



How Can Participation Deliver Just Energy Transitions?

Insights from Civic Participatory Institutions
in South Africa and Nigeria

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data
ALIGN	Advancing Land-based Investment Governance
ANC	African National Congress
APRI	Africa Policy Research Institute
CBO	Community-based Organization
CEPA	United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration
COSATU	South African Trade Unions
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECN	Energy Commission of Nigeria
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
ETP	Energy Transition Plan
GEAPP	Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet
IDOS	German Institute of Development and Sustainability
IEA	International Energy Agency
ILO	International Labor Organization
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
IRP	Integrated Resource Plan
JET	Just Energy Transition
JET-IP	Just Energy Transition Investment Plan
JETP	Just Energy Transition Partnership
JTF	Just Transition Framework
JTR	Just Transition Roadmap
MEC	Minerals-energy Complex
MNC	Multinational Corporation

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NCCC	National Council on Climate Change
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labor Council
NEITI	Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
NEMP	National Energy Master Plan
NEP	National Energy Policy
NERC	Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission
NESG	Nigerian Economic Summit Group
NESREA	National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency
NIEP	National Integrated Electricity Policy
NIRP	National Integrated Resource Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NIRER	Nigerian Renewable Energy Roundtable
NRGI	Natural Resource Governance Institute
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCC	Presidential Climate Commission
PIA	Petroleum Industry Act
REIPPPP	Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Program
SDZ	Skills Development Zone
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP GPCG	United Nations Development Programme Global Policy Centre for Governance
UNECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Summary

This report, developed by the UNDP Global Policy Centre for Governance in collaboration with UNDP Country Offices in Nigeria and South Africa, explores **the role of civic participation in delivering justice within energy transition plans (ETPs) in Nigeria and South Africa.**

The study aims to understand how civic participatory institutions function in practice and whether they contribute to equitable outcomes in energy transitions. Recognizing that energy transitions are not only technical but deeply political and social processes, **the report discusses the opportunities and challenges that participatory platforms bring to energy transition planning and implementation.** It aims to inform policymakers on how inclusive governance can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of energy reforms.

The report employs a three-stage analytical framework combining political economy analysis with the UN's Principles of Effective Governance. First, it introduces a typology of civic participatory institutions based on their scope (i.e., whether participation is promoted for policymaking, monitoring, or both) and breadth (i.e., if participation is broad or narrow in terms of actors involved in the process) to analytically classify participatory platforms in each country. Second, it assesses the gap between formal mandates and actual practice. Third, it assesses the impact of civic participation on achieving just outcomes by comparing how energy transition plans in each country address varying civic demands. Empirical data were gathered through a comprehensive desk review of legal and policy documents and academic literature, and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders.

Nigeria and South Africa are showing a growing commitment to establishing people-centered processes to guide their energy transitions, including the adoption of new participatory institutions as well as strong political will. Yet, while both countries have formally committed to inclusive governance in their energy transitions, **challenges persist in translating participation into just outcomes.**

In **Nigeria**, the ETP was developed under the leadership of the Office of the Vice President and involved numerous technical experts, ministries, departments, and agencies. International consultants were also relied upon to play a role in providing technical assistance and modeling capabilities for the complex ETP plans. While some CSOs have been consulted, the general sentiment among many advocacy groups is that the process was not as inclusive as it could have been, particularly regarding achieving the “just transition” elements. Analytically, the report categorizes the Nigerian ETP process within the *Strategic Policy Circle* model

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(i.e., characterized by its narrow stakeholder breadth and an orientation toward centralized policymaking).

South Africa's process, led by the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC), enabled meaningful engagement from labor unions, civil society organizations, and local communities in shaping the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP). However, concerns remain around implementation, monitoring, and the uneven influence of stakeholders. Analytically, it is classified as an *Open Policy Lab* model (i.e., characterized by its broad stakeholder breadth oriented toward policymaking).

The report concludes that achieving a just energy transition requires co-production: sustained, empowered collaboration between state and non-state actors across the entire policy cycle. To do so, the report introduces **entry points at the institutional, political, and technical levels.** It recommends institutional reforms to embed continuous participation, political strategies to broaden engagement and reduce power asymmetries, and technical innovations to democratize knowledge and make technical content accessible.

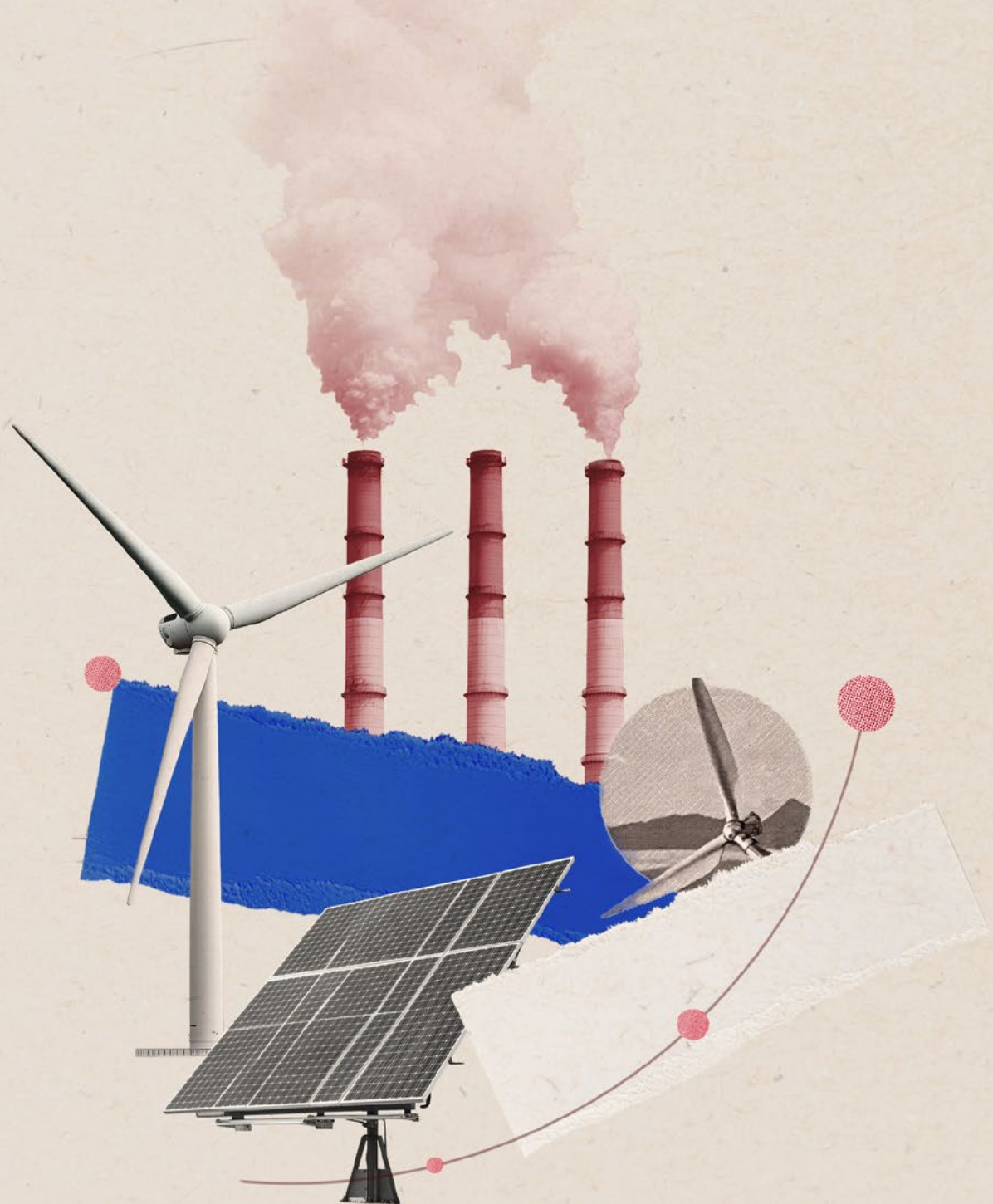
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Democracy has to be judged not just by the institutions that formally exist but by the extent to which different voices from diverse sections of the people can actually be heard.

(Sen, 2011)

01 Introduction



Energy transitions are crucial in tackling the climate crisis, as they substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, the positive externalities associated with energy transitions go beyond a cut in emissions. Renewable energy sources improve energy security and resilience (IRENA, 2022), while also resulting in cleaner air and significant health benefits (Huang et al., 2025). The most cited benefit is job creation (World Economic Forum, 2022). However, policy debates often highlight the economic benefits of energy transitions, while frequently overlooking the collateral social tensions and governance¹ challenges that accompany these changes. If not carefully managed, transitions risk worsening national and global disparities. These disparities may increase the pushback against decarbonization, thereby hindering efforts to meet climate commitments (Fairbrother et al., 2019). **Energy transitions, therefore, require governments to navigate complex social, environmental, economic, and political dynamics, ensuring that the benefits of green energy transformations reach broad segments of society.**

Understanding the distribution of costs and benefits of energy transitions and how to address them effectively brings the discussion of justice into play. The concept of a “just transition”² emerged in the 1980s within the US trade union movement to protect workers affected by environmental regulations (UNDP GPCG, 2023). Over the past decade, the concept has gained global momentum, particularly in the context of climate action. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has played a significant role in promoting just transition principles, which were highlighted in the 2012 Rio+20 outcome document (United Nations, 2012) and reinforced in the Paris Agreement of 2015. These principles aim to balance economic, environmental, and social aspects of climate action, ensuring that *no one is left behind* in the transition to a sustainable future.

Participation and community engagement are increasingly recognized in both policy and academic circles as necessary conditions for strengthening energy governance and achieving just energy transitions (e.g., UNDP, 2022; 2023). The 10 Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (UN, 1992) emphasizes procedural rights (such as access to information, public participation, and access to justice) as essential to transparent, inclusive, and accountable environmental governance. Indeed, discussions on justice within environmental and natural resource issues have evolved significantly, shifting from a narrow focus primarily concerned with distributive justice (i.e., who bears the economic costs and benefits) to broader considerations that emphasize procedural justice (Newell et al., 2024). This perspective emphasizes the importance of inclusive processes in achieving just outcomes, suggesting that considering all relevant facts, views, and opinions in decision-making will ensure a fair distribution of costs and benefits (de Vries et al., 2024).

1 By governance, the report understands the systems, processes, and institutions through which decisions are made and authority is exercised in a society. It encompasses the mechanisms by which power is distributed and accountability is ensured, involving both formal structures (e.g., governments and laws) and informal practices (such as norms and networks). In the context of just energy transitions, governance refers to the frameworks, institutions, and processes that guide how decisions are made, implemented, and monitored to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in changing energy systems.

2 When justice in energy transitions is discussed in the document, the report follows an inductive approach: it centers the discussion around what people and organizations think “just” means in their contexts and evaluate the extent to which energy transition plans reflect or not such demands.

Despite the widespread recognition that civic participation plays a crucial role in these transitions, research on the governance and political economy dimensions of just energy transitions remains limited. This gap likely stems from two main reasons. First, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis on how participatory institutions work on energy transition processes, particularly in the Global South. Second, discussions around justice in energy transitions tend to focus on economic outcomes (i.e., distributive justice), while overlooking other dimensions, such as recognition and procedural justice.

From a procedural point of view, while there has been a greater acknowledgment among practitioners of the need for more inclusive policymaking processes, studies examining civil society's institutional involvement in policy deliberations within just energy transitions are relatively few. The literature review conducted for this report shows that only two papers (Newell et al., 2024; Radtke & Renn, 2024) have conducted an in-depth review of civic institutional participatory experiences in energy transitions. Yet, their lessons tend to be primarily informed by experiences in the Global North, which do not necessarily capture the specificities of countries in the Global South. This gap is even more pronounced in the context of Africa, where there is even less information available on more institutionalized participatory processes.

From an outcome perspective, the concept of justice in energy transition has historically been linked to economic redistribution. However, theoretical and empirical research on environmental justice emphasizes the need to integrate multiple dimensions of justice, including procedural justice and recognition justice. Expanding the discussion to include a broader concept of justice is important for two reasons. First, it enables a deeper bottom-up understanding of the demands and tensions surrounding energy transitions, allowing government officials to design more comprehensive policies that lead to effective energy transformations. Second, particularly in discussions of procedural justice, it helps evaluate the implications that energy transitions have on the political and civic realms. There is a strong assumption that energy transitions may foster more inclusive and open civic spaces, given the role of new participatory institutions that encourage public input in policymaking. Yet, this relationship is far from guaranteed (OECD, 2024), since participatory institutions can also perpetuate inequalities due to racial and economic barriers and can be manipulated for political gain by powerful interests.

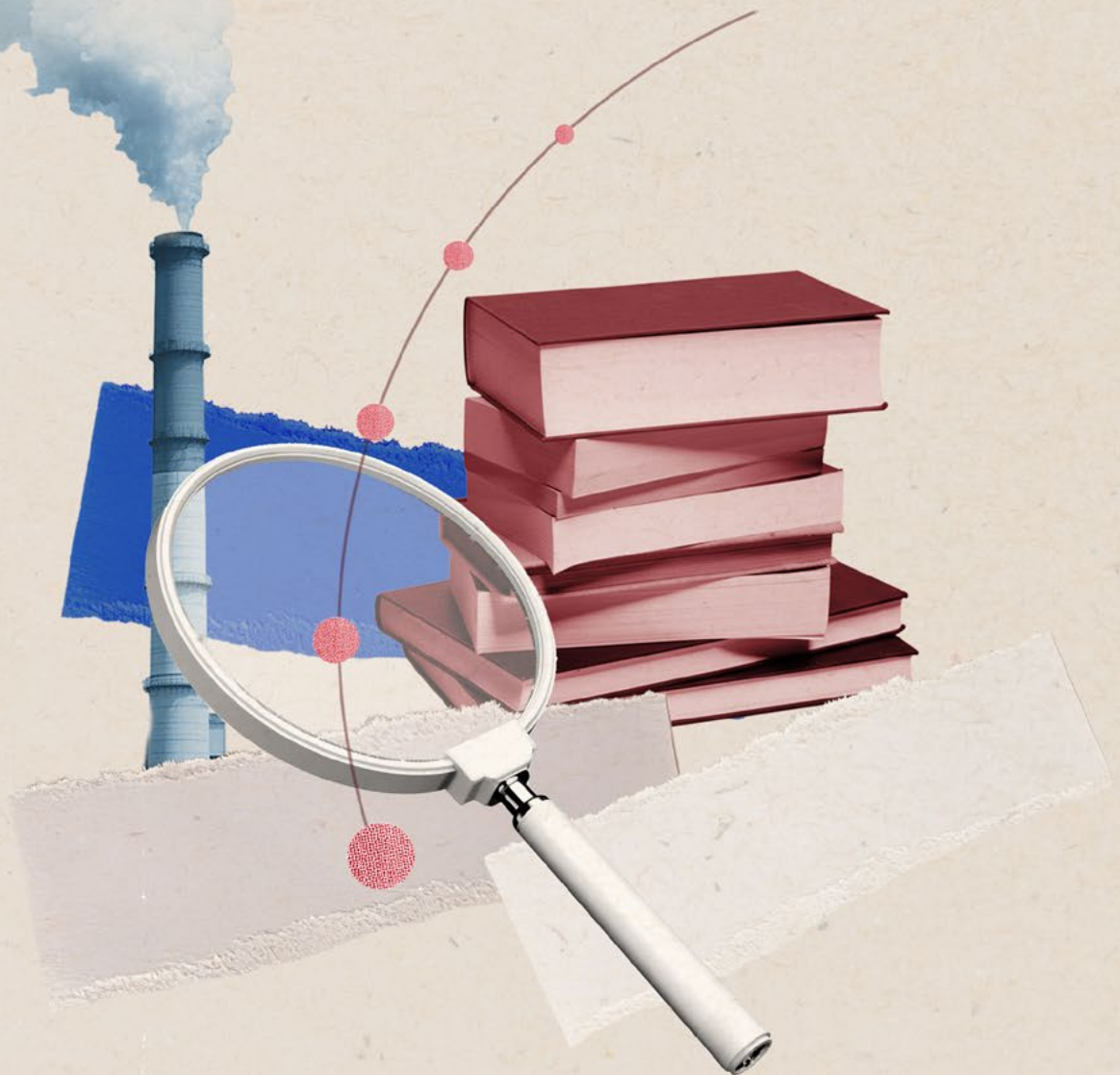
How is civic participation shaping and being shaped by just energy transition processes? There are UN-wide efforts to understand the challenges societies face in undertaking a fair, green transition (the ‘what’). Comparatively little attention has so far been given to the governance dimension—i.e., on how to address identified challenges (the ‘how’). In this report, UNDP’s Global Policy Centre for Governance (GPCG), in collaboration with UNDP country offices in Nigeria and South Africa, aims to help bridge this knowledge gap by examining how countries such as South Africa and Nigeria ensure the inclusiveness of their just energy transition processes, and under what circumstances these processes also yield inclusive and just outcomes. The report focuses on *state-led civic participatory institutions* (i.e., institutionally organized and state-sanctioned participatory platforms) (Falleti and Cunial, 2018) to examine how participation unfolds in practice and the extent to which participatory platforms lead to just outcomes. The report is based on an extensive desk review and is complemented by interviews with key stakeholders in each country, including government officials, community leaders, activists, CSO representatives, and representatives from academia.³

3 All reasonable precautions have been taken by UNDP to verify the information contained in this publication. The report is grounded in a rigorous methodology that integrates an extensive desk review and stakeholder interviews. However, the analysis is subject to limitations, notably potential perceptual biases among stakeholders and inconsistencies in cross-country data availability. Readers are advised to interpret the findings with caution, keeping these constraints in mind.

