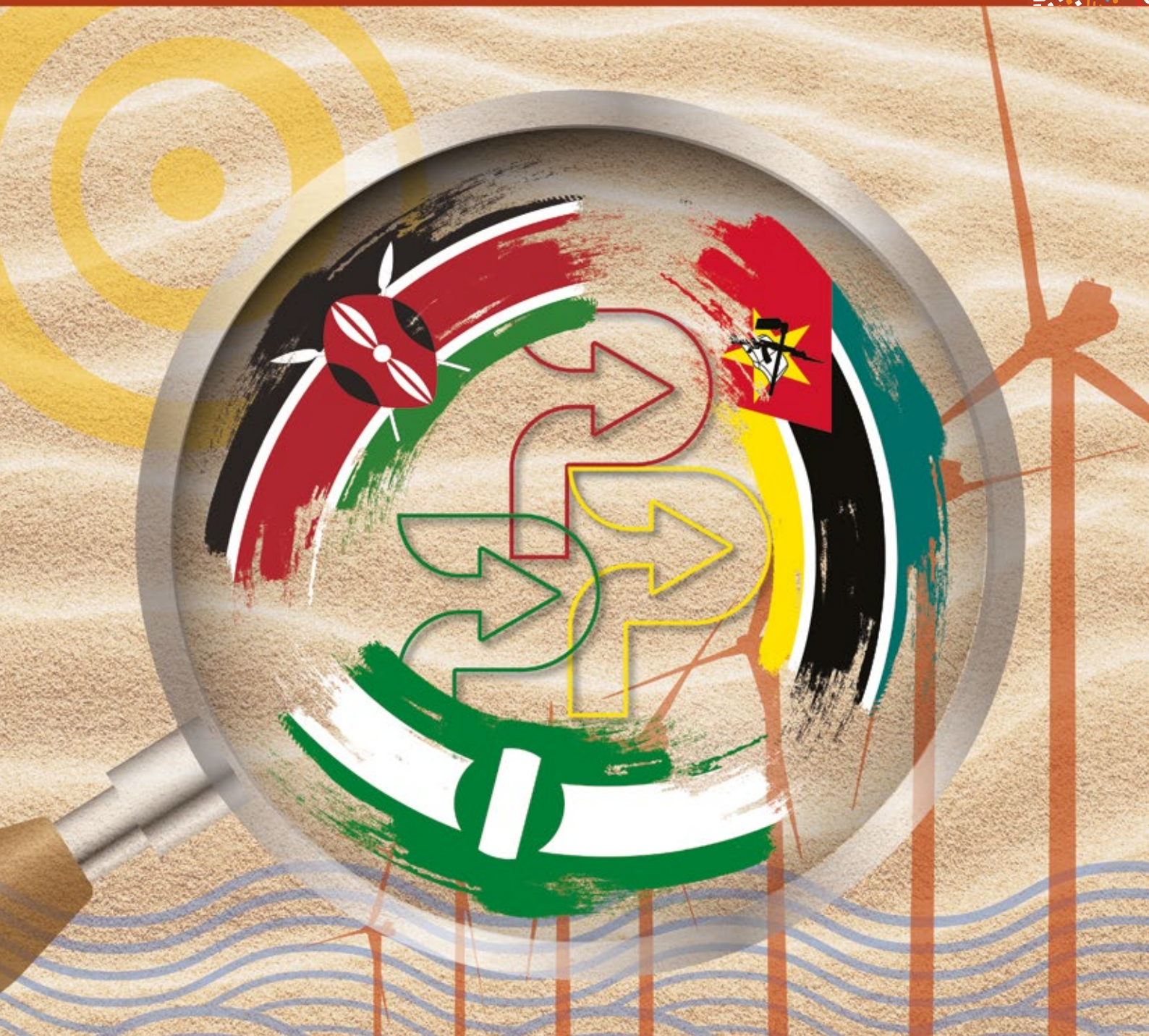


The Three Ps of the Just Energy Transition

Principles, Policies and Practicalities

Case studies from Kenya, Nigeria and Mozambique



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was developed by Natural Justice, with the support of the contributions from Gabriel Bunei from the Menengai West Stakeholders Forum, Bruno Gomes from Natural Justice and God'spower Martins from Urban-Rural Environmental Defenders (U-RED).

Natural Justice Just Energy Transition Initiative supports public interest lawyers, affected communities and civil society organisations to:

- Challenge new fossil fuel exploration and generation.
- Advocate for law and regulatory reform to provide for equitable and just energy access for communities across Africa.
- Ensure robust public participation in decision-making for large-scale renewable energy projects to help avoid potential social and environmental harms to Indigenous peoples, local communities, and biodiversity, and ensure local communities' benefit from the energy transition.
- Build legal capacity and a community-of-practice to support Just Energy Transition work in Africa.

Developed by: Natural Justice

Edited by: Dr Michelle Pressend

Designed by: Giselle Slabbert / Trigger Design

Published: 2026





TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
INTRODUCTION TO JUST ENERGY TRANSITIONS	4
What is a just energy transition?	4
The context of the Just Energy Transition in Africa	5
TRENDS IN ENERGY TRANSITION AND 'GREEN' DEVELOPMENT PLANS	6
DRAWING ON THE 3 PS FRAMEWORK	8
Principles	9
Policies and Laws	10
Practicalities	11
APPLYING THE 3 PS TO CASE STUDIES FROM AFRICA	13
Case Study one: Sosian Energy Limited – Kenya	13
Case Study two: EDM Wind Power Project – Jangamo, Mozambique	18
Case Study three: Subsidy Removal and Potential Solar Panel Import Ban – Nigeria	25
CONCLUSION: A CALL FOR RIGHTS-BASED JUST ENERGY TRANSITION ACTION	30
Defining the terms of engagement	30
Enforcing Core Principles	30
Fair and Equitable JET Financing	31

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concept of Just Energy Transition (**JET**) has gained global policy traction, but there is no single, clear global framing of what this means, let alone for Africa.

The term JET stems from just transition, which emerged from labour movements concerned that environmental and industrial transitions could impose disproportionate costs on workers and affected communities, particularly through job losses and economic disruption. A just transition focuses on broader socio-economic transformation towards justice and sustainability. The International Labour Organisation has outlined just transitions as promoting environmentally sustainable economies in ways that are fair and inclusive for everyone, especially workers, enterprises and communities with inclusive transitions to the green economy that embed labour rights, universal social and care protection, gender-responsive policies, and robust dialogue.¹

A JET is a subset of just transitions, a framework to shift the economy away from fossil fuel dependence towards clean and sustainable energy sources.² For Africa, a just energy transition cannot simply mean replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. It must also address the historical and continuing inequalities that shape who controls energy resources, who benefits from energy development, and who bears its social, environmental and economic costs.

Africa accounts for 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, with South Africa being the largest emitter. Many

reports highlight poverty and limited access to electricity across the continent, often suggesting underdevelopment is a matter of course³ rather than a legacy of colonial exploitation. Africa has become a key site for solar and wind energy investments, carbon markets, green hydrogen, and critical mineral extraction—resources vital for renewable energy, batteries, robotics, and electric vehicles. These developments are often framed as opportunities for green growth in the continent's economy and mining sectors. While industrialised nations progress in the energy transition and become wealthier without reducing consumption, they expect African countries to catch up in development while remaining major exporters of natural resources.⁴ Technology and market solutions alone won't solve the climate crisis. While global strategies focus on cutting emissions, they overlook the root causes: deep poverty, unfair and unregulated global economic systems, and racial, class, and gender inequality.

Concerns have also emerged that the privatisation of energy markets, which treats energy as a commodity to be bought and sold, is likely to worsen electricity access and affordability for already marginalised communities. Through the energy transition narrative, there is a push for energy projects, including renewable energy and critical mineral mining. However, how these projects threaten land, the environment, and communities already hard hit, without delivering benefits, harming livelihoods and cultural ties, beyond a reduction in carbon emissions, is a major concern.

