

Policy Imperatives for Nigeria's Medium and Long-Term National Development Plan 2022 – 2050



nnngo.org



[@nnngo](https://www.facebook.com/nnngo)

INTRODUCTION

With its diverse and growing economy, Nigeria, which is often referred to as the giant of Africa, continues to be ranked amongst countries with the lowest economic competitiveness in view of her weak systems – political, legal, regulatory frameworks, transport, education, health, and infrastructure – coupled with growing ethnic intolerance, religious crises, insurgency, banditry, criminalities, and an overall corrupt ecosystem, thus creating a complex landscape for Nigeria’s decades of underdevelopment.

In recent years, Nigeria has seen governments taking decisions aimed at achieving economic recovery and growth through policies and incentives to ease doing business, investments in formal and informal sectors, export and import activities, boosting of agricultural programmes, and job creation – all laying a foundation for sustainable growth. The government’s long-term economic plan (Vision 20.20.20) has shaped the economy through a period of abundance, with the Economic Recovery Growth Plan (ERGP) protecting it during the nation’s period of uncertainty while providing the foundations for recovery from the 2017/2018 economic recession.

The limited gains made as a result of several interventions of government to set Nigeria back on the path of national development and growth are at risk of being rolled back due to the ravaging coronavirus. The pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political, and economic systems which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic. Across every sphere, from health to human rights, economy and security, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are exacerbated for the 82.9 million Nigerians who are already poor with the number projected to increase as a result of an elongation of the pandemic era. However, the Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) developed as a response to the challenges posed by COVID-19 proposes an ambitious strategy that can help safeguard the economy for the short-term effects of the pandemic, even as the country sets on its journey to recovery.

As Nigeria plans to develop the thematic areas of the two new Medium-Term National Development Plans (MTNDP 2020 – 2025 and MTNDP 2026 – 2030) and the long-term national development plan called “Nigeria Agenda 2050”, this policy brief focuses on issues, themes, and topics that must be included and prioritised in the next set of development plans for the country in order to safeguard the economy for the long-term and build a stronger, fairer society. While the economy is expected to decline by 0.59% in 2020 following the full implementation of the ESP, with a stimulus spending of 2.3 trillion Naira, citizens should partake in this investments and proceeds of the growth that the economy may witness in ways that ensures they are taken out of debt and poverty, while accessing opportunities, enjoying increased in income, and experiencing improvements in their living standards, as well as the overall merits of economic inequality gaps being closed.

To achieve this, the policy brief emphasizes 11 policy priorities for reclaiming Nigeria’s prosperity, including building resilience for any future health crises and disruptive events based on lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic as tracked by the policy team at the Nigeria Network of NGOs. The policy brief further links the suggested policy priority areas to priorities in the ESP and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in ways that progress opportunities and common direction for continuity, integration, and scaling up into the next decade.

What we know about conditions of Nigerians in normal times and during a pandemic (COVID-19)



In normal times, Ade works in a local security firm and earns N18,000. He and his family depend on this income. To get by, Ade is a member of a corporative group where he can get loans, while relying on family and friends to augment other financial responsibilities.

Due to the economic lockdown and revenue loss arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the firm Ade works had to close. Ade is out of Job. Friends and Family within his circle are also affected, hence cannot help as they also grapple with financial problems. Ade has nowhere to run to but to look up to government for support.

How can government help? The government understands they need to help Ade but they do not know Ade “legally” because there is no database that shows them Ade’s realities. A nonprofit has escalated Ade’s plight, but how do we know that Ade is truly vulnerable?

What we know about conditions of Nigerians in normal times and during a pandemic (COVID-19)



Let's talk about Aisha. Aisha wants to stop the spread of COVID-19 and has decided to take all necessary precautions – handwashing, wearing face mask, and staying at home. However, in normal times, Aisha's community does not have portable water and open defecation is what is practiced by many in the community who lack toilet facilities.

To get water, Aisha must travel about 1km to fetch water. How would Aisha stay safe during this period?

What we know about conditions of Nigerians in normal times and during a pandemic (COVID-19)



How about Jane who works with a startup in Lagos? As part of measures and protocols to curb the spread of COVID-19, Jane's employers have asked that she works from home. To do this, Jane needs a laptop, fast internet access, and electricity. In normal times Jane's community experiences unscheduled power outages, which damaged her personal computer as a result of voltage fluctuations. Internet connectivity is not strong for video calls where Jane lives, causing her to most times rely on the office internet for tasks requiring high bandwidth.

