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STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nigeria has over the years introduced various laws and policies on climate change; but translating these laws and policies into effective action has been a major challenge due to their poor implementation framework. This article looks at various strategies for strengthening climate change governance in Nigeria and proposes stronger cooperation between the federal, state and local governments, better management of climate funds and greater involvement of communities in climate decisions. It argues that a more inclusive and coordinated approach is needed to ensure that climate laws and policies effectively address the different climate change induced environmental challenges faced across Nigeria.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The rate of climate change in Nigeria is increasingly alarming.[1] Rising temperatures, irregular rainfall, flooding, drought, desertification and coastal erosion are now being viewed as normal occurrences by many Nigerians. These irregular weather patterns, which are direct effects of climate change affect public infrastructure, health, economy and the life and livelihood of people in Nigeria.[2] While Nigeria has enacted the Climate Change Act of 2021 and other climate change related laws and policies, the stronger challenge remains effective implementation.[3] Thus, this article examines the vulnerability associated with the weaknesses in climate change governance and recommends practical strategies to address this problem.

[1] Barry Akatah et al, 'Climate Change-Induced Heatwaves in Nigeria: Causes, Challenges, and Adaptive Strategies' (2025) 394 *Journal of Environmental Management*.

[2] Surjen Healthcare, 'Climate Change and Its Impacts on Public Health' (19 August 2025) https://www.surjen.com/blog-details/climate-change-and-its-impacts-on-public-health accessed 27 August 2026.

[3] Blessing Benjamin, 'The Status of Environmental laws and Policies in Nigeria; Implications and way forward' (National Assembly Library Trust Fund, 30 June 2025) https://naltf.gov.ng/the-status-of-environmental-laws-and-policies-in-nigeria-implications-and-way-forward/ accessed 27 August 2026.

3.0 STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

Although Nigeria has made various laws and policies aimed directly and indirectly at addressing the rising impact of climate change, these interventions have largely failed due to a lack of proper implementation and coordination strategies necessary to translate these commitments into meaningful actions. This subsection highlights the inadequacies in the current climate change governance model in Nigeria and suggests practical strategies for their enhancement.

3.1 Implementation of a Decentralised System of Climate Governance in Nigeria

Nigeria adopts a highly centralised system of climate governance, with the bulk of initiatives aimed at combating the effects of climate change coordinated at the federal level. The Climate Change Act, 2021 and other major policies aimed at addressing the problem of climate change were all enacted at the national level. Since the negative effects of climate change are felt much more at the local level, these national enactments have not been able to adequately address the realities of the different states and local government areas in Nigeria.[4] That is why, despite the enactment of the Act, the effects of rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, flooding, drought, desertification, sea incursion and coastal erosion continue to seriously affect lives, livelihood and infrastructure across the different parts of the country unabated.[5] This constitutes a significant threat to Nigeria's environmental, social and economic development.

It is thus important for subnational governments to be more actively involved in climate change governance because it is the people who suffer the most that know exactly where it pinches, and the best strategies to mitigate or adapt to their situation. The state and local governments may be involved in state-level environmental regulation by making laws and policies addressing issues bothering on areas like waste management, urban planning, forestry, erosion control, methane pollution from livestock farming and other areas closely related to climate change according to their different circumstances and respective capabilities. They may also

[4] Society for Public Policy, 'Climate Action: Enhancing Resilience through Subnational Policies' (Society for Public Policy) https://sppnigeria.org/climate-action-enhancing-resilience-through-subnational-policies/ accessed 27 August 2026.

[5] World Bank Group, *Climate Risk Country Profile: Nigeria* (World Bank, 2021) https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/15918-WB_Nigeria%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf accessed 26 August 2026.

go as far as making laws and regulations on carbon emissions (to the extent that they don't conflict with federal laws) as was done by the Lagos State Government with the launch of the Lagos Greenhouse Gas Registry by the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency to create a comprehensive digital system for tracking carbon emissions within the state.[6] Strengthening climate change governance at the state and local level will in addition enhance climate change awareness within the local population.[7]

3.2 Strengthening Institutional Cooperation at Subnational Levels

Beyond strengthening climate change governance at subnational levels, there should be cooperation between the federal government and other levels of government as the different subnational governments develop climate action plans that complement the extant national policies. This cooperation will not only reduce the rate of duplication but will further ensure that national climate commitments translate into practical action. This is because state and local governments are closer to the communities, putting them in better positions to respond to the specific needs of the people. For instance, the north may experience draught and water scarcity while the coastal areas may experience excessive rainfalls and flooding. Each region will require a tailor-made solution suitable to its own peculiar situation to respond adequately to the challenges. This highlights the need for institutional cooperation amongst the different levels, otherwise central climate change laws and policies may become ineffective at subnational levels.

3.3 Improved Climate Finance, Transparency and Accountability

Climate action requires adequate and well-managed funding.[8] Adaptation measures such as flood control, resilient infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and improved water systems require government financing to thrive. Governments at all levels need to introduce clearer and more transparent budget allocation and implementation mechanisms for climate action. Transparency here involves the ability of the government to show that the climate funds are being utilised in a way that benefits the vulnerable communities. This will not only ensure

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[6] Gbenga Salau,' LASEPA launches Lagos State Greenhouse Gas Registry' (The Guardian, 27 July 2026) https://guardian.ng/news/lasepa-launches-lagos-state-greenhouse-gas-registry/ accessed 1 September 2026.

[7] Timothy Akinkuolie et al, 'Strengthening Climate Vulnerability Governance Toward Inclusive Development in Nigeria' (2026) 4 *Discover Environment* 280.

[8] Climate Action Tracker, 'Climate Governance in Nigeria' (11 February 2022) https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/climate-governance-in-nigeria/ accessed 27 November 2026.

proper utilization of budgeted funds but will also improve the chances of access to domestic and international climate finance.

Government funding is of utmost importance as lack of adequate funding or inadequate management of allocated funds can limit the implementation of strategies put in place to combat the effects of climate change and reduce chances of access to domestic and international climate finance.

3.4 Promoting Community Participation in Climate Governance

Climate policies are most effective when the people affected by them have a voice in their development through grass root involvement.[9] This is so because persons who have lived in a community for years have better knowledge of the weather patterns and climate change induc3 factors in the community. They also have first-hand knowledge of how to cope with climate related challenges, which may not be opened to the public. Their participation can therefore make climate programmes more accurate, realistic and effective.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Effective climate change governance requires action at all levels of government. The federal, state and local governments as well communities must be involved if the efforts to address the challenges of climate change are to have practical measurable results. Thus, it is important to among other things strengthen climate change governance and cooperation at the subnational levels and engender community participation to make climate change governance more effective.

[9] Greg Odogwu, 'Nigeria's climate governance strategic synergy as model for Africa' (The Punch, 21 May 2026) https://punchng.com/nigerias-climate-governance-strategic-synergy-as-model-for-africa/ accessed 27 August 2026.