02

Literature Review

**What we (do not) know about
Civic Participation in Energy Transitions**



Civic participation is promoted as a necessary component of effective governance. Civic engagement has been closely associated with social sectors like health, education, and public safety (e.g., Altschuler & Corrales, 2012; Abers & Keck, 2013; Falletti & Cunial, 2019; González, 2016; Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2020). Recently, its scope expanded to include the energy sector, grounded in the recognition of inclusive energy policymaking for the success of sustainable transitions. Concepts such as *energy democracy* (Szulecki & Overland, 2020) and *energy citizenship* (Silvast & Valkenburg, 2023) emphasize the agency of citizens in shaping energy futures.

Despite the growing recognition of civic participation as a critical component of energy transitions, research on the topic remains relatively limited. This section summarizes the main findings and gaps in current research, drawing on a systematic literature review of 90 scholarly articles published in English from 2010 to 2024 that engage with the intersection of civic participation and environmental politics. The review was based on an extensive search of databases, including Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, JStor, and various library catalogs. The literature review highlights five key trends: (1) a limited focus on energy-specific processes within broader environmental governance research; (2) a geographic and conceptual bias toward Global North experiences; (3) a neglect of the justice implications of civic participation in energy transitions; (4) insufficient attention to how formal participatory mechanisms translate into meaningful influence; and (5) a lack of typologies that distinguish forms and stages of participation across the policy cycle.

First, many studies focus on broader themes of environmental governance or sustainability without concentrating on energy-specific processes. A significant portion of the literature examines areas such as climate adaptation or cross-sectoral governance. For example, several studies focus on urban planning, disaster risk management, or local resilience strategies (Le & Tran, 2023; Wamsler et al., 2020), where participatory efforts are geared toward adaptive capacity rather than shaping energy transitions. Articles focusing on energy governance (e.g., APRI, 2024; Holler, Bernier, Roberts, & Robinson, 2020; Sarzynski, 2015) remain a minority.

Second, there is a notable lack of comparative research on state-led civic participation in energy transitions throughout the Global South, especially in African contexts.⁴ Nearly two-thirds (62) of the 90 articles focus on case studies from the Global North, revealing a pronounced asymmetry in scholarly attention. Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly underrepresented, with only a handful of studies addressing participatory dynamics (Chu, Anguelovski, & Carmin, 2016; Dissanayaka, 2023; Tsoeu-Ntokoane, Kali, & Lemaire, 2022). This imbalance is notable, especially considering the role the Global South plays in advancing the global energy transition.

⁴ This section deliberately excludes research on energy transitions in Nigeria and South Africa, as these cases serve as key inputs for the analytical and empirical discussions.

How participation is described also varies significantly. Case studies from the Global North often examine participatory innovations such as climate assemblies (Colli, 2021; Lewis et al., 2023), deliberative democracy (Boswell et al., 2022; Ejsing, Veng, & Papazu, 2023), and the emergence of *energy citizenship* (Sierro & Blumer, 2024; Wahlund & Palm, 2022). These studies typically present citizens as empowered co-producers of energy, embedded in institutional frameworks and distributed governance models (Beauchamp & Walsh, 2021; Broska et al., 2022). Even when critical, they largely depict participatory governance as both desirable and operationally feasible (Galván Labrador & Zografos, 2023).

In contrast, literature from the Global South often focuses on the challenges of inclusion, structural inequalities, and the limited impact of participatory processes on actual policymaking (Averchenkova et al., 2019; Donges et al., 2020; Holler et al., 2020). It is often described as tokenistic; mandated in policy but constrained by elite capture, weak institutional responsiveness, or limited civic infrastructure (Holler et al., 2020; Sarzynski, 2015; Huang, Castán Broto, & Westman, 2020).

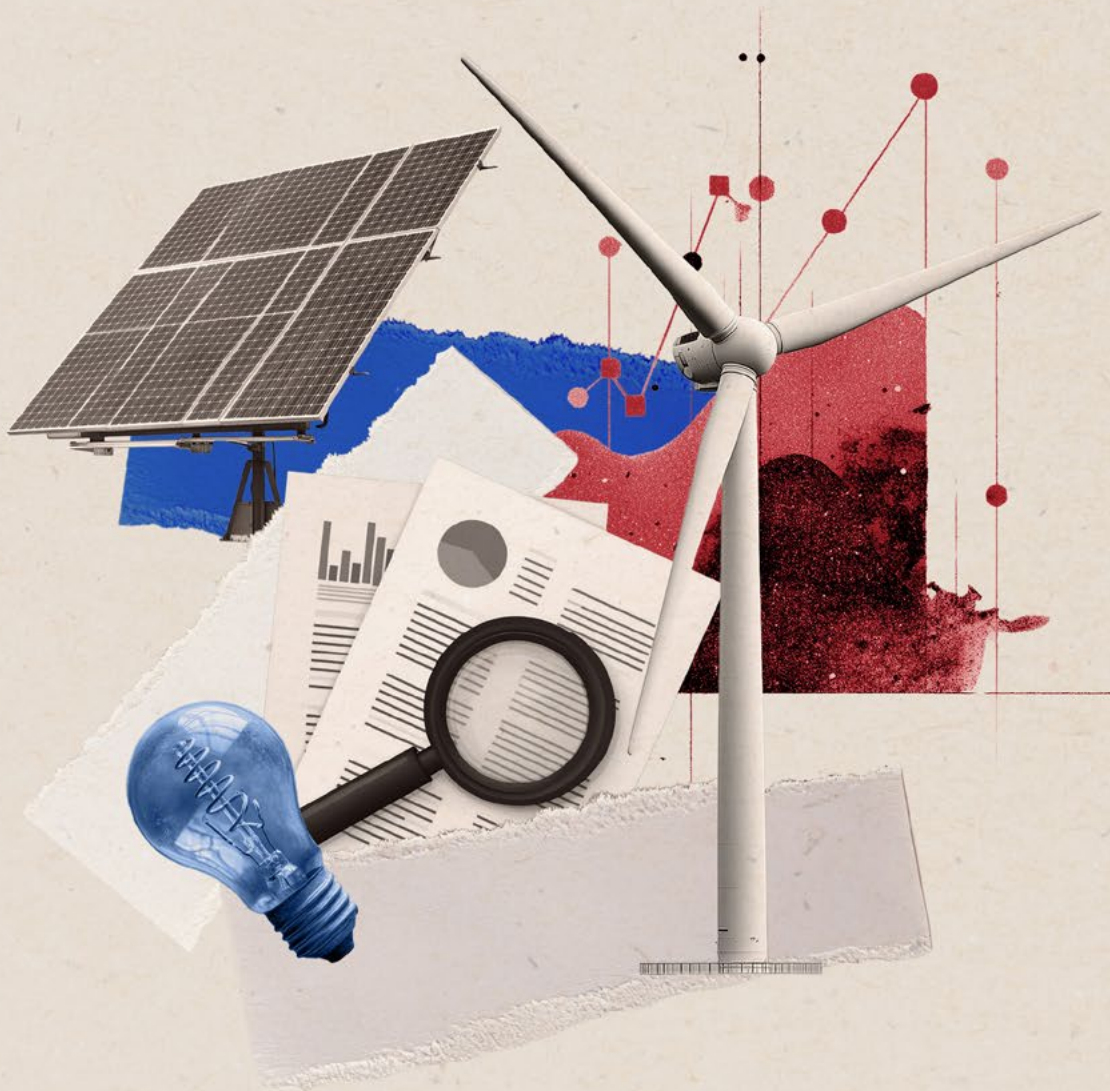
Third, only a small portion of the literature explicitly addresses the justice outcomes of civic participation, typically focusing on its potential economic consequences. While distributive justice outcomes, such as the fairness of cost and benefit sharing, are discussed (Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment & ALIGN, 2023; Hoppe & de Vries, 2019; Lawrence et al., 2019; Mohideen & Kolantharaj, 2024; Chilvers & Longhurst, 2016; Koomson & Koomson, 2024), the focus tends to remain on the potential of participation to produce more equitable futures rather than on concrete redistributive results that have already been achieved. Moreover, the literature often overlooks other types of outcomes that civic participation may lead to, including recognition and restorative justice, as well as procedural justice.

Fourth, few studies critically examine how formal participatory mechanisms are translated into meaningful civic engagement in practice. Much of the literature focuses on institutional participation forms like consultations and hearings, but neglects assessing the actual functioning of these institutions: who participates, how they engage, and if and how their input influences policy. Although informal modes of participation (such as grassroots mobilization or activist pressure) are occasionally addressed, they are typically discussed as existing in a separate sphere, disconnected from formal governance channels (Irwin et al., 2022; Kong, Chen, & Gou, 2023). As a result, the literature leaves unanswered whether *de jure* mechanisms of participation truly result in *de facto* empowerment or merely reproduce symbolic inclusion.

Finally, there is a notable absence of typologies or conceptual frameworks that systematically categorize forms of state-led civic participation in energy transitions. While many studies describe *when* participation occurs within the policy cycle, few analytically distinguish *how* citizens are involved, masking important variations in participatory practice and the ways they influence policy outcomes. The literature observes a concentration of formal participatory mechanisms during agenda-setting and design, followed by a decline during implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (e.g., Mohideen & Kolantharaj, 2024; Dissanayaka, 2023; Foss, 2018; Elstun et al., 2021), raising critical questions about the function of participation in encompassing co-implementation, oversight, or accountability.

03

Analytical Framework



This report analyzes civic participation in the ongoing processes of South Africa and Nigeria’s energy transitions. The UNDP GPCG collaborated with UNDP Country Offices in South Africa and Nigeria to promote reflections on meaningful engagement and identify lessons for enhancing participatory institutions that foster just energy transitions. The specific goals of this research were:

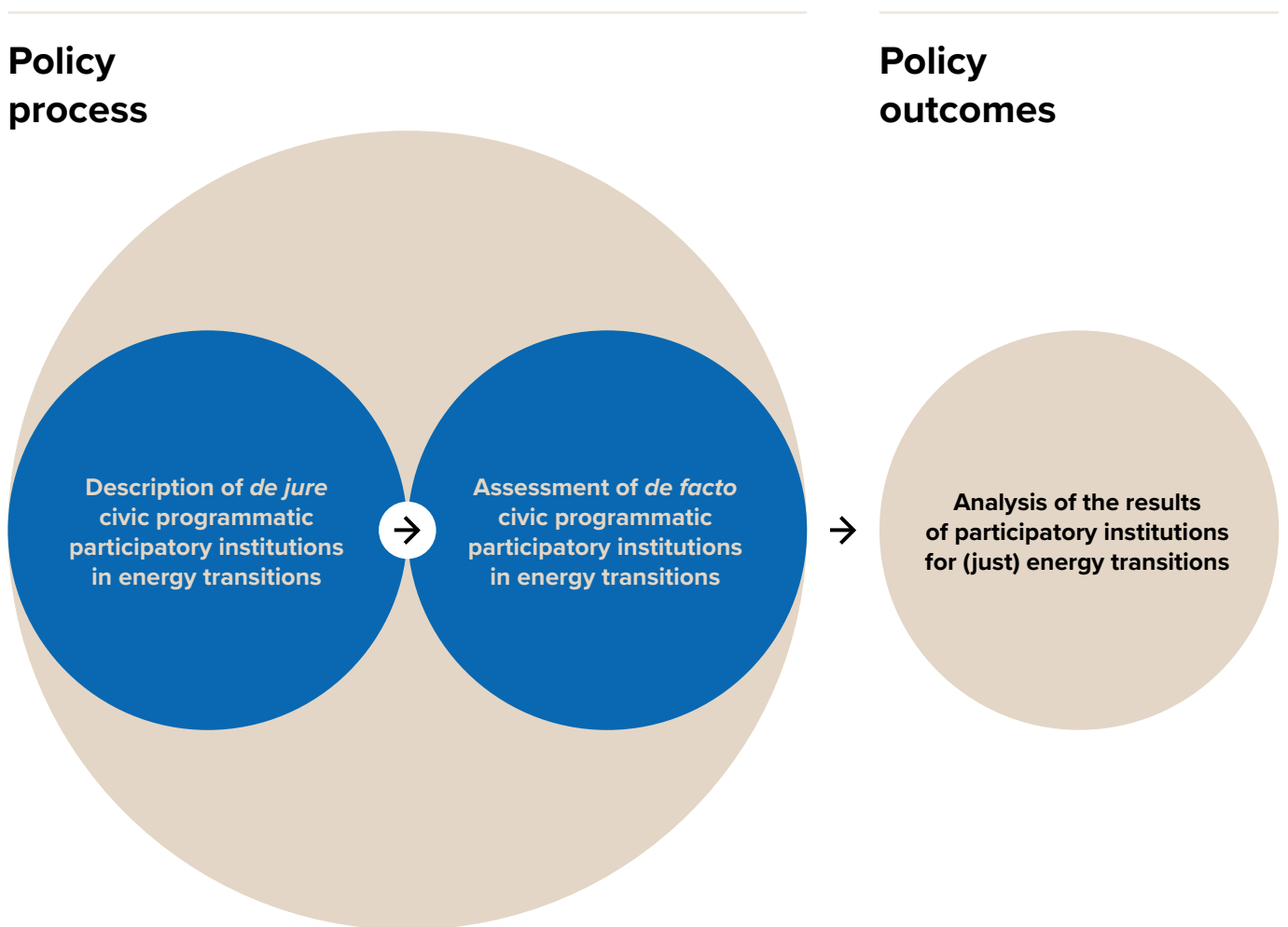
- To identify the formal and informal governance structures that shape civic participation in energy transition policymaking in South Africa and Nigeria.
- To examine the key stakeholders involved and the specific roles and activities they perform within these governance frameworks.
- To examine the influence of different actors in shaping just energy transition outcomes and evaluate how governance institutions enable or constrain participation for distinct groups.
- To evaluate the extent to which civic participation produces inclusive and just outcomes.
- To discuss governance innovations that can enhance effective civic participation in energy transition processes.

Tackling the challenges of energy transitions is not merely a technical issue. Political and power dynamics significantly shape development pathways, influenced by local histories, expectations, values, incentives, attitudes, beliefs, and institutional structures. To explore these complexities, the report adopts an integrated approach. **Political economy analysis** sheds light on how political and institutional contexts (including power dynamics, stakeholder interests, incentives, and formal and informal constraints in decision-making) established the underlying factors that either facilitate or hinder inclusive transitions. To complement this, the research draws on the **Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development**, developed by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) and endorsed by UN ECOSOC in 2018, to provide a deeper understanding of how governance quality influences equitable outcomes.