During the pandemic, Jane is connected to internet but there is no electricity; and while her employers have had to contribute to internet cost, same was not done to cover costs associated with powering her generator when she needs electricity to work.

What we know about conditions of Nigerians in normal times and during a pandemic (COVID-19)



Ibrahim's driver's license has expired and Chinedu needs to renew his international passport both of which have to wait until government relaxes its measures/protocols. Pre-COVID, to process a driver's license and international passport, one would have to visit the often-crowded government offices.

How would Ibrahim and Chinedu reasonably observe the six metres physical distance? Can't these services be offered entirely online?

What we know about conditions of Nigerians in normal times and during a pandemic (COVID-19)



Goodnews' children attend a public school, while her friend's children attend a private school. Goodnews' children do not have computers, neither does their school offer online sessions, but her friend's children have laptops which they use to join their school's online classes and carry out assignments given.

The school on TV organized by the government requires the family to have electricity or fuel in their generator, which are luxuries for Goodnews and her jobless husband.

What we know about conditions of Nigerians in normal times and during a pandemic (COVID-19)



Owing to an argument, Olajumoke's husband beats her. Olajumoke will like to leave the house, but her parents will not allow her to leave the abusive marriage because moving back in with them is not an option. Many times, Olajumoke has reported her abusive husband to relatives, in-laws, and their pastor, but everyone advised that she keeps enduring. She discussed with a nonprofit and they are willing to help her press charges, but the organisation cannot provide her shelter.

She will have to continue staying with her abuser. With COVID-19, Olajumoke now spends a longer amount of time with her violent husband because she has nowhere to go. Pre-covid Olajumoke and her husband only had to see each other in the evening.



These stories are only few of how many Nigerians are dealing with the multi-faceted effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, while other citizens are receiving supports from their governments in other parts of the world, Nigerians are wondering when their government will do the same – if not exactly, but something close. And, should there be monetary palliatives for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, majority of Nigerians who may qualify for this do not have a bank account. How then can citizens access government support transparently?

Therefore, taking stock of how millions of disadvantaged and vulnerable Nigerians are coping with the effects of the pandemic and the knowledge of possible ways of cushioning these effects, mindful that government already understands the importance of a strengthened health and functional education system, the Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNGO) is proposing the following policies that are believed would be effective in preparing and positioning Nigeria for recovery, sustainably, and insulate for any future crises.

OUR SUGGESTED PRIORITY AREA AT A GLANCE

Policy Priority Area	Link to the ESP <i>(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)</i>	Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs
		
Social protection systems	Strengthening the Social Safety Net	●
Food security	Mass Agricultural Programme	●
Digital inclusion: affordability, accessibility, and meaningful connectivity	Cross-cutting imperative; Broadband connectivity	● ● ●
Citizens Identity Management	Cross-cutting imperatives; Digital identification	●
Electricity (Energy)	Installation of solar home systems	●
Water, sanitation and hygiene.	Wash emergency response to COVID-19	●
Decent jobs	Jobs for youths and women post COVID-19	● ●
E-governance	Not available in the ESP	● ●
Financial Inclusion	Not available in the ESP	●
Gender-Based Violence	Not available in the plan	● ●
Industrial Growth	Cross-cutting imperatives for a post-COVID economic recovery	●

Policy Priority Area

Link to the ESP
(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)

Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs

Justification

Expected Outcomes

Social protection systems

Strengthening the Social Safety Net

The ESP plans to increase the number of cash transfer beneficiaries, N-power volunteers, and sundry traders enjoying small and micro loans through the MarketMoni and TraderMoni schemes.

Goal 1.3 (Target level)

Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

Forecasts indicate an increase in poverty and hunger due to job losses and economic lockdown occasioned by COVID-19. Many Nigerians earn meagre daily incomes from working in the informal economy. Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (older persons, persons with disabilities, women, children, young people) are grappling with the impact of the pandemic disproportionately due to their specific health, socioeconomic realities, and pre-existing inequalities.

A strong social protection system to expand and strengthen the social safety net programme in the ESP is essential for mitigating the effects and preventing many people from falling into poverty.

