**Policy Paper:**

# Towards an Inclusive and Just Energy Transition for Niger Delta Extractive Communities in Nigeria

Yar'Adua FOUNDATION

*Olumide Onitekun, Rashidat Sanusi, Chibuikem Agbaegbu, Opetunde Dairo*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nigeria's clean-energy pivot is accelerating. Yet the country's energy heartland, the Niger Delta extractive communities, which generate 75% of national export earnings, are the most vulnerable to this transition. The region continues to be largely excluded from the decision-making rooms and benefit streams shaping this new era. Decades of oil spills, gas flaring, and uneven revenue sharing have produced 4,000 $km^2$ of contaminated land, flare-linked infant-mortality rates twice the national average, and unemployment that spikes when international oil companies divest. Consequently, the Niger Delta remains volatile and marginalized, with instability that threatens both local well-being and national progress.

Now, the government has positioned the Niger Delta as the primary source of Nigeria's transition fuel: gas. This once again puts the region at the center of national energy planning, but not yet at the center of benefit or inclusion. For the transition to break from past patterns of exclusion and risk, justice demands that the Niger Delta become not only a source for the country's low-carbon future, but also a primary destination for its benefits and opportunities.

A justice audit of eight flagship policies and six major programmes, conducted with an adapted Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP) Scorecard Assessment, exposes four systemic gaps:

| Justice Pillar | Findings | Consequences if Unaddressed |
|---|---|---|
| Distributive | < 15% of Energy Transition Plan (ETP) and Host-Community Development Trust (HCDT) flows reach host communities. | Revenue loss and widening poverty as oil jobs decline. |
| Recognitional | Core documents rarely name oil-bearing communities, women, or youth; no gender-disaggregated targets. | Community priorities are invisible in national budgeting. |
| Procedural | No voting seats for community trusts on ETP working groups or NERC tariff panels. | Policies decided in Abuja, legitimacy deficit on the ground. |
| Restorative | Only 8% of Ogoni clean-up sites completed; new licences issued while legacy pollution persists. | Health crises and litigation risks escalate. |

Yet the transition also offers game-changing opportunities. Capturing 80% of flared gas by 2030 (NGFCP) can create 300,000 skilled jobs; the ETP's USD 23 billion renewables pipeline can cut household energy bills by 38% in mini-grid pilot areas; and the region's degraded mangroves could earn USD 120 million a year in carbon credits.

**A Justice-Anchored Roadmap**

1. Finance: Launch a N200 billion Just-Transition Fund—5% of federal oil royalties plus climate finance, dedicating at least 15% of all transition spending to projects owned by host communities.
2. Governance: Amend the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) so that every HCDT invests at least 30% of its annual inflows in clean energy and remediation approved by the elected Community Energy-Transition Committees (CETCs).
3. Land & Consent: Make Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) a pre-condition for all REA and NUPRC licences; states adopt legally binding Community Land Protocols.
4. Skills & Jobs: Create a Delta Green-Skills Corps to retrain 10,000 people annually in solar O&M, modular LNG, and climate-smart aquaculture, linked to mini-grid rollouts.
5. Remediation: Establish a Climate-Fund Remediation Window that allocates 50% of its budget to women-led clean-up and water-treatment enterprises.
6. Accountability: Publish an annual Niger Delta Just-Transition Scorecard—a TJTP scorecard audit annexed to the national budget—tracking jobs, emissions cuts, health gains and gender equity.

**A Policy Window to Craft a New Social Contract**

The shift to clean energy is not just a technical transition; it offers Nigeria a rare opportunity to rewrite the basic rules and relationships of governance within its energy systems, moving away from the approaches that have fuelled exclusion and fragility. When justice is woven into the spine of new structures emerging from the transition—from finance and land use to community decision-making and environmental remediation—it does more than redress past injustices. Justice becomes the foundation of stability, undergirding the social, political, and policy security of the energy sector itself. This is what makes true energy security possible—and, by extension, strengthens human security.

Global experience—from Germany's Coal Commission to South Africa's JET-IP—shows that justice clauses, when embedded from the outset, endure beyond changing governments and budgets. Now is the moment to make justice the founding principle of Nigeria's energy governance, ensuring the transition is not only cleaner but also more secure, inclusive, and resilient for generations to come.

**The Choice**

Nigeria stands at a crossroads. It can follow the old pattern—where the benefits of modern energy are abstracted and disconnected from the communities whose land, labor, and resources fuel the system, whether fossil-based or renewable—or it can chart a new course: building a global model of inclusive, restorative, community-driven transition that delivers lasting benefits, agency, and security to all energy communities, past, present and future. The tools, finance, and policy models are already on the table. What remains is a decisive commitment to justice-centered action. The moment to embed that justice—before new systems and investments are locked in and inertia takes hold—is now. The direction chosen at this pivotal moment will shape Nigeria's energy future for generations.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The global energy landscape is at a crossroads, shaped by the competing imperatives of climate action and energy security. While the urgency to mitigate climate change has driven commitments to transition away from fossil fuels, recent geopolitical and economic shifts underscore the complexities of this transition. For instance, the United States President, Donald Trump, has recently signalled a pro-fossil fuel stance, advocating that prioritizing domestic oil and gas production is essential for energy security and economic growth. Similarly, a number of developing countries face mounting pressure to balance climate commitments with the immediate need to expand energy access and industrialization. These tensions highlight a critical challenge: how to transition to a low-carbon future without exacerbating socio-economic inequalities, particularly for communities that have historically relied on fossil fuel extraction.

In sub-Saharan Africa, global tensions between energy security and climate action take on an added dimension, as the transition must also address widespread energy poverty. With over 600 million people lacking access to electricity[1], the shift away from fossil fuels presents both opportunities and risks. Nigeria, as one of the world's top oil producers, faces a particularly complex challenge: while fossil fuels account for 65% of government revenue and 90% of export earnings[2]. only 60.5% of its population has reliable electricity access[3]. Power outages remain frequent, and rural areas, where over 90 million Nigerians depend on traditional biomass and fossil fuels for daily activities, are disproportionately affected. This dependence not only exacerbates environmental degradation but also entrenches socio-economic inequalities, particularly in extractive communities. As Nigeria progresses on its energy transition, it must navigate the delicate balance between reducing emissions, sustaining economic stability, and ensuring that vulnerable communities are not left behind.

Recognizing these challenges, Nigeria launched its Energy Transition Plan (ETP) in 2022, targeting net-zero emissions by 2060. The plan includes transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy, using natural gas as a transitional fuel, and achieving universal energy access by 2030.[4] Nigeria's energy transition holds profound implications for extractive communities, particularly in regions like the Niger Delta, which is one of Nigeria's most productive areas for oil and gas extraction. For instance, approximately 2 million barrels (320,000 $m^2$) are extracted daily in the Niger Delta, with an estimated 38 billion barrels of reserves.[5] These communities in the Niger-Delta have faced decades of environmental degradation from oil spills and gas flaring, which have destroyed livelihoods, polluted water sources, and displaced populations. Therefore, if left behind, the energy transition could deepen these challenges.

As Nigeria reduces its reliance on fossil fuels, extractive communities risk losing the limited economic benefits they currently receive. Declining oil revenue may also lead to reduced financial allocations. Section 162, sub-section 2 of the Nigerian Constitution allocates 13% of the Country's oil revenue to the oil-producing communities as part of a benefit transfer scheme for the resources extracted from their jurisdictions[6]. Despite this, the transition presents an opportunity to address historical injustices by prioritizing the inclusion of extractive communities in shaping the country's energy future. For example, deploying decentralized renewable energy systems—such as solar mini-grids—in these communities could enhance access to reliable electricity and catalyse rural economic potential.

This policy paper offers an evidence-based assessment of how Nigeria's energy transition will affect extractive communities in the Niger Delta—highlighting both risks and opportunities—and frames all findings through the four pillars of energy justice (distributive, recognitional, procedural, and restorative). It proposes strategic, people-centred interventions, such as robust community-engagement frameworks, sustainable financing windows, and community-driven energy models, that guarantee a fair sharing of costs and benefits, acknowledge legacy harms, embed local voices in decision-making, and fund environmental and livelihood restoration. By uniting policymakers, civil-society actors, and frontline communities around these justice principles, the brief aims to advance SDG 7[7] while ensuring the transition is genuinely inclusive, equitable, and sustainable.

# 2. NIGERIA'S ENERGY TRANSITION LANDSCAPE

### 2.1 Overview

The Nigerian energy landscape is undertaking a significant transition, driven by the urgent need to mitigate climate change and address energy poverty. The country's economy has long been heavily reliant on fossil fuels, particularly oil and natural gas, which together account for approximately 65% of total government revenue.[8] Fossil fuels also play a central role in electricity generation, with thermal power plants contributing about 8,457.6 MW of the nation's installed capacity of 12,522 MW. In comparison, hydroelectric plants provide an additional 1,938.4 MW[9]. Despite this substantial capacity, only around 60.5% of Nigeria's population has access to electricity,[10] and those who are connected often experience frequent outages due to the instability of the national grid. This highlights the pressing need for a more resilient and sustainable energy system in the country.[11]

### 2.2 Government Responses to Energy Transition and Energy Access

The Nigerian government has developed a wide range of climate and energy policies to support its shift from fossil fuel dependence to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. These frameworks reflect a growing commitment to addressing both global climate goals and domestic energy poverty challenges.

