



Best Practice Brief

Incorporating Just Transition Into Climate Action

MAY 2026

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About Best Practice Briefs

Best practice briefs are analyses developed by the NDC Partnership Support Unit that summarize opportunities, strategies, and examples on topics related to the development, implementation, or financing of NDCs. This best practice brief is based on research conducted by Ginette Walls of World Resources Institute (WRI).



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SECTION 1

Introduction

This best practice brief highlights opportunities, strategies, and examples of how countries can effectively include just transition elements in the development, implementation, and financing of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

There is a critical gap between the urgent need to move to low carbon, climate resilient economies, and the skills, decent work, social dialogue, green jobs, and social protections required to do so in a just and equitable manner. Mainstreaming these just transition elements into the NDCs and associated climate action helps countries facilitate a holistic approach to more effective and equitable climate policies that prioritize social elements alongside emissions reductions. This approach, in turn, helps countries scale effective NDC development and implementation and mobilize finance for the benefit of all.

The complex nature of a just transition to a low carbon society is illustrated by the multiple definitions that exist, and how these translate to implementation (see the annex for a list of just transition definitions among key actors). For this best practice brief, “just transition” is characterized as activities that maximize economic and social opportunities or minimize and address potential adverse impacts of climate action on society, with consideration for those in situations of vulnerability and disadvantage. Such activities may also contribute to reducing inequality and equitably distributing the benefits of climate action.

- **Promotion of green jobs and decent work** may include high-quality green jobs, occupational health and safety, labor standards, and workers’ rights.
- **Skills development** may include training curricula tailored to green skills, potentially in the context of technical and vocational education and training.
- **Social protection measures and policies** may extend to unemployment benefits, employment schemes, pensions, insurance schemes, cash transfers, social services, and support to low-income households and displaced populations.
- **Participatory processes and social dialogue** may engage affected communities and vulnerable groups in just transition-related processes, along with trade unions, employers’ organizations, and industry groups.
- **General just transition requests** may also include the development and implementation of just transition plans, strategies, or frameworks and undertaking employment and social impact assessments of climate change and climate policies.



As of April 2026, 84 of the 105 countries requesting support through the NDC Partnership have requested support with just transition elements. Of the 123 countries that submitted their NDCs 3.0 by November 2025, 79% of them explicitly referenced just transition, an increase from 50% who did the same in the previous NDC update. Drawing on the experience across NDC Partnership members, this brief presents key strategies and opportunities for countries to enable a just transition through climate action (see Figure 1), including:

- establishing procedural justice mechanisms to resolve disputes and allocate resources, including meaningful participation of marginalized groups in decision-making processes;
- identifying and advancing priority areas or goals to help define what a just transition to a low carbon society means for the country and guide related efforts;
- enabling distributive justice to ensure the fair distribution of costs and benefits of transitioning within a society;
- strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver and strengthen just transition efforts;
- mainstreaming and promoting policy coherence to enable successful just transition efforts by aligning priorities, goals, and targets, leading to streamlined implementation and finance mobilization capabilities;
- providing just transition finance; and
- monitoring and evaluating just transition efforts to track progress and course correct as needed.

The concepts, frameworks, and examples provided in this brief are non-prescriptive and can be tailored to countries' unique experiences, circumstances, and capacities.

FIGURE 1

Just Transition Strategies and Opportunities

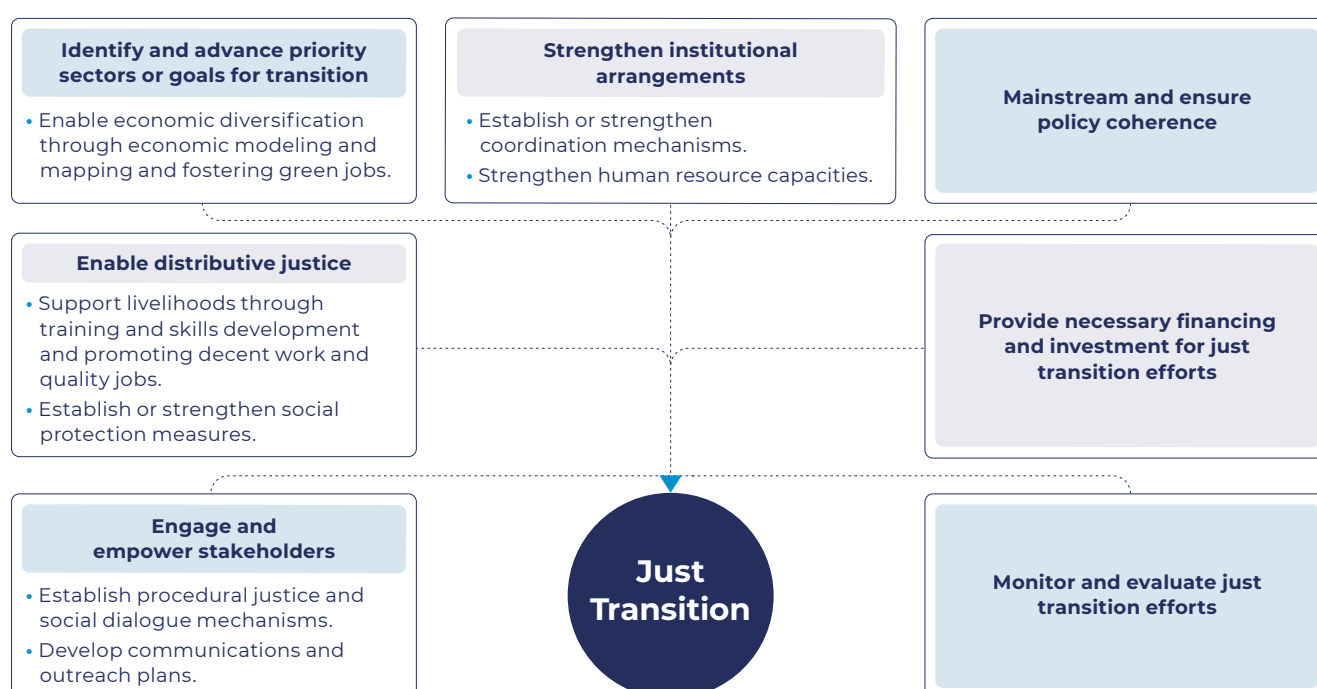


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SECTION 2

Framing Just Transition within Climate Action

History of Just Transition in International Climate Action

The concept of a just transition to a low carbon society (Eisenberg, 2019) emerged out of the labor and environmental justice movements in the United States in the late twentieth century. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development recognized both the need to consider the socioeconomic impacts of efforts to address climate change and that workers and their representatives were major stakeholders in achieving sustainable development. Trade unions (Galgóczy, 2018) also began pushing to include the concept of a just transition to a low carbon society in official negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC; United Nations, 1992).

