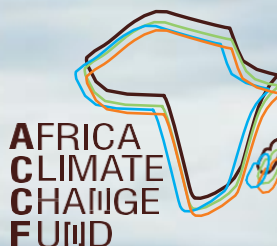




AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP
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DE DEVELOPPEMENT



**LEVERAGING THE NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS IMPLEMENTATION
INDEX TO SHAPE CLIMATE POLICY AND PRACTICE IN AFRICA**

**African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS)
TECHNOPOLICY BRIEF NO. 100**

**Nicholas Ozor
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Leveraging the Nationally Determined Contributions Implementation Index to Shape Climate Policy and Practice in Africa

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African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS)



The African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) is a transdisciplinary network of researchers, policymakers, private sector actors and the civil society promoting the generation, dissemination, use and mastery of Science, Technology and Innovations (STI) for African development, environmental sustainability and global inclusion. In collaboration with like-minded institutions, ATPS provides platforms for regional and international research and knowledge sharing in order to build Africa's capabilities in STI policy research, policymaking and implementation for sustainable development.



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About the NDC Project

Globally, numerous attempts have been made to regulate climate-induced challenges through mitigation and adaptation measures. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of 1992, the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, and the Paris Agreement of 2015 are three potent Conventions, Protocols, and Agreements that aim at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Paris Agreement, a legally binding treaty based on the Party's voluntary submissions, was seen as a major milestone towards bringing years of near-deadlock negotiations to a conclusion and progressive global responsibility by all aimed at combating the rising GHGs.

The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), with conditional and unconditional commitments, are key by-products of the Agreement and require all the countries to spell out their intended actions to address climate change over 5-year periods in terms of adaptation, mitigation, and means of implementation. Despite the Paris Agreement providing little guidance on what and how climate change adaptation would be included in the NDCs, most African NDCs highlight a number of cross-cutting strategies to address their mitigation ambitions as well as their adaptation needs. This is significant considering the continent is already dealing with increased severity and frequency of climate risks and hazards due to its geographical positioning, overreliance on climate-sensitive production sectors such as agriculture, tourism, resource, and infrastructure deficit, and the limited adaptive capacity of the people.

It is against this background that the ATPS and its partners, in 2016, developed and piloted an NDC implementation monitoring, tracking tools, and an index to gauge the status of NDC implementation in countries against the targets indicated in their submitted NDCs. This was measured across the five (5) NDC components [Governance, Finance, Mitigation, Adaptation and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV)] as depicted in the monitoring tool and Index. The Index indicate areas among the components where each country is performing well and where they are not performing well, hence, enabling policy decisions to improve in areas where performance is low. Moreover, the Index promotes comparability among countries/regions, which can spur healthy competition to improve country/regional compliance based on the Index results.

The project titled ***“Building the Capacity of Selected sub-Sahara African Countries to Effectively Measure Progress in their Nationally Determined Contributions’ Implementation Using Tracking Tools and Indexes”***, sought to utilize the key product from this pilot study (monitoring and tracking tools) already developed and validated in eight (8) African countries to build the capacity of focal persons/champions in twelve (12) selected SSA countries (Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to effectively measure their NDCs implementation progress using the tracking tools and Indexes.

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Acknowledgement

The African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) expresses its deepest gratitude to the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, particularly the Ministry of Planning and Development, Ethiopia, for their commitment and support in hosting the Regional Policy Dialogue and Dissemination Workshop on NDC Implementation in Addis Ababa. Special thanks are given to H.E. Mr. Seyoum Mekonen, State Minister, Ministry of Planning and Development, for gracing the opening ceremony and providing visionary guidance. The valuable contributions from country delegates, government officials, data collectors, civil society actors, academics, private sector representatives, and development partners who participated both in-person and virtually are also appreciated. The policy dialogue would not have been possible without the financial support from the African Climate Change Fund (ACCF) under the African Development Bank (AfDB). ATPS also commends its strategic partners, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) and the West African Green Economics Development Institute (WAGEDI), for their collaboration and expertise. Finally, appreciation is extended to the dedicated project implementation team at ATPS, as well as to the facilitators, moderators, and rapporteurs who ensured the success of the policy dialogue.

Key Messages

- Despite the updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of African countries, implementation progress remains uneven, with governance being the strongest-performing among the NDC components, while a significant lag in finance and technology transfer continues to hinder overall progress.
- Many of the African countries face significant constraints in building systems to generate reliable data, with challenges including fragmented data, institutional reluctance to share information, and a lack of coordination among government agencies.
- The NDC Implementation Index is not a ranking exercise, but a diagnostic instrument designed to highlight areas for improvement in data quality and institutional commitment. It serves as a tool for continuous learning and improvement.
- A regular review of the NDC implementation index using new data will ensure that countries make conscious efforts to meet their NDC targets and hence take more positive climate action. There is therefore need to support the ATPS and partners in continuously building the capacity of countries to collect reliable data that are used for developing the NDC implementation Index.