By integrating these frameworks, the report aims to move beyond conventional impact assessments (“what is happening”) or normative approaches (“what should happen”) toward understanding the complexity of transformation (“why this is [not] happening and how change can occur”).

Analytically, the report adopts a three-step approach to examine how civic participation shapes (and is shaped by) just energy transitions, distinguishing between policy processes and policy outcomes (Figure 1). The analysis begins by identifying *civic programmatic participatory institutions* using a typology based on policy stage (from policymaking to monitoring) and degree of inclusiveness (who participates). It then assesses how these institutions function in practice, analyzing both formal enablers and constraints as well as informal dynamics. The final step focuses on policy outcomes, examining how people and organizations define a “just” transition in their context and assessing to what extent these “demands” are reflected and translated into concrete, actionable measures.

Figure 1. Assessing Civic Participation in Energy Transitions: A Three-Step Analysis



Assessing Civic Participation in Energy Transitions: A Three-Step Framework Analysis

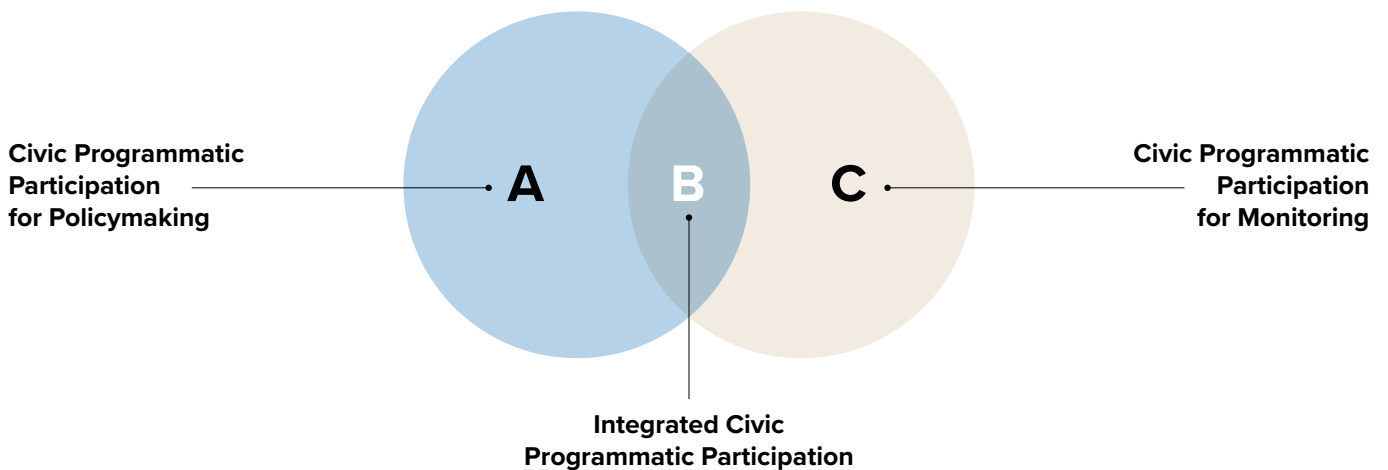
This report examines experiences of civic *programmatic participation* in the policy processes leading to *Energy Transition Plans* in South Africa and Nigeria. When it refers to civic, it uses it in a broad sense, as suggested by UNDP and UNDESA (2020), and includes all non-government stakeholders that have an interest in energy transitions, such as individuals, civil society actors, youth and women organizations, indigenous peoples, movements and networks, academia, the private sector, and trade unions. It also adopts the proposal made by Falleti and Cunial (2018: 4), defining **programmatic participation** as “institutionally organized and state-sanctioned individual or collective behavior that influences or attempts to influence the management or distribution of public goods or services”. In defining *programmatic participation* as a voluntary act (endorsed, promoted, or acknowledged by the state), **this report focuses on formal top-down participatory institutions rather than bottom-up initiatives.** This decision is based on two grounds. Firstly, it offers greater **feasibility**, allowing for a more focused and manageable analysis and making it easier to compare outcomes across different contexts. Secondly, and **theoretically**, energy transitions require coordinated efforts for which governments have the primary authority and capacity to oversee a national-level transition that aligns with other national goals.

The analysis begins by **describing the main formal (i.e., *de jure*) institutions that promote civic programmatic participation in the context of energy transitions in Nigeria and South Africa.** Heuristically, the report proposes a typology⁵ based on **two dimensions.** The first dimension describes **the goal(s) and moment(s) in the policymaking process in which participation takes place (i.e., *scope*).** It distinguishes between *programmatic participation for policymaking* and *programmatic participation for monitoring* (Falleti and Cunial, 2018). In the former, stakeholders engage in agenda-setting, planning, and design, acting as co-creators for the identification of priorities and formulation of objectives. The latter takes place during implementation, with stakeholders assuming oversight roles for monitoring execution and holding authorities accountable; advocating for transparency and compliance, rather than influencing initial policy decisions. Importantly, these are not necessarily exclusive, and institutions can promote participation across the whole policy process (i.e., agenda setting, design, planning, execution, and monitoring). Thereby, this report includes an additional ideal type labeled as *integrated programmatic participation* (Figure 2).

⁵ Ideal types are used as heuristic tools to simplify complex realities, and in practice, it is common to observe combinations of their features rather than clear-cut examples.

The second dimension considers **the level of openness of such processes to different stakeholders (i.e., breadth)**. In asking who is allowed to participate and under what conditions, it distinguishes between broad participation (processes accessible to all interested parties regardless of their organizational status or specific affiliations) and narrow participation (processes limited to specific stakeholders who are formally recognized and meet certain criteria; generally benefiting more established organizations). Based on these two dimensions, six ideal types of civic programmatic participatory institutions can be identified, as shown in Figure 3 and described in greater depth in the Annex.

Figure 2. Ideal types of civic programmatic participation based on role of actors in the policy process



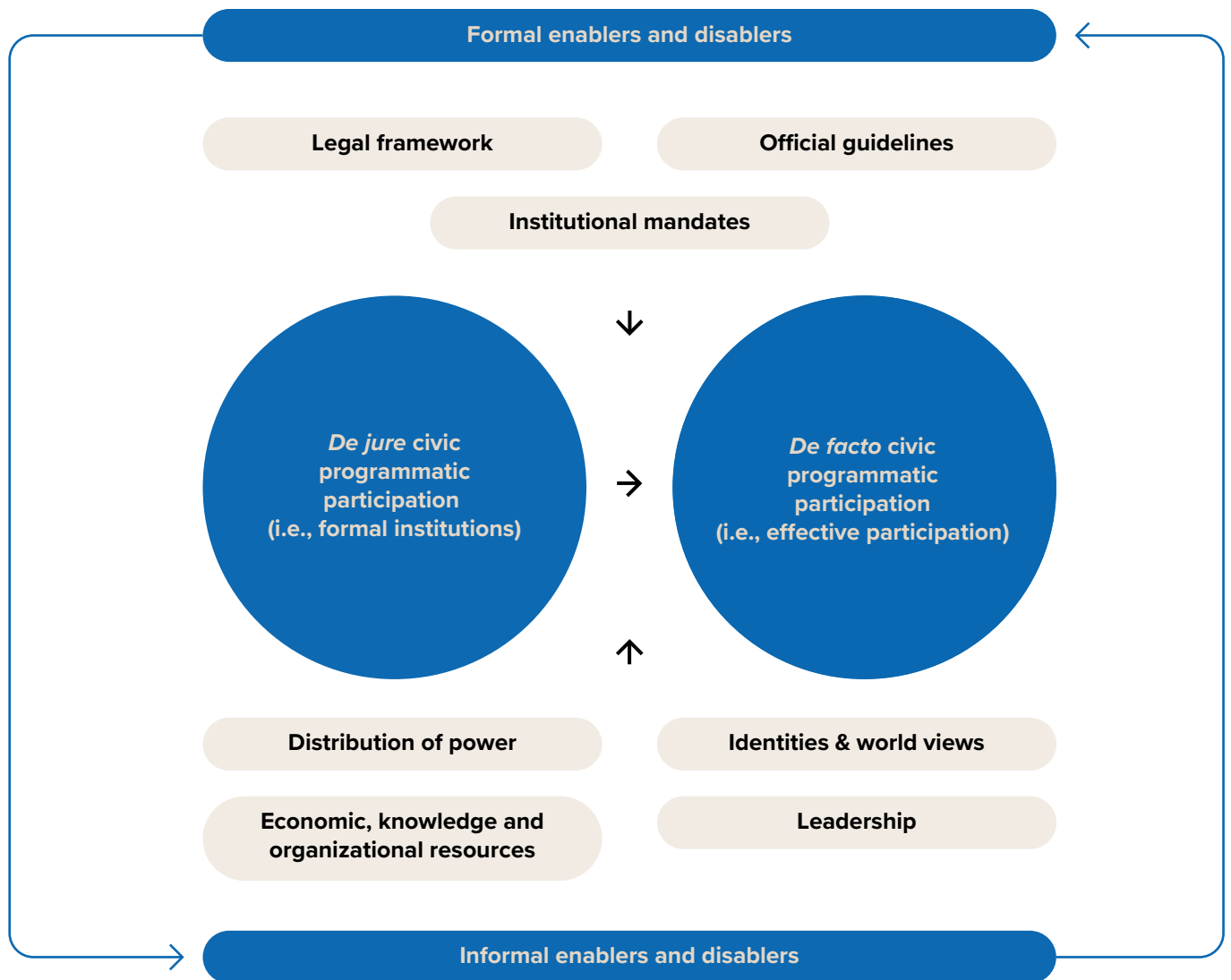
Source: adapted and expanded from Falletti and Cunial (2018).

Figure 3. Ideal types of civic programmatic participatory institutions

Breadth / Scope	Policymaking	Monitoring	Integrated
Broad	Open Policy Labs	Open Monitoring Platforms	Open Governance Hubs
Narrow	Strategic Policy Circles	Expert Monitoring Panels	Core Governance Networks

In the second stage of the analytical framework, **the analysis moves beyond the descriptions of participatory institutions to examine the extent to which these institutions are translated into *de facto* participatory experiences** (Figure 4). It critically assesses the formal and informal factors that either enable or disable effective participation and thus evaluates the practical challenges and opportunities for enhancing participatory governance.

Figure 4. Enablers and Disablers of Civic Programmatic Participation



Formal enablers and disablers include legal frameworks, institutional mandates, and official guidelines that define who can participate, how participation is structured, and how decisions are made within participatory institutions. **Informal enablers and disablers** relate to factors beyond written rules that influence the participation of stakeholders. They speak to the distribution of power among stakeholders as well as the economic, knowledge, and organizational resources available to participants.

The third stage of the analysis involves examining the outcomes of civic programmatic participation in relation to just energy transitions. Rather than applying a predefined concept of justice, the report identifies the various demands of civic stakeholders in each national context with attention to three interrelated dimensions of justice:

- Distributive justice: Who benefits and who bears the costs?
- Recognition justice: Whose voices, identities, and experiences are acknowledged?
- Procedural justice: Who is included in decision-making, and on what terms?

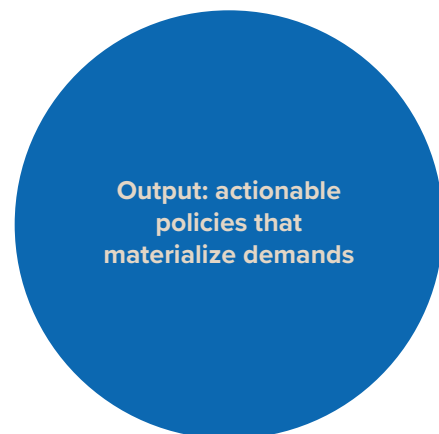
It then assesses the extent to which these justice demands are reflected in the national energy transition plans of Nigeria and South Africa, and if they are translated into concrete, actionable policy measures.

Figure 5. From participation to JET outcomes

Stakeholders



Energy Transition Plans



How Can Participation Deliver Just Energy Transitions?

Insights from Civic Participatory Institutions in South Africa and Nigeria

To practically undertake this three-step assessment, the research was grounded in a **desk review** of official laws, policies in each country, alongside existing research on civic participation and community engagement in the energy transitions.⁶ Complementarily, **semi-structured interviews** were conducted with key stakeholders (including government officials, community leaders, activists, CSOs representatives, and representatives from academia) to provide additional context, validate findings from the desk review, and offer perspectives on how institutions function in practice. The analysis of documents and interviews was guided by a clear set of research questions provided in the Annex.

⁶ To ensure reliability, the coding of documents was carried out manually by two researchers to validate each other's work.

Introduction to Cases

This report compares the policymaking processes around ETPs in Nigeria and South Africa, focusing on civic participation experiences in each case. While these two countries differ in their political systems, institutional arrangements, and cultural contexts, they share the pursuit of green transformation in the energy sector.



Nigeria

Nigeria is a federal country (Wig et al., 2015) that has made significant strides toward democratic consolidation in the early 2000s, laying the foundation for participatory governance. While recent years have presented challenges (including pressures on civil society), these highlight critical areas for renewed commitment to democratic principles and inclusive civic engagement (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022; Nord et al., 2024). Nigeria is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, with over 250 ethnic and linguistic groups, and experiences extreme levels of conflict, particularly in oil-producing regions (ACLEDD, 2024), where land dispossession remains a contentious issue.

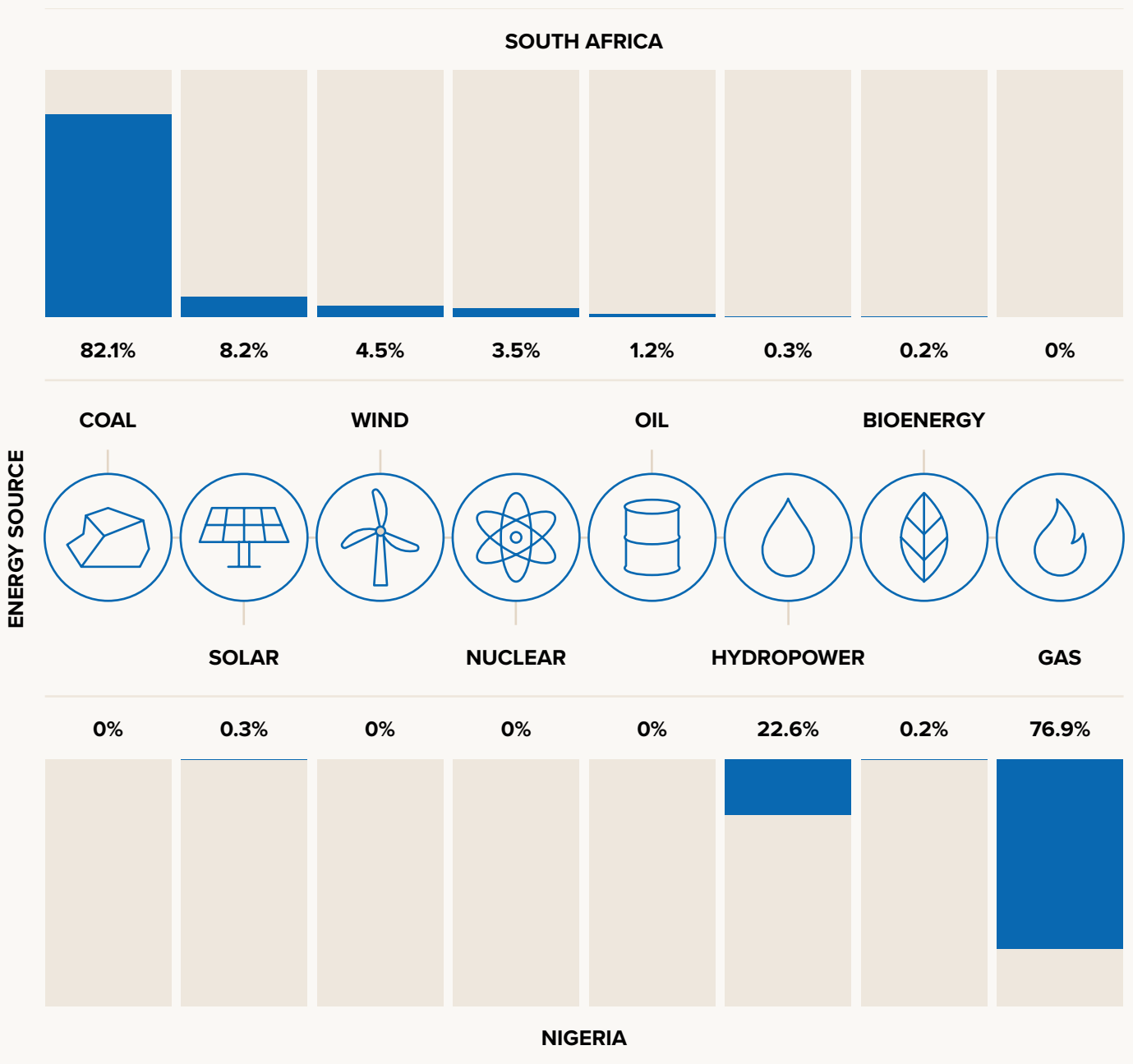


South Africa

South Africa is a unitary state, recognized globally for its commitment to human rights since the end of apartheid in 1994. Post-apartheid legacies, underpinned by the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1996, demonstrate the country's efforts to confront historical injustices (Ofusori, 2024) and continue to shape contemporary demands for recognition, including in the context of energy transitions. Despite this, it continues to face ongoing challenges related to governance, transparency, institutional accountability, and gender-based violence (Human Rights Watch, 2025; Nord et al., 2024; Ofusori, 2024). Deep racial and ethnic divisions persist and stark economic inequalities overlap with racial and regional divisions. Unemployment remains a pressing issue (Hunter, 2025), and conflict levels remain moderate (ACLEDD, 2024), underscoring a complex but relatively stable sociopolitical landscape.