A watershed moment for the concept of a just transition to a low carbon society was its inclusion in the Paris Agreement in 2015 (UNFCCC, 2016), which noted “the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”. That same year, the International Labour Organization (ILO) published its Guidelines for a Just Transition (ILO, 2016; see box 1). In 2022, the Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP; United Nations Climate Change, n.d.-b) was created with its continuing dialogue series in support of developing national just transition pathways (Adow et al., 2024); and in 2023, just transition was further referenced in the outcomes of the First Global Stocktake (United Nations Climate Change, n.d.-a). More broadly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also support efforts to address climate change in ways that are more equitable—specifically SDG8 on decent work, SDG10 on reduced inequalities, and SDG13 on climate action (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).



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BOX 1

ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition

Published in 2015, ILO's Guidelines for a Just Transition (ILO, 2016) were endorsed by ILO's 187 Member States as the central reference for policymaking on a just transition to a low carbon society and are considered the minimum standard for addressing just transition and sustainable development (United Nations Global Compact, 2022). The guidelines present opportunities, challenges, and guiding principles of a just transition to a low carbon society, laying out policy entry points for developing and implementing just transition actions. They also promote social dialogue, decent work, and social protection (Smith, 2017). In addition to workers, governments, and employers, they advocate for engagement with other relevant stakeholders. Within the guidelines ILO also advocates for policy alignment across 10 areas, from industrial to macroeconomic to active labor market to social protection policies. ILO continues to provide guidance and support to countries and other stakeholders on just transition in NDC planning, implementation, and enhancement, including through the NDC Partnership.

A Just Transition in National Climate Action

Many countries have integrated just transition elements into their national efforts to address climate change, notably in NDCs, Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS), and other national policies, strategies, and frameworks. As of late 2023, just transition had been explicitly mentioned in 72 countries' NDCs (including the 27 countries covered by the European Union NDC; Fransen et al., 2023) and in 57% of the 68 LT-LEDS submitted to the UNFCCC (UNFCCC, 2023).

BOX 2

Just Transition in NDCs

The concept of a just transition to a low carbon society can be reflected in numerous ways within a country's NDC. The ILO's 2025 report on mapping just transition in NDC 3.0 found that 79% of NDC 3.0 submissions, of the 123 countries assessed, included explicit references to a just transition—a marked increase from 50% in the previous cycle (ILO, 2025). The NDC 3.0 cycle also shows an increase in social inclusion and equity references, with explicit mention in 75% of NDCs, such as in Saint Lucia's third NDC. A full 90% of NDCs now references employment-related considerations such as green jobs and decent work, for example in Somalia's third NDC. Some countries' NDCs have dedicated sections covering just transition, such as Nepal's third NDC and Brazil's second NDC. References to just transition elements can be found across all areas of an NDC, including but not limited to mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation. These references now extend beyond simple mentions and over half of NDCs reference action-oriented provision, such as follow-up mechanism and institutional arrangements.

South Africa was the first country to explicitly include just transition in its [Intended NDC](#) in 2015. Countries such as Spain (MITECO, 2020), Indonesia (Republic of Indonesia, 2021), and South Africa (Government of South Africa, 2020) offer clear descriptions of just transition efforts in their LT-LEDS. Numerous countries have also put forward policies, strategies, and frameworks around just transition and the justice implications of climate action (Chan et al., 2024).

- For example, Chile has developed a Just Transition Strategy as part of the country's efforts to transition away from coal (Moreno, 2024; Ministerio de Energía, 2021). Efforts underpinning the strategy creation included developing a working group to examine the social, environmental, economic, labor, and technical implications of the transition, and engagement with a broad swathe of stakeholders. The strategy focuses on retiring coal-fired power plants, with the vision of doing so while allowing “fair, equitable, and sustainable development of the country and the territories involved” and will require coordination across numerous sectors of society to complete the more than 30 actions required.

- In 2022, after broad and inclusive stakeholder engagement across the country, South Africa adopted a Framework for a Just Transition (Presidential Climate Change Commission, 2022). The framework lays out South Africa's vision, principles, and governance arrangements for a just transition to a low carbon society, and identifies sectoral priorities, policy areas of focus, and how to finance these efforts.
- In 2016 the Philippine Green Jobs Act was passed, promoting the creation of decent jobs and sustainable growth toward a greener, more climate resilient economy (WRI, 2021).

BOX 3

Justice Principles Underlying Just Transition Efforts

Justice is a key element underpinning just transition efforts, as the overall aim of a just transition is to move toward low carbon, climate resilient societies while preventing and addressing injustices resulting from these efforts (Wang & Lo, 2021). There are many justice principles, but this brief focuses on two that are increasingly reflected in countries, NDCs: [distributive justice and procedural justice](#).

- Distributive justice refers to the fair distribution of costs and benefits of transitioning within a society (McCauley & Heffron, 2018).
- Procedural justice refers to fairness in the processes to resolve disputes and allocate resources, including meaningful participation of marginalized groups in decision-making about them (Cahill et al., 2020).

Other justice principles that are relevant to just transition efforts, and that have been prioritized in some countries' national efforts include [recognitional](#) and [restorative justice](#).

In some countries, the term just transition is politically sensitive. Even when engaging in activities that display elements of distributive or procedural justice while seeking to transition to more sustainable, lower carbon, climate resilient economies and societies, some countries avoid the term just transition.



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SECTION 3

Best Practices in Integrating Just Transition Elements in NDC Development, Implementation, and Financing

Each of the best practices outlined below includes specific opportunities and strategies to integrate just transition elements into NDC development, implementation, and financing and are illustrated by specific country examples.

1. Establish Procedural Justice Mechanisms

Meaningfully engaging impacted communities in climate policy development and implementation, and empowering them to lead efforts to transition to a low carbon society, strengthens community buy-in and helps ensure the transition is just and sustainable. Specific strategies for establishing procedural justice mechanisms include engaging and empowering stakeholders, establishing social dialogue mechanisms, and developing communication and outreach plans—each of which is detailed below.

1.1 Engage and Empower Stakeholders

It is important to provide meaningful opportunities for input at all stages of the transition to a low carbon society, including transparent feedback to help establish the foundations of procedural justice and ensure the process of stakeholder engagement and empowerment is truly participatory and effective. This can be accomplished through consultations, surveys, and focus groups involving impacted communities, marginalized groups, key stakeholders such as civil society organizations, research institutes, and the private sector. These efforts can identify specific needs and challenges, leading to tailored solutions and resulting in a more widespread and strengthened just transition to a low carbon society.



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In **Antigua and Barbuda**, comprehensive stakeholder engagement is a significant part of efforts to identify NDC development, planning, implementation, and financing needs related to a just transition to a low carbon society. Throughout 2024, the government consulted with various groups—including government agencies, civil society organizations, and local community-based organizations—in an effort to build consensus on climate action priorities and ensure that the voices of vulnerable populations were integrated into the NDC planning and implementation process.