¹ International Labour Organisation "Achieving a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all" (Report IV). Available at <https://www.ilo.org/resource/conference-paper/ilc/ilc111/achieving-just-transition-towards-environmentally-sustainable-economies-and-societies-for-all>.

² International Energy Agency "Indicators for Just and Inclusive Energy Transitions" (10 October 2025). Available at <https://www.iea.org/reports/indicators-handbook-for-just-and-inclusive-energy-transitions>.

³ United Nations Development Programme "Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone" (2016). Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/25212016_human_development_report.pdf, United Nations Environment Programme "Renewable Energy Efficiency in Developing Countries: Contributions to Reducing Global Emissions" (2017). Available at <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/renewable-energy-and-energy-efficiency-developing-countries-contributions-0>.

⁴ Mies, M., & Shiva, V. *Ecofeminism*. Zed Books, 1993.

For Natural Justice, an important framing of a JET should shift systems towards regenerative, rights-based (human and nature rights), and community-led approaches.

While many see the JET as a shift to renewable energy, there are broader considerations. In the African context, a decolonial approach to just energy transitions goes beyond replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. It asks deeper questions about who defines the transition, who owns energy, whose knowledge counts, and who benefits. A JET has the potential to support energy sovereignty, the right of communities to determine their own energy systems in ways that are socially just, ecologically sustainable, and culturally appropriate.⁵ It can also address inequalities between the polluting, industrialised Global North and the less developed Global South through reparations and by acknowledging climate debt, as stated in the Paris Climate Agreement.

Case studies by Natural Justice and allied organisations from Kenya, Nigeria, and Mozambique highlight the need to ensure energy and environmental justice and to recognise that system change is necessary for JETs. In Kenya, geothermal expansion near homes, grazing lands, water sources, and cultural sites triggered mobilisation over noise, pollution, and unprocedural expansion. In Mozambique, a wind project involved consultation and asset recording, but unclear processes and delays left communities frustrated and uncertain. In Nigeria, the removal of subsidies increased fuel prices, and poor consultation on planned restrictions on solar imports deepened distrust following a top-down decision-making process, resulting in unrest and protest against policies implemented to increase renewable energy.



Natural Justice's Framework for JET pathways in Africa are built on the Three P's: Principles, Policies and Practicalities. It calls for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to be centred in decision-making, with justice principles translated into policy and law and supported by practical, community-level action. The key question is whether environmental and energy justice principles and policies will be met in ways that address well-being, ecological sustainability, and genuine local benefit, not merely carbon reduction. Drawing on these case studies and the tools of the 3 P's framework, the conclusion calls for rights-based action to deliver a JET, with communities' needs at the centre. The actions are framed around defining the terms of engagement, enforcing core principles, and ensuring fair and equitable JET financing as preconditions and pathways towards decolonisation in energy transitions, where a JET must be transformative and embedded in core values such as reciprocity, regeneration, restoration, reparation, care, and solidarity, as well as in life-affirming principles.

INTRODUCTION TO JUST ENERGY TRANSITIONS

What is a just energy transition?

The term “a just energy transition” (JET) has gained widespread recognition. It arose from concerns among workers and affected communities that shifting away from fossil fuels, which have provided electricity and employment for decades, could lead to significant job losses and economic disruption. Also, while not explicitly framed in JET, concerns have emerged about established neoliberal⁶ energy markets, over which citizens have little to no control, worsening the plight of marginalised communities struggling to access and afford electricity.⁷

Global institutions such as the United Nations⁸, International Labour Organisation⁹, and multilateral frameworks like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)¹⁰ have framed a ‘just transition’ as a process that maximises social and economic benefits, creates decent work, protects human rights, ensures community participation, and safeguards vulnerable groups from harm.

Mainstream framing of ‘just’ energy transition frameworks as a subset of just transitions by policy-makers and businesses tends to focus on electricity generation, energy infrastructure, energy access and energy governance in renewable energy. However, projects led by governments, corporations and multilateral financial institutions are typically anchored in technology-centred approaches and do not always reflect the lived realities, legal contexts, historical injustices and ways of life of local and indigenous communities – all of which will shape energy transitions in Africa. For African communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples, rural communities, women, youth, and those living near energy and extractive projects, a just energy transition is not only about shifting from fossil fuels to renewable energy. It is fundamentally about shifting power, decision-making, and the distribution of benefits and burdens of energy production and use. It is about ensuring that communities are not displaced, silenced, or further marginalised in the name of “green development”, and that historic injustices are not repeated under new technologies.

It is critical that just energy transitions acknowledge the interdependence and interconnectedness of humans and non-human life across areas such as food cultivation, housing, energy, water use, and transport. This approach to just energy transitions needs to support the radical reduction of energy consumption by high consumers, especially in global North countries, the restoration of ecosystems affected by extractive practices, and the development of regenerative and sustainable pathways.

⁶ Neoliberalism is a political and economic ideology that argues markets rather than governments are better at organising society and the economy. Neoliberal policies have reshaped the global economy by promoting free trade, privatising state-owned services and assets, reducing government regulation, and allowing capital to move more freely across borders. These changes have transformed many goods and services that were once considered public responsibilities such as healthcare, education, water, electricity, and even aspects of nature-into commodities that can be bought and sold for profit. Within this framework, energy has increasingly been treated as a market commodity. International energy markets facilitate the trade of oil, coal, natural gas, electricity, carbon credits, and renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind power.

⁷ McDonald, D. *Electric Capitalism: Recolonising Africa on the Power Grid*. HSRC Press and Earthscan, 2009

⁸ United Nations “Just Transition” (2023). Available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/CDP-excerpt-2023-1.pdf>.

⁹ International Labour Organisation “Just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies”. Available at <https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/just-transition-towards-environmentally-sustainable-economies-and-societies#intro>.

¹⁰ UNFCCC-KCI. “Guidelines and Policy Frameworks for Just Transition of the Workforce and the Creation of Decent Work and Quality Jobs: Compilation and Synthesis Report” (2025). Available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/648793>.



Through our work at Natural Justice, we believe that achieving a JET requires adopting a rights-based approach (human and nature rights) that places Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the centre of decision-making. This includes empowering Indigenous Peoples and local communities to participate in JET design and implementation, so that these communities are not only on the receiving end of predetermined energy projects but can also reimagine and build a new future. This means that energy policies, laws, and projects must be guided by legally recognised rights, including access to information, access to justice, participation, equality and non-discrimination, environmental and cultural rights, and the right to define their development. A rights-based approach demands that communities can participate meaningfully, that no one is left worse off, and that transitions address both historic and ongoing injustices.¹¹

The context of the Just Energy Transition in Africa

Africa's energy transition must be viewed through the lens of a continent that contributes the least to global greenhouse gas emissions yet faces the most severe climate impacts. Despite this, across Africa, governments and businesses aspire to development and living standards comparable to those of industrialised societies, while industrialised countries make no meaningful changes to their own production and consumption patterns. African governments often see this as 'their' turn for development and, therefore, for fossil fuel expansion and use.

At the same time, renewable energy growth is accelerating under the banners of climate mitigation and 'green' growth. As climate finance, carbon markets, and "green" infrastructure expand, the question of climate reparations and the availability of resources to pay off global debt remains largely unresolved. The African continent has the world's lowest levels of access to electricity, with more than 600 million people still without it, including in sub-Saharan Africa, where over 80% of people lack access. This lack of access to electricity is coupled with some of the highest levels of extreme structural poverty in the world, with people living in countries like Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, both of which have high levels of natural resources, living below the poverty line.¹²

¹¹ For more information on a human rights based approach for just transitions see United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner and International Labour Organisation "Key Messages on a Just Transition and Human Rights". Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/climatechange/information-materials/key-messages-hr-a-just-trans.pdf>. Also see Indigenous Peoples Rights International "Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples in Just Energy Transitions" (14 August 2024). Available at <https://iprights.org/2024/08/14/human-rights-and-indigenous-peoples-in-just-energy-transition/>.