#### Climate Commitments and Strategic Frameworks

Nigeria's climate journey began with the ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1994[12], laying the foundation for subsequent participation in global agreements, including:

- Kyoto Protocol (ratified 2004): Committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through mechanisms like the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Joint Implementation (JI), and Emissions Trading, which were designed to assist countries in meeting their emissions reduction targets[13].
- Paris Agreement (signed 2016, ratified 2017): Committed Nigeria to limiting temperature rise to below 2°C, with efforts to cap it at 1.5°C.

Nigeria also adopted Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on climate action in 2015 and became a signatory to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), committing to multi-hazard, resilience-based planning.

In line with its Paris Agreement obligations, Nigeria submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2015 and updated it in 2021, targeting:

- 20% unconditional GHG emission reduction by 2030.
- 47% conditional reduction with international support.

Complementing this, the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) 2021–2030 outlines a low-carbon development path and prioritises adaptation and resilience. The Climate Change Act (2021) provides a legal foundation for these efforts, establishing the National Council on Climate Change Secretariat (NCCCS) and setting a net-zero emissions target for the period between 2050 and 2070.

#### Renewable Energy and Efficiency Policies and Plans

To operationalize climate objectives, Nigeria has launched several renewable energy and efficiency policies:

- National Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy (NREEEP) – 2015: Targeted over 23 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, including large hydropower.
- National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) – 2015–2030: Aligned with ECOWAS regional policy and Nigeria's Vision 30:30:30; aims to deliver: 5,000 MW solar PV; 2,000 MW small hydro; 800 MW wind; and 400 MW biomass

- National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) – 2015–2030: Focuses on demand-side measures, such as: Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS), Efficient appliances, and Industrial and building retrofits
- Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) Action Agenda – 2016: Integrates NREAP and NEEAP, setting targets such as reducing traditional firewood use by 80% by 2030[14].
- Renewable Energy Master Plan – 2019: Seeks to achieve 30% of electricity generation from renewables by 2030.

### Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP) – 2022

The Energy Transition Plan (ETP) represents the most comprehensive framework to date, providing a roadmap to net-zero emissions by 2060 while addressing energy poverty and development goals. Its core priorities include:

- Achieving Net-Zero by 2060 across five sectors: Power, Cooking, Transport, Oil & Gas, and Industry.
- Lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty through job creation and clean energy access.
- Universal access to modern energy by 2030.
- GHG reduction targets: 45% by 2030, and up to 90% by 2050.
- Ending traditional biomass dependence and scaling LPG and electric/biogas cookstoves.

The ETP promotes a phased shift from petrol and diesel to renewable-backed electrification, with natural gas serving as a transitional fuel. In the transport sector, the plan aims for a 97% reduction in emissions via the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs), while in oil and gas, it targets reduced flaring and fugitive emissions. Since its launch, the ETP has introduced several inclusive initiatives:

- Women-in-Energy Dialogue (May 2023) to address gender-specific barriers[15].
- Data Stakeholder Session (July 2023) to establish shared monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks[16].
- Community clean-cooking pilots (e.g., Petti village, FCT)[17] and a solar cookstove showcase (Iponri Market, Lagos)[18].
- World Bank–supported DARES programme, targeting 17.5 million beneficiaries with solar mini-grids and home systems[19].
- ETP Help-Desk, providing direct access to technical support for households and cooperatives.

Yet none of these initiatives is expressly ring-fenced for the Niger Delta and other extractive heartlands that have endured decades of oil spills, gas flaring and withheld royalties. The ETP still lacks a finance window, a benefit-sharing rule set, or a decision-making seat for host-community trusts, leaving the very regions that powered Nigeria's fossil economy and are now slated to supply its transition fuel at risk of observing the renewable boom from the sidelines. Absent explicit targets and governance safeguards for these communities, the shift to clean energy risks trading petrol for solar while perpetuating the same patterns of exclusion and social volatility.

### Key Institutions Driving the Energy Transition

**Federal Ministry of Power (FMoP):** As Nigeria's lead policymaker for the electricity sector, the FMoP coordinates national strategies to deliver inclusive, sustainable, and climate-aligned power infrastructure. It supervises key agencies such as the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), the Rural Electrification Agency (REA), and the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA).

**National Council on Climate Change Secretariat (NCCCS):** Created by the Climate Change Act (2021), the NCCCS oversees implementation of national climate policies, including: Rolling five-year carbon budgets, Climate Change Fund management, and Public–private sector compliance The NCCCS also partners with UN agencies to design Nigeria's Just Transition Framework, facilitating: Green job creation, Social inclusion, and Carbon credit markets.

**Rural Electrification Agency (REA):** Established under the Electric Power Sector Reform Act (2005), the REA drives electrification of underserved areas through off-grid and mini-grid systems. Flagship initiatives include the Nigeria Electrification Project (NEP), Energizing Education Programme, Solar Power Naija, Distributed Access through Renewable Energy Scale-Up (DARES), Africa Mini Grids Programme (AMP), and Rural Electrification Fund (REF). These interventions contribute to universal energy access and align with the ETP's targets, particularly in reaching rural and low-income communities.

**The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC):** Nigeria's independent power regulator is crucial for turning energy transition targets into bankable projects. Since the passage of the Electricity Act 2023, NERC has:

- Updated the Mini-Grid Regulations (2023) to streamline licensing and performance standards for systems up to 5 MW[20].
- Adopted the AFUR cost-reflective tariff tool to give developers clear, uniform pricing templates, reducing investor risk for rural solar and hybrid grids[21].
- Expanded net-metering and embedded-generation rules, enabling households and SMEs to export surplus solar power to the grid.

Together, these steps lower entry barriers for decentralised renewables and help align power-sector economics with the Energy Transition Plan (ETP).

**Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN):** As the government's think-tank for long-range energy planning, the ECN:

- Leads national energy-balance and demand-forecast studies that feed directly into each update of the ETP.
- Steers R&D partnerships with universities and private firms to localise solar-PV component manufacturing and green-hydrogen prospects.
- In 2024, launched a knowledge-exchange bulletin linking state energy ministries, researchers and investors on transition topics.

By providing data, modelling, and technology roadmaps, ECN equips policymakers with the analytical foundation necessary for informed, evidence-based transition decisions.

**Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC):** The NDDC serves as a regional intervention body, focusing on development and environmental remediation in the Niger Delta. It plays a growing role in Nigeria's energy transition through:

- Lighting Up the Niger Delta: Over 56,000 solar-powered streetlights installed.
- Plans to solarize entire communities and develop industrial clusters powered by renewables.
- Launching a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) training and conversion programme for 10,000 technicians by 2027.
- Targeting up to $2 billion in climate finance through clean energy initiatives.

While these efforts represent essential steps, their integration into national frameworks, such as the ETP, remains limited, thereby reducing opportunities for synergy and scale.

**Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC):** The upstream oil-and-gas regulator now embeds decarbonisation in core licensing:

- Upstream Petroleum Decarbonisation Template (UPDT): From 1 Jan 2025, every field licence applicant must demonstrate a low-carbon plan, methane management measures and a renewable energy component[22].
- A 2024 strategic decarbonisation drive links flare-gas commercialisation, CCS pilots and nature-based offsets to national net-zero goals[23].

These requirements push operators to cut flaring and integrate clean-energy solutions, aligning hydrocarbon activity with the ETP's emission-reduction pathway.

Nigerian Midstream & Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA): Tasked with gas infrastructure and fuel markets, NMDPRA is pivotal for transition fuels:

- Co-authored the National Clean-Cooking Policy (2024), anchoring LPG and CNG scale-up to replace firewood and kerosene in 30 million households by 2030[24].
- Issues pricing and safety guidelines that make LPG bottling, bulk storage and CNG conversion centres commercially viable.

By expanding gas-based cooking and transport fuels, NMDPRA provides the "bridge fuel" layer envisioned in the ETP.

Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA): Beyond managing sovereign-wealth capital, NSIA has become a green-finance catalyst:

- Co-launched the US$500 million Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) Fund with SEforALL, Africa 50 and ISA to crowd-in local pension-fund capital for mini-grids, SHS and storage[25].
- Through its subsidiary RIPLE, it co-invests in hybrid solar–hydro IPPs such as the 20 MW Shiroro extension.

These vehicles mobilise long-term, naira-denominated finance that utility-scale renewables and rural electrification both require.