A legislated social protection system best suited to address the consequences of pandemics and disruptive events providing unemployment benefits, health insurance, contributory pension, and social assistance cash to people not covered by contributory pension schemes is an imperative for lifting many out of poverty and for bridging inequality gaps.

Legislated social protection system that supports the health, social, economic, and overall wellbeing of Nigerians during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic era.

Policy Priority Area

Link to the ESP
(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)

Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs

Justification

Expected Outcomes

Food security

Mass Agricultural Programme

The ESP plans to bring between 20,000 and 100,000 hectares of new farmland under cultivation in every State of the Federation. The aim is to create millions of job opportunities, directly and indirectly, over a 12-month period.

Goal 2.1:

By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

Nigeria's ability to be able to grow and distribute agricultural produce will have a positive impact in mitigating the effects of reduction in availability of national and global food supplies, and the restriction in trade activities caused by COVID-19 and possible future pandemics or disruptive events. Small and medium scale farmers play a critical role in Nigeria's food production, yet they routinely face difficulties accessing information, financial services, markets, and opportunities. Urgent actions and investment in agriculture can help address these challenges, enhance productivity, attract public and private investments, and guaranty food security.

Increased investments in agriculture targeting small and medium scale farmers.

Whole of government development plans are in place and implemented for target industries in the agricultural value chain.

Policy Priority Area

Link to the ESP
(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)

Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs

Justification

Expected Outcomes

Digital inclusion:
affordability, accessibility, and meaningful connectivity

Cross-cutting imperative

Broadband connectivity to help school children access digital education across the entire country.

Goal 4.1, 9.c, 17.6.2:

4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

9.c: Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.

17.6.2 (indicator level):

Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed.

Many Nigerians lack the quality of access they need to use the internet's most powerful features, such as online learning, video streaming, and telehealth. The pandemic has shown that it is time to raise the bar for internet access and aim for affordable and easy access, as well as meaningful connectivity for everyone.

With efficient and affordable information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and services, and the right digital, language and soft skills (like teamwork), individuals and businesses can participate in the digital economy. This, in turn, allows the country to increase its overall economic well-being and competitiveness.

According to the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), *"We have meaningful connectivity when we can use the internet every day using an appropriate device with enough data and a fast connection"*.

Unlimited broadband connection for Nigerians at home, workplaces, and learning institutions.

Policy Priority Area	Link to the ESP <i>(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)</i>	Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs	Justification	Expected Outcomes
Citizens Identity Management	<p data-bbox="394 300 775 539">Cross-cutting imperatives</p> <p data-bbox="394 371 775 539">Digital identification of every Nigerian, this will help improve the provision of cash transfer and other benefits.</p> <p data-bbox="394 584 775 683">Cross-cutting imperatives for post-COVID economic recovery</p> <p data-bbox="394 727 775 930">Collaboration between government, the telecoms ecosystem, and banking sector to provide a national identification number to every Nigerian.</p>	<p data-bbox="831 300 965 331">Goal 16.9</p> <p data-bbox="831 371 1182 472">By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.</p>	<p data-bbox="1245 300 1715 1142">The challenges faced by government in identifying and providing support to vulnerable citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about the need and importance of accelerating and strengthening the management of an electronic identity system for all Nigerians. Identity management, therefore, becomes a key issue in the legal identity agenda, to aid the process of citizens' access to social benefits and government services in ways that guarantees transparency and accountability, while establishing trust and confidence in the government. Such system must enable. easy enrollment, issuance, and lifecycle management including high resistance to fraud, forgery, and alteration.</p> <p data-bbox="1245 1187 1715 1425">A digital identity management system for all Nigerians throughout their life cycle is a game-changer to close identity gaps and realize an effective delivery of social benefits and services to millions of Nigerians.</p>	<p data-bbox="1794 300 2119 539">Citizens' identity management system that support/enhance the ability of Nigerians to access government services and social benefits.</p>