¹² Statista "African countries with the highest share of global population living below the extreme poverty line in 2025" (2025). Available at https://www.statista.com/statistics/1228553/extreme-poverty-as-share-of-global-population-in-africa-by-country/?srsltid=Afm-BOorwxC7hKodmVRypd1QLNewyEj9x3f_Gg1paHCm4lwQlayoPqms0.

TRENDS IN ENERGY TRANSITION AND 'GREEN' DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The African continent has seen rapid growth in renewable energy investment projects, and geographical areas are being measured and demarcated for their solar, wind, geothermal, and hydroelectric potential.¹³

Many countries are adopting electrification strategies, decentralised renewable systems, and national energy transition frameworks. At the regional level, the World Bank Group has developed the Mission 300 plan, and the African Energy Commission is spearheading the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)¹⁴. During the G20, the European Union pledged 15.5 billion euros to Africa to boost renewable energy generation and access.¹⁵ Regional and continental initiatives such as the African Union's Green Mineral Strategy¹⁶ and African Mining Vision¹⁷ purport to address energy supply chains, including energy justice, resource governance, beneficiation, and energy sovereignty. The Africa Green Industrialisation Initiative¹⁸ is in the pipeline, with an emphasis on building green industries that benefit Africa and its communities.

However, concerns remain about the extractive nature of 'green' energy projects, the financing terms for these energy investments, the extent to which local communities will benefit from access to electricity, and how their land, livelihoods, and spiritual and cultural rights will be affected.¹⁹

Many of these so-called green energy and development plans, programmes and projects are top-down and follow extractive logic, which perpetuates historic injustices. These trends include exclusion from decision-making, forced displacement, unequal distribution of benefits, and lack of transparency.

Furthermore, weak governance and ineffective regulatory enforcement are evident. This includes inadequate environmental assessment processes, unfair resettlement regulations that result in the loss of land and community livelihoods, and neglect of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (**FPIC**) requirements. Additionally, the absence of dispute resolution or grievance mechanisms makes it difficult for communities to address concerns.



¹³ United Nations Sustainable Development Group "Decoding Africa's Energy Journey: Three Key Numbers" (27 January 2025). Available at <https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/decoding-africa%E2%80%99s-energy-journey-three-key-numbers>.

¹⁴ Africa Energy Commission "Africa Renewable Energy Initiative". Available at <https://au-afrec.org/fr/node/788>.

¹⁵ European Union "Scaling up renewables in Africa". Available at https://commission.europa.eu/topics/international-partnerships/global-gateway/energy-africa_en.

¹⁶ African Minerals Development Centre "Africa's Green Minerals Strategy". Available at https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/44539-doc-AGMS_Final_doc.pdf.

¹⁷ African Union "Africa Mining Vision". Available at <https://au.int/en/ti/amv/about>.

¹⁸ Africa50 "Africa Launches Landmark Green Industrialisation Framework With \$100 Billion in New Commitments". Available at <https://www.africa50.com/media/news/article/africa-launches-landmark-green-industrialisation-framework-with-100-billion-in-new-commitments/>.

¹⁹ Adarve Zuluaga, M., Shortall, N., Stroot, H., Wayand, N., Ruiz, V., Fadel Diop, M., Chester Pagulayan, J., & Emran Hasan, M. *Unjust Transition: Reclaiming the Energy Future from Climate Colonialism*. Oxfam International, 2025. Available at <https://doi.org/10.21201/2025.000086>.

While Africa has become a site for renewable energy investment projects, these investments remain significantly lower than in the rest of the world, due to the perception that African investments are higher risk. To encourage investment, states reduce investment risks by lowering barriers for investors, making a range of investment opportunities more favourable for business over the rights of people, and guaranteeing returns on investment.

According to the International Energy Agency, clean energy investment has tripled between 2019 and 2024 in the private sector while public and development finance funding has fallen by a third over the last decade.²⁰ Due to only growing private investment in renewable energy projects, energy poverty and lack of access to energy persist amid resource abundance, in conjunction with an increase in exports to other parts of the world of raw and semi-finished materials.²¹ Communities hosting energy or critical minerals projects largely remain without electricity and, in some cases, are displaced, with livelihoods affected.

Subsidy reforms, tariff increases, and new industrial policies tend to deepen inequality when not accompanied by participation and social protections, thereby leading to socio-economic fragility. In other words, Africa's transition is at a critical crossroads: it can either repeat the extractive past or seize the opportunity to build fair, inclusive, socially and ecologically just, community-centred energy futures.



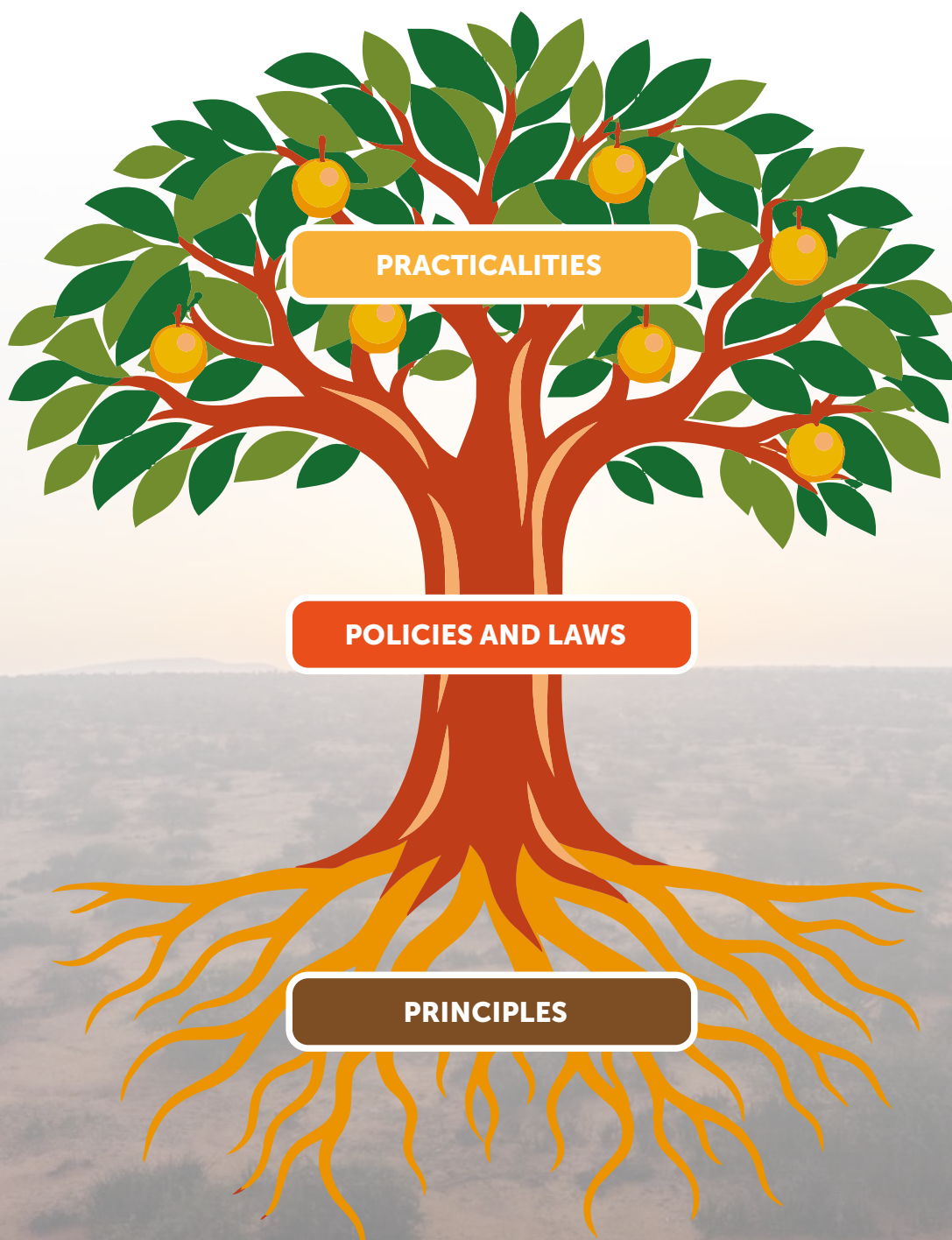
²⁰ International Energy Agency (IEA) "Africa - World Energy Investment 2025" (2025). Available at <https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-investment-2025/africa>

²¹ CNBC Africa "SADC's Critical Minerals Can Power Africa's Structural Transformation" (12 August 2026). Available at <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/sadcs-critical-minerals-can-power-africas-structural-transformation>

DRAWING ON THE 3 PS FRAMEWORK

The 3Ps - Principles, Policies and Laws, and Practicalities - of a Just Energy Transition

is a resource developed by Natural Justice for communities. It offers local communities, civil society, and workers an accessible tool to analyse whether a project or policy/law follows a process for just outcomes or masquerades as just another “green development project” with limited outcomes. Governments and policymakers can use it to incorporate the “just” aspect into laws and policies. The framework highlights gaps and areas for action to prevent harm and foster more equitable systems. It aims to support sustainable energy transitions that heal, nurture, and enhance well-being for both humans and nature.