State Governments (Post-Electricity Act 2023): With the new Act devolving power regulation, states are emerging as frontline transition actors:

- Lagos State Electricity Law (2024) empowers the state to license mini-grids, set feed-in tariffs and create a state-level market operator—an early template for sub-national energy governance[26].
- Other states (Kaduna, Enugu, Edo, Ekiti) are drafting similar laws or renewable-energy policies, opening space for local PPPs and climate-adaptation projects.
- State Ministries of Energy can now earmark portions of Internally Generated Revenue and climate funds for solar schools, agro-processing mini-grids and electric-bus pilots.

This decentralisation, when combined with capacity-building and financing, can accelerate the rollout of clean, reliable power, especially in underserved rural and peri-urban areas.

**2.3 Policy–Community Disconnect in Extractive Regions**

Nigeria now boasts a dense web of climate and energy policy instruments; yet, oil and gas-producing communities still struggle to see or shape the transition on the ground. Most frameworks reference "stakeholders" in general terms, but only a handful build in clear seats, budgets, or grievance channels for the people who continue to bear the brunt of spills, gas flaring, and lost livelihoods as Nigeria pursues its low-carbon energy aspirations. The two tables below map (i) how far the flagship climate-energy policies embed community-inclusion safeguards and (ii) whether community-level programmes advance clean-energy and climate-resilience goals.

Table 1: National climate-energy policies through a community-inclusion lens

| Policy / Plan | Year | Stated Community-Inclusion Provisions | Inclusion Rating* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Energy Transition Plan (ETP)/ETO | 2022 | The ETO's CSO/CBO, women-and-youth, and data workshops—and its clean-cooking pilots—have all taken place in Lagos and Abuja; wider "awareness roadshows" are promised, yet extractive-region CSOs and host-community representatives still have no formal seat in transition-plan governance. | Low-Medium |
| Climate Change Act | 2021 | Requires a public-engagement strategy and annual carbon-budget hearings | High (on paper) |
| National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) | 2021 | Drafted via nationwide consultations; calls for community-based adaptation projects | Medium–High |
| Electricity Act | 2023 | Permits states to license mini-grids and set feed-in tariffs; guidelines for host communities pending. | Low–Medium |
| NDC (Rev. 2021) | 2021 | Pledges "participatory implementation", but no dedicated finance window | Medium-Low |
| NREEEP | 2015 | Encourages NGO & civil society partnership on demo projects. | Medium |
| NREAP / NEEAP | 2015 | Rural/off-grid focus; envisages state & LGA input, but lacks enforcement | Medium |
| Renewable Energy Master Plan | 2019 | Targets 30 % RE share; silent on benefit-sharing rules | Low |

**High = binding duties and earmarked resources; Medium = some provisions but weak on enforcement; Low = aspirational only.*

Table 2: Community-level programmes & instruments—alignment with clean energy and resilience

| Programme / Instrument | Lead Agency | Clean Energy / Resilience Content | Alignment Rating |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nigeria Electrification Project (NEP) | REA | Uses a published community-engagement framework for > 1,000 solar mini-grids | Medium–High |
| DARES mini-grid scale-up | REA / WB | Results-based grants for 17.5 m beneficiaries; targets rural SMEs | Medium–High |
| "Light-Up the Niger Delta" | NDDC | >56 000 solar streetlights; plan for solar industrial clusters | Medium |
| Host Community Development Trusts (HCDT) under the PIA | NUPRC / Operators | 3% OPEX levy for social projects; no clean-energy mandate | Medium (development) / Low (energy) |
| RUWES clean-cooking project | Federal Ministry of Environment | Targets 1.3 m rural women with efficient stoves | Medium |
| Upstream Petroleum Decarbonisation Template (UPDT) | NUPRC | From 2025, licence bids must include low-carbon & RE plans | Emerging–High |

### What the Tables Reveal

- Inclusion is still event-based. The ETP hosts high-profile dialogues, but residents of extractive regions have no representation on sector taskforces, nor a share of the ETP's financing pipeline.
- Legacy host-community vehicles lag the transition. HCDTs capture billions of naira each year, yet have no obligation to fund solar, clean cooking, or climate-resilience projects.
- Pilot success, weak feedback loop. REA and NDDC pilots confirm that mini-grids and solar streetlights are viable energy interventions in oil-producing areas; yet, the insights seldom loop back into national planning, and the projects remain largely top-down interventions, rather than solutions co-designed with the communities that are critical to the production and consumption of energy.

### Why a Just Transition Matters to Nigeria's Energy Future

Missing the opportunity to embed dedicated finance windows, clear benefit-sharing rules, and formal governance roles consigns host communities to vanishing jobs, exclusion from project design, and enduring toxic legacies. Simultaneously, the nation forfeits the chance to cultivate stable, community-anchored fuel supply chains and risks fostering fragility in emerging critical-mineral hubs—undermining the resilience and security of its low-carbon pathway.

Addressing this, therefore, requires:

1. Ring-fenced funding: dedicate a share of ETP and HCDT funds to community-led renewable projects in oil- and gas-producing LGAs.
2. Institutional seats: guarantee host-community and CSO representation on every ETP sector working group.
3. Score-card transparency: publish an annual Just Transition Scorecard tracking how policy targets translate into on-the-ground benefits—jobs, emissions cuts, and resilience gains for Niger Delta and other extractive regions.

Embedding these measures across all major climate and renewable energy policies—not just the ETP—will turn abstract decarbonization goals into tangible, inclusive progress for Nigeria and its past, present and future extractive communities.

## 2.4 The Case for a Just Energy Transition for Nigeria's Extractive Communities

Nigeria's energy transition has yet to sufficiently integrate the realities and interests of extractive communities into its policy implementation strategies. While national policies, such as the ETP, set ambitious decarbonization goals, they often fail to address the socio-economic vulnerabilities of communities that have historically relied on fossil fuel industries. Extractive regions, particularly in the Niger Delta, have endured decades of environmental degradation, economic marginalization, and limited access to energy. Without deliberate efforts to incorporate their needs and perspectives, the transition risks deepening existing inequalities rather than fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

The concept of a Just Energy Transition (JET) offers a framework for ensuring that climate action does not come at the expense of the most vulnerable populations. Originating from labour movements in the 1980s, JET emphasizes the shift towards sustainable energy systems that prioritize social equity, economic inclusion, and environmental sustainability. It seeks to mitigate the adverse effects of moving away from fossil fuels by actively involving all stakeholders, especially workers, marginalized communities, and local populations, in decision-making processes.

At the core of a just transition is the principle that no group should be treated unfairly, particularly by public policies. A 2024 ODI working paper[27] provides a framework for incorporating justice in the energy transition. It comprises four key dimensions:

- **Distributive Justice:** Ensuring the fair distribution of the costs and benefits associated with the transition. Extractive communities should not bear the burden of economic displacement while others reap the advantages of renewable energy investments. Policies must guarantee equitable access to resources, opportunities, and financial support for alternative livelihoods.
- **Recognitional Justice:** Acknowledging the unique needs, histories, and vulnerabilities of oil-producing communities. These populations have suffered for decades from environmental degradation, and a just transition must prioritize their economic and social well-being rather than treating them as an afterthought in climate policies.
- **Procedural Justice:** Guaranteeing that all stakeholders—especially those in extractive regions—have equitable access to information and decision-making processes. Energy transition plans must incorporate transparent, participatory governance mechanisms to ensure that affected communities can shape policies that impact their future.
- **Restorative Justice:** Addressing historical injustices and environmental harms caused by past energy practices. This includes funding for environmental remediation, investments in sustainable local economies, and direct compensation for communities that have suffered from pollution and resource extraction.

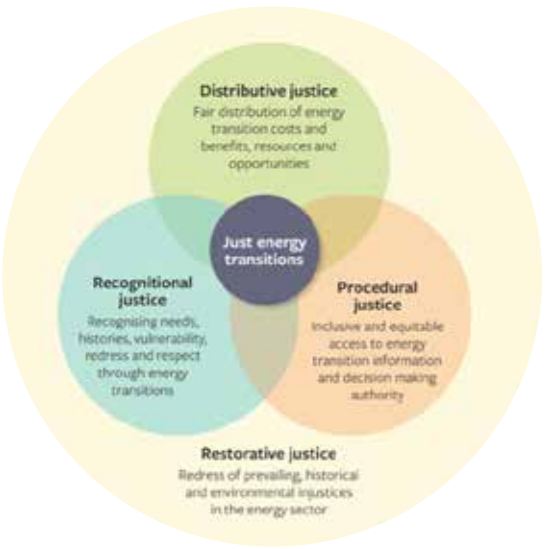


*Figure 1: Four Key Dimensions of Justice Pillar*
*Source: Steadman et. al. (2024)*

Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP) does not incorporate these dimensions of justice: extractive-region CSOs and host-community trusts are not recognised in decision-making, and public awareness remains patchy. Yet realities in the Niger Delta are mixed. Some enclaves already enjoy access to gas-fired power, royalties, CSR scholarships, and employment opportunities. In contrast, others face chronic pollution and see these benefits captured by local elites or armed groups. A truly Just Energy Transition (JET) must therefore (i) safeguard existing livelihoods while hydrocarbons remain, (ii) provide bankable alternatives before any phase-down, and (iii) embed a permanent justice architecture—compensation funds, clean-up timelines and statutory representation of host trusts facilitated access to renewable energy on all transition-finance and project-approval boards.