Nigeria and South Africa share similarities in their energy sectors, particularly in their continued dependence on fossil fuels: coal in South Africa and oil and gas in Nigeria. In both countries, over 75% of electricity generation is derived from fossil fuel sources (Figure 6), and Nigeria’s economy is also highly dependent on oil and gas exports.

Figure 6. Share of electricity production by source, Nigeria and South Africa, 2024



Source: Our World in Data (2024)

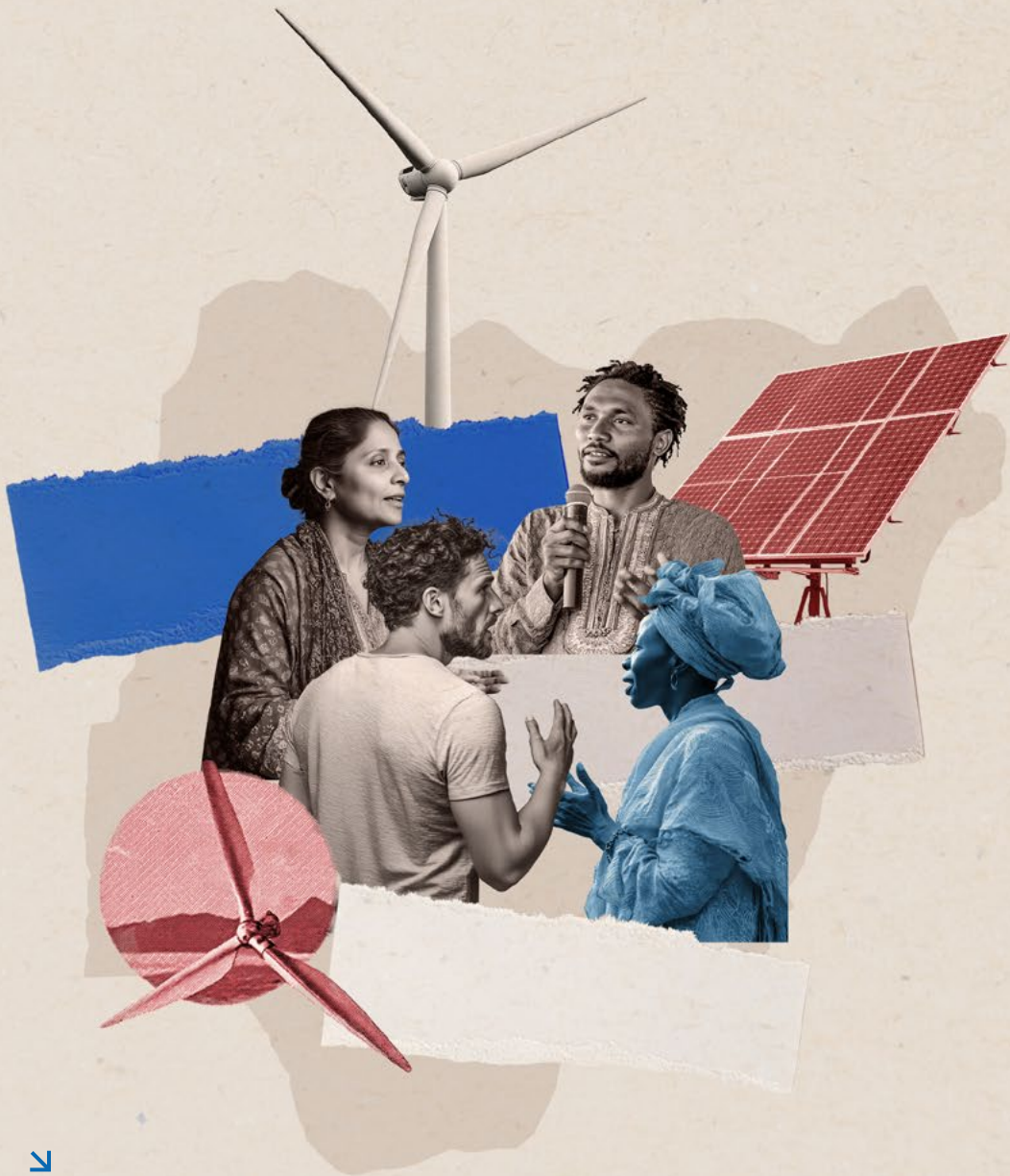
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Access to electricity is also uneven with over 90% of South Africans having access, compared to just 55% in Nigeria (as of 2020) (World Bank, 2025). In Nigeria, electricity insecurity, marked by frequent power outages, continues to hinder health services and economic development. This insecurity is further exacerbated by concerns over potential unrest in some oil-producing areas such as the Niger Delta, which often disrupts energy production (Page, 2016). These contrasts, as discussed later in the document, shape distinct interpretations of energy justice among stakeholders in each country.

Both nations have expressed strong commitments to decarbonizing their energy systems, with South Africa targeting net-zero emissions by 2050 and Nigeria by 2060. To achieve such commitments, both countries have formally committed to inclusive governance in their energy transitions, leading to the Nigerian Energy Transition Plan (ETP) and South African Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP).

04 Civic Participation in Energy Transitions: Nigeria



Background: Nigeria's Energy Landscape

Nigeria's energy transition is linked to its historic reliance on oil and gas. Commercial extraction of fossil fuels started in the early 20th century and sped up after the 1960s under a highly centralized governance system motivated by public fiscal interests and corporate incentives (Edomah, 2021). Currently, hydrocarbons remain a core pillar of the Nigerian economy. In 2024, crude petroleum and natural gas contributed about 5.7% of real GDP, with an average output ranging from 1.4 million to 1.8 million barrels per day (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

The governance of the energy sector has been historically concentrated in national executive and judicial arenas, as well as among multinational corporations (MNCs). In contrast, civic engagement, particularly in the Niger Delta, has often emerged through protests, such as the 2012 fuel subsidy crisis (Agbonifo, 2023; McCulloch, 2021). In the extractive sector, formal participation has been largely orchestrated by MNCs to reduce tension with local communities (Zalik, 2004) or through Senate committee hearings, with civic actors relegated to passive rather than decision-making roles (Ekhaton, 2021). Historically, the outcome has been intense social conflict and extensive ecological harm, which civil society actors now point to as warning lessons for Nigeria's low-carbon future (Craig, 2022).

In 2024, crude petroleum and natural gas contributed about 5.7% of real GDP, with an average output ranging from 1.4 million to 1.8 million barrels per day.

(National Bureau of Statistics, 2024)

Institutional Foundations for Nigeria's Energy Transition

Nigeria's pledge at COP26 to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060 signaled a decisive policy shift from hydrocarbons toward low-carbon development. In the four years since the announcement, the Federal Government has launched several initiatives and public bodies that collectively form the institutional architecture for the energy transition.

Within these initiatives, the ETP stands out as the main pillar. The ETP was approved by the Federal Executive Council in 2022 and translates the 2060 pledge into quantified sectoral targets and financing pathways (Energy Transition Office of Nigeria, 2024). With an estimated \$1.9 trillion investment need, the plan highlights the urgency of attracting foreign capital and ensuring strong governance. Coordinated by a federal working group chaired by Vice President Osinbajo, it provides a multilayered institutional framework that, on paper, embeds civic consultation more deeply than any previous energy regime in Nigerian history. Notably, the ETP has been informed through numerous consultations held between its initial launch in 2022 and the 2024 ETP revision, pointing to a significant departure from past top-down approaches to more bottom-up energy governance in Nigeria. Initial ETP development was characterized by a centralized approach but there is need for increased inclusivity in subsequent implementation and ETP updates to ensure comprehensive just transition considerations. The challenge to achieving optimal engagement can also be attributed to the complexity of Nigeria's federal government structure—comprising one federal government, 36 states grouped into 6 geopolitical zones, 1 Federal Capital Territory and over 774 local government authorities. This forms a vast labyrinth. When incorporating the multi-layered governance structures, such as the senate at the national and regional levels, alongside influential royal kingdoms that continue to exert influence within certain communities, it becomes evident that substantial resources are required to support effective consultations and to define appropriate frameworks for justified, bottom-up engagement.

The ETP is complemented by several legislative and policy measures:

- The **Climate Change Act 2021** created the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC) and a Climate Change Fund, embedding sectoral reforms within a low-carbon mandate (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021).

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- Under the **National Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0** published in 2025, Nigeria has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 29% by 2030 and 32% by 2035, relative to 2018 levels, setting the nation firmly on course to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.
- The **Energy Transition Office**, established in 2022 under the Vice President, leads ETP implementation, international engagement, and climate finance mobilization (Energy Transition Office of Nigeria, 2024).
- The **Revised National Energy Policy (NEP)** and **National Energy Master Plan (NEMP)**, both approved in 2022, provide strategic and operational frameworks for energy access, efficiency, and sustainability (Energy Commission of Nigeria, 2022b). These plans align diverse actors and are central to executing the ETP.
- The **Electricity Act 2023** decentralizes power governance to states, promotes private sector participation, and mandates stakeholder consultation in policy design, though it omits clear roles for local governments (Udoma & Osagie, 2023; Goldsmiths LLP, 2023; Kaze et al., 2025).
- Similarly, the **Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) of 2021** promotes procedural justice through Host Community Development Trusts, though implementation has faced definitional and capacity challenges (Ugochukwu & Samson, 2024).
- The **National Integrated Electricity Policy (NIEP)**, approved in 2025, establishes a unified framework for electricity planning, access, and market development, aligning federal and state-level efforts with Nigeria's energy transition goals.
- The **National Integrated Resource Plan (NIRP)**, also approved in 2025, complements the NIEP by providing a long-term, least-cost roadmap for electricity generation, transmission, and distribution, incorporating renewable energy targets and demand projections.
- The **Just Transition Roadmap (JTR)**, currently under development by the National Council on Climate Change in collaboration with the ILO, UNDP, and UNIDO, focuses on capacity building, skills development, and job creation for workers affected by the shift from carbon-intensive industries (ILO, 2025).
- **Public bodies also enhance civic engagement in the energy sector.** The Energy Commission of Nigeria, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), and the Renewable Energy Programme facilitate consultations and clean energy initiatives, while platforms like the Nigerian Renewable Energy Roundtable (NiRER) and private-sector conferences like the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) advocate for inclusive energy policy (Shari et al., 2023).

Mapping of Actors and their Demands of Justice

Nigeria's energy transition is rooted in its oil and gas dependence, with regional disparities in resource access. Land access issues in oil regions have shaped socio-economic conditions. Ongoing electricity access problems affect millions nationwide. These historical and current challenges influence stakeholder interests and the political economy of Nigeria's energy transition.

In Nigeria, various stakeholders with specific interests in the energy sector aim to influence the country's transition path. **At the federal level**, the national government, represented by the federal ministries of Power and Environment, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) and the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), is leading the ETP and is primarily interested in enhancing Nigeria's climate credibility, expanding energy access, and securing foreign funding. **Governments in the Niger Delta region**,⁷ which have access to oil and gas, have a strong interest in maintaining the operation of fossil fuel power plants, given that they are a core source of employment for local constituencies. Given the federal structure of Nigeria as well as the decentralization process that started with the Electricity Act of 2023, subnational governments have a great influence in the process (Agbonifo, 2023; Ekhator, 2021).

The Nigerian **private sector**, notably **fossil fuel industries** and associated organizations, both domestic (e.g., Nigerian Association of Petroleum Explorationists) and international (e.g., Shell, Chevron), seek to maintain their licenses to operate, as well as maintain the share of fossil fuel sources (particularly natural gas) in the electricity market. **Renewable energy developers** are also increasingly trying to enter the market, but they face significant challenges due to the dominance of oil companies and regulatory hurdles. Among these, a major issue is the fact that the sector continues to receive preferential support, including high subsidies that hinder the entry of renewables, which are mainly viewed as expensive because of their initial start-up costs

⁷ The Niger Delta region is formed by the states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers.

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Within the Nigerian **civil society**, stakeholders can be differentiated based on their linkages to the oil and gas industries. **Host communities in oil-producing regions** demand jobs, land rights and environmental safeguards, redress for past injustices, and local development. These communities are often marginalized and lack access to decision-making processes, which exacerbates their grievances (Spaces for Change, 2022a; Jia, 2024). The historical exploitation and environmental degradation in these regions have led to deep mistrust of the government and oil companies, making inclusive participation in energy transition processes crucial for addressing their concerns.

Youth and women are also critical stakeholders in Nigeria's energy transition. Youth, who are disproportionately affected by unemployment, seek opportunities for inclusion and empowerment in the emerging green economy. Women, while naturally implicated by issues of energy access, have historically faced cultural exclusion, limiting their engagement in the energy sector. Both groups demand greater involvement in the government's action plans to address climate change and ensure a just transition (George-Ikoli & Chinery, 2024).

CSOs, CBOs, and research institutes advocate for justice, accountability, and inclusion in the energy transition process. These actors emphasize the need for restorative justice and procedural fairness, aiming to rectify past injustices and ensure transparent and inclusive decision-making. Despite their efforts, CSOs and academics often lack formal authority, which constrains their ability to influence policy outcomes (George-Ikoli & Chinery, 2024).

Altogether, **the expectations of civic actors in relation to Nigeria's ETP can be framed around the complementary notions of distributive, procedural, and recognition justice**, illustrated in Table 1 below.

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Table 1. Mapping the civic space in Nigerian Energy Transition

JUSTICE NOTION	DEMAND	ACTOR(S) LEADING THE DEMAND
Distributive Justice (i.e., distribution of benefits and costs)	Minimize the decline in gas and oil production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fossil fuel industries and associated organizations, both domestic and international – Host communities in oil-producing regions
	Facilitate the entrance of renewable energy sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Renewable energy producers
	Provide alternative sustainable livelihoods and targeted job programmes for workers and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Host communities in oil-producing regions – Youth – Women
	Undertake comprehensive environmental cleanup and restoration in affected regions, funded through the transition's financing mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Host communities in oil-producing regions – CSOs – Academic sector
	Guarantee that host communities receive direct economic benefits, e.g. equity stakes or revenue-sharing, in renewable energy projects located in their localities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Host communities in oil-producing regions
Procedural Justice (i.e., involvement in policy process)	Create permanent multistakeholder mechanisms supported by widespread training of civil society organizations to build technical capacity and ensure continuous dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Host communities in oil-producing regions – Youth – Women – CSOs – Academic sector
	Embed participation in policy and public-finance cycles by providing user-friendly budget information at approval and audit stages and by holding inclusive public hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Host communities in oil-producing regions – Youth – Women – CSOs – Academic sector
Recognitional Justice (i.e., acknowledgment of identities and legacies)	Integrate human-rights principles of inclusion, transparency, and environmental accountability and safeguards, while explicitly recognizing gender-differentiated and state-specific climate impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Host communities in oil-producing regions – Youth – Women – CSOs – Academic sector
	Acknowledge the historical environmental burden on oil-producing communities and affirm their right to remediation and fair treatment in the transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Host communities in oil-producing regions

De Facto Civic Participation in the Nigeria's ETP

The Nigerian Government recognizes the significance of integrating civic engagement into its policies, acknowledging the importance of formally incorporating this approach within the framework of the ETP. In its launch of the NEMP, the Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN) anchored under the Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology messaging around the contributions of civil society was clear, including the statement that “the National Energy Policy and National Energy Master Plan are the result of extensive consultation and collaboration among various stakeholders” (Energy Commission of Nigeria, 2024).

