



Institute For Economic Justice Renewable Energy Localisation Factsheet



MAKING KENYA'S ENERGY TRANSITION WORK AT COUNTY LEVEL

In Brief

- ✓ Kenya has strong national renewable-energy policies, but they are not being implemented consistently at county level.
- ✓ County governments are responsible for energy planning, but many lack the funding, technical skills, data, and planning tools they need.
- ✓ County Energy Plans are often weakly connected to county development plans and budgets.
- ✓ Better national-county coordination is essential if the energy transition is to support local industry, decent jobs, and more equal access to its benefits.

The priority for Kenya is not more renewable-energy policies. It is making the policies it already has work.



This factsheet is based on The African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) research under the Just Energy Transition (JET) project and the accompanying policy brief.¹

The gap between policy and implementation

Kenya has developed an extensive framework for renewable energy and a Just Energy Transition.

47

county governments are required under the Energy Act 2019 to prepare County Energy Plans.



These plans are supposed to feed into the national Integrated National Energy Plan (INEP).

What is the INEP?

The Integrated National Energy Plan (INEP) is Kenya's national framework for bringing together energy planning across the country. County Energy Plans are intended to feed into it.

The Integrated National Energy Plan Regulations 2025 and the Kenya National Energy Compact 2025–2030 strengthened this framework, but County Energy Plans remain poorly integrated into County Annual Development Plans and county budgets.

A 2025 national policy dialogue — involving government, renewable energy sector experts, labour, academia, and civil society — and the Draft National Energy Policy 2025–2034 identified

the same problems: weak implementation and enforcement, fragmented coordination, import dependence, limited domestic manufacturing capacity, and skills gaps.²

But the problem is not only institutional weakness. Energy reforms are also shaped by existing political and institutional interests; these can limit how far formal reforms change what happens in practice.

Counties have responsibilities without enough support

Devolution gave counties responsibility for energy planning without providing many of them with sufficient capacity. Research covering all 47 counties found that coordination was inconsistent in all of them; many also still lack the data, modelling tools and institutional systems needed to turn national renewable-energy targets into practical county plans.³

How weak coordination affects implementation



Plans without budgets:

County Energy Plans are often disconnected from county budgets and annual development plans.



Unclear responsibilities: national and county institutions have overlapping roles, but there is no effective mechanism for deciding who is responsible for implementation.



Uneven capacity: some counties have stronger technical and financial resources than others; this creates major differences in their ability to plan and implement renewable-energy projects.



Weak monitoring: there is no effective national system for tracking whether County Energy Plans are being implemented and making the results public.



Uncertain investment: fragmented planning makes it harder for businesses to know where renewable-energy investment will take place and what opportunities will be available.

International experience supports stronger national–county links

Renewable-energy transitions are more effective when national targets are linked to sub-national implementation through clear responsibilities, coordinated planning, predictable financing, and strong accountability.⁴

Coordination is also essential for localisation

Weak national–county coordination also makes it harder to build Kenyan renewable-energy industries and supply chains.

Factsheet 4, Building renewable energy manufacturing through Kenya’s counties, sets out the evidence on import dependence, manufacturing, and the policies needed to strengthen localisation.

The Local Content Bill 2025 sharpens this problem: enforcement would sit with a national office, with no role defined for county governments.⁵

Without national–county cooperation, local-content rules are unlikely to create opportunities across the country. Counties with fewer resources and weaker institutions are particularly at risk of being left behind.

Why this matters for a Just Energy Transition

A Just Energy Transition should do more than increase renewable energy access. It should also create decent work, build Kenyan businesses and manufacturing, expand opportunities for women and young people, and benefit underserved areas.

Without stronger coordination, counties with fewer resources and weaker institutions are particularly at risk of being left behind.

What needs to change?

We recommend: a formal intergovernmental coordination system. The Ministry of Energy and Petroleum and the Council of Governors should establish a binding framework that defines responsibilities, reporting requirements, and accountability. National implementation guidelines should require County Energy Plans to be integrated into County Annual Development Plans and county budgets. This should be backed by stronger county capacity and a national monitoring and reporting system.



Two weaker alternatives are:

- 01 Voluntary national guidelines:** non-binding guidelines could help standardise county energy

planning, reporting, and budget alignment. But without enforcement, implementation is likely to remain uneven.

02 County capacity-building: technical training, digital planning tools, and financial support would strengthen county capacity. But capacity-building alone would not resolve weak coordination and accountability. A national monitoring and reporting system is also needed.

There is an opportunity to act now

Implementation of the National Energy Compact is still at an early stage, allowing stronger coordination to be built in before weak practices become entrenched.⁶ Parliament's consideration of the Local Content Bill also provides an opportunity to strengthen counties' role in implementing and monitoring local-content requirements.

The choice facing Kenya

PATH 1

Kenya can continue with fragmented planning and uneven implementation, leaving many counties unable to turn national commitments into action.

PATH 2

Or it can build a coordinated system in which

national priorities, county plans, budgets, and accountability mechanisms reinforce each other.

Effective coordination would create a more predictable environment for renewable-energy investment, strengthen local manufacturing and supplier development, create opportunities for decent work, and help ensure that the benefits of the energy transition reach communities across Kenya.

Kenya's challenge is not a lack of policy; it's the failure to translate policy into coordinated county-level planning, budgeting, and local economic development.

Endnotes

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2. Lolo, B., Kemunto, F., Nekesa, U., Ouma, N., Andega, J., Magale, E., and Onyango, J. 2025. [Advancing a just energy transition in Kenya: Localising renewable energy for inclusive growth and decent work—National policy dialogues report](#). Nairobi, Kenya: African Centre for Technology Studies.
3. Fields, N., Akute, M., Hofbauer, L., Mutembei, M., Nganga, A., Howells, M., and Brown, E. 2025. [‘CORE-D: County resolution energy demand projections for multi-scale modelling and multi-level governance dialogues in Kenya’](#). *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Transition*, 8, article 100131.
4. Islam, M. M. 2026. [‘Towards a sustainable energy future: Multi-level governance, capacity gaps, and policy innovations in Bangladesh’](#). In X. Zou, A. Mukhia, and R. Dasanayake (eds), *Navigating “Sustainable Energy Transition” in South Asia*. Singapore: Springer, pp. 375–409.

5. Republic of Kenya. 2025. [*The Local Content Bill, 2025*](#). Nairobi, Kenya: National Assembly of Kenya.
6. Ministry of Energy and Petroleum. 2025. [*Kenya National Energy Compact 2025–2030*](#). Nairobi, Kenya: Government of Kenya.

