



UNLOCKING SUBNATIONAL POTENTIAL FOR GREEN JOBS: A POLICY BRIEF



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Executive Summary

This policy brief makes a case for subnational action in the creation of green jobs within the context of the National Inclusive Green Jobs Act. Given Nigeria's federal structure, states play a vital role in job creation and skills development. Integrating subnational actors ensures context-specific green employment strategies across diverse regions. It enables better coordination, fiscal alignment, and accountability between federal and state governments. Ultimately, this approach will unlock regional potential and scale inclusive green job creation nationwide.

1.0 Introduction: Why Subnational Action Matters

Subnational actors are often frontline implementers of policy¹. State governments, local governments, provinces and municipalities possess contextual knowledge and proximity to specific stakeholder groups that may be unavailable at the national level². As such, national interventions require subnational action to sustain political will, support sustainability and drive continuity. This is especially the case in decentralised systems, where inclusion of subnational actors can translate national objectives into meaningful local change³.

But challenges exist. In Nigeria, where power is shared among the federal, state and local governments⁴, subnational actors are often constrained by limited financial autonomy and legal overlaps. Nigeria operates a federal system where legislative powers are divided into the Executive list; controlled by the federal government, the Concurrent List; shared by the federal and state government and Residual powers; which generally reside with the state governments⁵. This limits subnational involvement in concurrent matters⁶, especially in areas like energy access and job creation.

2.0 A Missed Opportunity: Harnessing Subnational Action for Green Job Creation



Green jobs are decent jobs that contribute to preserving or restoring the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency."-International Labour Organisation (ILO)⁷

¹Lipsky Michael (1980). Street Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services. Russell Sage Foundation.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/107758978161044713>

²Hsu, A., Höhne, N., Kuramochi, T., Vilariño, V., & Sovacool, B. K. (2020). Beyond states: Harnessing sub-national actors for the deep decarbonisation of cities, regions, and businesses. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 70, 101738. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2020.101738>

³Faguet, J.-P. (2014). Decentralization and Governance. *World Development*, 53(1), 2–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.01.002>

⁴Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). <https://nigeriarights.gov.ng/files/constitution.pdf>

⁵Elaigwu Isawa. The Federal Republic of Nigeria. Forum of Federations.

https://www.forumfed.org/libdocs/Global_Dialogue/Book_2/BK2-C08-ng-Elaigwu-en.pdf

⁶Bawo and Ighodalo (2023). The Constitutional Amendment Heralding The Decentralization Of The Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry ("NESI").

⁷International Labour Organisation (ILO). What is a Green Job?

<https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/just-transition-towards-environmentally-sustainable-economies-and-societies/what-green-job>

In Nigeria, grass root initiatives and subnational actors like state and local governments can serve as green job engines, supporting employment growth, especially in rural areas.⁸ These actors possess the capacity to design targeted interventions, with an understanding of local labour demands, local preferences and constraints.⁹ While green jobs at the national level are often linked to macroeconomic targets and framed in terms of energy efficiency and the need to reduce emissions (for example, Nigeria's National Energy Transition Plan),¹⁰ green job initiatives at the subnational level are more grounded in local developmental contexts, and aimed at solving local problems.¹¹



Green jobs at subnational levels are often grounded in local developmental contexts, and aim to solve local problems such as agri-waste processing, recycling, community-based forestry management, solar maintenance and use of sustainable materials in construction.¹²

3.0 Innovation from Below: Case Studies in Subnational Green Job Creation

There are several examples of subnational action towards driving sustainability and providing green jobs, some of which include:

Action	Examples
Climate Policy/Laws	States such as Lagos, Gombe and Ebonyi have climate action plans/policies currently enacted or in progress.
Budgetary Allocations	21 states have budgetary allocations for climate change, with specific projects captured as climate-related (SPP Report, 2024)
Major Green Projects	Several states have green projects that support job creation, focused on several areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Emission reduction and renewable infrastructure planning: e.g. Lagos Rail Mass Transit Green Line and Greening Lagos InitiativeCommunity-based forestry management and agro-climatic resilience: e.g. Gombe Goes Green (3G), Ekiti Forestry and Agro-forestation pilotsGreen Job Creation: Edo Jobs platformCarbon Emissions Reduction and Green Job Creation: e.g. Lagos Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) electrification trials

*Source: Climate Governance Report, Performance rating and Ranking of Nigeria's 36 States (2024).
Society for Planet Prosperity (SPP) and the Department of Climate Change, Federal Ministry of Environment.¹³*

⁸Ezeamama I. And Ofozoba C.A. (2023) Role of Local Governments in Rural Development of Nigeria, a Case Study of Ekwusigo Local Government Area of Anambra State." British Journal of Marketing Studies, vol. 11, 2023, pp. 29–43, ejournals.org/bjms/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2023/11/Role-of-Local-Governments.pdf, <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjms.2013/vol11n52943>.

⁹Faguet, Jean-Paul. "Decentralization and Governance." World Development, vol. 53, no. 1, Jan. 2014, pp. 2–13, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.01.002>.

¹⁰National Energy Transition Plan (2022), <https://energytransition.gov.ng/>

¹¹Mwaura, Grace, and Dominic Glover (2021) Evidence Synthesis Paper Series Green Jobs for Young People in Africa: Work In Progress. 2021, INCLUDE Knowledge Platform, <https://includeplatform.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ESP-Mwaura-and-Glover.pdf>

¹²C⁴⁰ Knowledge Hub (2022), How to Measure Current And Potential Green Jobs in Your City.

https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/How-to-measure-current-and-potential-green-jobs-in-your-city?language=en_US

¹³Climate Governance Report, Performance rating and Ranking of Nigeria's 36 States (2024). Society for Planet Prosperity (SPP) and the Department of Climate Change, Federal Ministry of Environment.

<https://sppnigeria.org/download/climate-governance-performance-ranking-of-the-36-states-of-nigeria-2024/>

4.0 Policy Proposals to Unlock Subnational Potential

The following proposals can support subnational initiatives:

- Green Job Compacts for States: Enable agreements between the federal government and willing state governments to promote green employment in areas like renewable energy, green construction and ecosystem restoration.
- Fiscal Incentives and Matching Grants: Provide incentives in form of federal support for states that enact job-creation mandates in local energy, waste, or public works.
- Procurement Reforms: Encourage LGAs/states to adopt “green procurement” guidelines that prioritise environmental standards in targeted green sectors.
- Capacity Building: Establish state-level green job-desks that can align with federal programmes and support local businesses and training centres.



5.0 Relevance to NIGJA: The Case for Subnational Provisions

Recommendations for subnational provisions in the National Inclusive Green Jobs Act (NIGJA) include:

- A clause enabling state-led compacts to support partnerships with the federal government and align national green job goals towards the achievement of common objectives, especially in sectors like renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management,
- Provisions for co-financing and technical support from the federal government to drive subnational interventions
- Provisions for federal matching funds for states that invest in green job schemes (e.g. solar installation programs, green construction apprenticeships).
- Mandate the creation of dedicated desks in state ministries (e.g. Environment, Labour, Youth) to:
 - Coordinate green employment initiatives
 - Liaise with federal agencies and private sector actors
 - Track outcomes and report data
- Mandate states to identify regional green job opportunities, map relevant skills, contribute to a national green skills database and tailor training accordingly
- States can be required or encouraged to integrate their own green job opportunities into national job platforms



6.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, NIGJA must embed subnational provisions to leverage Nigeria's federated governance, unlock regional potential, and ensure coherent, inclusive, and effective green job creation across the country.



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