While the Nigerian Government has set up institutions for energy transition, focusing on engaging non-state actors and citizens, their participatory practices vary. Based on the information that is publicly available, the participatory approach adopted under **the ETP most closely resembles the concept of *Strategic Policy Circle***, in which selective groups of experts or key stakeholders are engaged to plan and design policies (i.e., with a focus on strategic decision-making with limited public involvement, and a reliance on specialized knowledge and expertise). Critics have noted that despite its progressive goals, the planning and implementation remain elitist and lack participatory mechanisms that incorporate the lived experiences of fossil-fuel-dependent communities (Spaces for Change, 2022a).

Formally, **there are significant limitations in relation to how civic participation is entrenched in official energy policy and planning mandates.** Notably, in the NEMP, the role of civil society in guiding future policy implementation and or monitoring is almost entirely absent. The only official statement that could infer civic engagement is the recognition of “other stakeholders” in supporting “the nation’s energy planning process” (Energy Commission of Nigeria, 2022a: 200).

Similarly, **there is little available evidence that the ETP was itself developed through participatory mechanisms that included the voice of civil society and citizenry.** The planning process was **dominated by federal technocrats and international consultants** (Akintay, 2023) notably from McKinsey (Hege et al., 2022), as well as the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Global NGOs SEforALL and the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) (SEforALL, n.d.), with views usually considered distant from local actors and communities (Spaces for Change, 2023).

There is much greater evidence about consultations held after the formal launch of the ETP in 2022, and prior to its revision in 2024. This includes the National Dialogue on Energy Transition (August 2022) (NRGI, 2022), a private sec-

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tor roundtable held in February 2023, a dialogue on “Women in Energy” held in May, 2023, a data stakeholder session held in July 2023, an ETP Workshop with CSOs and CBOs held in May 2024 (Nigeria Energy Transition Office, 2023) and a 2024 “stakeholder consultation with public and private sector participants” held in October 2024 to review and refine the original plan (SEforAll, n.d.). Importantly, reporting of these provides little evidence regarding which organizations/individuals have formally participated and does not demonstrate the extent to which the revised ETP reflected the opinions of participants.

For reported ETP consultations, **participants mainly played a passive role**, primarily being informed about key items, with limited mechanisms for public feedback, grievance redress, or decision-making (Onukwugha, 2024; Spaces for Change, 2022b). The 2022 National Dialogue on Energy Transition occurred after the ETP was launched, limiting scope changes. Within it, the breakout session on “securing a just, inclusive energy transition” received little reporting, but acknowledged that the transition should emphasize equity, inclusion, and job security (BudgIT Foundation, 2022: 20). In other cases, ETP events are framed as “courses” with the implication being one-way not two-way information exchanges, where the NREGI can learn from community and civil society representatives.

Based on publicly available information, **participation in ETP tends to be limited and primarily involves highly technical or senior “civic representatives”** (e.g., energy experts, heads of NGOs, etc.), who are likely to have been selected for consultation. For example, for the Women in Energy Dialogue event, the participants were described as “a rich pool of seasoned female professionals and women groups from within the energy and finance sector” (Nigeria Energy Transition Office, 2023). While gender representatives, senior experts, and professionals may have important perspectives, these are likely to differ from those of women in communities who are most impacted.

This raises **concerns** among CSOs and civic actors in Nigeria about whether communities most vulnerable to the energy transition, like extractive-dependent communities, are adequately prioritized. Institutions like Spaces for Change note that marginalized groups, especially in oil-rich communities affected by energy transition, are underrepresented in national discourses on decarbonization (Spaces for Change, 2023). While informal discussions may happen locally within specific projects, there is no evidence supporting this.

The National Energy Policy and National Energy Master Plan are the result of extensive consultation and collaboration among various stakeholders.

(Energy Commission of Nigeria, 2024)

Assessing real inclusiveness of energy transition processes in Nigeria: Does civic participation translate into just outcomes?

The top-down and exclusive participatory process in Nigeria led to a national strategy that does not address the full spectrum of demands around justice described in the previous pages. The plan includes elements related to distributive justice, such as compensating job losses and promoting local industries, but fails to address procedural and restorative justice, dimensions that stakeholders have stressed as crucial in previous sections. Table 2 below maps the extent to which the ETP reflects the different types of demands made by civic actors.

Table 2. Assessment of Justice and Demands within ETP in Nigeria

DEMAND AND JUSTICE CATEGORY	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE / EXTENT ADDRESSED
Recognitional Justice: Whose voices, identities, and experiences are acknowledged?	
Integrate human-rights principles while explicitly recognizing gender-differentiated and state-specific climate impacts.	Partial acknowledgment in policy, limited in implementation. Nigeria’s climate governance has begun to incorporate these principles on paper. For instance, the Climate Change Act creates a council that includes civil society, women, youth and other vulnerable groups, reflecting a commitment to inclusion. The Council chaired by the President has however never met, a major weakness to an otherwise progressive edit. However, the ETP itself makes little explicit mention of gender-differentiated or region-specific impacts.
Acknowledge the historical environmental burden on oil-producing communities their right to remediation and fair treatment in the transition.	Largely unaddressed in the official plan. There is recognition of the Niger Delta’s legacy, but concrete commitments under the ETP are limited. NEITI’s Executive Secretary has stressed that the transition is an opportunity to “heal our environment [and] restore dignity to host communities”, acknowledging past injustices. Yet, the ETP contains no explicit provision to remediate historical oil damage.

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DEMAND AND JUSTICE CATEGORY

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE / EXTENT ADDRESSED

Procedural Justice: Who is included in decision-making, and on what terms?

Create permanent multistakeholder mechanisms supported by training of CSOs to build technical capacity and ensure continuous dialogue.

No permanent mechanism yet; engagement is ad hoc. The government has an Energy Transition Working Group (ETWG), but there is no formal platform for continuous civil society participation. Several of the multi-stakeholder dialogues have been convened by NGOs and partners (e.g., by Spaces for Change) rather than by the government. While civil society continues to push for an institutionalized working group and capacity-building support, the government has not established one to date.

Embed participation in public-finance through transparent budgeting at approval and audit stages and by holding inclusive public hearings.

Not yet fulfilled – budget processes remain top-down. Public participation in budgeting remains weak. Nigeria does publish budget and audit reports, but there are few specific provisions for citizens to scrutinize or influence how climate and transition funds are spent (International Budget Partnership, 2023). Civic actors have noted that the ETP's massive \$1.9 trillion funding proposal lacks transparency or detail, on funding sources and how the green economy will create jobs.

Distributive Justice: Who benefits and who bears the costs?

Minimize the decline in gas and oil production.

Addressed. The ETP addresses the imperative to minimize the decline in gas and oil production, albeit through recognition of natural gas as a critical “transition fuel.” In this framework, gas is not only preserved but strategically leveraged to support key sectors such as power generation and clean cooking, ensuring continued investment and utilization during the shift toward net-zero emissions.

Facilitate the entrance of renewable energy sources.

Acknowledged as a key objective of the ETP. The ETP explicitly prioritizes the integration of renewable energy for achieving a cost-effective and resilient energy transition. By promoting greater interconnection across electricity, transport, heating, and cooling sectors, the plan aims to enhance system-wide efficiency and flexibility and dramatic scale-up in renewable energy deployment—including, according to the ETP, an increase from just 5% of the energy mix in 2020 to a projected 82% by 2050.

Provide alternative sustainable livelihoods and targeted job programs for workers and communities

Acknowledged as a challenge, but little action on targeted programs. The government recognizes the risk of job losses and promises a net gain of 340,000 jobs by 2030 and 840,000 by 2060 through new clean energy industries. While there is no detailed just transition plan for fossil fuel workers or dependent communities, the transition is aided by the definition of ‘gas’ as a renewable source allowing for a more gradual phasing out. Concrete programs for re-skilling oil workers or compensation for lost oil income are still absent.

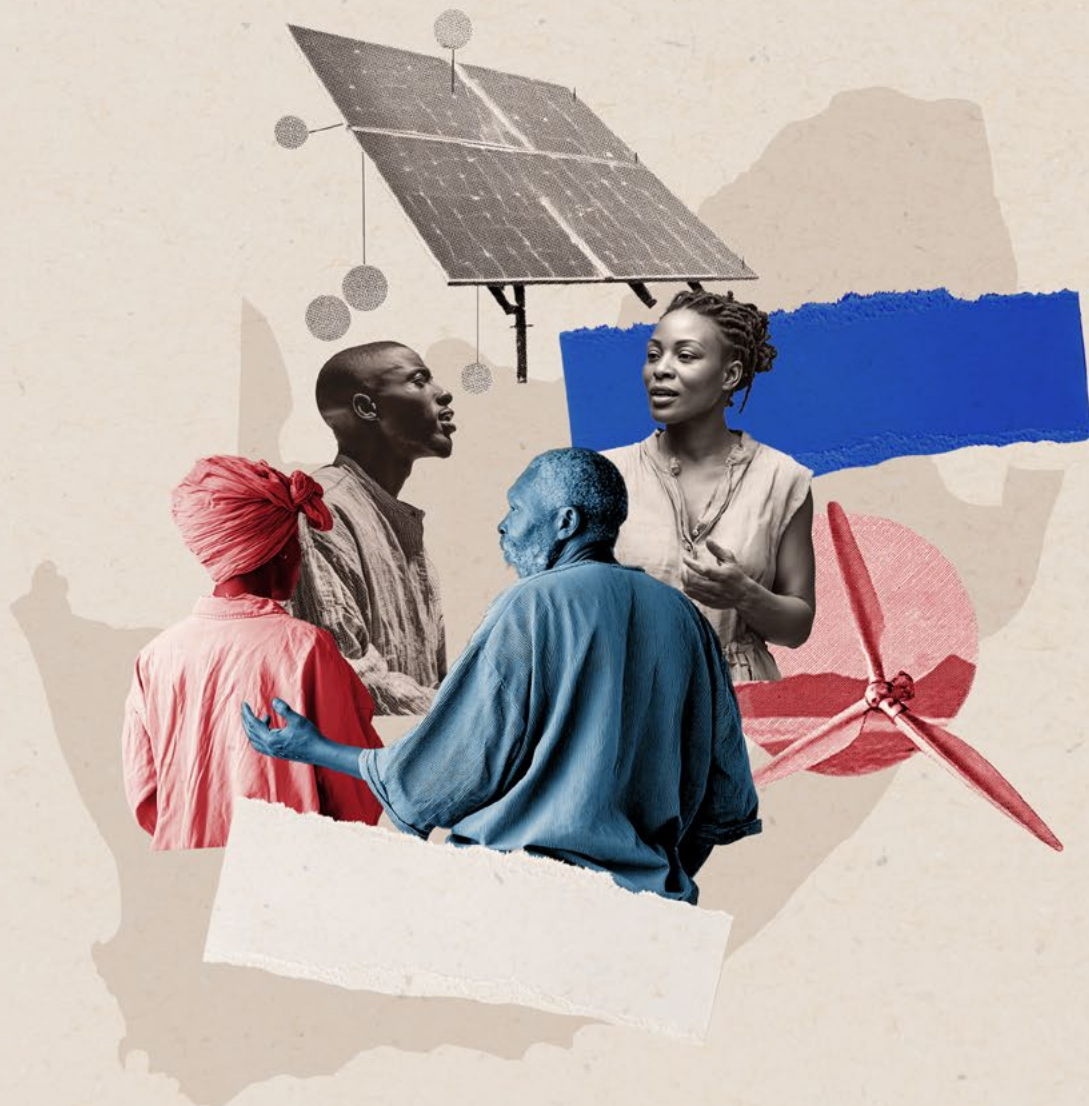
Undertake comprehensive environmental cleanup and restoration in affected regions

Largely unaddressed in transition funding. Thus far, Nigeria's energy transition efforts have not included a robust plan (or funding) for environmental remediation in the Niger Delta or other polluted regions. Cleanup projects exist (e.g. HYPREP) but these are limited in scope and funded separately from the ETP. The ETP's \$1.9 trillion financing framework is geared toward new energy infrastructure and contains no dedicated provision for environmental restoration.

Guarantee that host communities receive direct economic benefits (e.g., equity stakes or revenue-sharing) in renewable energy projects located in their localities.

No policy in place; risk of repeating past inequities. Currently, there is no framework to give host communities a share of ownership or revenue from new renewable projects. Under the PIA of 2021, oil-producing communities do receive a small, fixed percentage of oil companies' expenditures via a Host Communities Trust Fund. By contrast, renewable energy investments have no analogous benefit-sharing mechanism, with profits typically accrued to government or private developers, and communities only gaining indirect benefits like jobs or electricity access.

05 Civic Participation in Energy Transitions: South Africa



Background: South Africa's Energy Landscape

South Africa's energy landscape has long been shaped by its dependence on coal, both as a domestic energy source and as a cornerstone of its economy. Coal-fired power accounts for approximately 85% of the country's electricity generation, a legacy rooted in apartheid-era policies that prioritized energy security and industrial growth (Tshabalala, 2025). South Africa's decision-making systems were historically designed to promote mining-led economic growth. While this model enabled large-scale electrification of industry and urban centers, it entrenched deep socio-economic and spatial inequalities (Tshabalala, 2025).

Coal-fired power accounts for approximately 85% of the country's electricity generation, a legacy rooted in apartheid-era policies that prioritized energy security and industrial growth.

(Tshabalala, 2025)

Post-apartheid reform efforts have struggled to address these structural imbalances, and access to reliable and affordable electricity remains uneven. Eskom (the State-owned utility) has been beset by financial crisis, aging infrastructure, and rolling blackouts, which have intensified public frustration and highlighted the urgent need for systemic energy reform (AP News, 2023). Within this context, the energy transition has emerged not only as an environmental imperative but also as a socio-political and economic necessity. The framing of the transition as "just" reflects both a critique of historical exclusion and a normative demand for inclusion, equity, and restorative development. The government's formal adoption of just transition principles, culminating in the Just Transition Framework (JTF) and the JET-IP, signifies an institutional shift toward embedding social justice within energy and climate policy.

Institutional Foundations for South Africa's Energy Transition

South Africa's energy policy is guided by several key instruments supporting a just transition. The 2019 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) outlines a shift from coal to renewables by 2030 (Department of Mineral Resources and Energy of South Africa, 2019; IEA, 2024). The 2020 National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy promotes climate resilience and equity, while the 2021 Framework for Sectoral Emissions Targets sets benchmarks for greenhouse gas reductions (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2021). Since 2011, the REIPPPP has mobilized private investment in clean energy, with added social benefits like community development and job creation (Department of Mineral Resources and Energy of South Africa, 2025). Together, these instruments create a policy ecosystem linking climate goals, sectoral planning, and social justice.

South Africa's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) (2021) represented a key turning point in the country's formal commitment to a just energy transition. South Africa was among the first countries to explicitly integrate a just transition into its NDC, defining it as "core to shifting our development pathway to increased sustainability, fostering climate resilient and low GHG emissions development, while providing a better life for all" (Republic of South Africa, 2021: 3). The framing establishes the just transition as a normative and practical foundation of South Africa's climate diplomacy and national development strategy.