1. Introduction

Africa’s ability to honour its commitments under the Paris Agreement hinges on the strength of its systems to track, measure, and evaluate progress in implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Bridging the gap between pledges and measurable action requires more than political will—it demands robust technical capacity, standardized monitoring tools, and coordinated institutional frameworks that can translate commitments into demonstrable results.

The idea of developing a standardized tool to assess NDC implementation in Africa emerged from early collaborative engagements between the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA). Both organizations recognized that while African countries had submitted their NDCs, there was a critical gap in systematically tracking and comparing progress in a transparent, evidence-based, and policy-relevant way. Existing reporting mechanisms, such as Biennial Update Reports (BURs) and National Communications (NCs), provided valuable information but varied widely in scope, format, and frequency—making it difficult to conduct cross-country comparisons or derive policy insights.

In response, ATPS and PACJA initiated technical consultations and stakeholder dialogues (Ozor and Nyambane, 2020a; Sanou et al., 2020a) to conceptualize the “NDC Implementation Index”—a diagnostic framework offering a composite measure of how effectively countries were translating commitments into action (Sanou et al., 2020b). Unlike purely emissions-focused tracking tools, this Index was designed to incorporate broader dimensions of climate action, including institutional readiness, policy integration, financing mechanisms, stakeholder participation, and the enabling environment for innovation and technology deployment (Ozor and Nyambane, 2020a; Sanou et al., 2020a). This multidimensional approach ensured that the NDC Implementation Index would be relevant for policymakers, development partners, and civil society organizations alike.

The conceptualisation phase combined international best practice reviews with targeted consultations involving African government agencies, regional bodies, and technical experts. ATPS contributed its policy research, data analysis, and capacity-building expertise, while PACJA leveraged its extensive

advocacy networks to ensure the Index reflected both national priorities and grassroots realities. An initial framework was piloted in selected countries to test its feasibility, relevance, and adaptability across different governance and climate contexts (Ozor and Nyambane, 2020b). These early efforts laid the foundation for the regional project tagged ***“Building the Capacity of Selected sub-Sahara African Countries to Effectively Measure Progress in their Nationally Determined Contributions’ Implementation Using Tracking Tools and Indexes”***—implemented in collaboration with the West African Green Economics Development Institute (WAGEDI) and funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) through the African Climate Change Fund (ACCF)—to refine and apply the Index in twelve sub-Saharan African countries namely: Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

A major milestone in this journey was the Regional Policy Dialogue and Dissemination Workshop, held from 8–6 July 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event brought together over 65 delegates—comprising government officials, technical experts, civil society actors, and development partners from 12 countries—to deliberate on key findings, share country experiences, and validate the outputs of the NDC Implementation Index. Beyond validation, the workshop created a platform for peer learning, harmonization of monitoring approaches, and the exploration of strategies to institutionalize the Index within national governance systems.

2. Rationale for NDC Implementation Index

Tracking NDC implementation in Africa is not merely a technical exercise in data collection; it is a complex governance process that requires strong institutions, inclusive stakeholder participation, and sustained policy engagement at both national and regional levels. Many countries face persistent challenges in establishing reliable, transparent, and timely data systems that can effectively inform climate policy. Weak institutional frameworks, fragmented data collection, and limited coordination mechanisms often leave monitoring efforts vulnerable to inconsistency, political disengagement, and lack of accountability (Sanou et al., 2020a).

The absence of systematic political buy-in—particularly from key Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs)—further limits the integration of NDC tracking into national planning and budgeting processes. Without institutionalized frameworks and cross-sectoral coordination, progress risks remaining fragmented, superficial, or overly dependent on external support. Addressing these barriers demands deliberate action to strengthen policy coherence, build technical capacity, and embed NDC tracking as a core element of national climate governance.

The NDC policy dialogue held in Addis Ababa directly addressed these needs by fostering a structured regional dialogue where stakeholders could critically examine the enabling conditions for effective NDC monitoring. It facilitated the sharing of country experiences, provided opportunities for harmonizing methodologies, and promoted strategies for leveraging the NDC Implementation Index as both a diagnostic tool and a catalyst for continuous improvement. Through peer learning, the policy dialogue strengthened inter-country collaboration—an essential ingredient for aligning policies, mobilizing resources, and scaling climate innovations across Africa.