Since oil's discovery at Oloibiri in 1956[28], spills, flaring and weak governance have devastated farmland and fisheries in places such as Bodo and Ogoniland[29]; UNEP estimates complete remediation could take three decades[30]. These historical harms, along with the Ogoni struggle of the 1990s and current illicit mining conflicts[31] elsewhere, underscore the need for restorative and distributive justice, rather than a simple exit from the situation.

*Figure 2: Oil from a leaking pipeline burns in Goi-Bodo, a swamp area of the Niger Delta (October 12, 2004)*
*Source: Austin Ekeinde/Reuters*

A JET can still turn a crisis into an opportunity. Decentralised solar, wind, and mini-hydro schemes—tied to reforestation and environmental service jobs—can expand clean power, build skills, and diversify incomes, advancing SDG 7[32]. However, success hinges on procedural and recognitional justice: town-hall consultations that include youth, women and other vulnerable groups; transparent benefit-sharing that reaches households, not just gatekeepers; and retraining programmes for workers whose livelihoods depend on oil and gas.

Targeted social-service spending, capacity-building and strict accountability for both government and companies will convert Nigeria's green ambitions into genuine social equity. Without such institutional safeguards, communities can rightly ask: *"You polluted our land for decades—now you want to leave without remedy; where is the justice?"*

**2.5 Where the Justice Gap Persists for Extractive Communities**
Decades of oil spills, gas flaring, and royalty disputes have left the Niger-Delta and other extractive communities with damaged ecosystems and precarious livelihoods. A just energy transition must therefore be judged against **four justice principles—Distributive, Recognitional, Procedural, and Restorative**—not merely against national emission curves.

Table 3: Do Nigeria's flagship policies respect justice for extractive regions?

| Policy / Programme | Distributive (income, jobs, infrastructure) | Recognitional (explicit mention of Niger Delta needs) | Procedural (seats, votes, data-access) | Restorative (cleanup, compensation) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Energy Transition Plan (ETP) 2022 | ▲ Poverty-reduction goal, but no ring-fenced finance for host LGAs | ▮ | ▲ One-off dialogues (Women-in-Energy, CSO sessions) but no standing seats for host trusts. | ▮ |
| Climate Change Act 2021 | ▲ Climate Fund can, in theory target impacted zones | ▲ Mentions "vulnerable groups" | ▮ Mandates public-engagement strategy & CSO partnership §25-30 | ▮ |
| NREEEP / NREAP / NEEAP 2015 | ▲ Rural/off-grid focus; no host-community clause | ▮ | ▲ State/LGA consultation suggested, not enforced | ▮ |
| Electricity Act 2023 | ▲ States may reserve tariffs for affected LGAs | ▮ | ▲ Devolves licensing; host voices depend on state law | ▮ |
| Host-Community Dev. Trusts (PIA) | ▮ 3 % OPEX levy to host funds | ▮ | ▲ Trustees picked by operators; limited transparency | ▲ Allows remediation spending but no clean-energy mandate |
| REA Mini grid / DARES | ▮ Results-based grants; 17.5 m beneficiaries targeted | ▲ | ▲ Uses published community-engagement framework | ▮ |
| NDDC 'Light-Up' Solar Streetlights | ▮ 56 000 solar lamps in Niger Delta | ▮ | ▲ Community input unclear | ▲ No direct remediation budget |

*Key: ▮ = strong provision ▲ = partial / aspirational ▮ = absent*

### Justice diagnosis

1. **Distributive justice:** Flows of climate and energy finance still bypass oil-bearing LGAs. The only automatic channel—the 3% Host-Community levy—has no obligation to fund renewables or clean-cooking projects, and ETP financing dashboards list zero host-community earmarks.
2. **Recognitional justice:** The specific needs and interests of extractive regions are seldom acknowledged. Apart from the PIA, national strategies refer generically to "vulnerable" or "rural" groups, glossing over the unique legacy burdens borne by Niger Delta communities.
3. **Procedural justice:** Engagement is event-based, not institutional. The ETP's Women-in-Energy Dialogue and stakeholder workshops are welcome, but host-community trusts hold no voting seats on ETP sector task forces, NCCC carbon budget hearings, or NERC tariff reviews.
4. **Restorative justice:** Environmental cleanup and livelihood repair remain peripheral. Neither the ETP, NREEEP, nor mini-grid programmes link new energy investments to soil-and-water remediation or compensation for decades of extraction damage.

**Why These Matter**

Unless distributive, recognitional, procedural and restorative justice are baked into every major policy, the transition will merely swap one set of energy technologies for another—and repeat old patterns of exclusion and renewed insecurity. Extractive communities could again shoulder environmental scars—this time without the meagre royalties that once compensated them.

### Justice-Centred Reform for Policymakers

| Justice Pillar | Immediate Action | Responsible Body |
|---|---|---|
| Distributive | Earmark 15 % of ETP and Climate-Fund capital for host-community clean-energy and remediation projects; allow HCDTs to count such spending against levy obligations. | MoF, NCCC, NUPRC |
| Recognitional | Amend NREEEP & Electricity Act regulations to name and prioritize extractive communities for mini-grid and clean-cooking subsidies. | FMoP, NERC, State Governments |
| Procedural | Guarantee two host-community seats on every ETP sector working group; publish minutes in local languages. | Energy Transition Office |
| Restorative | Create a Just Transition Remediation Window—funded by carbon-credit revenues and HCDT surpluses—for oil-spill clean-up, mangrove restoration, and livelihood grants. | NDDC, NOSDRA, NSIA |

Embedding these justice levers will convert Nigeria's impressive stack of policies into a people-centred, extractive-region-inclusive energy transition—one that repairs the past while securing a sustainable future.

# 3. EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION ON EXTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES IN THE NIGER-DELTA

### 3.1 Introduction and Methodology

The energy transition in Nigeria presents both significant challenges and potential opportunities for extractive communities, such as the Niger Delta. Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP), which aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060, marks a crucial shift toward renewable energy and low-carbon development. While this transition poses socio-economic risks—such as job losses and economic disruptions in oil- and gas-producing regions—it also creates new prospects for sustainable livelihoods and economic diversification. Drawing on recent analyses, policy documents, and direct engagements with local communities, this section explores both the challenges and opportunities that the transition presents for these communities.

The analysis employs a mixed-method approach, drawing from empirical evidence in the form of reports from international organizations, government agencies, and civil society groups; case studies from affected communities; statistical data on economic trends, employment, and energy access; and perspectives from key stakeholders, including local community members, industry players, and policymakers. Additionally, this study incorporates insights from focus group discussions held during the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation event, Shaping an Inclusive Energy Transition in the Niger Delta. The study engaged local communities, including Eteo Eleme in Rivers State; Koroama, Ikarama, Gbarain, and Ekpetiama in Bayelsa State; as well as Akpet Central, Boki, and Biase in Cross River State. Participants included community leaders, women leaders, youth, and other residents, whose lived experiences provide critical insights into the socio-economic and environmental realities of the transition.

*Figure 3: Focus Group & Interactive Session Held During the Yar Adua Foundation Event*
*Source: Author*

### 3.2 Socio-Economic and Environmental Challenges

#### Economic Vulnerability and Fiscal Instability

Extractive communities in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta, face acute economic risks as global fossil fuel demand declines and international oil companies divest. According to NEITI's 2023 report, Nigeria's oil revenues fell by 15% between 2022 and 2023, while production volumes dropped by 8% during the same period[33]. This decline directly threatens the fiscal stability of states like Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta, where oil revenues fund up to 80% of state budgets through statutory allocations and derivation funds. The BudgIT analysis further highlights that oil-producing regions account for 79.37% of Nigeria's exports but remain plagued by underdevelopment, with minimal infrastructure and social services despite decades of resource extraction[34].

The ETP's push to phase out fossil fuels risks exacerbating unemployment in these regions. In the Niger Delta, between 45% and 75% of the local workforce is employed in the oil and gas sector[35], including roles in drilling, logistics, and ancillary services. Without targeted reskilling programs, workers in traditional energy sectors risk being left behind as the renewable energy sector expands. For example, while Nigeria's Gas Flare Commercialization Program (NGFCP) aims to reduce emissions and convert flared gas into economic value—potentially creating up to 300,000 direct and indirect jobs—it is unlikely to absorb displaced workers unless complemented by vocational training in sectors to upskill workers[36].