Mexico strengthened the adaptive capacities of local authorities and communities related to mangrove restoration and conservation in developing its 2020 NDC. In an effort to include local priorities and knowledge and involve local residents in the decision-making process, this work began with location-specific stakeholder mapping, community consultations, and the involvement of stakeholders in appraisal exercises. The project also included the identification and analysis of socioeconomic indicators and co-benefits, such as job generation and contribution to fisheries.

1.2 Establish Social Dialogue Mechanisms

Social dialogue is a specific form of engagement that includes negotiation, consultation, and exchange of information among governments', employers', and workers' representatives. Established and regular conversations with these groups can help inform decision-makers of the priorities, needs, and challenges of these stakeholders, who are often among the most impacted by the transition. Social dialogue can help countries manage challenges and create powerful allies in just transition efforts. It is also crucial in developing a transition process that leads to a just outcome.

Nigeria, through its NDC implementation plan launched in May 2024, aims to institutionalize social dialogue and just transition collaboration in several ways. This includes engagement with the private sector, unions, and academic and financial institutions and awareness advocacy campaigns to increase public understanding of and commitment to climate action and a just transition to a low carbon society.

1.3 Develop Communications and Outreach Plans

When communication and outreach with relevant stakeholders is done transparently, frequently, and through appropriate and targeted measures, these efforts can support procedural justice and increase community support for a just transition to a low carbon society. Sharing information with key stakeholders at early stages can help to ensure they have adequate time to provide meaningful input. Communication and outreach can happen while designing (or co-designing with stakeholders) efforts for a transition to a low carbon society, at key moments while the transition is ongoing, and at the end of specific actions or activities. Such communications can provide updates on how activities are progressing, share monitoring information, seek feedback, or provide space for sharing grievances.

Relevant considerations when developing communication and outreach plans include, but are not limited to:

- **Timing of outreach events:** Meaningful participation in outreach events require scheduling at times that are accessible for different stakeholder groups and holding events at different times to account for this. For example, some groups, such as women, have historically had more caregiving responsibilities than others, so holding events at different times or providing free childcare can ensure participation from those with such responsibilities.
- **Logistics of outreach events:** Organizers should consider the logistical support that might be necessary to support some stakeholders in reaching event locations. Holding events at already familiar community spaces—such as libraries, schools, or places of worship—enables stakeholders to engage in familiar places. Access for those less mobile, such as the elderly or persons with disabilities, may mean supplying transportation or ensuring ramps to enter and move throughout buildings are available. Providing funds to cover local transportation costs could also help ensure participation from low-income households.
- **Language of communication materials:** Highly complex legalese is difficult for many people to understand. Using clear, easy-to-understand language in the materials shared with stakeholders is crucial for effective and transparent communication and better enables stakeholders to share input on just transition efforts. In some areas multiple languages are spoken, and communications need to be disseminated in all languages to be accessible to all.
- **Types of communications:** The types of communication materials and methods used also matter for accessibility. For example, some members of society may not be literate, so considering oral, audio, or visual communications that do not require literacy to understand support the inclusiveness of outreach.
- **Power dynamics between participants:** In some focus group settings, women might not feel as comfortable sharing feedback or answering questions if men are present. In others, participants might not wish to contradict the opinions of local government or business leaders who are in the room. The particular power dynamics in different country and subnational contexts should be carefully considered when organizing sessions and events. Separate communication or outreach sessions with different groups can help address asymmetrical power dynamics and help stakeholders feel more comfortable in sharing their input.



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Antigua and Barbuda, with support provided by the NDC Partnership through the Partnership Action Fund (PAF), has embedded a behavioral change communications and outreach specialist within its Department of Environment. The specialist is supporting social dialogue efforts and undertaking the following activities, targeting key stakeholders among vulnerable communities and groups, the private and public sectors, youth, non-governmental organizations, workers affected by the transition, and micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs):

- designing a comprehensive communications plan to enhance knowledge about climate change and the country's NDC commitments;
- supporting the coordination of communications around NDC implementation, with a key focus on the energy transition and a just transition to a low carbon society;
- providing technical support to influence and promote buy-in of stakeholders across NDC implementation efforts;
- developing gender-sensitive public awareness campaigns on a just transition for workers in sectors undergoing economic and technological changes, with tailored messages for men and women; and
- developing public service announcements and informative audiovisual materials to publish in traditional media and social media platforms.

2. Identify and Advance Priority Sectors or Goals for a Just Transition

To identify who might be impacted—and how—by efforts to transition to a low carbon society, countries need to determine their priority sectors, or goals, for the transition. Some begin by focusing on high-emitting sectors to reduce more emissions earlier in the transition, while others aim for low-emitting sectors where emissions can be reduced more quickly. Other key factors could include, but are not limited to, the economic importance of the sector, employment contribution of the sector, political relevance of the sector, and the geographical concentration of the activity. Relevant national circumstances (environmental, social, political, economic, etc.) can all play a role in deciding where to focus and prioritize just transition goals.

Priority setting is important for identifying impacted groups and setting the stage for modeling and assessment and social equity analysis, which underpin robust policy and program design and implementation related to areas such as economic diversification, skills, or social protection.

Priority sectors can also be pinpointed through meaningful stakeholder engagement and co-creation of transition plans and priorities. Countries can engage in multistakeholder exercises and consultations to develop a vision for the country's just transition to a low carbon society or to determine high-level goals to guide the transition process and aim for a just outcome.

Antigua and Barbuda, with support from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and through the NDC Partnership, conducted a technical needs assessment of relevant sectors to achieve a just transitioning of the workforce to greener occupations and more wide-scale adoption of e-mobility.

Malawi, with support from IRENA, began by identifying sectors it considered to be most affected by climate action and the transition to a green economy, such as agriculture—and that would also affect the most vulnerable groups of people such as women and children. The country identified NDC implementation and just transition support needs through comprehensive stakeholder engagement at both the national and subnational levels. Consultations with stakeholders are supporting the identification and development of scenarios to assess the low carbon pathways and socioeconomic co-benefits and development potential of such pathways



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Mauritania has developed a national situation analysis on the sectors that drive a just transition to a low carbon society. This analysis involved an inclusive approach with national stakeholders, including communities, through the Association of Municipalities and Regions. The situational analysis supported the development of a national action plan on the green economy, which will evolve into a national green jobs and decent work program. This is one aspect of Mauritania's wider just transition efforts, delivered through the United Nations and ILO initiative [Climate Action for Jobs and Just Transition](#).