The legislative and institutional consolidation of the just energy transition was significantly advanced with the Just Transition Framework and the JET-IP. The Framework, developed by the PCC and adopted in 2022, establishes a foundation by outlining principles of procedural equity, social inclusion, and distributive justice, particularly for workers and communities affected by the shift away from coal (PCC, 2022a). The PCC is distinctive not only because of its institutional positioning at the presidential level and broad mandate but also because of its inclusive structure and participatory ethos. Its membership spans government, business, labor, academia, civil society, and traditional leadership, facilitating both horizontal policy coordination and vertical integration between state and society (Connolly, 2022). National leadership is supported by the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), an \$8.5 billion initiative signed at COP26, and supported by the EU, UK, France, Germany, and the US (Mason, Shalal, & Rumney, 2021; European Commission, 2021).

Building on this foundation, the JET-IP provides a five-year investment roadmap for the period 2023–2027, translating JET principles into concrete financial and sectoral commitments (PCC, 2023). It identifies priority sectors (electricity generation, new energy vehicles, and green hydrogen) and proposes targeted interventions, including skills development, municipal capacity-building, and infrastructure support, while also highlighting energy poverty alleviation as a key co-benefit of climate action (PCC, 2023). Domestically, a Presidential Climate Finance Task Team was established in early 2022 to coordinate and guide JETP investments through a governance and oversight system including inter-ministerial coordination, transparency safeguards, and a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system to ensure investments follow the principles of just transition (PCC, 2023).

South Africa’s Just Energy Transition has been further institutionalized through the enactment of the Climate Change Act (2024). The Act affirms the state’s commitment to a long-term, low-emissions, and climate-resilient economy, positioning the just transition as a core objective of national climate policy (Republic of South Africa, 2024). It codifies procedural requirements for public participation, requiring the Minister to consult a range of stakeholders (including business, labor, civil society, and affected communities) when developing climate response measures.

National leadership is supported by the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), an \$8.5 billion initiative signed at COP26, and supported by the EU, UK, France, Germany, and the US.

(Mason, Shalal, & Rumney, 2021; European Commission, 2021)

Mapping of Actors and Their Demands of Justice

In South Africa, the number and diversity of invested stakeholders in the energy transition are significant: they include government officials, African National Congress (ANC) elites (particularly majority governing party aligned elites), Eskom managers, labor unions such as the South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), CSOs, the mining sector, renewable energy actors, and international financiers. Table 3 summarizes these actors and respective demands.

The **government**, at both national and local levels, aims for economic stability, energy access, and global credibility in its climate commitments. While the national government is leading the JET process, local administrations also want to play a more significant role in shaping the energy transformation. Subnational governments have strong interests, given potential impacts on constituencies' support, especially in coal regions such as Emalahleni, Mpumalanga, Lephalale, and Secunda, and due to their connections with the coal industry (Vanheukelom, 2023).

While Eskom has acknowledged the need for a renewable energy transition, it has also been accused of stalling efforts to diversify its energy mix and reduce reliance on coal.

(Ting & Byrne, 2020)

Businesses in both the coal and renewable energy sectors increasingly shape the JET in South Africa. Eskom has faced resistance to transitioning towards renewable energy, particularly from coal lobbyists seeking to protect their interests. While Eskom has acknowledged the need for a renewable energy transition, it has also been accused of stalling efforts to diversify its energy mix and reduce reliance on coal (Ting & Byrne, 2020). Conversely, renewable energy producers are increasingly attempting to enter the market, but with limited success due to Eskom's monopoly (Bookbinder, 2024).

Within civil society actors, stakeholders can be initially differentiated in terms of their **linkages to the coal industries**. Communities in coal areas are seeking compensation, inclusion, and economic alternatives to coal-based employment.

These communities often mistrust the government and unions, fearing exclusion from the benefits of the energy transition (Mohlakoana et al., 2023; Tshabalala et al., 2025; Amis, 2024). Labor unions, such as COSATU and NUMSA, also have a strong interest in prioritizing job protection and the delayed phaseout of the coal sector. Coal communities also seek to address historic harms like environmental damage and land dispossession.

Communities in **non-coal regions**, as well as **academia** and **NGOs** that are pro-environment, are in favor of energy transitions. These actors not only endorse the environmental benefits of energy transitions, but they also demand a higher say in the policy process and stress the need for local manufacturing of renewable energy industries, particularly in non-coal regions, to ensure that the economic benefits of the transition are widely distributed.

About 3.2 million households (particularly those in informal settlements) still lack access to electricity and basic services.

(Baker & Phillips, 2019)

Moreover, **local communities** also mobilize around issues of access and affordability. Energy poverty remains a persistent issue with many low-income households unable to afford grid electricity, and about 3.2 million households (particularly those in informal settlements) still lack access to electricity and basic services (Baker & Phillips, 2019). Better access to affordable electricity is at the core of these communities' demands.

Women and youth are also critical stakeholders in South Africa's energy transition. Women and youth are often not acknowledged as stakeholders in energy poverty policymaking (Tshabalala et al., 2025), facing barriers to employment. Both groups demand greater involvement in the government's action plans to address climate change and ensure a just transition. Because women are already disadvantaged in the economy and likely to face unique risks from the transition, a gender-responsive just transition is also recognized as essential (Maseko, 2021).

How Can Participation Deliver Just Energy Transitions?

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Table 3. Mapping the civic space in South African Energy Transition

JUSTICE NOTION	DEMAND	ACTOR(S) LEADING THE DEMAND
Distributive Justice	Minimize the decline in coal production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Coal industries (including Eskom) – Communities in coal producing regions
	Facilitate the entrance of renewable energy sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Renewable energy producers
	Address energy poverty by expanding access to affordable electricity for low-income households and informal settlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CSOs – Poor households
	Ensure direct economic empowerment in coal communities, including lump-sum payouts and compensation schemes, rather than relying on state-led public goods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communities in coal producing regions
	Promote decent job creation in renewable energy sectors and ensure labor standards are embedded early to prevent replication of current inequities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Labor unions – CSOs – Academia – Women – Youth
Procedural Justice	Institutionalise continuous, inclusive public dialogue instead of once-off consultations, especially with poor and unemployed populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CSOs – Youth movements
	Engage underrepresented stakeholders directly in transition planning and implementation processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Worker associations in Coal Regions
	Improve coordination of diversification plans between provincial governments and coal companies, ensuring coherence and inclusivity in development strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CSOs – Coal industries (including Eskom)
	Rebuild community trust by addressing concerns of misappropriation and elite capture of JET benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Labor unions – Local communities
Recognitional Justice	Include youth and women in policymaking processes relating to energy poverty and access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Youth – Women – Gender-focused NGOs
	Ensure a gender-responsive just transition that recognises the differentiated impacts of energy transitions on women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Women – Gender-focused NGOs
	Respect cultural identity and economic reliance on coal in mining regions, acknowledging coal's role in shaping community self-understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Local community leaders – Communities in coal producing regions
	Ground transition strategies in local priorities, needs and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Community-based organizations – Local community leaders

De Facto Civic Participation in South Africa's JET

Prior to the PCC, participation in energy transition processes seems to have been largely compliance-driven. Social and Labor Plans (SLPs) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) were mandated by environmental and mining laws to facilitate stakeholder input; however, it appears that they often functioned as tick-box exercises with minimal community influence (Makgetla, 2021; Montmasson-Clair et al., 2022). The National Economic Development and Labor Council (NEDLAC), a statutory body meant to foster consensus among government, business, labor, and civil society on socio-economic policy, including climate and energy transitions, also struggled with grassroots inclusion (Patel, 2021). Ward Committees and Local Forums, intended for bottom-up participation, were often inactive, politically captured, or underfunded (Montmasson-Clair et al., 2022; Makgetla, 2021).

The establishment of the PCC intended to change this by explicitly calling for a multi-stakeholder process. **Formally, the participatory platform that emerged with the PCC can be framed as an *Open Policy Lab*** (i.e., inclusive in terms of openness to stakeholders and oriented to policymaking). The PCC designed and implemented an inclusive multi-stakeholder process between 2021 and 2023 to support and plan the Just Transition Framework and the JET-IP.

South Africa has summoned government, business, labor, and civil society to collaboratively tackle development challenges, rather than imposing a top-down plan. The participatory process that led to the planning of the JET-IP was inclusive in essence: formally, there were no requirements for stakeholders to participate. The openness of participation in South Africa's energy transition processes was evident in the diverse range of stakeholders involved. These included labor unions (e.g., COSATU and NUMSA), business and industry associations, municipalities, civil society, youth, and faith groups, local communities, government (national and municipal), businesses (renewable energies and coal sectors), community organizations, and youth groups (e.g., Mohlakoana et al., 2024; Tshabalala et al., 2025; Bookbinder, 2024; Vanheukelom, 2023; Montmasson-Clair et al., 2023).

Public debate and consultation have been an explicit mandate of the PCC's during the planning of JET strategies. It includes representatives of organized labor, business, civil society (including youth and academia), and functions as a high-level platform to debate and reconcile interests (Climate Investment Funds, n.d.). The PCC conducted broad consultations in 2021–2022, using workshops, community visits (e.g., Mpumalanga), written submissions, social partner dialogues, livestreams, and thematic working groups. They also engaged communities through broadcasts and sub-

missions to empower individuals to shape their development and livelihoods (PCC, 2022c; Connolly, 2022; Elliot et al., 2023). Parliament has also become an important venue for facilitating public involvement in lawmaking and oversight, for example, by routinely inviting written submissions and oral testimonies from civic actors.

Despite robust participatory mechanisms, a gap seems to exist between formal intent and reality, with civic participation lacking true inclusiveness and influence.

One key challenge is that many processes tend to be dominated by organized and well-resourced stakeholders, whereas poor and marginalized communities often struggle to have their voices heard (Maphanga et al., 2022). Indeed, local communities, women, youth, informal sector workers, and artisanal miners are generally underrepresented in participation fora (particularly in Mpumalanga and Limpopo, where the socio-economic impacts of the transition are likely the most profound). Structural support for disadvantaged groups to engage (such as funding for travel to meetings, translation into local languages, or technical assistance to interpret energy plans) has been limited and, as a result, favors those with the awareness, time, and resources to participate (Hartmann & Thornton, 2024).

Broad participation tends to be unevenly distributed in each policy-making stage.

Certain actors, notably labor unions, industry groups, and other actors connected with the established minerals-energy complex (MEC), have disproportionate influence during policy design and investment planning, leveraging political networks to shape outcomes or to delay policies that threaten their interests (Bookbinder, 2024). By contrast, civil society organizations and community groups generally have more formal influence once policy direction has been set and through open consultations. There is also limited evidence of civic participation during the execution and monitoring of these decisions, meaning that once plans are approved, the space for public input narrows considerably (BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform, 2023).

Governance mechanisms at different levels of government are considered to be poorly aligned.

At the national level, despite the central role of the PCC, coordination across departments is often weak, leading to overlapping mandates. At the sub-national level, the reality is that provinces vary in institutional strength, political will, and resource capacity, with similar weaknesses even more acute at the municipal and local levels. As a result, the PCC is unable to systematically integrate local priorities into higher-level strategies, unless it initiates its own direct engagement efforts.

Critics have argued that dialogues can often be associated with a check-the-box approach, failing to build trust or incorporate community feedback in a meaningful way.

As one civil society review observed: “Meaningful engagement with low-income communities is not happening generally, and even less so when dealing with access to energy” (Project 90 by 2030, 2020). For example, following the release of a Just Transition Framework for consultation in 2022, observers questioned “how inclusive these consultations will be” given time and resource constraints on engaging grassroots communities (Price, 2022: 7). Even when out-

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reach to vulnerable groups does occur, it can be superficial and oriented around the presentation of a predetermined plan without a clear mechanism to incorporate comments or concerns.

The quality of representation is another concern. The PCC provides seats to civil society and labor, but those representatives may not always reflect the full diversity of affected communities and unique perspectives (e.g., informal workers, women in energy-poor households, or small rural municipalities). The challenge of translating high-level commitments into local action plans further illustrates informational asymmetries. While civil society groups contributed many ideas to that initial wish list, it is unclear to what extent they were involved in prioritizing and refining those ideas into actual policy measures (Makgetla, 2021); with technical experts and government planners instead leading in formulation.

Assessing real inclusiveness of energy transition processes in South Africa: Does civic participation translate into just outcomes?

While South Africa's JET governance framework is highly participatory by design, the reality on the ground seems to be mixed. Well-established stakeholders (e.g., businesses, unions, major NGOs) find it easier to navigate and influence formal processes, whereas smaller beneficiaries often remain on the margins of decision-making. The ultimate test of participation is whether it leads to "meaningful influence" over policies and outcomes (which remains an open question given the ongoing nature of the JET). Nonetheless, an initial mapping of the extent to which the JETP reflects the different demands of civic actors is provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Assessment of Justice and Demands within ETP in Nigeria

DEMAND AND JUSTICE CATEGORY	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE / EXTENT ADDRESSED
Recognitional Justice: Whose voices, identities, and experiences are acknowledged?	
Include youth and women in policymaking processes relating to energy poverty and access.	Addressed. The JET-IP emphasizes that socially owned renewable energy systems can offer both access and income-generating opportunities for low-income households, with benefits for women and youth. JET-IP explicitly includes gender, inequality, and social exclusion as key dimensions in its skills development strategy and commits to offering women, youth, and other vulnerable groups decent work opportunities, including leadership roles.
Respect cultural identity and economic reliance on coal in mining regions.	Acknowledged but not completely addressed. The JET-IP emphasizes that just transition interventions must be sensitive to the localized impacts of coal phase-down. The plan calls for place-based economic development strategies that address employment and infrastructure. While the plan does focus on cultural heritage preservation, it does stress the importance of inclusive planning and community ownership models to ensure that communities are active participants in shaping <i>their future beyond coal</i> .
Ground transition strategies in local priorities, needs and skills.	Addressed. The JET-IP promotes the development of place-based skills planning and provision, particularly through Skills Development Zones (SDZs) in regions like Mpumalanga, the Eastern Cape, and the Northern Cape. These SDZs are designed to align training and employment pathways with locally relevant value chains, ensuring that communities are equipped for opportunities arising from the energy transition.
Procedural Justice: Who is included in decision-making, and on what terms?	
Institutionalize continuous, inclusive public dialogue.	Addressed, but platforms remain uneven. While stakeholder consultations informed the drafting of the JET-IP, these tended to be one-off events rather than standing forums. During implementation, a handful of permanent structures exist that commit to participatory governance led by the PCC, yet they operate through government appointments and technical working groups, without open membership for informal workers or unemployed communities.
Engage historically underrepresented stakeholders in transition planning and implementation.	Partly addressed. The plan explicitly calls for the inclusion of marginalized groups (youth, rural communities, coal-affected communities, women) and highlights the importance of early and genuine stakeholder consultation. It also promotes community-level governance structures, social ownership models, and participatory monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure that affected groups are not only consulted but actively involved in shaping and overseeing the transition. Yet, the execution of the plan is mixed.
Improve coordination of diversification plans between provincial governments and coal companies.	Acknowledged but not addressed. The JET-IP does acknowledge the importance of coordinated planning for economic diversification in coal-dependent regions, particularly Mpumalanga, and recognizes coal companies as key stakeholders (especially in the context of mine closures, land repurposing, and social investment). However, it does not detail structured frameworks or mandates for joint planning between these companies and provincial authorities.
Rebuild community trust by addressing concerns of misappropriation and elite capture of JET benefits.	Acknowledged with unclear implementation. The JET-IP acknowledges the risk of misappropriation and elite capture and outlines measures to rebuild community trust and ensure transparency. It identifies <i>corruption</i> as a high-level concern, and proposes tight localized governance structures, clear safeguards, and regular monitoring and evaluation to mitigate this. The plan also emphasizes transparency in fund management. However, the plan does not propose direct accountability mechanisms such as independent oversight bodies or grievance redress systems specifically designed to address community concerns in real time.