Findings from local community engagements confirm these economic vulnerabilities. Across all states, communities reported severe and consistent economic hardships:

- **Reduced Agricultural Productivity:** Farmers in Bayelsa and Rivers reported declining crop yields due to pollution and soil degradation, making agricultural livelihoods unsustainable.
- **Declining Fisheries Output:** Fishermen in Cross River cited reduced fish stocks due to pollution and river contamination, directly impacting their income and food security.
- **Youth Unemployment:** Communities emphasized that many young people remain jobless due to a lack of alternative economic opportunities outside the oil sector.

*Figure 4: A man holds dead fish from an oil-polluted river in Ogoniland, Rivers State, on September 18, 2020*
*Source: Afolabi Sotunde/Reuters*

## 3. EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION ON EXTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES IN THE NIGER-DELTA *continued*

### Environmental Remediation and Health Outcomes

Decades of oil spills and gas flaring have rendered extractive zones ecological "wastelands". For instance, between 1976 and 2006, there were at least 7,000 oil spills in the region, affecting an area of more than 2,500 square kilometres[37]. Between January 2019 and April 2021, a total of 881 oil spills were recorded across 12 states in Nigeria, according to data from the government-run satellite tracker, NOSDRA. Notably, 77% of these spills occurred in just three major oil-producing states. During this period, approximately 43,000 barrels of oil were lost, with an estimated value of $3 million on the international market and 1.23 billion naira in the national market. These figures continue to rise as new spills are reported daily[38].

These disasters have destroyed farmland, fisheries, and drinking water sources, compromising food security and creating a cycle of poverty, with over 47% of the population living below the poverty line[39]. The ETP's emphasis on reducing flaring and methane leaks offers hope for environmental recovery, but progress remains slow. For example, the NGFCP aims to commercialize flared gas into liquefied natural gas (LNG) and compressed natural gas (CNG). However, only 12% of flared gas volumes were captured as of 2023[40].

Health outcomes in these regions are equally dire. A 2019 UNEP study linked oil pollution to **16,000 infant deaths annually** in the Niger Delta due to respiratory illnesses and contaminated water[41]. Transitioning to cleaner energy could mitigate these risks, but communities demand immediate remediation. The Nigerian government's Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP), tasked with Ogoni land cleanup, has been criticized for inefficiencies, with less than 10% of pledged sites restored since 2016[42].

Findings from the community engagements further highlight:

- **Severe Pollution of Farmlands and Rivers:** Farmers in Rivers and Bayelsa reported the destruction of crops and soil infertility due to oil contamination.
- **Air and Water Pollution:** Communities in Cross River cited worsening air quality, with frequent cases of respiratory illnesses attributed to gas flaring and industrial emissions.
- **Health Crises:** Participants in Rivers and Bayelsa frequently cited respiratory issues, skin conditions, and water contamination. Women in Cross River noted reproductive health challenges and vision problems, underscoring a gendered dimension of gas flare-related health impacts.

*Figure 5: Farmland habitually ruined by oil contamination, destroying local livelihoods.*
*Source: Justice for Bayelsa*

### Environmental Degradation

With the energy transition, there will be an increase in demand for raw materials required for renewable energy technologies, such as lithium for batteries and rare earth metals for wind turbines. This demand often results in intensified mining activities, which can lead to habitat destruction, soil erosion, and water pollution. For instance, studies have shown that lithium mining in regions like the Atacama Desert in Bolivia has led to a 7% annual increase in mining area, accompanied by severe environmental impacts, including decreased vegetation cover and rising temperatures.[43] Additionally, the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources often requires more land to produce the same amount of energy. Wind farms and solar arrays typically occupy significantly larger areas than traditional coal or gas plants. This increased land use can lead to habitat fragmentation and biodiversity loss, particularly if these installations are placed in ecologically sensitive areas. [44]Furthermore, bioenergy production can exacerbate land use changes and deforestation if agricultural resources are diverted from food production to energy crops.

Another critical aspect of environmental degradation associated with the energy transition is the potential for increased pollution from mining activities. The extraction of materials necessary for renewable technologies can result in significant ecological disturbances, including contamination of local water sources and soil degradation.[45] Industrial mining operations often result in long-term ecological damage that threatens both wildlife and human populations residing in the vicinity[46]. Moreover, while renewable energy sources are generally considered more environmentally friendly than fossil fuels, their production processes can still contribute to greenhouse gas emissions if not appropriately managed. For example, the manufacturing of solar panels involves energy-intensive processes that may rely on fossil fuels, potentially offsetting some of the environmental benefits gained from their use.[47] Therefore, it is imperative to address the associated environmental degradation. Policymakers must implement stringent regulations on mining practices, promote sustainable land use planning, and invest in technologies that minimize ecological footprints throughout the lifecycle of renewable energy systems.

### Energy Poverty Rise

Nigeria has one of the highest rates of energy poverty globally,[48] with approximately 92 million people lacking access to electricity. Transitioning to renewable energy requires substantial investment in infrastructure, including power generation, transmission, and distribution systems, which are currently inadequate to support this shift. The ETP estimates that Nigeria will require approximately USD 410 billion in additional spending above business-as-usual levels between 2021 and 2060 to achieve net-zero emissions[49]. Additionally, the initial costs associated with renewable technologies can be prohibitive for extractive communities, as they predominantly comprise rural areas.

There are compelling reasons to believe that transitioning to clean energy lowers the overall cost of the energy system in the long run, driven by the widespread adoption of efficient technologies and a reduced reliance on (imported) fossil fuels.[50] However, this reduction in costs is not linear over time. In the short and medium terms, the energy transition is expected to lead to higher energy costs. This means that the energy transition may exacerbate the problem of energy poverty, as affordability and accessibility of energy for the energy poor are also essential considerations for the transition[51]. International research has shown that sustainable energy technologies – such as electric vehicles, solar panels, efficient appliances and LED light bulbs – are often used primarily by higher-income households[52]. There is therefore a clear risk that the energy transition may not include all, but will lead to increasing inequality.[53] Necessary investments in sustainable technology must be made with this risk in mind.

Community engagements revealed additional concerns:

- **Affordability of Renewable Energy:** Many residents fear that clean energy alternatives will remain unaffordable due to high upfront costs, exacerbating **energy poverty**.
- **Unequal Energy Access:** Rural communities in Cross River reported a lack of electricity access, highlighting the risk of deepening inequalities if the transition does not prioritize off-grid solutions.

### Potential Community Displacement

Nigeria is endowed with large and small rivers, as well as natural falls, which are potential sources of hydroelectricity to serve both urban and rural populations. With a total installed capacity of 2,064 MW, Nigeria is the 8th largest hydropower generator in Africa.[54] And China plays a significant role in Nigeria's hydropower sector. The Mambilla Hydroelectric Power Station, situated on the Dongo River in Taraba State, is currently under development and will be the largest power-generating installation in Nigeria with a capacity of 3,050 MW[55]. The total budget is 5.8 billion USD, of which 4.9 billion USD (85%) is provided by the EXIM Bank of China and other Chinese lenders, while the Nigerian government pays the 15% balance. It is expected that the Chinese companies Sino Hydro and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) will start construction. The dam is expected to displace approximately 100,000 people in Taraba State. Likewise, the Zungeru Hydropower Dam in Niger State, with a 700 MW capacity, is also supported by the EXIM Bank of China[56]. Chinese EXIM covers 975 million USD through a preferential loan, while the Federal Government of Nigeria funds the remaining 25% of the total 1.3 billion USD project. Construction started in 2013 by the Consortium of China National Electrical Equipment Corporation (CNEEC) and Sino hydro. As many as 98 villages from three local government areas (Shiroro, Rafi and Wushishi) are affected by the project.[57]

## 3.3 Opportunities for Extractive Communities in Nigeria's Energy Transition

### Economic Diversification Through Renewable Energy Investments

The ETP's $23 billion investment target for renewable energy infrastructure creates unprecedented opportunities for extractive communities to transition from fossil fuel dependency to sustainable livelihoods[58]. Solar mini-grids, biogas systems, and decentralized energy projects—prioritized in the plan—could empower communities to become active stakeholders in energy production. A 2010 study by Heidi states that the employment level per $1 million in demand is approximately three times greater for the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency industry than for fossil fuel (FF) industries. This implies that a shift to clean energy will result in positive net employment impacts[59]. For instance, community-owned solar farms in oil-rich states like Rivers and Bayelsa could generate local employment in installation, maintenance, and grid management, addressing the prevailing unemployment rates. A 2023 study by Ubani and Effiong found that renewable energy projects in Abia and Akwa Ibom states increased household incomes by 22% through direct jobs and ancillary services, such as battery recycling and agro-processing powered by clean energy[60].