PRINCIPLES

These are the foundational justice concepts that should guide every stage of Africa's transition. They include:



Environmental Justice:

It encompasses fundamental rights, including the right to a healthy environment free from ecological harm. It affirms people's self-determination and demands participation rights and the enforcement of free, prior and informed consent. It gives people the power to influence, shape, and directly intervene in decisions that affect their lives and the land they depend on. As an organising framework, environmental justice can connect social, economic, ecological, and political struggles with both human-built and natural environments.²²



Procedural Justice:

Requires the state to establish fair and equitable processes. This means that procedures and projects must be accessible, inclusive and transparent. Public participation must be fair, transparent and accessible to ensure meaningful community engagement. This enshrines meaningful participation in law-making and access to information.



Distributive Justice:

This principle calls for the fair distribution of the costs, risks, and benefits of an energy transition, ensuring that communities are not harmed, displaced, or placed in a worse position, financially or otherwise, by energy reforms or projects.



Restorative Justice:

Encompasses both the restoration of land degraded over centuries of extraction and the dignity of people who, in the past and at present, endure the harm and violence inflicted by extractive projects imposed upon them. This includes consideration of the international principles of polluter-pays and the precautionary principle, which respectively hold that those who pollute must pay for the damage and that harm must be avoided.



Recognition Justice:

Honours the diversity and ways of life of communities. It acknowledges the land, culture, and history of local and Indigenous groups.



Energy Democracy:

Can be understood as a contemporary expression of decentralised, local communities' and social movements' direct participation in decisions about their local electricity needs, ensuring that everyone has access to affordable or necessary electricity to live a dignified life.



Social and Gender Inclusion:

This recognises intersectional differences in impacts and challenges, especially among vulnerable groups such as women, youth, cultural and ethnic communities, workers (both informal and formal), and the elderly during the transition. It should also strive to promote broader social benefits that take differences into account.

POLICIES AND LAWS

The second “P” in the 3 Ps Framework highlights that justice principles should be integrated into legal and policy frameworks to translate principles into practice. This includes:



Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC):

An international legal principle that, before any major decisions or actions are taken that could affect the land and resources of indigenous peoples and local communities, they have the right to be fully informed, to participate in the decision-making process, and to give their consent freely and without undue pressure or influence, including the right to say no.



Constitutional Rights:

These are national-law rights that must be upheld, such as the right to a healthy environment, the right to access information, the right to housing, and the right to basic services, including electricity, land tenure and land rights:



Land Tenure and Land Rights:

As constitutional rights, these rights are separated due to their importance and relationships with other rights. Community and customary land rights must be respected. The rights of non-humans and ecologies must be respected for their role in sustaining Earth’s ecosystems and cycles. Land is never terra nullius (no one’s land) and is inhabited by plants, animals, and insects that sustain ecosystem flows and by potentially nomadic communities.

While national and regional policies and laws may not explicitly reference JET and may need to evolve as concepts develop, existing laws and policies may nonetheless support just energy transitions.

These include climate change regulations, initiatives to advance environmental and energy justice, and policies promoting social and gender inclusion. Additionally, a government might have a strategic plan outlining the desired future energy mix, potentially emphasising renewable sources, alongside policies that foreground care and well-being, including measures to ensure affordable energy provision.

Governments can also enact laws that incentivise a just energy transition, such as providing subsidies for renewable energy infrastructure. Additionally, punitive measures, such as taxes on fossil fuels, can be implemented. Nevertheless, care must be taken to avoid disproportionately affecting marginalised and low-income communities.

PRACTICALITIES

The third “P”, practicalities, focuses on translating principles and policies into practical, on-the-ground implementation of the just energy transition. Practicalities, as part of the JET framework, recognises that principles, laws and policies require more than mere promises to not only advance a renewable energy transition but also provide real justice on the ground.



Mobilise and build legal capacity

Build mobilising and legal empowerment, and capacity to advocate for policies and laws that address JET.



Understand investment and finance

Communities need to deepen their understanding of investment agreements, financing for energy transitions, the international energy policy arena, and green accounting mechanisms, such as carbon trading and carbon or biodiversity offsetting. Understanding the nature of these investment agreements enables receiving communities to be more aware of the stakes and negotiate more strategically.



Participate as equal partners

Communities need to demand the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including assessments, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation, in large-scale public-private energy projects.



Develop community energy

Enhance capacity to propose, design, finance, and support locally organised, accessible, and affordable community renewable energy.



Secure state support

Advocate for state incentives and subsidies for marginal communities to support energy needs and feed-in tariff systems.



Create local JET forums

Create local Just Energy Transition committees or forums to coordinate and agree on your community's energy needs and collective actions.



Share benefits meaningfully

Meaningful benefit sharing with communities, facilitated by large-scale public-private energy projects that deliver skills development, decent jobs, improved infrastructure, support for local businesses, and fair access to a full range of resources.



Enable fair financial support

Global and philanthropic financial support, without unachievable conditions, is needed to implement life-serving, sustainable, renewable energy systems.



Make information accessible

Access to understandable, meaningful information should be facilitated, and public participation should be supported in a manner that seeks to understand community needs.



Ensure accountability

Independent grievance mechanisms, accountability and oversight institutions need to be put in place.

Practicalities recognise that good laws alone won't fix our energy system. The global financial system is rigged, making real change hard.²³ While new technology and skills are important, true fairness requires community power, proper funding, and an understanding of how foreign direct investments, international loans, trade deals, and national debt affect our daily lives.

The case studies that follow demonstrate how the dynamics of unjust transitions play out on the ground, from geothermal fields in Kenya to wind corridors in Mozambique and national fossil fuel subsidy reforms in Nigeria. Together, they show that the justice of the transition depends not only on shifting technologies but also on shifting power and participation, which embody a rights-based and community-centred approach.



²³ Madonko, T. "Debt Imperialism in Africa: Is It the Art of War by Other Means?" (7 November 2025). Available at <https://www.boell.de/en/2025/11/07/debt-imperialism-africa-it-art-war-other-means>, Global Justice Now "Decolonise to Decarbonise" (2024). Available at <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/blog/2024/07/decolonise-to-decarbonise/>, Sokona, Y., Mulugetta, Y., Tesfamichael, M., Kaboub, F., Hällström, N., Stilwell, M., Adow, M., & Besaans, C. Just Transition: A Climate, Energy and Development Vision for Africa. Independent Expert Group on Just Transition and Development, 2023, p. 18. Available at https://justtransitionafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Just-Transition-Africa-report-ENG_single-pages.pdf.

APPLYING THE 3 PS TO CASE STUDIES FROM AFRICA



Case Study one: Sosian Energy Limited – Kenya



PROJECT TYPE AND LOCATION

Geothermal exploration and power production, Menengai Geothermal Resource Area, Nakuru County, Kenya.