DEMAND AND JUSTICE CATEGORY	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE / EXTENT ADDRESSED
Distributive Justice: Who benefits and who bears the costs?	
Minimize the decline in coal production.	Implicitly addressed. The JET-IP stresses that speed of decarbonization and descaling of coal plants should be done in a way that it meets the demands of the country.
Facilitate the entrance of renewable energy sources.	Addressed. The JET-IP states that an investment of USD 47.2 billion will be made to facilitate the penetration of renewable energy in the country. This budget includes investments on the transmission grid infrastructure to accommodate the shift to renewable energy and to modernize the electricity distribution system. Moreover, the amendment of the Electricity Regulation bill in 2022 included the establishment of an independent transmission company to allow for a more open market.
Address energy poverty by expanding access to affordable electricity for low-income households and informal settlements.	Addressed. The JET-IP presents targeted investments to address the electrification backlog, modernize and maintain municipal distribution infrastructure, and increase the Free Basic Electricity allocation to 100 kWh per month for qualifying households. It also promotes socially owned renewable energy models (such as community and cooperative ownership) to ensure benefit-sharing. These efforts are supported by substantial municipal investments, including funding for grid maintenance and for electrification.
Advance economic empowerment in coal communities, including lump-sum payouts and compensation schemes.	Partially addressed. The JET-IP does not offer lump-sum payouts or compensation schemes, instead offering institutional investment over individual compensation. It proposes state-led interventions including reskilling, retraining, temporary income support, and employment placement for affected workers. The plan offers a package of social protection and economic diversification measures, such as infrastructure upgrades, youth employment programs, and support for small enterprises.
Promote decent job creation in renewable energy sectors and ensure labor standards are embedded early to prevent inequities.	Addressed, but unclear in regards to implementation. The JET-IP emphasizes the alignment of skills development with the anticipated labor force needs, particularly in green jobs, and highlights the importance of labor market intelligence, inclusive training programs, and proactive planning. It directly frames job creation around 'decent jobs' and stresses the need to address inequality and social exclusion by ensuring that women, youth, and other vulnerable groups have equitable access to training and employment.

06

From Formal to Real Inclusiveness? Enablers and Disablers of Civic Participation



The experiences of Nigeria and South Africa reveal how formal institutions and informal dynamics jointly shape the landscape of civic participation in energy transition planning. In Nigeria, while the process that led to the ETP was initially restricted, it was eventually opened to a broader set of participants after 2022. However, despite strong government commitments and more inclusive processes, participation has largely remained limited to policy planning stages and remains dominated by technical stakeholders. As such, the Nigerian participatory process can be framed as a *Strategic Policy Circle*. The ETP includes distributive justice elements but fails to sufficiently address procedural and restorative justice, dimensions that stakeholders have also stressed as crucial. In South Africa, the breadth of formal civic engagement is more substantive, and can be framed as an *Open Policy Lab*. Yet, the final influence of these actors in shaping the JET shows some divergence. In practice, although it reflects many of the distributive, procedural, and restorative justice demands voiced by civic stakeholders, considerable uncertainty remains about its effectiveness. Many stakeholders remain unsure about what can be achieved and how inclusive the transition will ultimately be.

This section distinguishes between formal and informal enablers and disablers of civic participation (Figure 7), highlighting how the interplay of different factors such as institutional designs, political will and dynamics, and socio-cultural conditions, affect not only who is involved in energy policy planning, but also the extent to which their inputs and preferences inform concrete policies. Despite formal commitments in both countries, as a result of these disablers, participation is at risk of “selective engagement” from “selective actors” with fewer channels to solicit broad feedback or allow for civic monitoring of policy execution.

Figure 7. Enablers and disablers of civic participation in energy transitions

Enablers

Formal

Policy and legal frameworks promoting civic participation
Commitments to transparency

Informal

Strategic leadership
Civic culture
Knowledge
Framing around Justice

Disablers

Formal

Absence of clear guidelines
Weak mandates for inclusion
Weak state capacities

Informal

Political dynamics
(e.g., patronage, regulatory capture)
Political trust
Identities & social constructions
Socioeconomic & knowledge inequalities

Formal Enablers: Legal Mandates and Participatory Structures

Formal enablers refer to the existence of laws, policies, and institutional mechanisms that legally or procedurally support civic engagement in energy transition processes. Both South Africa and Nigeria introduced frameworks aimed at institutionalizing stakeholder participation.

In Nigeria, international norms (e.g., Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)), along with expectations of the international community, have encouraged the integration of participatory standards into national laws and policies. The NEITI 2024 Country Work Plan aims to enhance stakeholder engagement through strategic communications and to improve public access to, and understanding of NEITI reports and knowledge products. Similarly, the Electricity Act (2023) mandates public consultations for new infrastructure projects, while the PIA (2021) and the Climate Change Act (2021) grant local communities the legal right to establish Host Community Development Trusts. This formalization of engagement through legal and institutional frameworks constitutes a key enabler.

In South Africa, the PCC has a formal mandate of governing inclusively, while the National Just Transition Dialogue demonstrates structured participatory efforts. The PCC's multi-stakeholder composition and alignment with international just transition principles (ILO guidelines) further reflect this formal commitment (PCC, 2022c). Furthermore, the transparent design of renewable energy programs, notably the REIPPPP's requirements for competitive bidding rounds with oversight from the National Treasury and external experts, creates procedures that minimize corruption and patronage and eliminate rent-seeking opportunities, attracting private investment and building public trust (Bookbinder, 2021).

These laws and policy platforms provide enforceable opportunities for non-state actors to participate actively, with mandated agencies required to organize workshops, virtual sessions, and training sessions as minimum engagement activities. However, while necessary conditions for civic participation, they are not sufficient and ultimately dependent on the informal dynamics informing execution.

Informal Enablers: Political Will, Civic Culture, Local Knowledge and Networks, and Strategic Framing

The materialization of participatory commitment is supported by informal enablers, including social, cultural, and political factors that, while not codified in law and/or policies, facilitate meaningful and inclusive participation. These enablers included leadership support, civic mobilization, political trust, and social capital, as well as availability of information and interest in national energy transitions.

Independent research of NGOs and think tanks further empowers citizens through accessible analyses and challenges official government narratives.

(Faluyi, 2023)

In Nigeria, while the formal process of drafting the ETP was limited to select actors, informal channels helped widen public awareness. Media, digital platforms, and growing pressure from civil society (domestic and international) offer accessible and low-cost tools for citizen engagement and supported a broader public discourse. Independent research of NGOs and think tanks further empowers citizens through accessible analyses and challenges official government narratives (Faluyi, 2023). They act as gateways for ensuring that government bodies fulfill their participatory obligations (Faluyi, 2023: 301). Notably, debates surrounding fuel subsidies have generated significant public interest in energy policy.

In South Africa, strong political backing for the PCC and a tradition of civic and labor mobilization have legitimized participatory efforts (Patel, 2021). Notably, local familiarity with the socio-economic impacts of coal has anchored the just transition dialogue in lived experience, coupled with the interest of traditional local leaders toward building political trust (Elliot et al., 2023).

Formal Disablers: Procedural Gaps, Weak Mandates, and Capacity Constraints

Formal participatory institutions can be undermined if not designed properly.

In Nigeria, a lack of clear guidance on stakeholder inclusion, an absence of formal platforms for community engagement, and insufficient resources to facilitate participation have undermined formal commitments (Olayinka, 2016). Authority over the transition has remained heavily centralized and left “a gap between central and subnational governments, particularly when it comes to the energy transition agenda” (George Ikoli & Molineris, 2024). Many state officials “do not thoroughly understand what their role is” (George Ikoli & Molineris, 2024), and community stakeholders often learn of the transition only when civil-society groups convene first-time awareness sessions (Spaces for Change, 2023). Moreover, when consultations are held there are no strict requirement for inputs to inform eventual decision making and as a result are “rarely reflected in implementation” (Ekhaton, 2021). Additionally, confidentiality clauses in the NEITI Act allow officials to withhold sensitive information, restricting oversight to disclosures at the discretion of oil companies (Osuoka, 2019).

In South Africa, although the PCC is inclusive in design, participatory dialogues are hindered by weak bureaucratic skills and institutional capacity (Amis, 2024), rushed consultation timelines, and limited access to digital platforms (excluding less-resourced stakeholders) (Montmasson-Clair et al., 2022). Responsibilities are spread across numerous agencies with overlapping mandates, limiting clear entry points for civic engagement (Peterson, 2022). Regulatory complexity and inter-agency disputes further delay decision-making, while bureaucratic procedures around policy development (requiring officials to finalize proposals under strict deadlines) tend to constrain public participation (Hadley et al., 2022). Crucially, there is an absence of binding mechanisms that ensure that inputs are translated into policy outcomes, as well as of clear guidelines and mandates for stakeholder participation in the implementation and monitoring of the JET-IP. These factors raise hesitation and uncertainty among grassroots actors who sense that their feedback will not influence the outcome, raising critical questions about what is realistically achievable. In other words, while the PCC and various climate policy documents recognise the importance of stakeholder engagement, they stop short of establishing enforceable procedural rights.

Informal Disablers: Political Dynamics, Trust, Cultural Resistance, and Socioeconomic Exclusion

Beyond formal limitations, political and socio-cultural dynamics can also constrain civic participation. In particular, the Nigerian and South African cases provide evidence of three key barriers.

Firstly, historically powerful groups continue to leverage their influence to dominate or obstruct participatory processes. In South Africa, political patronage networks, rent-seeking behavior, and regulatory capture have diluted the transformative potential of the JET (Bookbinder, 2024; Vanheukelom, 2023). These groups operate through informal channels, creating informal power structures that wield outsized influence, sometimes overruling formal policies. In Nigeria, similar dynamics play out, notably through the political ties between state actors and fossil fuels industries, particularly in the Niger region (Agbonifo, 2023; Ekhaton, 2021).

In Nigeria, deep-rooted community dependence on fossil fuel-based livelihoods and historical neglect have shaped mistrust toward transition agendas and limited the appetite for civic participation.

(Spaces for Change, 2022a)

Secondly, cultural factors, narratives, and social constructions also undermine the legitimacy of the participatory process. In South Africa a strong identity linked to coal mining communities (BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform, 2023), and narratives that depict renewable energy sources as “white and foreign”, juxtaposing coal and nuclear energy as “local and black-owned” (Bookbinder, 2024, Mirzania et al., 2023; Vanheukelom, 2023) create perceptions that the energy transition is a form of neo-colonial imposition (Bookbinder, 2024). Deep-rooted patriarchal norms constrain the participation of women while distrust in the government

and unions further erodes the credibility of the JET process (PCC, 2022b; Tshabalala et al., 2025). In Nigeria, deep-rooted community dependence on fossil fuel-based livelihoods and historical neglect have shaped mistrust toward transition agendas and limited the appetite for civic participation (Spaces for Change, 2022a).

Finally, socioeconomic and knowledge inequalities exacerbated these challenges. In South Africa, low awareness of the JET, as low as 36% (Seriti & UNDP, 2024), highlights significant informational gaps. High inequality creates further obstacles for low-income communities, which have neither the time nor the resources to participate. This includes the lack of access to the internet due to poor connectivity, high data costs, and low digital literacy, which hinders the participation of citizens, especially in a context in which government websites, online surveys, and email submissions are the crucial tools for engagement. Feedback from multistakeholder conferences also highlights that overly technical language can exclude many stakeholders (Connolly, 2022). Communication challenges are seen throughout engagements, with participants highlighting uncertainty around the purpose of consultations (Mohlakoana et al., 2024). In Nigeria, the lack of knowledge and awareness about energy transitions also affects demands for and input into consultations. Informational asymmetries persist owing to the technicality of official documents, illiteracy exceeding 40%, and the absence of translations into local languages (Ekhat, 2021). Physical distance (with most forums held in Abuja or Lagos) results in consultations that are “physically and logistically inaccessible to rural and oil-producing communities” (Ekhat, 2021), while high poverty and unemployment rates account for immediate economic concerns over future-oriented environmental planning.

In Nigeria, the lack of knowledge and awareness about energy transitions also affects demands for and input into consultations. Informational asymmetries persist owing to the technicality of official documents, illiteracy exceeding 40%, and the absence of translations into local languages.

(Ekhat, 2021)

07

Conclusion: Policy Implications and Recommendations



Justice is not just an outcome, but a journey.

Democracies are currently witnessing a paradox. While a large majority of people believe in democratic principles, there is increasing frustration and dissatisfaction with the outcomes. This reflects a deeper issue: democratic institutions and processes are struggling to meet the demands of today's complex world (UNDP, 2024). This is particularly evident in energy transitions, where the climate crisis has created a sense of urgency that necessitates profound structural changes. **If not managed carefully, a rapid energy transition can destabilize local and national economies, leading to long-term consequences for growth, well-being, and stability.**

To avoid this, justice must be placed at the heart of energy transition strategies. Energy transitions are not just technical challenges, but social and political endeavors. For transition plans to be effective and sustainable, they must be seen as just and reflect people's needs and concerns. If people believe that the costs and benefits of the transition are being distributed unequally, resistance is likely, even if environmentally necessary or technically sound. Without justice (i.e., distributive (who gets what), recognitional (who is acknowledged), and procedural (who decides)), the promise of a green transformation will remain incomplete.

This highlights the importance of participation, both in principle (to uphold democratic values and strengthen the social contract) and in practice (to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of energy transitions). When people are meaningfully involved in shaping decisions, they are more likely to support and trust the outcomes. As such, participation offers a bridge between public demands and real change, with their design and operationalization likely to determine whether energy transitions are experienced as just and whether they succeed.

Just energy transitions, therefore, require more than technological solutions: they call for broader systemic change. This includes rethinking institutional arrangements to bring people closer to their representatives and ensure that governance is more inclusive and accountable. This report contributes to that conversation by examining the vital role of civic participation in advancing different notions of justice within energy transitions based on the lessons and experiences of South Africa and Nigeria. Nigeria's efforts can be described as a *Strategic Policy Circle*, offering participatory processes that are narrower in scope, with decisions driven by a small group of stakeholders that limit broader civic engagement to a more passive role. In South Africa, participation appears to be closer to an *Open Policy Lab*, enabling broad stakeholder involvement to shape the JET, but with limitations in the extent to which civic groups can continue to monitor implementation.

The analysis **offers several key lessons** for policymakers and practitioners aiming to ensure justice in energy transitions.

First, justice in energy transitions is not solely an economic issue. While the specific content of each justice dimension may differ due to the specific national contexts and historic legacies, all three dimensions (i.e., distributive, procedural, and restorative) are equally important and must be addressed in transition planning. Ignoring any of these, risks fundamentally undermining the legitimacy and sustainability of the transition.

Second, perceptions matter as much as outcomes. For an energy transition to be truly just, people and communities must not only benefit from the outcomes but also perceive the process as fair and inclusive. Even well-designed policies can face resistance if they are seen as top-down or disconnected from local realities. Building trust through transparent, participatory processes is essential to ensure long-term support and social buy-in.

Third, legal and institutional mandates for participation are necessary but not sufficient conditions. Mechanisms such as NEITI and the PIA in Nigeria and the JET-IP in South Africa are at the foundation of progress towards informed civic engagement. While they have (at times) been criticized as box-ticking exercises, they nonetheless provide communities and civic actors with enforceable rights and governments with procedural obligations to be judged upon.

Fourth, and building on the above, inclusive institutions must be set up to have real influence. South Africa's PCC-led process demonstrates how formal openness to participation can lay the groundwork for a just transition. However, unless all participants, especially those who have been historically marginalized, have meaningful influence over decisions, justice goals may not translate into real outcomes. Participation must go beyond symbolic inclusion to genuinely shape policy and power.

Fifth, participation is most effective if it extends across the entire policy cycle. Civic engagement limited to the planning phase reduces the transformative potential of energy transitions. While planning is often the most accessible stage, the real challenges emerge during implementation. Achieving just outcomes requires sustained involvement of actors: from planning through to implementation and monitoring. Long-term engagement fosters adaptability, accountability, and a sense of ownership among communities.

Finally, informal dynamics can either reinforce or undermine formal commitments. Political will, elite influence, civic culture, and public trust all shape the actual impact of participatory institutions. In many cases, informal barriers (such as exclusionary power structures, patriarchal norms, or widespread distrust in government) can limit participation more than formal rules. Addressing these underlying dynamics is essential for achieving real and lasting inclusion.

Entry Points for a Real Co-Production of Just Energy Transitions

A common assumption in participatory governance is that formal inclusion of civil society organizations and other civic actors is enough to ensure just policy outcomes. However, evidence from this study and others reveals that this is far from guaranteed (e.g., OECD 2024). Even when inclusive platforms exist on paper, informal factors (such as power dynamics, trust, political will, and civic culture) shape whether participation is meaningful and leads to fair outcomes.