### Environmental Remediation and Green Job Creation

More than 4,000 km$^2$ of Niger Delta land remains contaminated by decades of spills and flaring. Yet, the same gas, now lost to the atmosphere, can underpin a twin strategy of restoration and local industrialisation. Nigeria's Gas Flare Commercialisation Programme, which aims to capture 80% of flared gas by 2030, is projected to create approximately 300,000 jobs along new value chains in pipeline construction, modular LNG, carbon credit verification and leak detection[61]. Redirected LPG and other by-products can supply a domestic clean-cooking market, reducing the 128,000 annual deaths linked to indoor air pollution[62] while supporting women-led enterprises that assemble stoves or build biogas digesters. At the same time, reliable feedstock from captured gas can anchor petrochemical clusters that produce plastics, fertilisers, and lubricants, enabling oil-bearing communities to transition from raw-material outposts to diversified industrial hubs. By tying remediation funds and local-content rules

to these gas-based and renewable offshoots, Nigeria can convert ecological repair into a catalyst for broad-based, community-anchored prosperity.

### Policy Advocacy and Community-Led Governance

A key opportunity lies in transforming energy governance through inclusive policymaking. Establishing a National Energy Transition Platform that actively incorporates community voices into decision-making can ensure that the transition is both equitable and sustainable. By prioritizing local engagement, the government can address the unique concerns of extractive communities and foster a sense of ownership in the transition process. For example, the Host Communities Development Trust, established under Nigeria's Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), could be repurposed to fund renewable energy cooperatives rather than legacy oil projects. Communities in Delta State have already utilized similar trusts to pilot solar-powered water treatment plants, thereby reducing their reliance on oil companies for basic services[63].

Civil society organizations, such as Spaces for Change (S4C), advocate for legislative reforms to ensure 40% local content quotas in renewable energy contracts, mirroring policies in South Africa's wind sector. Such measures would enable communities to supply materials, such as solar panel mounts fabricated from recycled oil pipelines, thereby blending environmental cleanup with industrial innovation.

### Leveraging Transition Finance for Local Development—With Safeguards

Meeting the ETP's US$410 billion investment target by 2060 could channel sizeable climate-finance flows—carbon-offset revenues, green bonds, concessional loans—into Niger Delta communities. Degraded mangroves and abandoned oil-palm estates, for example, are prime candidates for REDD+ projects that might earn roughly US$120 million per year in carbon credits while restoring ecosystems[64]. International partnerships, such as the World Bank's $750 million power sector recovery program, could subsidize community solar hubs linked to agricultural processing zones, enhancing food security and energy access[65]. Redirecting a portion of derivation funds, currently allocated to oil-producing states, toward renewable energy training centres could address skill gaps and prepare the communities for a post-oil future. Bayelsa State's proposed Green Technology Academy, funded by 5% of its monthly derivation revenue, aims to train 5,000 youths annually in solar installation and e-mobility maintenance[66].

Yet such finance can just as easily disenfranchise communities if profit-sharing, land tenure and consent rules are weak. Conservation or credit-generation schemes that overlook customary rights or channel revenues through intermediaries risk entrenching the very inequities the transition seeks to correct. To avoid this, all climate-finance deals should (i) pass Free, Prior and Informed Consent audits certified by Community Energy-Transition Committees, (ii) earmark a minimum share of credit revenue for locally owned clean-energy or livelihood projects, and (iii) publish annual benefit-sharing accounts. Furthermore, climate-finance activities must safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, rather than trading one form of extraction for another. Only by embedding these measures can transition finance become a true engine of inclusive development, rather than a new, top-down appropriation of local value.

### Gender and Youth Inclusion in the Green Economy

Women and young people in oil-bearing areas can tap the energy transition only if generic "green jobs" schemes are adapted to local realities. National programmes, such as Solar Sister Nigeria, already demonstrate that training women to retail solar lanterns and clean cookstoves can increase monthly incomes; yet, few chapters operate south of Port Harcourt. Youth-focused e-mobility ventures like MAX.NG or Revive Electric have generated more than 52,000 jobs nationwide[67]., but almost none of the associated battery-recycling or charging-station work is anchored in the Niger Delta. The one notable exception is the YEAC-Nigeria's Community Energy and Development initiative, whose solar mini-grid pilot in Umuolu, Delta State[68], cut generator costs for local businesses and created maintenance jobs for trained youths. Scaling socially embedded models—rather than relying on generic national rollouts—will enable gender and youth inclusion to become a tangible pillar of a just transition in extractive communities.

# 4. COMMUNITY-CENTRED NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR EXTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES IN THE NIGER-DELTA

### 4.1 Method and Scope

To move beyond anecdotal evidence, the assessment utilizes an **adapted Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP) Scorecard Assessment developed by WWF**[69] applied to five livelihood domains identified during a focus group discussion held at the *Shaping an Inclusive Energy Transition in the Niger Delta* workshop organized by the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation in 2024. Each justice pillar—**Distributive (D), Recognitional (R), Procedural (P), Restorative (Re)**—is scored 0-3 based on hard numbers already documented in Section 3. Where a score is below 2, the table cites the data that triggered the shortfall and lists a Niger-Delta-specific policy action.

| Domain | D | R | P | Re | Data anchor from Section 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jobs & livelihoods | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | ▪ 45–75% of local jobs tied to oil/gas.<br>▪ NGFCP could add 300,000 clean-gas jobs. |
| Land & resource rights | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | ▪ Customary owners rarely consulted on energy land deals.<br>▪ The Mambilla Dam would displace 100,000 people. |
| Environmental health | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | ▪ 4000 km$^2$ polluted: 881 spills 2019-21, 77% in Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta.<br>▪ UNEP links 16,000 infant deaths/yr to pollution.<br>▪ < 10% of HYPREP sites restored. |
| Clean-energy access | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | ▪ 92 million Nigerians lack power: 62% Delta households rely on diesel.<br>▪ Umuolu mini grid cut energy spend by 38%. |
| Gender & youth inclusion | 1 | 0 | 1 | - | ▪ Solar Sister chapters south of Port Harcourt < 10% of national total.<br>▪ 52,000 e-mobility jobs, but few in Delta. YEAC pilot in Umuolu created youth O&M jobs. |

*Scoring key 0 = absent, 1 = weak, 2 = moderate, 3 = strong*

**Reading the scores**

- **Distributive justice** is weakest in relation to livelihoods and clean energy, as most transition funds still bypass host communities.
- **Recognitional and procedural gaps** dominate land governance, with FPIC largely nominal.
- **Restorative justice** is the worst-performing pillar overall: huge pollution legacies contrast with meagre clean-up delivery.

| Domain | Niger-Delta-specific need | National Lever | Sub-national Lever |
|---|---|---|---|
| Livelihood security | Replace falling oil wages with clean-energy and agro-processing jobs. | Tie every NGFCP flare-capture or marginal-field licence to a 25% local hiring quota and a ring-fenced skills fund drawn from the Host-Community Development Trust (HCDT) levy. | Establish Green Skills Corps in each oil-producing state, run by TVET boards and funded from derivation revenue. |
| Land & resource governance | Protect customary tenure as solar farms, pipelines, and CCS facilities expand. | Embed statutory Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in the Petroleum Act's environmental regulations; require FPIC proof in all REA and NDPHC tenders. | Enact Community Land Protocols—co-signed by community development association, youth councils and traditional rulers—that register communal plots and publish compensation schedules. |
| Environmental remediation & health | Clean up 4000 $km^2$ of polluted land and waterways; cut flare-related infant deaths. | Create a Just-Transition Remediation Window in the national Climate Change Fund, capitalised with carbon-credit revenues and HCDT surpluses; set a three-year target to close all post-2015 spill sites. | Mandate state ministries of health to run pollution-linked disease surveillance and channel 10% of ecological funds to potable water kiosks powered by solar energy. |
| Affordable clean energy | End the diesel-generator trap; electrify riverine settlements. | Reserve 15% of ETP capital for mini-grid subsidies in oil-bearing LGAs and offer 0 % import duty on solar balance-of-system parts fabricated locally. | Launch a Delta Mini-Grid Accelerator with zero-interest connection loans and a social tariff for the first 50 kWh/month, managed by state electricity markets (enabled by the 2023 Electricity Act). |
| Gender & youth inclusion | Turn "green jobs" rhetoric into real pay packets for women and youth. | Insert a 40 % gender-and-youth quota in all national renewable-energy procurement frameworks; channel SE4ALL grants through women's savings groups. | Scale the YEAC solar-mini-grid model via revolving funds held by youth cooperatives; partner NYSC to place engineers as "clean-energy fellows" across host LGAs. |

### What success looks like by 2030

1. At least **15 % of all ETP and HCDT disbursements** flow directly to host-community green enterprises.
2. Every new energy project operates under a published, FPIC-compliant land protocol.
3. Pollution-linked infant mortality in core Delta LGAs falls by 50 % from 2019 levels.
4. Half a million households shift from diesel to mini-grid power.
5. Women and youth secure meaningful representation and full voting voice on all state energy boards.