Montenegro, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the NDC Partnership, analyzed energy consumption by the country's households and MSMEs. The government identified how these users are impacted by proposed measures for a just transition from carbon-intensive to clean and renewable energy sources. Led by the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, and Northern Region Development, the effort included a scoping analysis to review existing relevant legislative frameworks; experiences regarding existing programs on the use of renewable energy sources for households and MSMEs; and recommendations for a set of related mitigation measures and financial instruments Montenegro can apply for this purpose. The analysis was supported by stakeholder consultations, household surveys, and focus groups. Additionally, it informed the enhancement of legislative frameworks, including the Draft Law on Protection from the Negative Impacts of Climate Change and Protection of the Ozone Layer ; the establishment of a national monitoring, evaluation, and verification (MRV) system; and the development of a low carbon development strategy.¹

¹ The analysis also informs the work of several organizations supporting the closure of Montenegro's Thermo-Power Plant (TPP), including UNDP, which is working on the country's Just Transition Roadmap (UNDP, 2023). Montenegro is aiming to close the TPP, the source of most of the country's energy sector GHG emissions but also its most stable energy source (accounting for 40–60% of energy production). Closing down the TPP is a highly social issue as the plant and coal mine supplying the plant present income generating opportunities for a significant number of workers and their families.



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2.1. Enable Economic Diversification

In order to transition to a low carbon society, countries must diversify their economies by identifying, promoting, or creating new and additional industries and sectors. This can take decades, and starting sooner rather than later can help the process move more smoothly. There are multiple paths for economic diversification, and each depends on country and subnational contexts. Such efforts necessitate long-term planning informed by analyses that can help pinpoint possible diversification pathways. Focusing on developing just or sustainable supply chains, or green job development—especially for those already marginalized in society or those who will be negatively impacted by the transition to a low carbon society—are ways to promote economic diversification.

Malawi, through its NDC implementation plan launched in August 2022, is seeking to establish grain export processing zones and develop resilient value chains. These efforts support the country's goal to improve socioeconomic resilience in the agricultural sector, through increasing revenue and strengthening the livelihoods of women, men, and youth. Robust monitoring and evaluation would underpin these efforts, including tracking the number of farmers provided with tools and training on enhanced value chains development and climate resilience disaggregated by gender and age.

2.1.1 Conduct Economic Modeling and Mapping

Economic modeling and mapping exercises help countries determine the impacts of transitioning in a specific sector and help underpin efforts to diversify economies. Countries can utilize existing models and methodologies, adapting them to their own contexts to inform their just transition efforts. For example, [input-output models](#) can show the impacts of different diversification strategies on current economies or economic sectors, and the dynamic [Green Economic Model \(GEM\)](#) shows the impacts of economic diversification on climate-related, environmental, and socioeconomic variables.



Malawi, with support from IRENA, through the NDC Partnership, gathered and analyzed data to determine the impacts of the transition to a low carbon society. This effort underpinned the development of the country's LT-LEDS. It included cost-benefit analyses, just transition approach, green jobs assessments, macroeconomic assessments, gender sectoral analyses, and efforts to strengthen capacities to integrate social inclusion.

In 2020, **Nigeria's** Department of Climate Change, with support from UNDP and ILO, organized a broad-based consultation with stakeholders from labor unions, other CSO groups, the Ministry of Labour and Productivity, and representatives from oil companies. Findings from the Green Job Assessment Model (GJAM) were presented at this workshop, and participants provided feedback on the results and recommendations. The GJAM methodology was developed by ILO to help countries understand the impacts of climate policies—especially the NDC—on jobs, GDP, and emissions. The assessment in Nigeria, carried out in collaboration between ILO and UNDP, outlined implications for the country's economic sectors, considered the effects of these policies' medium- and long-term structural changes, and identified positive social and employment outcomes.

3. Enable Distributive Justice to Support Those Affected by the Transition

Understanding who will be impacted by the transition to a low carbon society, and how, is a crucial step in developing just transition plans and efforts. Inclusive stakeholder engagement and empowerment is most meaningful and effective when targeted efforts are made to identify the groups directly and indirectly impacted by the transition to a low carbon society. This involves data collection, analyses, and assessments that clarify how and for whom the costs and benefits of the transition to a low carbon society are distributed in a given context and who would therefore need support to mitigate such harms.

Data collection and analyses can take the form of distributional impacts assessments, needs assessments, vulnerability assessments, employment assessments, and social equity and socioeconomic analyses. They can be done at national or sub-regional levels and can target specific sectors or populations according to geographic location, sector, skillset, industry, etc. Disaggregated data that look at different demographic groups are crucial to understand how different people could be impacted. Data can be disaggregated by factors such as gender, age, education level, income level, and other markers of marginalization or historic exclusion within a society. Once it is understood who is impacted by the transition to a low carbon society, measures and actions need to be developed, implemented, and monitored to address the harms and benefits and ensure they are more equitably distributed across society. There are various ways in which countries can analyze or better understand socioeconomic benefits and harms as part of NDC planning and implementation.

Montenegro is conducting socioeconomic analyses to identify vulnerable groups and understand the impacts of climate change on different parts of society, and their need for support during the transition to a low carbon society. These analyses are crucial and provide a foundation for developing targeted policies that will mitigate negative impacts, support those most affected, help empower communities, and minimize social inequalities.

Saint Lucia, with support from World Resources Institute (WRI) through the NDC Partnership, assessed distributional impacts of its proposed fossil fuel subsidy reform over different income groups. Recognizing that low-income households in Saint Lucia spend a higher proportion of their budget on fuel, the government aimed to avoid regressive reforms and sought recommendations to offset regressive impacts for low-income households with a redistributive approach. Efficient interagency coordination and mobilization of stakeholder members of the National Climate Change Committee supported the final Fossil Fuel Subsidy and Taxation Reform Scenarios Modelling for Saint Lucia.

Antigua and Barbuda, with support from IRENA and through the NDC Partnership, conducted baseline socioeconomic analyses to help identify which communities are most affected by climate change and how they can benefit from climate action initiatives. These analyses have been a critical step in understanding the specific needs of vulnerable populations, and such a data-driven approach helps ensure that interventions are effectively targeted. The analysis looked at the impact of the electric mobility transition on various groups and was followed by the development of gender-responsive recommendations to support increased uptake, access, and availability of electric mobility interventions. The analyses were completed by a just transition specialist embedded advisor.

3.1 Support Livelihoods

Supporting livelihoods is key to ensuring a just transition to a low carbon society and linking climate goals with other sustainable development goals. Creating new jobs (direct, indirect, and induced), improving the education system to better prepare students for the jobs of the future, and reskilling and upskilling for workers to be able to move into new and adapt to changing fields are all important elements to support livelihoods.

This can include:

- maximizing the job and livelihood opportunities generated by the transition to a low carbon society, for example in terms of linkages with MSMEs and the local economies or skills development; or
- addressing potential negative job losses associated with climate action, for example by supporting affected workers through reskilling and upskilling.