Source: <https://africa-energy-portal.org/news/kenya-menengai-iii-geothermal-power-plant-be-commissioned-december-2022>

CONTRIBUTION BY

Gabriel Bunei from the Menengai West Stakeholders Forum



“ We are well informed with facts that allow us to engage meaningfully with all stakeholders. Just energy transitions means communities being informed and being able to make informed decisions that are respected. ”

THE SITUATION

In the mid-2000s, the Menengai crater, a largely uninhabited government forest area in Nakuru County, became the site of the Menengai geothermal project. This area has long been recognised for its energy potential, and initial exploration of its geothermal resources was carried out by KenGen and later by the Geothermal Development Company (**GDC**).

As geothermal production within the crater approached its limits, drilling and infrastructure development began expanding outward towards community lands in Menengai West, an area with established homes, large- and small-scale farming, grazing lands, schools, churches, mosques and cultural sites.

In February 2021, Sosian Energy Limited was granted a geothermal prospecting licence by the Ministry of Energy, supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment (**EIA**) that many community members claimed was inaccessible, incomplete, and poorly communicated. The EIA contact details were inaccurate, meetings were held 40 km away from affected settlements, local participation was minimal, and the assessment failed to capture the sentiments of the people and undervalued their land.

Despite these procedural gaps, the National Environment Management Authority (**NEMA**) issued the licence to Sosian Energy. In April 2021, the Menengai West Stakeholders Forum, supported by Natural Justice, filed a case with the National Environmental Tribunal, arguing that public participation had been inadequate and that the licensing process had violated both environmental and constitutional principles.

The Tribunal dismissed the case in December 2023. However, the community appealed. On 13 March 2025, the Nakuru High Court overturned the Tribunal's decision, cancelled Sosian's licence, and directed the company to conduct a new, comprehensive public participation process that must meaningfully involve all affected communities.

This year, the GDC began expansion of operations near the communities in the area without proper notice, causing noise and air pollution. The Menengai West Stakeholders Forum reported this to the National Environmental Complaints Committee. The Committee advised that a fresh EIA be carried out and that the operations be paused. For more details on the Sosian Energy case, see "[*Sosian Energy Case emphasises the importance of public participation in energy projects*](#)" and "[*Centring Justice in the Just Energy Transition*](#)".



THE IMPLICATIONS ON COMMUNITY LIFE

As Sosian's drilling sites moved closer to the communities, within 50 kilometres, the local community raised concerns about the project's proximity to their homes, schools, grazing lands, water sources, and cultural sites. Community members complained about the noise pollution caused by the operations. The noise could be so severe that residents could not sleep, and children were unable to concentrate at school because of lack of sleep.

When operations moved closer to the community, a strong smell of rotten eggs from hydrogen sulphide gas, an air pollutant, was detected. Long-term exposure could cause health issues, and one community member has produced a report on the side effects of sulphur. There is also increased dust and noise, and reduced access to shared grazing areas. The project has generated fears of forced relocation and long-term environmental damage. For the people of Menengai West, the problem is not geothermal power as an energy source, but the pressure to abandon their homes on privately owned land. This area is very densely populated, with over 163 000 residents. Community pressure was heightened by limited access to information, insufficient consultation, and a lack of relocation alternatives. The Google map above shows the crater's proximity to the communities, labelled A to E. The locations labelled D and E represent the Olrongai and Arahuka communities, which have formed the Menengai West Stakeholders Forum.



Communities surrounding Menengai Geothermal Project

Source: <https://rightsindevelopment.org/news/kenya-menengai-geothermal/>

REASONS FOR THIS ENERGY PROJECT

The Kenyan government is making a strong push to expand geothermal energy as part of its national development and climate goals, creating pressure to fast-track licensing and exploration. In addition, geothermal energy sourced within the Caldera cannot meet demand, so the government wants to expand the project to increase output. Political and commercial interests shape the project landscape. Currently, due to community pressure, many independent power producers have ceased pursuing the project, leaving only the government-owned GDC active.²⁴

²⁴ Abdi, A. M., Murayama, T., Nishikizawa, S., & Suwanteep, K. "Social Acceptance and Associated Risks of Geothermal Energy Development in East Africa: Perspectives from Geothermal Energy Developers." *Clean Energy*, Vol. 8, Issue 5, October 2024, pp. 20-33. Available at <https://academic.oup.com/ce/article/8/5/20/7697437>.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Community members organised through the Menengai West Stakeholders Forum, which brought together local leaders, farmers, youth, and elders to coordinate their response.

With legal and technical support from Natural Justice and other civil society allies, the group:

- ✓ Conducted detailed reviews of the EIA,
- ✓ Identified inconsistencies and procedural violations, and analysed the project's documents to support community education.
- ✓ The project's social and environmental impacts were documented through media and field reports.
- ✓ They established local committees to gather evidence and engage with authorities on their terms.

These actions ensured the community remained united, so no member was compromised or turned against the community's struggle. They maintained privately owned land within the community to ensure its protection.

In the end, these actions led to the 2025 High Court ruling²⁵, which not only cancelled Sosian's licence but also affirmed the importance of procedural rights and meaningful participation in Kenya's renewable energy sector.

Other actions included filing complaints with government agencies and international funders, such as the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Persistent communication and outreach to various contacts eventually led to success, with investigations into the complaints conducted on 25 and 26 August 2025 and a resulting report produced.²⁶ The report recommended a fresh Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and a community liaison strategy.



²⁵ Natural Justice "Sosian Energy Case Emphasises the Importance of Public Participation in Energy Projects" (20 March 2025).

Available at <https://naturaljustice.org/sosian-energy-case-emphasises-the-importance-of-public-participation-in-energy-projects/>.

²⁶ Orpower Twenty-Two Limited Supplemental Environmental Impact Assessment (SUEIA) Report. Available at https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/20251008131506_20093_2.pdf.

LESSONS LEARNED



The Sosian experience shows that when shortcuts are taken in legal procedures and energy developments, even those considered “green”, communities are negatively affected and their rights are threatened. These developments are unjust and will create discontent amongst local people, leading to resistance. Public-private partnerships need substantive public participation, ensuring that communities are informed in a timely manner, in accessible formats and languages, and that their feedback is taken into account in decision-making.

Empowering communities so that they are well informed, educated, and understand all documents is critical. Thoroughly investigating the project and holding workshops to share information are vital.

Corporations and the government need to respect FPIC and human rights, including those related to land, to prevent the deterioration of community life. Independent monitoring and grievance mechanisms are essential to uphold accountability. Clean energy should not replicate the injustices of fossil-fuel extractive industries. The community’s success in the courts also demonstrated that, when people are organised and informed, they can hold powerful institutions accountable under existing legal frameworks.

APPLICATION OF THE THREE PS FRAMEWORK



This case highlights important issues in environmental and energy justice. It shows how decisions by the government and investors can directly affect various aspects of the local community, including its ecology, health, social life, politics, the local economy and culture. It also points out existing power imbalances between the authorities and the community. Ideally, these should have been addressed by following the principles of FPIC, meaningful participation, and social and gender inclusion, which help ensure the community’s consent, provide access to information, prevent harm, and hold parties accountable. This case directly relates to the Principle of Procedural Justice in the JET Framework. It underscores how meaningful and transparent community participation has been overlooked.

It also relates to Distributive Justice, as it unfairly places the burden of costs and risks on the community’s land and livelihoods. It reinforces the Policies and Laws pillar, highlighting the centrality of FPIC, which ensures the community’s consent and access to information, prevents harm, and promotes accountability.

The pursuit of greater geothermal energy in Kenya has imposed an unfair burden of costs and risks on the community’s land and livelihoods. Furthermore, the government failed to protect the land rights of people living near the crater. A more balanced approach would be for the government to assess whether these communities’ land rights could still be protected while seeking to expand the country’s geothermal energy supply. Alternatively, the government could have considered alternative energy sources, benefit agreements that compensate people for losses, stricter operational conditions, and feedback mechanisms between the project developers and affected community members.

Finally, this case shows how community organising, legal empowerment, and strategic litigation can help communities to litigate for their rights and to hold governments, corporations, and investment institutions accountable.