A joint **Niger-Delta Just-Transition Scorecard**, issued annually by the National Council on Climate Change Secretariat and a regional CSO consortium, will keep federal and state actors accountable for hitting these justice-based milestones.

# 5. CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY-INCLUSIVE AND JUST ENERGY TRANSITIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

As Nigeria charts its energy-transition pathway, looking outward can illuminate what works and what should be avoided, especially when the goals are inclusion, justice, and economic resilience. Around the world, several countries have steered community-centred shifts away from fossil fuels through strong stakeholder dialogue, equitable financing, and targeted safety nets for at-risk groups. The brief case studies below showcase those experiences. They are not blueprints to be copied wholesale, but lenses through which Nigeria can distil principles and adapt them to its distinct political, economic and cultural terrain, so that any solution ultimately fits local realities rather than importing a one-size-fits-all model.

### 5.2 Germany's Just Transition in Coal Regions

**Background:**

Germany, through its Energiewende (Energy Transition) policy, has been systematically phasing out coal while supporting affected communities. In 2020, the German government passed a law to end coal use by 2038, ensuring a structured transition with socio-economic safeguards[70].

**Key Strategies:**

- **Community-Centred Decision-Making:** The government established a Coal Commission consisting of representatives from affected regions, industry, labor unions, environmental groups, and civil society to ensure broad participation in decision-making.
- **Economic Diversification:** Germany invested €40 billion in alternative industries, including renewable energy, technology parks, and green infrastructure projects in former coal-dependent regions.
- **Reskilling and Workforce Transition:** Programs were developed to train former coal workers in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and digital industries, ensuring continuity of employment.

**Lessons for Nigeria:**

- Establish a National Energy Transition Committee with community representation to ensure inclusive policymaking and decision-making.
- Create economic diversification zones in the Niger Delta and other extractive regions, with government support for green industries.
- Implement workforce reskilling programs to transition oil and gas workers into renewable energy jobs.

### 5.3 South Africa's Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP)

**Background:**

South Africa, a coal-dependent country, developed the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP) to phase out coal while prioritizing community welfare. This initiative is supported by an $8.5 billion financing package from international partners[71].

**Key Strategies:**

- **Blended Financing for Just Transition:** The JET-IP leveraged public-private partnerships and concessional loans to fund renewable energy projects and community-driven enterprises.
- **Decentralized Renewable Energy Development:** Local governments were empowered to establish off-grid solar and wind projects, ensuring direct community benefits.
- **Workforce Development and Employment Support[72]:**
  - The Eskom Youth Employment Service Programme offers on-the-job training to unemployed youth, equipping them with practical skills that enhance their employability not only within Eskom but also across multiple sectors.

- Participants benefit from mentorship opportunities where experienced professionals provide industry insights, career guidance, and support.
- This initiative helps bridge the skills gap in South Africa's energy sector while ensuring that young people, especially in coal-dependent regions, are equipped for emerging job opportunities in renewables.

- **Social Protection for Vulnerable Groups:** Affected communities received direct financial assistance, social welfare programs, and retraining initiatives for green jobs.

**Lessons for Nigeria:**

- Develop a Just Energy Transition Fund (JETF) with blended financing mechanisms to support renewable energy projects in extractive communities.
- Strengthen off-grid and mini-grid renewable solutions for rural electrification.
- Implement social protection policies such as temporary basic income or employment guarantees for workers displaced by the transition.
- Establish youth employment and skills development programs within Nigeria's energy sector to train young people in renewables, similar to Eskom's initiative.

### 5.4 Canada's Transition Support for Oil Sands Workers

**Background:**

Canada, particularly Alberta, has faced challenges transitioning away from its carbon-intensive oil sands industry. In response, the government launched programs to support workers and communities affected by declining fossil fuel jobs[73].

**Key Strategies:**

- Worker Transition Funds: The Canadian government established the Coal Workforce Transition Fund, providing compensation, relocation assistance, and training grants to displaced workers.
- Regional Economic Development Plans: The government collaborated with local industries to identify new growth sectors, such as clean technology and advanced manufacturing.
- Indigenous Community Engagement: Indigenous groups were given direct decision-making power in clean energy projects, ensuring cultural and economic benefits.

**Lessons for Nigeria:**

- Establish worker support programs to provide financial aid and retraining for oil and gas workers.
- Design regional transition plans in partnership with communities to identify new economic opportunities.
- Strengthen inclusion of host communities and indigenous groups in energy transition planning and project ownership.

### 5.5 Denmark's Community-Owned Renewable Energy Model

**Background:**

Denmark is successfully transitioning towards renewables, with over 50% of its electricity coming from wind and solar. A key factor in this success is the community-owned energy model that ensures local benefits[74].

Key Strategies:

- Community Ownership of Energy Projects: Danish law requires that at least 20% of new renewable energy projects be community-owned, enabling local populations to share in the benefits of energy production.
- Financial Incentives for Local Participation: The government offers low-interest loans and grants to communities for investing in wind and solar projects.
- Direct Benefits to Residents: Local households and businesses receive discounted electricity rates from nearby renewable projects.

Lessons for Nigeria:

- Introduce community-ownership models for solar farms, mini-grids, and wind projects in oil-producing states.
- Offer low-interest financing mechanisms to cooperatives and local enterprises for investing in clean energy.
- Develop policies that mandate profit-sharing agreements between renewable energy developers and host communities.

### 5.6 Key Insights from Case Studies

The case studies above highlight successful strategies for inclusive energy transitions that Nigeria can adapt. To ensure an equitable transition, Nigeria should focus on:

1. Institutionalizing participatory decision-making, such as creating a National Energy Transition Platform with community representation.
2. Investing in economic diversification by channelling funds into green industries, the digital economy, and energy efficiency programs.
3. Establishing a Just Energy Transition Fund (JETF) to blend public and private finance for renewable energy investments.
4. Strengthening social protection programs, including worker retraining, financial compensation, and relocation support for affected communities.
5. Promoting decentralized renewable energy solutions and community-owned projects to ensure local participation and benefits.

By integrating these best practices, Nigeria can avoid the socio-economic pitfalls of energy transitions and build an energy future that is inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven.

# 6. STAKEHOLDER-ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK FOR A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION IN THE NIGER DELTA

### 6.1 Why a Purpose-Built Framework Is Required

Sections 2 and 4 demonstrated that most national climate-energy instruments treat Niger Delta communities as "consulted" rather than "empowered." To close that justice gap, engagement must be systematic, data-driven, and anchored around livelihood security, land and resource governance, environmental remediation and health, affordable clean energy, and gender and youth inclusion. The framework below blends lessons from Germany's Coal Commission, South Africa's JET-IP and Denmark's community-ownership model with the governance deficits identified in Table 1 (low inclusion scores) and Table 3 (weak procedural and restorative justice).

### 6.2 Justice Principles that Anchor the Engagement Framework

The stakeholder architecture proposed in this brief is built around the four universally recognised pillars of energy justice. Each pillar answers a concrete question: "Who gets what?", "Whose story counts?", "Who sits at the table?", "Who fixes the damage?", and then converts that answer into a design rule for Nigeria's transition institutions.

| Justice Pillar | What it means in plain language | How it must show up in the Niger Delta engagement and policy |
|---|---|---|
| **Distributive** – 'Who gets what?' | Benefits (jobs, revenues, infrastructure) and burdens (pollution, job losses) must be shared fairly. | Finance rule: Set aside a fixed share of Energy Transition Plan (ETP) money, Host-Community Development Trust (HCDT) levies and state derivation funds for projects that are owned or co-owned by host communities—for example, a 30 % allocation to local clean-energy co-operatives and remediation SMEs. |
| **Recognitional** – 'Whose story counts?' | Policy must acknowledge the unique history, culture and daily realities of oil-bearing communities—especially women and youth. | Data rule: Every federal or state energy programme must publish a Niger-Delta impact baseline (including gender-disaggregated jobs, health, and land use) and update it annually, so that host-community experiences are visible and measurable. |
| **Procedural** – 'Who sits at the table?' | Communities must have real decision-making power, not just consultation. | Governance rule: Create Community Energy-Transition Committees (CETCs) in every oil-producing LGA and give them voting seats on ETP sector working groups, NERC tariff hearings and state electricity boards. Minutes and budgets are published online and on community noticeboards. |
| **Restorative** – 'Who fixes the damage?' | The transition must repair past harm—polluted land, lost livelihoods, health crises—before moving on. | Remediation rule: Establish a Just Transition Remediation Window within the national Climate Change Fund. At least 50 % of its disbursement goes to clean-up contracts and health-monitoring projects led by local women's and youth groups; no new energy licence is issued until legacy pollution at the site is under an approved remediation plan. |

*Source: Author*

## 6. STAKEHOLDER-ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK FOR A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION IN THE NIGER DELTA *continued*

### Why spell the principles out?

Experience from Germany's Coal Commission and South Africa's JET-IP shows that when justice rules are written into financing, data, governance, and remediation requirements upfront, they survive political turnover and budget cycles. By translating each pillar into a binding rule of money, information, seats and clean-up, Nigeria can ensure that the Niger-Delta engagement framework is not just a set of workshops, but a standing, enforceable system that guarantees fair outcomes throughout the transition.