This calls for a fundamental rethinking of how participatory governance in energy transitions should be approached. What is needed is not just participation, but co-production: a governance model in which state and non-state actors (particularly, civil society) work together throughout the policy lifecycle. This requires moving beyond consultation or symbolic inclusion, toward shared responsibility and decision-making power from the earliest stages of planning through to implementation and evaluation.

Co-production, as proposed by Elinor Ostrom (1990), emphasizes the importance of **engaging citizens not only as recipients of policy but as active contributors to the design, delivery, and evaluation of public services.** In the context of energy transitions, this means involving communities, civil society organizations, and frontline groups at every stage of the policy process: from identifying needs and shaping priorities to ensuring energy transition plans are effectively implemented and monitored.

Framing energy transitions through the lens of co-production offers several key benefits. First, it can help leverage community knowledge and lived experience, especially from civil society actors who understand local contexts (McCauley et al., 2019). Treating them as policy co-producers democratizes knowledge (Jasanoff, 2004), includes marginalized voices, and bridges gaps between science, policy, and daily realities, enhancing the credibility, relevance, and legitimacy of transition plans.

Second, co-production can help enhance state capacity. Energy transitions often involve complex and evolving regulatory frameworks. Their success depends not only on government enforcement but also on the active engagement of civil society, which can help monitor implementation, identify gaps, and promote compliance (e.g., Gunningham et al., 2003; Bernauer & Betzold, 2012).

Finally, co-production can yield practical benefits in two important ways. Firstly, it is likely the greatest factor in achieving distributive outcomes that deliver genuine co-benefits. By placing civic actors and communities at the core of shaping renewable ener-

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gy investments, co-production offers communities and civic actors leverage to ensure that profits, energy access, and associated benefits are directed toward community priorities. In this way, investments that might otherwise bypass local development can instead foster shared ownership, improved services, and long-term livelihood gains.

In addition to this, policies that are co-produced through inclusive and deliberative processes tend to enjoy broader public support. This is not only because communities feel a sense of ownership, but also because they are more informed and engaged. Informed public deliberation increases the likelihood of policy endorsement (Balza et al., 2023), contributing to a more stable and predictable environment for long-term investment.

However, for co-production to work, changes in informal dynamics and power relations are essential. Current participatory institutions are often constrained by elite capture, capacity and resource constraints, gender biases, and institutional distrust. Participation does not happen in a vacuum: actors come to the table with vastly different levels of power and influence. To level the playing field, policy initiatives must actively work to reduce these inequalities.

Shifting toward meaningful co-production requires transforming who holds power, whose knowledge counts, and who gets to shape the future of energy landscapes. Without addressing these informal barriers, co-production risks replicating the inequalities it seeks to overcome. There is a strong need to activate both formal and informal enablers while dismantling the formal and informal disablers that shape participatory governance.

To make co-production a reality, **civic participation in the energy sector must be approached from an integrated and multidimensional perspective.** This means recognizing that participation is not just a procedural or institutional matter, but deeply political and technical. Transforming governance to promote justice requires action across all three levels (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Entry points for a real co-production of energy transitions



To finish with, this report proposes three guiding questions (and corresponding entry points) to help reframe and strengthen participatory governance in energy transitions.

Institutional: How should participatory institutions be designed to facilitate a continuous and substantive participation of stakeholders?

For co-production to be meaningful, participatory institutions must be designed around the principle of open government involving stakeholders throughout the policy process (see OECD, 2025). This requires moving beyond one-off consultations or symbolic gestures toward permanent, well-structured platforms that provide entry points from agenda setting and policy design to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Moreover, civic participation should take place across the energy transition space, such as the production of renewable energies or mining for critical energy transition minerals. As the comparative analysis shows, limiting participation to the design phase undermines both trust and policy effectiveness, hindering community ownership and sustaining inclusive outcomes.

Participatory efforts must draw from a clear mapping of the stakeholder landscape (from citizenry/households, worker unions, private actors, academia, civil society organizations, community bodies, etc). Such stakeholder analysis will ensure that the downstream design of participatory institutions is sufficiently informed by the diversity of civic stakeholder groups and their logical entry points for engagement. Such an activity is also an opportunity to make explicit reference to the important role of vulnerable or otherwise isolated groups (e.g., indigenous peoples, youth, and women).

In conjunction with this, clear procedural rules are critical. One of the major formal disablers identified in this research was the lack of clarity around how participatory input was collected, weighed, and translated into decisions. To address this, governments should codify procedural guidelines that specify when and how consultations occur, how decisions are made, and how feedback loops are maintained. These rules should be publicly communicated to reduce ambiguity and prevent tokenism.

To further strengthen legitimacy and accountability, independent oversight mechanisms can be introduced. Third-party oversight, such as academic institutions or international organizations, can ensure that commitments to inclusion are upheld. In parallel, governments can institutionalize multi-stakeholder advisory bodies as permanent fixtures of energy governance, going beyond ad hoc forums but instead with formal access to policy drafts, budgetary discussions, and implementation plans. These bodies should reflect a balanced cross-section of society, including civil society groups, trade unions, youth, women, local leaders, and private sector actors, to ensure a diversity of justice claims are represented and addressed.

Political: How can interest in participation be expanded while limiting the disproportionate influence of powerful actors?

To increase participation and reduce undue influence, energy transition governance must address informal power dynamics. This entails actively redistributing influence, fostering trust, and establishing safeguards against elite capture, gender bias, and exclusion. In doing so, policymakers must identify and work with different stakeholder groups, including Indigenous Peoples, environmental defenders, women, and youth, who are potentially affected by various types and scales of energy transition.

Participation in energy transition is more meaningful when connected to broader national development goals. Framing energy transitions within a shared vision for inclusive growth can align diverse interests and increase public engagement; particularly where historical marginalization has eroded trust in institutions. Adopting an integrated and forward-looking approach can support economic diversification, identify new sectors for skill and labor transfer while positioning communities as co-creators of change, fostering a renewed sense of identity and belonging. Moreover, development goals must also encompass non-economic priorities, such as the right to a healthy environment, to ensure that transitions are not only economically viable but also socially just and ecologically sustainable.

Trust is often built through local relationships. Partnering with traditional authorities and community leaders (especially in rural or post-conflict areas) can help bridge the gap between formal institutions and grassroots actors. These intermediaries can amplify local voices and legitimize participatory processes.

Finally, **participation must offer tangible benefits.** As the findings show, communities are more likely to engage when they see clear incentives, such as job training, microgrants, or renewable energy pilots. Compensating participants for their time and knowledge can also affirm their role as co-producers of the transition.

Technical: What technical innovations can be used to bridge the gap between policymakers and communities in energy transitions?

One of the key barriers to inclusive participation in energy transitions relates to access to information. On the one hand, this barrier is linked to the **lack of reliable information**, particularly around studies and assessments to provide scenarios of energy transition implementation and its impacts on the socioeconomic. On the other hand, the barrier speaks to **the technical complexity of planning processes**. When information is overly technical or inaccessible (e.g. due to language barriers or geographical isolation), it reinforces knowledge asymmetries and risks excluding stakeholders. The challenge with information availability is therefore twofold, implicating both the identification of relevant data, as well as its ease of accessibility to all stakeholders.

To overcome this, **technical processes must be informed by reliable data and be democratized.** While public education campaigns can also raise awareness and empower broader engagement, ensuring that data, tools, and expertise are co-developed with those most affected by the transition is also crucial. Capacity-building initiatives, extended consultation timelines, and the use of simplified, multilingual materials can help make technical content more accessible. Similarly, experts must act as facilitators, translating complex content rather than dominating discussions.

Digital technologies offer additional opportunities to expand participation and raise awareness as in South Africa.⁸ Digitalization can be used to strengthen participatory environmental monitoring (PEM) tools and to expand local capacities and increase voice and meaningful participation. Governments can also invest in online portals, SMS-based surveys, and hybrid engagement tools to reach remote or mobile populations. Crucially, to avoid reinforcing digital divides (which were often noted as disablers in the study), these tools must be paired with digital inclusion measures such as internet subsidies and education policies, and combined with offline alternatives.

This must be complemented through capacity development efforts, to improve the ability of civic and particularly local level actors to meaningfully understand and engage with the energy transition discourse. This could make use of existing capacity development initiatives, but could also draw on dedicated funding for civic education, participatory budgeting pilots, and community monitoring initiatives through the expenditures associated with just transition investment plans.

⁸ For a deeper discussion on how digital technologies can be leveraged to promote open government for green transitions, refer to OECD (2025).

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Achieving justice in energy transitions requires more than well-meaning declarations; instead, it requires structural reforms in how participation is conceived, implemented, and sustained. **Moving from symbolic inclusion to real co-production calls for transforming both formal institutions and the informal dynamics that shape them.** These policy entry points provide a roadmap for turning the principles of a just transition into practice, ensuring that all voices, not just the most powerful, help shape the green future. Following this goal, UNDP Country Offices in South Africa and Nigeria were, at the time this report was being finalized, actively socializing its findings with key national partners and feeding them into ongoing JET processes. In parallel, internal discussions within UNDP were underway to translate the report's main results into practical guidelines aimed at strengthening civic engagement in JET efforts.

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Annex

Six Types of Civic Programmatic Participatory Institutions

The six types of civic programmatic participatory institutions, based on the two analytical dimensions of scope and breadth, are described below:

- **Open Policy Labs (Broad - Policymaking):** These are collaborative environments where diverse stakeholders, including citizens, CSOs, and CBOs, come together to co-create policies. They emphasize open participation, ensuring that a wide range of voices are included in the policymaking process.
- **Strategic Policy Circles (Narrow - Policymaking):** These are selective groups of experts or key stakeholders who develop policies. The focus is on strategic decision-making with limited public involvement, often relying on specialized knowledge and expertise.
- **Open Monitoring Platforms (Broad - Monitoring):** These platforms allow for broad public participation in monitoring activities, enabling transparent oversight and accountability through open data sharing. They encourage community involvement in tracking and evaluating policy implementation and outcomes.
- **Expert Monitoring Panels (Narrow - Monitoring):** These panels are composed of selected experts who conduct monitoring activities with specialized knowledge, providing high-level oversight but with limited public engagement.
- **Open Governance Hubs (Broad - Integrated):** These hubs facilitate open collaboration between various governance actors, promoting transparency and shared decision-making processes across different sectors. They aim to integrate participation throughout the entire policy process, from design to execution and monitoring.
- **Core Governance Networks (Narrow - Integrated):** These networks consist of core members who integrate governance functions within a closed group, ensuring coordinated actions but with restricted access to outsiders. They focus on maintaining a streamlined and efficient decision-making process among key stakeholders.

Research Questions Guiding the Review of Literature & Analysis of Interviews

QUESTION	DIMENSION OF ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK
What are the formal institutions involved in the energy transition process, and what are the formal and informal rules governing their operation?	(1) Description of <i>de jure</i> civic programmatic participatory institutions in energy transitions
At what stages of the energy transition policy process (design, planning, execution, evaluation) are stakeholders formally able to participate?	(1) Description of <i>de jure</i> civic programmatic participatory institutions in energy transitions
Which stakeholders (individuals or organizations) are formally able to participate?	(1) Description of <i>de jure</i> civic programmatic participatory institutions in energy transitions
Who are the key stakeholders in energy transition processes, and what is their influence (e.g., incentives, constraints)?	(2) Assessment of <i>de facto</i> civic programmatic participatory institutions in energy transitions
How have citizen participation and community engagement been implemented within energy transition processes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Which stakeholders have been formally involved, and what are their perspectives on the fairness of the process? – At what stages of the energy transition policy process have stakeholders been formally engaged? – At what level have stakeholders been formally involved? – What roles have formally involved stakeholders played? 	(2) Assessment of <i>de facto</i> civic programmatic participatory institutions in energy transitions
What are the primary local, national, and international enablers and barriers to participation?	(2) Assessment of <i>de facto</i> civic programmatic participatory institutions in energy transitions
What economic, political, and cultural factors enable or hinder participation?	(2) Assessment of <i>de facto</i> civic programmatic participatory institutions in energy transitions
How are the outcomes of formal participatory processes being integrated into decision-making and policymaking?	(3) Analysis of the results of participatory institutions for (just) energy transitions
Are formal participatory processes leading to more inclusive outcomes, and if so, how?	(3) Analysis of the results of participatory institutions for (just) energy transitions

Key Informant Interview Protocol

Introduction

Hello, my name is [**Interviewer's Name**] and I am working with the United Nations Development Program's Global Policy Centre for Governance on a research project about **inclusive participation in energy transitions**. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me.

The purpose of this interview is to learn from your experiences and insights on how civil society participation in energy transition processes might ensure **justice and fairness** in outcomes.

We are conducting this discussion alongside several other interviews with civil society actors in both South Africa and Nigeria, to gather diverse perspectives.

The interview will take approximately **60 minutes**. We have a series of topics to cover related to your organization's involvement in energy transition processes, governance and participation mechanisms, inclusiveness of marginalized groups, perceptions of justice, and the outcomes of participation.

Assurances & Authorization

Before we begin, I want to explain how we will use the information you provide:

- Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to answer any question or to end the interview at any time.
- Should you request to make this discussion confidential and anonymous then we will not attribute your name or your organization's name to any of the quotes or findings in the reports or associated publications. The inputs will be analyzed for the study's purposes and reported anonymously.
- With your permission, we would like to record this interview (**audio only**) to ensure accuracy. The recording will be kept secure and only accessible to the research team. It will be deleted after the research is completed. If you prefer not to be recorded, that is fine.

Section I. Interviewee Warm-Up

1. To start, could you briefly describe your organization's work as it relates to energy or climate issues, and your role within the organization?

Section II. Civil Society Involvement in Energy Transition Processes

2. Can you describe how, if at all, your organization has been involved in any energy transition initiatives or decision-making processes in [South Africa/Nigeria]?"
3. How did your organization get involved in those processes? Were you invited by authorities, or did you seek out engagement on your own initiative?
4. What do you believe are the main reasons your organization has or has not participated in formal energy transition processes?"
5. From your experience, is the civil society voice in [South Africa/Nigeria] unified or fragmented on what they think an energy transition should look like? How?

Section III. Governance Structures for Participation

6. What state-led opportunities or platforms exist for civil society to engage in energy transition decision-making in your country?
7. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of these participation mechanisms (either formal or informal) and/or other governance structures for ensuring inclusive input?
8. Are the processes **transparent** and well-communicated? (For example, understand how decisions are made, get feedback on how your inputs are used?)
9. In your opinion, who gets a seat at the table in these energy transition discussions, and who doesn't? Are there any groups you feel are left out of the energy transition conversation in [South Africa/Nigeria]? Why?

10. What do you think is working well in these spaces for civic participation, and what is not?
11. How could participatory mechanisms be improved to strengthen civil society's voice? What type of strategies would you use to promote the participation of civic organizations?

Section IV. Outcomes and Impacts of Participation

12. From your experience, has civil society participation influenced any key decisions or outcomes in the energy transition? How?
13. Can you point to any **specific example** where input from civil society (maybe even your organization) *affected a policy or project*?
14. What changes or best practices would you recommend to ensure that participation genuinely leads to just outcomes in energy transitions?

Section V. Perceptions of Justice

15. In your view, what makes an energy transition just? What does **justice** in this context mean for you?
16. Based on that understanding of justice, do you feel that the current energy transition efforts in your country are proceeding in a just manner? Why or why not?

Closing and Thank You

Those were all the main questions I had. Thank you very much for sharing your experiences and insights.

Before we conclude:

- Is there anything we haven't covered that you feel is important to mention?
This could involve any final thoughts or messages you'd like to convey?
- Would it be okay if we follow up with you later for any clarifications or additional questions if needed? (*If yes, confirm best contact method.*)

On behalf of our research team, I sincerely appreciate your time. Your input will be extremely valuable in understanding how inclusive processes can lead to just outcomes in energy transitions in South Africa, Nigeria, and beyond.

We will keep you informed about the progress of our project, and once the research is complete, we can share a summary of the findings with you if you're interested.

Thank you again for your participation.

End of interview.