The dissemination of evidence and validation of the Index that were carried out during the policy dialogue reinforced the need for enduring systems that go beyond periodic reporting to embed transparency, accountability, and adaptive learning into NDC implementation. This approach advanced Africa’s broader climate governance agenda, contributing to the African Union’s Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032) (African Union, 2022) and laying the groundwork for sustained, high-impact climate action across the continent.

3. Methodology

This policy brief was developed based on a comprehensive review and analysis of the *Proceedings of the Regional Policy Dialogue and Dissemination Workshop on NDC Implementation*. The content is a synthesis of the key presentations, panel discussions, country experiences, and final resolutions from the two-day event held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 8–6 July 2025. Key sources of information include the executive summary, the detailed workshop agenda, the research findings, and the country-by-country experiences shared by delegates. The brief’s structure and content directly reflect the discussions that unfolded, particularly the themes of data governance, institutional challenges, and the strategic application of the NDC Implementation Index as a tool for policy and practice. The final recommendations presented herein are the formal resolutions and key takeaways that were agreed upon by the workshop participants.

4. Key Findings

The NDC Implementation Index, a new online platform, provides a systematic and data-driven mechanism to monitor and evaluate how well countries are aligning their actions with their NDCs. The platform evaluates five core components of the Paris Agreement: governance, MRV, mitigation, adaptation, and finance and technology transfer. The workshop's discussions provided a rich tapestry of country experiences, aspirations, and challenges, confirming that while countries show commitment, the practical implementation of NDCs remains a significant hurdle.

4.1 Countries and Components are at varying levels of NDC Implementation

The Index revealed that while many African countries have demonstrated strong political will and institutional commitment, the level of progress varies significantly across regions and components (Ozor and Nyambane, 2025). Governance was consistently the strongest-performing area, which is often linked to the presence of clear mandates and coordinated governance structures within government institutions. This includes the integration of climate objectives into national development plans and budgets, enhancing accountability and ensuring climate targets are not sidelined. In stark contrast, finance and technology transfer remains the most underperforming component across the continent. The findings show that most countries continue to struggle with mobilizing sufficient domestic and international climate finance, as well as scaling up the deployment of innovative, low-carbon technologies. Delegates highlighted that this is a critical barrier, as finance and technology are essential enablers for both mitigation and adaptation efforts. Mitigation and adaptation measures are increasingly being integrated into national planning processes, but their on-the-ground implementation is often constrained by the very same challenges of inadequate financing and limited access to technologies. Adaptation efforts, for instance, have progressed in terms of vulnerability assessments, but impact tracking remains weak.

4.2 Challenges with Data and Institutional Coordination

The workshop exposed a widespread and critical challenge: a lack of robust, reliable data systems and institutional coordination in most countries. Delegates from Ghana highlighted the difficulty in accessing relevant data due to institutional friction, with officials being reluctant to share information and citing concerns over how the data would be used. In Botswana, a delegate noted that while a lot

of climate action was happening, it wasn't documented in a way that aligned with the Index's requirements, and data was fragmented across ministries. In Nigeria, delegates reported that data collection process lacked adequate government stakeholder participation, making it difficult to track progress in ministries that had not mainstreamed climate actions into their policies. The discussions underscored the problem of "policy without practice," where well-formulated climate policies are disconnected from their often-weak implementation due to misaligned interests, insufficient political will, and institutional bottlenecks. A delegate from Namibia, for example, noted that some data had simply not been collected or lacked verifiability. This pervasive issue highlights the need for governments to invest in stronger national data systems to support reliable climate tracking, as well as in capacity building of technical officers involved in NDC data collection and documentation.

4.3 The Power of the NDC Index and Regional Collaboration

Despite the challenges, the workshop showcased the immense value of the Index as a platform for dialogue, policy learning, and regional alignment. Participants from Kenya, for instance, initially thought the tool was for quantitative measurement but realized it was a diagnostic instrument to assess the enabling conditions for implementation. This shift in perspective is crucial, as the Index provides a credible tool for countries to push for more robust data systems and evidence-based climate governance. The platform offers interactive dashboards, country profiles, and comparative analyses to foster transparency and public accountability. The workshop provided a forum for sharing best practices and ideas. A representative from Zambia shared a model of establishing a national carbon framework and Climate Change Act to regulate both voluntary and compliance carbon markets. Ethiopia's hosting of the event and its focus on initiatives such as the Green Legacy Programme and investments in renewable energy were also highlighted as examples of holistic climate action. The discussions confirmed that peer learning through South-South cooperation is a powerful mechanism for sharing best practices and strengthening climate action across the continent.