### 6.3 Engagement Architecture

- **Community Energy-Transition Committees (CETCs).** Facilitate or recognise the establishment of one in every oil-producing community; 51 % elected residents, at least 40 % women and youths. Mandate: vet ESIA reports, co-design mini-grid tariffs, monitor remediation contracts.
- **National Energy-Transition Platform.** Co-chaired by the Energy Transition Office and a Niger-Delta CSO coalition, receives annual TJTP scorecards and can trigger policy revisions.
- **Just-Transition Dialogue Cycle.** Quarterly town halls rotating across host LGAs; minutes become legally admissible inputs for rulemaking.

### 6.4 Key Action Areas

| Domain | Immediate step | Lead actor | Justice pillar served |
|---|---|---|---|
| Finance | Immediate step<br>Launch a N200 billion Just-Transition Fund capitalised by 5% of federal oil royalties and concessional climate finance. | NSIA / Federal Ministry of Finance | Distributive & Restorative |
| Governance | Amend Petroleum Industry Act to require HCDTs to invest ≥ 30% of annual inflows in renewable-energy and remediation projects approved by CETCs. | National Assembly | Procedural |
| Skills & jobs | Create a Delta Green-Skills Corps; 10 000 trainees per year in solar O&M, modular LNG safety, climate-smart aquaculture. | NDE / ITF / private sector | Distributive |
| Land | Publish a Community Land Protocol template; FPIC becomes a licence pre-condition for all REA, NDPHC and NUPRC approvals. | FM Environment + State Houses of Assembly | Recognitional & Procedural |
| Remediation | Activate a Climate-Fund Remediation Window; 50% of disbursements reserved for women-led clean-up SMEs. | HYPREP / NOSDRA | Restorative |

### 6.5 Navigating Political Hurdles

Effective implementation of a justice-anchored energy transition requires not only sound policy design but also strategic engagement with entrenched interests. The table below summarizes the main political obstacles and offers targeted pathways to turn potential resistance into constructive collaboration.

| Political Hurdle | Key Resisting Actors / Interests | Strategic Navigation / Proposed Solution |
|---|---|---|
| **Resistance to Financial Control:** Opposition to ring-fencing N200 bn for a Just-Transition Fund and mandating HCDT allocations | Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Budget and Planning; Petroleum operators | ▪ Frame the Fund as a critical investment in social and political stability rather than a cost.<br>▪ Leverage international climate finance to incentivize domestic contributions (e.g., South Africa's JET-IP model).<br>▪ Showcase successful pilots (e.g., YEAC-Nigeria mini-grids) to demonstrate clear economic and social returns. |
| **Legislative & Bureaucratic Inertia:** Delays in PIA amendments and resistance to new mandates | National Assembly; key regulatory agencies | ▪ Forge a broad advocacy coalition—uniting CSOs, community leaders, and think tanks—modeled on Germany's Coal Commission.<br>▪ Secure Presidential Executive Orders to accelerate priority reforms.<br>▪ Encourage progressive state governments to pilot innovative measures under the Electricity Act 2023. |
| **Elite Capture & Co-optation:** Risk of powerful local elites monopolizing CETCs and diverting benefits | Entrenched local powerbrokers; political gatekeepers | ▪ Institutionalize legally binding governance rules for CETCs (e.g., Ring-fenced quotas and dedicated decision-making categories for women and youth).<br>▪ Mandate regular social audits and publish all disbursements on open-budget platforms.<br>▪ Empower independent grassroots organizations to lead monitoring and provide capacity-building support. |

By anticipating these hurdles and applying the corresponding strategies, stakeholders can forge the coalitions and build the confidence necessary to ensure justice-centered reforms are adopted, funded, and sustained.

# 7. CONCLUSION AND NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

The success of Nigeria's low-carbon journey will be judged less by gigawatts installed than by whether the communities whose social labor and political endurance have kept the nation's lights on for six decades emerge cleaner, safer, and more prosperous. The evidence in Sections 2–4 is unequivocal: policy intent exists, but delivery is weak, with justice in its procedural, recognition, distributive, and restoration dimensions being the missing link. By structurally including these communities in financing, governance, and remediation, as exemplified by Germany's Coal Commission, South Africa's JET-IP, Canada's worker funds, and Denmark's community ownership model, Nigeria can convert risk into opportunity.

### 7.1 Eight Priority Decisions for 2025 – 2026 and the Lead Government Actors

| Priority Action | Primary MDAs / public bodies accountable |
|---|---|
| 1. Convene a National Energy-Transition Platform with statutory host-community seats before the next ETP revision | ▪ National Council on Climate Change Secretariat (NCCCS) in partnership with the Energy Transition Office (ETO) |
| 2. Operationalise the Just-Transition Fund and release a first audited report within 18 months | ▪ Federal Ministry of Finance |
| 3. Issue a federal directive that links all flare-capture and marginal-field licences to local-hiring and clean-up quotas | ▪ Presidency (for Executive Order) |
| 4. Mandate annual TJTP scorecards as annexes to the national budget* | ▪ Federal Ministry of Budget & Economic Planning in partnership with the Budget Office of the Federation |
| 5. Pass a Community Land-Rights Bill that codifies Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for all energy projects | ▪ National Assembly (Senate & House of Representatives) |
| 6. Scale the Delta Mini-Grid Accelerator to electrify 100 riverine settlements by 2028 | ▪ Rural Electrification Agency (REA) in collaboration with the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) |
| 7. Launch a Delta Green-Skills Corps to retrain 50,000 workers displaced by IOC divestment | ▪ National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in collaboration with the State Skills-Acquisition Agencies |
| 8. Expand the Polluter-Pays Framework to cover historical liabilities and fund health surveillance | ▪ Federal Ministry of Environment, supported by National Oil Spill Detection & Response Agency (NOSDRA), Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP), Federal Ministry of Health |

### 7.2 Final Word

A just transition will not emerge organically from market forces or elite-filled conference halls. It must be negotiated in village squares, tracked in public budgets, and felt in cleaner air, new pay-packets, and restored creeks. The roadmap is now clear; what remains is political will. If federal ministries, state governments, investors, and communities work together, guided by the justice benchmarks outlined here, the Niger Delta can become a global showcase of community-owned clean power and ecological restoration. From this legacy, Nigeria can then guarantee ecosocial justice as new extractive regions emerge. But if this moment is squandered, the country risks a deepening carbon divide, green energy for urban centres and lingering poverty in its extractive heartlands. The moment for decisive, collective action is now.

# ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **CCECC** | China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation |
| **CETCs** | Community Energy Transition Committees |
| **CNEEC** | China National Electrical Equipment Corporation |
| **CNG** | Compressed Natural Gas |
| **CSOs** | Civil Society Organizations |
| **CSR** | Corporate Social Responsibility |
| **ETP** | Energy Transition Plan |
| **EV's** | Electric Vehicles |
| **GHG** | Greenhouse Gas |
| **GW** | Gigawatt |
| **HYPREP** | Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project |
| **HYPREP** | Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project |
| **ILO** | International Labour Organization |
| **IRENA** | International Renewable Energy Agency |
| **JET** | Just Energy Transition |
| **JETF** | Just Energy Transition Fund |
| **JET-IP** | Just Energy Transition Investment Plan |
| **LED** | Light-Emitting Diode |
| **LPG** | Liquefied Petroleum Gas |
| **MW,** | Megawatts |
| **NBPI** | Nigerian Biofuel Policy and Incentives |
| **NCCP** | National Climate Change Policy |
| **NDC** | Nationally Determined Contribution |
| **NEITI** | Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative |
| **NEP** | National Energy Policy |
| **NGFCP** | Nigeria's Gas Flare Commercialization Program |
| **NOSDRA** | National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency |
| **NREEEP** | National Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy |
| **PIA** | Petroleum Industry Act |
| **PPPs** | Public-Private Partnerships |
| **REAP** | Renewable Electricity Action Programme |
| **REDD+** | Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation |
| **REMP** | Renewable Energy Master Plan |
| **REMP** | Renewable Energy Master Plan |
| **REPG** | Renewable Electricity Policy Guidelines |
| **S4C** | Spaces For Change |
| **SDG 7** | Sustainable Development Goals 7 |
| **SEIA** | Social And Environmental Impact Assessments |
| **UNEP** | United Nations Environment Programme |
| **USD** | United State Dollars |
| **YEAC-Nigeria** | Youth And Environmental Advocacy Centre (YEAC-Nigeria) |

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