Case Study two: EDM Wind Power Project – Jangamo, Mozambique



CASE NAME AND LOCATION

EDM Wind Power Plant in Jangamo District, Inhambane Province, Mozambique.



Photo taken by Bruno Gomes on 19 August 2025 in the Inhambane Province, Paidane near the area surrounding the wind measurement mast of the EDM Jangamo Wind Power Project

CONTRIBUTION BY

Bruno Gomes from Natural Justice in Mozambique



“ True climate justice is not only about replacing fossil fuels with renewables – it’s about transforming how decisions are made, ensuring that communities are informed, consulted, and never left behind. The Jangamo wind project shows that justice in the energy transition begins long before the turbines start turning. ”

THE SITUATION

The Jangamo Wind Power Project, also known as the Inhambane Wind Farm project, is one of Mozambique's first onshore wind energy projects, designed to support the country's Promotion of Renewable Energy Auctions (**PROLER**) Programme.²⁷ The project, led by Electricidade de Moçambique (**EDM**) in partnership with Tractebel Engineering, Impacto Lda, and Verde Azul Consult Lda, aims to install an estimated 40 – 50 MW of onshore wind capacity.²⁸

Public consultations were announced for 31 October 2024 (Sogue) and 1 November 2024 (Jangamo District Headquarters), covering affected communities in Paindane, Sogue, and Cumbana districts. The Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (**ESIA**) and Resettlement Action Plan (**RAP**) are under preparation by Verde Azul.²⁹

The project's infrastructure includes a wind farm and a transmission corridor that carries electricity to the Lindela Substation, presumably as part of the Temane Transmission Project.³⁰ Civil society organisations, Natural Justice (**NJ**), Justiça Ambiental (**JA!**), and Centro para Desenvolvimento Alternativo (**CDA**), have engaged with the communities to monitor the project implementation.

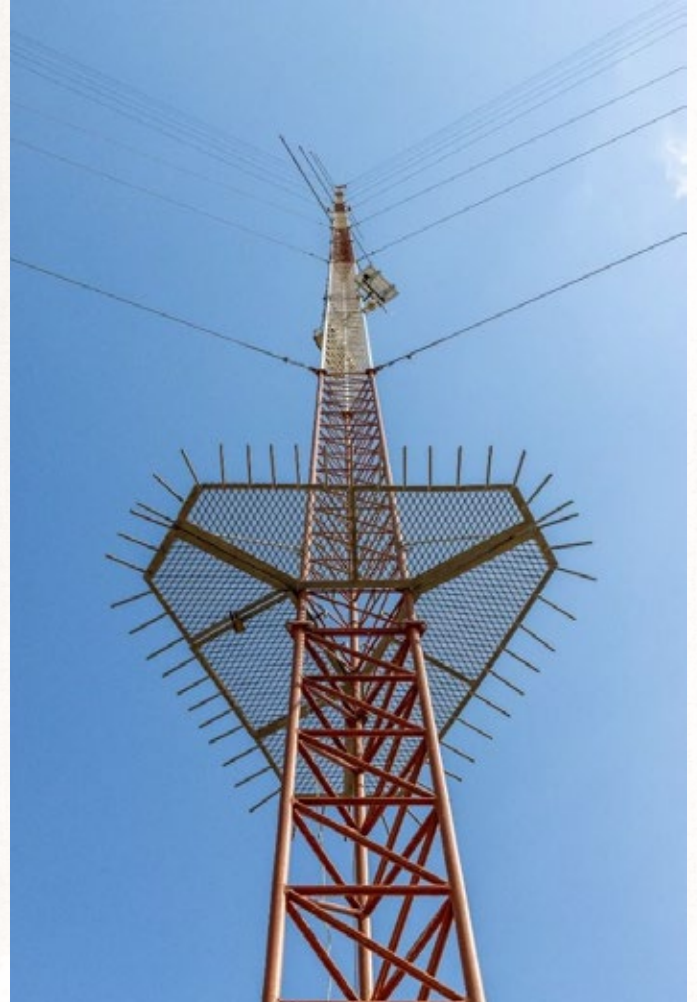


Photo taken by Bruno Gomes on 19 August 2025 in the Inhambane Province, Paindane, near the area surrounding the wind measurement mast of the EDM Jangamo Wind Power Project

²⁷ Freightnews "Mozambique positioning itself to become regional energy hub" (1 November 2024). Available at <https://www.freightnews.co.za/article/mozambique-positioning-itself-to-become-regional-energy-hub>. Agence Française de Développement "PROLER: Supporting Mozambique to develop large-scale renewable energy production". Available at <https://www.afd.fr/en/projects/proler-supporting-mozambique-develop-large-scale-renewable-energy-production>.

²⁸ Electricidade de Moçambique (**EDM**) "Consulta Pública sobre o Projecto da Central Eólica de Jangamo". Available at <https://www.edm.co.mz/en/concurso/consulta-publica-sobre-o-projecto-da-central-eolica-de-jangamo>. PROLER "Estudo de Pré-Viabilidade Ambiental e Definição de Âmbito: Central Eólica e Linha de Transmissão Associada, de Jangamo". Available at <https://proler.gov.mz/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/EPDA-e-TdR-Central-Eolica-Jangamo.pdf>.

²⁹ Electricidade de Moçambique (**EDM**) "Consulta Pública sobre o Projecto da Central Eólica de Jangamo" (2024). Available at <https://www.edm.co.mz/concurso/consulta-publica-sobre-o-projecto-da-central-eolica-de-jangamo>.

³⁰ African Development Bank (**AfDB**) "Multinational – Temane Transmission Project (TTP)". Available at <https://mapafrica.afdb.org/en/projects/46002-P-Z1-FA0-164>.

THE IMPLICATIONS ON COMMUNITY LIFE

Community testimonies and Natural Justice's field verification show significant procedural and social shortcomings that risk undermining the project's legitimacy.

During a field mission, NJ, JA! and CDA visited communities in the Paindane, Sogue and Jangamo districts. In Paindane, community members reported that two high-voltage transmission lines are already planned to cross their territory, carrying power to the Lindela substation. Households along the route, particularly those in the mid-corridor, fear that, without formal demarcation of the transmission corridor, they may later be denied compensation or land restitution.

Community members explained that consultants from Verde Azul Consultoria had distributed beneficiary tokens to record existing 'assets', including houses, farmland, trees, graves, and livestock. This data collection, conducted between 2024 and early 2025, was presented as part of a resettlement inventory. By the time of the field mission, at least two community meetings had taken place. Yet none had produced concrete feedback or the disclosure of official documents – and no minutes of these meetings are available. Verde Azul participated in the first meeting, while EDM and the district administration attended the second.

Community members expressed frustration with the process's lack of transparency and its slow pace. According to community accounts, the District Administrator advised villagers not to disrupt their lives and to continue planting and building. Yet there is widespread fear that new crops or houses will not be compensated, as asset registration has already closed.

Additional concerns have emerged about youth unemployment in the project area and unequal access to electricity, as only local leaders' homes are currently connected to the grid. Rumours persist that the Lindela substation, which will receive wind-generated electricity, might also serve the Mutamba Minerals heavy sands project, which has identified a mineral deposit near the neighbourhood of Bairro 2 in Paindane. This has fuelled community suspicion that a supposedly public renewable-energy investment could indirectly benefit extractive industry operations without any assurance of electricity access for the communities. Many community members lack electricity.

From a legal standpoint, these issues reveal clear procedural flaws. Mozambique's EIA Regulation (Decree 54/2015) requires that an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment include an Environmental Management Plan (**EMP**) and a RAP. However, during the public consultations, neither annex was presented nor made accessible. Nevertheless, the resettlement process has already begun. To date, the consulting firm Verde Azul has not publicly clarified the status of the EIA or the RAP.