Active support for relocation may be necessary where the transition is having regional geographic impacts. Providing economic support in the form of social protection may also be necessary as workers undergo the transition to a low carbon society. This might take the form of temporary income support during the transition, or it might be a longer term approach. Appropriate social benefits include pension, decent severance, and retirement packages for workers who are not able to make career transitions and who retire early. (See Section 3.2 for more on social protection.)



Photo by Kelvin / Adobe Stock

3.1.1 Facilitate Training and Skills Development

The development of skills—via (re)training, vocational programs, building educational pathways, integrating skills into national curricula, and so forth—is crucial for supporting employees in transitioning to new positions or sectors and in supporting youth in employment in new sectors. These activities may include “green skills” development and transitions to “green jobs,” but will also require developing broader skills and opportunities across sectors of the economy as part of just transition efforts.

In **Nigeria**, the agricultural technology company Hello Tractor trains young entrepreneurs and farmers to operate and manage tractors, and it finances their ownership through a pay-as-you-go model.

Pakistan’s Roshni Baji program, an initiative by utility company K-Electric provides inclusive training that empowers women to become certified electricians in a traditionally male-dominated field, offering holistic support that blends technical skill development with practical training such as motorbike riding.

Mobile-first platforms such as **Kenya’s** Arifu are delivering digital training via SMS and WhatsApp, making learning more accessible to users even without internet and helping expand access while avoiding the risk of deepening digital divides.

3.1.2 Promote Decent Work and Quality Jobs

ILO (2018) defines decent work as involving opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace, and social protection for all; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize, and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

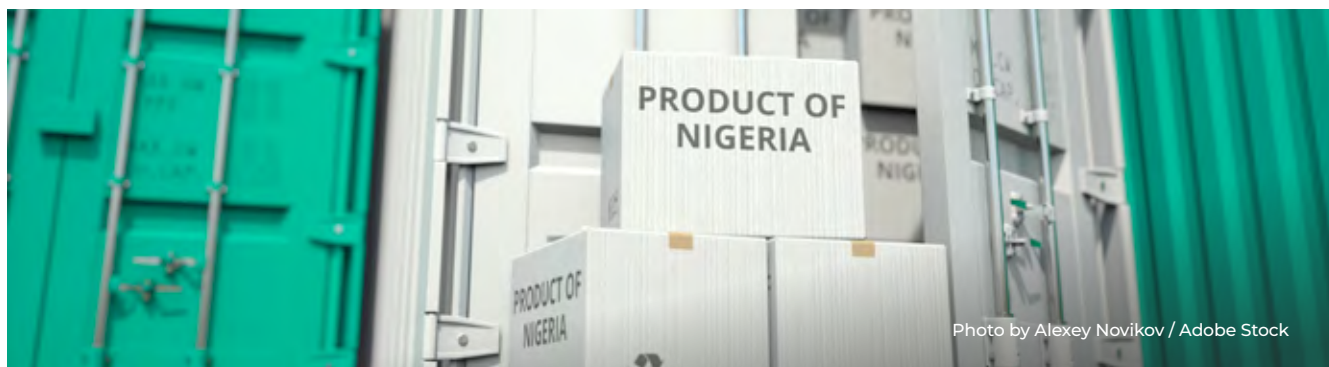
Providing decent work opportunities to those that may face job losses linked to the transition to a low carbon society can help with social acceptance and reduce pushback. Repercussions are to be expected if workers lose their jobs without opportunities for gainful reemployment and adequate social protection as they seek new work. Several NDCs include this term, including [Cambodia](#), [Costa Rica](#), and [North Macedonia](#).

Malawi, with support from the United Nations Environment Programme and through the NDC Partnership, under its NDC implementation plan launched in August 2022, is strengthening the socioeconomic resilience of its population through improved livelihoods and incomes. Malawi is preparing long-term workforce development plans and strategic livelihoods plans to help people move up and out into sound employment opportunities and plan for managed urban migration. These plans focus on climate risk and resilience, youth empowerment, and closing gender gaps.

3.1.3 Foster Green Jobs

Green jobs are also important aspects of a just transition to a low carbon society and economic diversification. These are not restricted to a single sector or set of skills. To build and strengthen opportunities for a just transition to a low carbon society and economic diversification, countries can map out the sectors and types of employment most affected by the transition and then develop policies, roadmaps, and strategies that ensure quality jobs are created in these areas (Jaeger et al., 2021). This mapping can be accomplished through engagement with stakeholders, sectoral analyses that integrate social inclusion and equity considerations, and scenario modeling for low carbon pathways—including modeling the socioeconomic co-benefits and development potential of these pathways.

Training and technical assistance can enable the implementation of sustainable solutions that promote economic and social justice. This may include projects that promote renewable energy sources or green jobs.



Nigeria, as part of efforts to ensure a just transition in the industrial sector through its NDC implementation plan, launched in May 2024, aims to develop a workforce and skilling strategy for workers to drive the change to environmentally friendly production. The country is still seeking support for this request to the NDC Partnership.

3.2 Expand or Strengthen Social Protection Systems

Social protection encompasses policies or programs that seek to prevent or alleviate poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion and minimize the impacts of shocks or crises on people, with particular emphasis on supporting vulnerable groups. Many countries have already established long-running social protection systems; however, in many cases their coverage, adequacy, and comprehensiveness are too low. Forms of social protection can be helpful tools not only to minimize negative impacts of transition efforts, but also to bolster climate resilience and reduce risks from climate change-exacerbated disasters by addressing the root causes of vulnerability, supporting human development, and enabling economic diversification, increasing households' adaptive capacity and helping avert negative coping strategies (Bowen et al., 2020).

By addressing risks across the life course, social protection systems are central to enabling deeper societal climate ambitions. These programs can provide income support to populations affected by transition policies, such as the economic disruptions caused by shifts to clean energy or the removal of fuel subsidies. Social protection programs can also include support such as unemployment benefits, parental leave, pensions, access to health care, subsidies for school meals, cash transfers, and crop insurance.

Despite the potential of social protection systems to support a just transition to a low carbon society, significant gaps remain in their coverage, adequacy, comprehensiveness, and alignment with climate action and just transition goals. While NDCs can play a pivotal role in integrating social protection as part of a just transition to a low carbon society, ILO (2025) has found that social protection is reflected in only 14% of NDCs, and there remains significant potential for expanded integration. The development, planning, implementation, and financing of NDCs can play a pivotal role in integrating social protection as part of a just transition to a low carbon society.

Nigeria, with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through the NDC Partnership, is reviewing the country's National Social Protection Policy to support workers' incomes against risks stemming from climate change and local environmental degradation across all industries. The effort is led by the National Social Safety-Net Coordinating Office, which is aiming to increase the number of climate-resilient social protection programs by 50%, including through protection for farmers (ILO, 2024). The government has also agreed that a set of guidelines on social protection activities are needed to institutionalize social dialogue, partnership, and collaboration on a just transition to a low carbon society. Nigeria is still seeking support for the request to the NDC Partnership to cover farmers in the new social protection policy.