5. Conclusion

The Regional Policy Dialogue and Dissemination Workshop in Addis Ababa was a pivotal moment for strengthening NDC implementation across sub-Saharan Africa. The event successfully brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from government, research institutions, universities, the private sector, civil society organizations, think tanks, and the media, thereby creating a platform for transparency, policy influence, and collaboration. The NDC Implementation Index was affirmed as a vital tool for tracking progress and guiding evidence-based policy formulation in the sub-sector. While the workshop revealed uneven progress across regions and components, with governance being the strongest area and finance and technology transfer lagging behind in meeting NDC implementation targets, a shared commitment to overcoming these challenges through sustained effort and collaboration was evident. Delegates recognized that effective NDC implementation is deeply linked to national development priorities and collectively resolved to ensure the Index's sustained improvement and annual update as a shared resource for the continent's climate ambition.

The excursion to the Ethiopian Science Museum served as a powerful reminder that technology and innovation are critical enablers for climate action. The workshop closed with a collective call to action, not as an end, but as the beginning of a renewed commitment to accelerate NDC implementation and foster mutual support among nations. Delegates maintained that the first-ever NDC implementation index online platform developed by the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) and its partners remains a unique and innovative tool for measuring countries' progress in NDC implementation, to enable them to improve on aspects of the components where they are not performing well in relation to other countries. They pointed out the need for the exercise to be scaled across African countries as it not only measures progress in NDC implementation but also helps build the capacity of experts involved in data collection and use in countries.

6. Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forth to accelerate progress in meeting NDC targets across the continent, drawing on the collective experiences and discussions from the workshop:

Recommendation 1: Institutionalize the NDC Implementation Index: Governments should formally adopt and integrate the NDC Implementation Index into their national climate governance frameworks. Governments should institutionalise the NDC Implementation Index by formally embedding it into national climate governance systems to ensure its sustained use and impact. This involves establishing high-level inter-ministerial committees, chaired at a senior political level, to provide oversight, policy direction, and cross-sectoral coordination. NDC targets and indicators from the Index should be mainstreamed into ministerial budgets, work plans, and performance contracts, making climate action a measurable component of institutional accountability. To maximise its value, the Index should be positioned as a continuous diagnostic tool—updated regularly to identify progress gaps, inform resource allocation, and guide policy reforms—rather than being treated as a one-off reporting exercise. This institutionalisation will ensure that climate ambition is consistently linked to actionable targets, measurable outcomes, and transparent reporting, thereby enhancing the credibility and effectiveness of national climate action.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen National Data Ecosystems to enhance quality, accessibility and accountability. Countries must invest in building robust national data systems that adhere to the UNFCCC’s TACCC principles (Transparency, Accuracy, Consistency, Comparability, and Completeness). This requires developing national climate change secretariats or agencies with central responsibility for data management and operationalizing integrated MRV platforms to track progress effectively. A multi-stakeholder approach needs to be enhanced as it is crucial for improving data quality and accessibility. Governments should actively engage non-state actors, including civil society organizations, the private sector, and academia, in the collection and validation of data, as well as in policy dialogue.

Recommendation 3: Mobilise sustainable resources through climate finance strategies, bankable project pipelines, technology hubs, and capacity building for NDC implementation and updates.

African countries should mobilise sustainable financial, technical, and human resources to support NDC implementation and the annual update of the NDC Index by developing comprehensive national climate finance strategies, integrating NDC priorities into budgets, and establishing a pipeline of bankable “NDC- ready” projects. Funding can be drawn from dedicated national climate funds, global climate finance mechanisms, public–private partnerships, and innovative instruments such as green bonds. Technical capacity should be enhanced through national hubs for climate technology transfer and innovation that connect research institutions, start-ups, and industry to scale solutions. Human resource development should focus on targeted training programmes that equip professionals and communities with the skills needed to implement, monitor, and report on climate actions.

Recommendation 4: Use the NDC Implementation Index to identify gaps, harmonise methodologies, and foster peer learning.

African countries should utilise the NDC Implementation Index as a diagnostic tool to pinpoint gaps, track progress, and guide continuous improvement of climate targets. Regional platforms should be leveraged to harmonise data collection methodologies, indicators, and reporting frameworks, enabling comparability and alignment across countries. Strengthening South–South cooperation will facilitate the exchange of best practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions, while joint capacity-building initiatives can address shared challenges such as data quality, policy coherence, and investment mobilisation. Such collaboration will enhance collective bargaining power in global climate negotiations, position Africa as a unified voice, and accelerate the achievement of continent-wide climate and development goals.

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