Photo taken by Bruno Gomes on 19 August in the Inhambane Province, Jangamo community adjacent to the Mutamba Mineral Sands processing plant

REASONS FOR THIS ENERGY PROJECT

This project was initiated to provide clean, renewable and sustainable energy in Mozambique, with job creation promised.³¹ The location was identified in a 2008 feasibility study for the development of wind power.³² However, the Jangamo case reflects structural and governance challenges within Mozambique's renewable energy rollout:

- Lack of procedural clarity and weak transparency in environmental and resettlement processes.
- Institutional fragmentation among EDM, local authorities, and consulting firms led to contradictory messaging.
- A policy gap in which renewable projects mirror extractive-industry practices, prioritising infrastructure delivery over participatory justice.
- Limited oversight of consultants and insufficient enforcement of safeguards under the Environmental Law and Resettlement Decree (31/2012).

³¹ Club of Mozambique "First wind power plant to be installed in southern Mozambique" (31 August 2020). Available at <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/first-wind-power-plant-to-be-installed-in-southern-mozambique/>.

³² Energypedia "Support for Wind Power Development in Mozambique" (30 June 2008). Available at https://energypedia.info/images/c/cb/EN_Support_for_Wind_Power_Development_in_Mozambique_report_DNER.pdf.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Civil society actors, Natural Justice, JA!, and CDA provided community legal capacity through facilitated meetings in Jangamo and Vilankulos to clarify community rights to participation, compensation, and access to information.

- ✓ They gathered community testimonies, photographs, and meeting minutes to support future administrative or judicial actions.
- ✓ Formal letters were sent to Verde Azul and EDM requesting the disclosure of all ESIA and RAP documents, in line with Mozambique's Right to Information Law (Law 34/2014).
- ✓ Legal monitoring processes have been initiated to evaluate grounds for an administrative challenge or a precautionary measure if licensing proceeds without full compliance.

The organisations have started planning community-level training on the Right to Information Law (Law 34/2014) and environmental participation.



Photo taken by Custodio Duma during a legal empowerment session with the community affected by the EDM wind project, in Sogue

LESSONS LEARNED



The Jangamo experience reinforces that renewable projects are not automatically grounded in justice.

The process lacked transparency and, by failing to disclose critical documents, violated procedural justice and further FPIC.

Procedural justice means that information should be provided during public consultation, not that communities have to seek it. Institutional accountability is crucial. Lack of coordination among EDM, Verde Azul, and local authorities deepens mistrust and could lead to future conflicts.

Inclusion must be intentional. Women and youth are often marginalised in consultations, which continues to deepen inequalities in who benefits from the energy transition. The project, pursued under the guise of a just energy transition strategy, does not mean the project is just. All projects should adhere to principles, policies and laws that protect communities' rights.

The Jangamo case shows that a project cannot be considered part of a "Just Energy Transition" if its procedures replicate the top-down patterns traditionally associated with extractive industries.



APPLICATION OF THE THREE PS FRAMEWORK

As in the Kenyan case, the case reveals overall violations of environmental justice, with decisions made by the government and investors directly affecting the ecological, physical, social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of the surrounding community. It also reveals existing power imbalances and how this community's way of life is affected and disrespected.

This case highlights the importance of Procedural Justice. It underscores the need for meaningful consultation, inclusive and transparent decision-making, access to information, and institutional accountability in Africa's energy transition.

While viewing compensation for losses as a suitable way to offer communities reparations or benefits, the government should also develop a more formal process. This process should clearly set out the compensation amounts, how new buildings and crops are included, and the locations for community relocations. Such planning must involve meaningful engagement with communities, ensuring gender and social inclusion and equitable outcomes. The government must also make it clear that the energy project will not only provide energy access for surrounding communities but also achieve energy democracy in the country – with citizens able to influence the country's energy future, decide on energy priorities, and ensure that

electricity is clean, green and affordable.

It highlights the need for Recognitional Justice, which respects diversity and the way of life of communities. It underscores the importance of acknowledging the land, culture, and history of local and indigenous groups, and of implementing measures that uphold the community's needs and dignity.

This case illustrates the policies and laws pillar, particularly the importance of constitutional rights to a clean and healthy environment, the national need to comply with EIA procedures, and fair and equitable environmental and resettlement regulations.

Regarding the Practicalities pillar, it highlights the need for communities to deepen their understanding of investment agreements, energy transition financing, and the international policy arena, and to build legal empowerment and capacity to ensure monitoring and enforcement at the community level.

The Jangamo case highlights the consequences of a lack of transparency in procedural matters, illustrating how renewable energy projects can promote a just transition by emphasising transparency, community participation, and respect for local rights.



Case Study three: Subsidy Removal and Potential Solar Panel Import Ban - Nigeria



CASE NAME AND LOCATION

Subsidy removal and potential solar panel import ban – Federal Republic of Nigeria



Source: <https://africarenewal.un.org/en/magazine/bid-end-subsidy-stirs-protest-nigeria>

CONTRIBUTION BY

God'spower Martins from Urban-Rural Environmental Defenders (U-RED) in Nigeria.



“Nigeria’s energy sector reforms have significant implications for the country’s future. By learning from the experiences of subsidy removal and the development of a local solar industry, Nigeria can create a more sustainable and self-sufficient energy system. It is crucial for policymakers to prioritise inclusive and participatory decision-making processes to build trust and ensure that the needs and concerns of all citizens are considered. By doing so, Nigeria can create a sustainable and self-sufficient energy system that mitigates the potential negative impacts of transitioning to a low-carbon economy on local communities, particularly frontline communities hosting rare earth minerals for green energy, thereby ensuring a just and equitable transition that prioritizes citizens’ well-being and participation.”

THE SITUATION

The Nigerian government has been making efforts to reform its energy sector, including the recent removal of fuel subsidies³³ and a potential ban on solar panel imports.³⁴

Nigeria's fuel subsidy regime cost the government approximately \$10 billion in 2022. In May 2023, during his inaugural address, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu announced the immediate removal of the fuel subsidy, ending a decades-long fiscal policy that had artificially stabilised petrol prices.

The removal of the subsidy on 29 May 2023 led to an outrageous increase in fuel prices, with a litre of petrol costing around ₦617 as of June 2023³⁵, and prices ranging from ₦770.54 per litre in July 2024 to around ₦1,024.99 per litre in July 2025.³⁶ As of October 2025, the price is ₦950 per litre.³⁷ Before the subsidy removal in May 2023, fuel cost about ₦238 per litre.³⁸



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-59448670>

³³ African Climate Wire "Nigeria and Angola Initiate Moves Away from fuel subsidies" (4 July 2023). Available at <https://africanclimatewire.org/2023/07/nigeria-and-angola-initiate-moves-away-from-fuel-subsidies/>.

³⁴ PV Knowhow "Nigeria solar panel ban: 5 Essential Steps to Boost Local Production" (1 April 2025). Available at <https://www.pvknowhow.com/news/nigeria-solar-panel-ban-imports-local-production/>.

³⁵ Al Jazeera "Nigeria petrol prices reach record high after subsidy removal" (18 July 2023). Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/18/nigerian-petrol-prices-reach-record-high-after-subsidy-removal#:~:text=The%20removal%20in%20May%20has,in%20Africa's%20largest%20oil%20producer.&text=Almost%20two%20months%20after%20Nigerian,of%20Africa's%20largest%20oil%20producer.>

³⁶ Business Day "Petrol price rose 33% in one year - NBS" (21 August 2025). Available at <https://businessday.ng/energy/article/petrol-price-rose-33-in-one-year-nbs/>.

³⁷ Punch "Over 310m litres of petrol ready for loading - Dangote" (20 October 2025). Available at <https://punchng.com/over-310m-litres-of-petrol-ready-for-loading-dangote/>.

³⁸ National Bureau of Statistics "Premium Motor Spirit (Petrol) Price Watch (May 2023). Available at <https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241340>

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

Nigeria's fuel subsidy removal was not new. In 2012, the government attempted to remove it, sparking nationwide protests. Public outcry and prolonged demonstrations, which nearly escalated into violent unrest, led the government to reinstate the subsidy. Since then, successive administrations have maintained the subsidy for fear of public opposition and potential unrest.³⁹ The 2023 removal succeeded politically but at a severe social cost, with immediate increases in the prices of goods and services nationwide.⁴⁰

One reason for the decision was to address corruption and financial losses in the subsidy system. Importers and refineries were accused of inflating costs, claiming excessive subsidies, and committing fraud, resulting in billions of naira being misused. These actions also hindered efforts to restore the national refineries, draining resources and causing their stagnation.⁴¹

However, the abrupt announcement, made without meaningful consultation or transition planning, exemplified a top-down, exclusionary approach to policy-making. The lack of public dialogue or preparation heightened the shock, deepening distrust between citizens and the state.