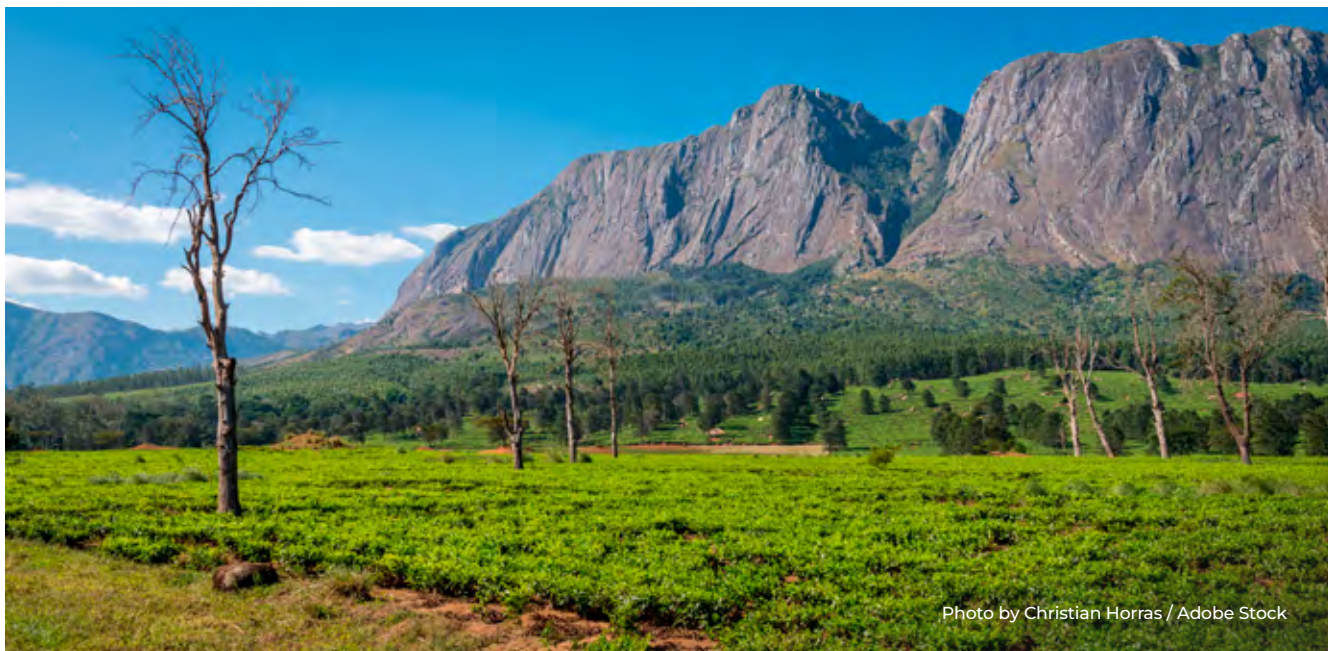


Photo by Christian Horras / Adobe Stock

Malawi is seeking support for a request to the NDC Partnership to develop multiple social protection activities and strengthen the socioeconomic resilience of its population. The activities will include risk financing options to boost inclusive social support through a coordinated system. Led by the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare, the effort will bring climate change resilience considerations into an update of Malawi's 2012 National Social Support Policy. It will build on the systems and mechanisms set up by the National Social Support Programme that provide social support to households engaging in climate-sensitive occupations and those disrupted by climatic shifts and hazards.

4. Strengthen Institutional Arrangements

Institutional arrangements that are systematized, adequately resourced, coordinated, include all relevant stakeholders, and have dedicated expertise and capacity embedded across government can help deliver and strengthen just transition efforts. Coordination through whole-of-government (across actors, sectors, and at all levels) and whole-of-society (such as civil society organizations, partner institutions, communities, academia and research institutions, private sector, and other relevant stakeholders) approaches can help prioritize continuous and robust engagement in support of just transition processes and outcomes. Committing dedicated human resource capacity helps ensure country ownership of just transition efforts and can support such efforts in a variety of ways (such as leading outreach and communications to impacted stakeholders; specialists to manage monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and ministerial or sectoral focal points).

4.1 Establish or Strengthen Coordination Mechanisms

Coordination mechanisms that engage many stakeholders across society and government are crucial in efforts to leave no one behind in the transition away from fossil-fuel-based economies and high greenhouse gas (GHG)-emitting sectors. When aiming to integrate a just transition to a low carbon society into climate action, countries are encouraged to use existing coordination mechanisms but can create new ones if none exist. The Presidential Climate Change Commission of South Africa, for example, was created to coordinate the country's just transition efforts and has developed research, engaged and consulted with stakeholders across the country, and coordinated across all government and policies, to underpin just transition efforts (WRI, 2024).

Nigeria, with support from the United Kingdom and through the NDC Partnership, launched an NDC implementation plan in May 2024. Led by the Federal Ministry of Environment, Nigeria developed the plan using a situational assessment and mapping of projects and stakeholders. This included a full mapping of ongoing, planned, and new climate-related projects and programs led by different levels of government, the private sector, and implementing partners and of relevant stakeholders, roles, and responsibilities, including women, youth, and vulnerable communities. These efforts helped to ensure coordination across the multiple institutions, actors, policies, and projects working to implement the NDC, including on issues of a just transition to a low carbon society and social inclusion.

Montenegro, through the NDC Partnership and with support from UNDP through the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, and Northern Region Development Directorate for Climate Change, established two groups to help guide and control the country's transition to a low carbon society in a just manner. By establishing the National Council for Sustainable Development and the Working Group for a Just Transition, Montenegro aims to bring together all relevant partners within a single coordination mechanism to ensure adequate governance of the process, while leaving no one behind. The working group includes representatives from different sectors. Through efforts such as developing recommendations for integrating social justice into climate policies, it lays the groundwork for a multidisciplinary approach to developing just transition strategies.

4.2. Strengthen Human Resource Capacities

Another key element to bolster just transition efforts and institutional arrangements necessary to coordinate such efforts is to understand the human resource capacities required to enact and carry out the research, coordination, and stakeholder consultations needed. Adding another working group or cross-institutional body to already long lists of groups and bodies that staff are responsible for can make it more difficult for them to contribute meaningfully. This can be mitigated by the creation of specific positions focused on just transition efforts.

Antigua and Barbuda, with support from the NDC Partnership through PAF, created a position for a just transition specialist to support the government's efforts to introduce a whole-of-economy just transition to a low carbon society. This role has helped with coordinating just transition activities, including mobilizing resources for NDC implementation and communicating with key stakeholders such as trade unions, employers' associations, and sectoral representatives. In addition, the specialist is leading the coordination of communications efforts with the Just Transition Working Group and partners, which helps strengthen coordination across multiple levels of government and ministries on just transition efforts.