Conversely, the potential ban on solar imports reflects a gradual, more participatory approach intended to promote local value addition and green industrialisation. It aligns with the government's ambition to make Nigeria a hub for manufacturing renewable energy components, supported by new investments such as the Nasarawa lithium processing plant.



³⁹ Raphael M. and Chukwudebe N "Nigerians say country is headed in wrong direction, oppose fossil-subsidy removal"(19 Mar, 2025). Available at <https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/AD958-Nigerians-see-grim-economic-perspective%5EJ-favour-reinstating-fuel-subsidy-Afrobarometer-19march25.pdf>.

⁴⁰ See Taofeek O., (Businesses Day June 1, 2025), The Great Paradox: Huge FAAC allocations to states, no impact on governance. Available at <https://businessday.ng/news/article/the-great-paradox-huge-faac-allocations-to-states-no-impact-on-governance/>.

⁴¹ Reuters "Nigeria spent \$25 billion to fix refineries, outgoing parliament says" (31 May 2023). Available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigeria-spent-25-bln-fix-refineries-outgoing-parliament-2023-05-31/>.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Following the subsidy removal, many citizens expressed dissatisfaction due to its effects. The negative impacts and lack of alternatives in energy should have been tackled to ensure that ending fossil fuel subsidies not only decreased Nigeria's reliance on fossil fuels but also mitigated the economic, social, and well-being challenges faced by communities.⁴²

The government implemented measures to cushion the impact, including:

- ✓ cash transfers to vulnerable populations,
- ✓ provision of buses for public transport, and
- ✓ support for small businesses.

⚠ However, citizens have clearly voiced their dissatisfaction with the gestures which failed to reduce rising transport costs and the increased prices of goods and services after the subsidy was removed.

According to a joint report by the World Bank and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), *"129 million Nigerians, over half the population, now live below the national poverty line, up from 104 million in 2023. This means that an additional 25 million people fell into poverty within a year."*⁴³

Most Nigerians (around 85%) are dissatisfied with the policy, which has led to lowering living standards.⁴⁴



⁴² See Raphael M. and Chukwudebe N., (19 Mar, 2025), AD958: Nigerians say country is headed in wrong direction, oppose fuel-subsidy removal. Available at <https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/ad958-nigerians-say-country-is-headed-in-wrong-direction-oppose-fuel-subsidy-removal/>.

⁴³ Afrobarometer "Majorities of Nigerians oppose removal of fuel subsidies, want them to be reinstated, latest Afrobarometer survey shows" (2024). Available at <https://www.afrobarometer.org/articles/majorities-of-nigerians-oppose-removal-of-fuel-subsidies-want-them-to-be-reinstated-latest-afrobarometer-survey-shows/>.

⁴⁴ PWC "Rethinking Nigeria's proposed solar panel import policy". Available at <https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/publications/rethinking-nigeria-proposed-solar-panel-import-policy.html>.

LESSONS LEARNED



The Nigerian experience offers powerful lessons for just energy transition governance.

Engagement and meaningful participation in decisions that affect citizens' social, economic, and ecological well-being are essential. Nigeria's experience shows that removing fuel subsidies without public consultation led to resistance and social hardship, worsening people's lives. JET demands democratic decision-making rather than top-down decrees. The absence of public engagement, consultation, transparency, and suitable alternatives to meet energy needs fuelled opposition to the government's move.

The solar import ban aims to develop Nigeria's solar industry and promote self-sufficiency, and it requires phased implementation. Removing fossil fuels that hinder energy access, without affordable renewable energy, especially for marginalised, low-income communities, is unwise. The lack of energy democracy, which enables communities to influence energy use, and of national policies that address social realities is evident.

Despite intentions to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, curb corruption, and grow the solar industry, poor engagement, transparency, and accountability have led to a distressing situation. Addressing corruption and inefficiency must go hand in hand with inclusive governance to significantly improve people's lives and well-being.

In short, Nigeria's path shows that the justice of the energy transition depends not on what is built, but on *how* and for *whom* it is built.

APPLICATION OF THE THREE PS FRAMEWORK



This case shows why procedural and distributive justice, as well as energy democracy, are key elements of the JET.

The removal of the subsidy revealed a failure of procedural justice, as citizens were excluded from decisions that worsened their social and economic lives. It also exposed the distributive imbalance in the burden of energy transition costs, which disproportionately affected the poor. Citizens were denied direct democratic involvement in government energy policy transitions.

Although the solar panel import ban offers opportunities to expand the manufacturing sector, increase local access to solar panels, create jobs, and support community energy initiatives, these changes require democratic engagement. Moreover, foreign direct investment and World Bank loans entrench unequal power relations and actively reproduce uneven development. Principles of energy justice and energy democracy would address structural inequities and create opportunities for sustainable, people-centred policies, provided that public participation, transparency, and fairness remain central.

CONCLUSION: A CALL FOR RIGHTS-BASED JUST ENERGY TRANSITION ACTION

The three case studies in Kenya, Mozambique and Nigeria have shown that environmental and social injustices persist, even with clean, renewable energy sources. They highlight a system that results in violations of rights (human and nature). They also offer important lessons for energy transitions. Even in a system not built to support marginalised communities, the case studies demonstrate that citizens and their responses are key to determining the outcomes of the energy transition – and that their inclusion and participation are essential to fair outcomes that do not leave communities worse off.

The Three Ps Framework offers a powerful tool and effective method for assessing whether legal reforms and projects promote justice or perpetuate exploitative cycles. It empowers communities with this understanding, enabling them to grasp what can be achieved and what likely outcomes to expect.

We call for a rights-based action to deliver a just energy transition that puts communities and the earth's needs at the centre:

Defining the terms of engagement



Governments and developers need to ensure communities have full access to information so they can shape decision-making and implementation from the outset.



Uphold FPIC, including the right to say 'NO'



Support communities and stakeholders to establish JET forums where they set their own development goals, methods, and needs.



Simplify project reporting and evaluation to make participation clear, accessible, and accountable.

Enforcing Core Principles



Recognise energy as a human right and a public good, not a commodity to be exploited for profit.



Accessible and affordable electricity as a core design principle.



Human Rights need to be respected and protected by the state and large-scale energy project developers to avoid delayed/stopped rollout of renewable energy.



Training and capacity-building need to be provided to civil society, governments, and businesses so that they can understand and hear communities' knowledge and recognise that their rights need to be defended.



The right to challenge "green" energy project models that reproduce inequality, even when labelled as socially, economically and ecologically beneficial.



Law and policies include principles of energy justice and energy democracy, with mechanisms for enforcement through dispute resolution and the Courts.



Fair and Equitable JET Financing



Ensure financing is accessible, supported by clear information and capacity-building for applications and reporting.



Develop economic models that direct funding and grants towards community-led energy systems and energy sovereignty.



Include government guarantees for community-led energy transitions to protect communities in the event of repayment challenges.



Deliver reparations and climate finance in line with the international polluter pays principle, including access to clean, renewable energy and technology.





Within a decolonial framework for African communities and Indigenous peoples, just energy transitions must recognise ways of being and knowledges that protect life and collective well-being. Cultures and their interrelatedness with nature are acknowledged and respected. For example, local energy systems can be designed to meet electricity and broader energy needs in holistic, life-affirming ways. Energy is regarded as a public good and a necessity.

A decolonial transition moves from extraction to regeneration.

A JET must be embedded in core values such as reciprocity, regeneration, restoration, reparation, care, and solidarity, as well as in life-affirming principles. The energy shift needs to become a means of sustaining life rather than fuelling economic growth alone.