5. Mainstream and Ensure Policy Coherence

Policy coherence across multiple levels of government can enable successful just transition efforts by aligning priorities, goals, and targets, leading to streamlined implementation and finance mobilization capabilities. ILO (2015) lists the following as policies necessary to be aligned in support of a just transition to a low carbon society: macroeconomic and growth policies; industrial and sectoral policies; enterprise policies; skills development; occupational safety and health; social protection; active labor market policies; rights; and social dialogue and tripartism. These policies present a number of valuable points of alignment with climate action:

- Integrating climate action goals into macroeconomic policies can help incentivize investments in lower carbon and cleaner energy sources, while also drawing investment planners' attention to employment and social impacts.
- Placing climate action targets within macroeconomic policies can help elucidate the possible impacts of meeting these targets on economic indicators, including jobs, GDP, and government expenditure.
- Macroeconomic modeling can demonstrate the relationship between climate change and economic impacts (Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, 2022)—along with the impacts of economic policy on climate change goals—and help policymakers plan to mitigate harms on groups impacted by climate action.
- Active labor market policies contribute by aiming to reduce unemployment and keep people engaged in the labor market (ILO, 2023). Some examples of active labor market policies include education and training, subsidies for employment, and employment services.
- Fiscal policies designed to reduce GHG emissions, such as carbon taxes, may result in price increases and economic hardship for households (ILO, 2022). Therefore, it is important to redistribute the revenues generated by the tax, for example by expanding the social protection system or providing training for workers (Mårtensson et al., 2024). This can offset the negative impacts and garner public support for the policy.

NDCs are crucial mechanisms to ensure these policies are aligned with national climate action priorities, and NDC implementation and investment plans are essential in linking the just transition priorities laid out in NDCs to the policies listed above as well as to climate finance and investment opportunities.

Long-term planning is an essential, crosscutting component that underpins and ties together the transition process to a low carbon society and helps ensure the outcome is just. A just transition to a low carbon society requires thoughtful consideration to carefully manage the impacts of transitioning in a way that minimizes harm and maximizes opportunity while securing a low carbon, climate resilient future. It also does not have to follow a linear trajectory, but it can be helpful to develop long-term goals to determine which outcomes the process is aiming for before starting. Engaging impacted and key stakeholders throughout—from the very beginning until the end—can help reinforce the principles of justice that underlie a just transition to a low carbon society and ensure societal support for just transition efforts.



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Nigeria, through its NDC implementation plan, is seeking to embed social dialogue for a just transition to a low carbon society into existing institutional structures by developing and including a just transition framework within every sectoral policy. The Federal Ministry of Environment would lead this effort, with the end goal being to mainstream the just transition framework across sectors by 2027. The country is still seeking support for this request to the NDC Partnership.

Explicitly recognizing a just transition to a low carbon society as a policy goal can help mainstream the concept, ensure cohesion across multiple policies, and support institutional coordination. In some cases, countries explicitly note the term “just transition” in these mechanisms without defining specific activities, objectives, or targets, or without indicating which just transition elements should be addressed, such as decent work, green jobs, skills development, or social protection. Including this level of detail in policies can help to operationalize a just transition, including laying out distinct activities that different institutions would be responsible for, such as mapping stakeholders, securing finance, tracking and monitoring, or developing and distributing communications and outreach materials.

Antigua and Barbuda, with support from Climate Analytics and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, developed a policy for a just transition of the workforce. Actions and information underpinning this policy included the National GHG Reduction Report, a technical needs assessment, and an action plan for a just transition of the workforce. The policy framework for a just transition of the workforce also fed into the creation of sectoral implementation plans for migration using a new structure, including a capacity building plan.



Montenegro developed its National Energy and Climate Plan in October 2025 (adopted in December 2025), which commits to phasing out the coal sector in line with the principles of a just transition to a low carbon society. This is reflected in the country's promotion of renewable energy sources aimed at reducing GHG emissions and fossil fuel imports.

6. Provide Necessary Financing and Investment for Just Transition Efforts

Financial support for just transition efforts will likely need to come from a variety of sources—domestic and international, public and private. National governments determine how to spend public funds and can allocate funding to support just transition efforts.

Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Environment, through its NDC implementation plan, launched in May 2024 with support from WRI, through the NDC Partnership, is promoting low carbon business models. Efforts supporting this include establishing a funding strategy and investment funds for economic diversification, green growth, and green jobs creation, by 2025. A national fund for economic diversification, the Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund, would be established by 2026. By 2031, Nigeria is aiming to mobilize USD 5.6 billion (NGN 2.3 trillion) for this fund.

While funding from national governments will be key, many countries will likely need additional support aside from their own domestic sources of financing. By preparing NDCs with both implementation and investment in mind, countries are better able to define the future direction of travel, leverage public funding, and align with priority areas for investors. NDC-aligned investment plans can be essential in mobilizing and channeling finance to where it is most needed. Often these plans are developed jointly by governments, financiers, and investors.



Photo by Terver / Adobe Stock

Nigeria, with support from Germany and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and through the NDC Partnership, is engaging in several efforts to secure financing for national just transition efforts in line with its NDC. The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Environment's Department of Climate Change is preparing a net zero investment plan. Nigeria will review the country's existing net zero transition plan and NDC to detail financing needs at both the initiative and project level and assess just transition financing needs. The initiatives and projects will include provisions for just transition measures, such as reskilling and social hardship programs. In addition, the ministry is engaging with stakeholders from a broad set of spheres—including public, private, multilateral, and philanthropic—to develop a full list of potential financing instruments (including local and international financing) and risk mitigation instruments. Nigeria is mainstreaming a just transition to a low carbon society throughout the net zero investment plan, which will have a clear results framework (i.e., specific milestones for government and other stakeholders to achieve) and a governance mechanism that can be used to track implementation. Nigeria has also drafted a capital raising strategy that includes financing scales from concessional loans, private capital, public budget and sovereign sources, grants, and philanthropy, among others. The final financing strategy will match financing sources and risk mitigation instruments with financing needs expected for the next 10–15 years. The investment plan was considered a critical deliverable in Nigeria's efforts to raise USD 10 billion of energy transition support.

Multilateral development banks are also taking action to support just transitions and are key resources for countries' efforts to align climate finance and just transition efforts. In addition to blended instruments such as Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs), so far signed by South Africa, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Senegal, several multilateral development banks have signed on to the High-Level Principles for Just Transition (MDB Group, n.d.). These are a set of five guiding principles ranging from inclusive planning involving all relevant stakeholders and impacted groups to delivering structural economic transformation.²

Multilateral development banks are supporting country-led just transition efforts. In South Africa, for example, the World Bank supported the country's efforts to develop bankable business plans for pilot cases to establish programs with the potential to ensure a just transition in the mining value chain and associated communities (e.g., mining rehabilitation and repurposing of old mines for agriculture). In Chile, the Inter-American Development Bank supported the Ministry of Environment's efforts to develop the country's LT-LEDs. These activities included developing a cost–benefit analysis of different possible measures and pathways to neutrality, including how much and granularity on who bears the costs (government, users, the private sector, etc.); identifying potential winners and losers in the transition toward net zero emissions; identifying challenges related to a just transition to enable implementation of the carbon neutrality objective. The process was supported by consultations with key stakeholders.

² For relevant information on financing just transition, see the [GCF and NDC Partnership Climate Investment Planning and Mobilization Framework](#).

7. Monitor Just Transition Efforts

As countries advance their just transition journeys to a low carbon society, it will be important to monitor and evaluate how those efforts are progressing. Monitoring can help identify when course corrections are necessary and minimize negative unintended consequences. These efforts are also essential in demonstrating impact and collecting lessons learned.

Meaningfully involving relevant stakeholders and impacted groups in decisions on what to monitor, and transparently sharing that information, can strengthen social buy-in of just transition efforts and increase accountability. Such data—which can build on existing data collection and monitoring efforts to streamline resources—can also help inform policies, facilitate access to climate finance, and inform decision-making that leads to reduced harms on populations.

It is important to disseminate the information collected during the monitoring process to relevant stakeholders, including impacted communities and the public at large, to establish social acceptance of the government's climate action efforts and maintain accountability throughout a just transition to a low carbon society. The data and information to be monitored and evaluated will be unique to each country and each subnational context.

[Helpful steps](#) for countries to monitor their just transition efforts include:

- setting goals or identifying priority areas to help define what a just transition to a low carbon society means for the country and guide related efforts;
- creating targets to measure progress toward the goals or priorities;
- identifying indicators to help track changes in targets over time;
- establishing the necessary data collection or already existing data sources to track identified indicators; and
- establishing the data coordination processes, including systems to manage.



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Malawi, through its NDC Implementation Plan launched in August 2022, is seeking support from the NDC Partnership for the country's efforts to increase revenue, strengthen livelihoods, and thus improve socio-economic resilience in the agricultural sector. These efforts would focus on implementing value-added agro-processing initiatives, coupled with training designed to reach youth, women, and men, and robust monitoring and evaluation to track results, including sex-disaggregated and gender indicators. The country is still seeking support for this request.

Nigeria, with support from the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency and WRI as part of its NDC implementation plan, is building out and mainstreaming a sector-specific MRV system. Additionally, the country is establishing and operationalizing a just and gender inclusive MRV system for sub-sectors including oil and gas and agriculture. Nigeria's Department of Climate Change and Federal Ministry of Environment are leading efforts to standardize institutional arrangements for the existing MRV, with the end goal being to establish a just and gender inclusive MRV system.



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SECTION 4

Conclusion

This brief provides opportunities, strategies, and best practices for how to effectively include just transition elements into NDC development, implementation, and financing, based on country experiences across the NDC Partnership. It draws from eight examples detailing country experiences. These best practices are not prescriptive but instead offer examples for countries to consider when integrating a just transition to a low carbon society into their own climate action efforts. Such efforts will continue to increase in importance as countries raise their climate action ambition through updates to their NDCs, implement their NDCs, and aim to mobilize finance for climate action.

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ANNEX

Key Actors' Definitions of Just Transition

There is no single consensus definition of a just transition to a low carbon society. Some definitions and interpretations share similar principles, but might reflect different priorities. The following table presents just transition definitions from some of the key actors in global and national just transition efforts. A just transition to a low carbon society will look different in different country contexts but it is important that definitions and interpretations have a shared understanding of some of the basic principles necessary to ensure transitions are just.

Key Actor and Document	Definition
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2023). Accelerating the transition in the context of sustainable development . In <i>Climate change 2022: Mitigation of climate change</i> (1st ed., pp. 1727–1790). Cambridge University Press.	A just transition “emphasizes the key principles of respect and dignity for vulnerable groups, the creation of decent jobs, social protection, employment rights, fairness in energy access and use, and social dialogue and democratic consultation with relevant stakeholders, whilst coping with the effects of asset-stranding and the transition to green and clean economies. Accelerating the transition to sustainability will be enabled by explicit consideration being given to the principles of justice, equality and fairness.”
IndustriALL Global Union	“Just Transition refers to a fair and equitable pathway to a sustainable future. A Just Transition requires an array of programmes that will provide an optimistic future for all workers, especially for those in industries that may be impacted by efforts to limit greenhouse gases or by the introduction of new technologies. A Just Transition programme is meant to be an all-encompassing, flexible and integrated approach to helping workers, their families, and their communities. Just Transition requires reimagining the entire economic system, not simply handing the keys to the decarbonization efforts to global corporations seeking to continue maximizing profits over the interests of workers and their communities.”
International Labour Organization (ILO). (2023, June 16). Resolution concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all . ILC.111/Resolution V.	“A just transition promotes environmentally sustainable economies in a way that is inclusive, by creating decent work opportunities, reducing inequality and by leaving no one behind. ... it involves maximizing the social and economic opportunities of climate and environmental action, including an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, while minimizing and carefully managing challenges. It should be based on effective social dialogue, respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, and be in accordance with international labour standards. Stakeholder engagement is also important.”

Key Actor and Document	Definition
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	“A Just Transition secures the future and livelihoods of workers and their communities in the transition to a low-carbon economy. It is based on social dialogue between workers and their unions, employers, and government, and consultation with communities and civil society. A plan for Just Transition provides and guarantees better and decent jobs, social protection, more training opportunities and greater job security for all workers affected by global warming and climate change policies.”
Just Transition Alliance. (n.d.). What we do.	“Just Transition is a principle, a process and a practice. The principle of just transition is that a healthy economy and a clean environment can and should co-exist. The process for achieving this vision should be a fair one that should not cost workers or community residents their health, environment, jobs, or economic assets. Any losses should be fairly compensated. And the practice of just transition means that the people who are most affected by pollution—the frontline workers and the frontline communities—should be in the leadership of crafting policy solutions.”
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). (2016, January 29). Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-first session, held in Paris from 30 November to 13 December 2015. Addendum. Part two: Action taken by the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-first session [Paris agreement]. FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1.	A transition that “contribute[s] to the goals of decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty.”
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). (2023, December 13). Work programme on just transition pathways referred to in the relevant paragraphs of decision 1/CMA.4. FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/L.14.	Just transitions should “promote sustainable development and eradication of poverty, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs.” They should “encompass pathways that include energy, socioeconomic, workforce and other dimensions, all of which must be based on nationally defined development priorities and include social protection so as to mitigate potential impacts associated with the transition.” They should include inclusive and participatory approaches, social dialogue, social protection and the recognition of labour rights.



Best Practice Brief

Incorporating Just Transition Into Climate Action

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