Policy Priority Area	Link to the ESP <i>(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)</i>	Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs	Justification	Expected Outcomes
Electricity (Energy)	<p data-bbox="392 300 775 363">Installation of solar home systems</p> <p data-bbox="392 408 775 679">ESP proposes a solar home systems project to cover up to 5 million households, serving about 25 million individual Nigerians who are currently not connected to the National Grid.</p> <p data-bbox="392 724 775 788">Promotion of domestic gas utilisation</p> <p data-bbox="392 833 775 1281">To take advantage of Nigeria's abundant gas resources which is also cheaper and more friendly to the environment, the ESP will promote indigenous manufacture of gas cylinders, building of gas filling stations and conversion of cars to promote the wide use of compressed natural gas in the domestic market.</p>	<p data-bbox="831 300 936 331">Goal 7.1</p> <p data-bbox="831 376 1211 507">By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.</p>	<p data-bbox="1249 300 1738 683">COVID-19 has further reinforced the need for the country to urgently address its electricity deficits. With majority of communities across the country not electrified, unscheduled outages, damaged equipment caused by poor connections and voltage fluctuations has weakened business growth and health systems response.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 727 1738 930">Current cooking methods puts the health of millions of Nigerians at risk. Access to clean cooking solutions helps in meeting the country's health and environmental commitments.</p>	<p data-bbox="1794 300 2141 363">Improve supply of electricity for Nigerians.</p> <p data-bbox="1794 408 2141 539">Rural and urban dwellers in Nigeria can access affordable and clean cooking solutions.</p>

Policy Priority Area	Link to the ESP <i>(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)</i>	Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs	Justification	Expected Outcomes
Water, sanitation and hygiene.	<p data-bbox="394 300 712 363">Wash emergency response to COVID-19</p> <p data-bbox="394 403 761 786">The ESP will make concerted effort to increase water supply to public utilities and public places, including markets, IDP camps, isolation and testing centres including a scale-up of the following already launched national initiatives:</p> <p data-bbox="394 826 752 1034">(i) Partnership for expanded Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (PEWASH) for rapid improvement of WASH activities in rural areas.</p> <p data-bbox="394 1074 768 1217">(ii) National WASH Action Plan to strengthen WASH governance institutions and service provision.</p> <p data-bbox="394 1257 752 1350">(iii) Clean Nigeria Campaign against Open Defecation.</p>	<p data-bbox="835 300 947 331">Goal 6.1</p> <p data-bbox="835 371 1209 507">By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.</p>	<p data-bbox="1256 300 1715 786">Millions across Nigerian communities and households lack access to basic water hygiene and sanitation services. COVID-19 has brought to fore the critical importance of these services for protecting, preventing and containing the outbreak and spread of infectious diseases. Closing the gaps in water, sanitation, and hygiene is critical to reducing poverty, containing the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases.</p> <p data-bbox="1256 826 1715 1145">Handwashing, which is one of the cheapest ways to stay healthy, requires clean water channelled through a proper hand-washing facility and soap – one that is lacking in many homes, schools, and public places – hospitals, motor parks, markets, worship centres, etc.</p>	<p data-bbox="1800 300 2159 467">People in communities across the country have access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services.</p>

Policy Priority Area

Link to the ESP
(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)

Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs

Justification

Expected Outcomes

Decent jobs

Jobs for youths and women post COVID-19

The real sector measures in the ESP each has an element of job creation: digital technology, mass agricultural programme, solar home systems, indigenous manufacture of gas cylinders, conversion of cars to promote wide use of compressed gas, road construction and maintenance, national public works programme to create 774,000 jobs.

The Jobs for Youth Project of the ESP will support the creation of jobs through:

- Training in digital skills in partnership with private sector providers like Google, Microsoft, IBM, and Cisco
- Direct labour in a National Public Infrastructure Maintenance project
- Provision of start-up capital and entrepreneurship skills for young Nigerian people and women.
- Science and Technology

Goal 4.4 (Target level) and Goal 8:

By 2030, substantially increase the number of youths and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

With the economic crisis in virtually all parts of the world, trade disruptions, mass unemployment and massive public deficits along with a high unemployment rate pre-COVID, the ability to provide decent jobs and increase employment will depend on how effectively policy measures preserve existing jobs and boost labour demand.

Whole of government development plans are in place and implemented to preserve existing jobs and boost labour demands.

Policy Priority Area	Link to the ESP <i>(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)</i>	Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs	Justification	Expected Outcomes
E-governance	Not available in the ESP	<p>Goal 16 and 17</p> <p>16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.</p> <p>17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.</p>	<p>With non-pharmaceutical measures (hand washing, use of face mask, social distancing) as the major forms of preventing the spread of the coronavirus, there is now an urgent case for moving government services requiring physical gathering online. Deploying e-government in support of good governance is essential for building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels, as called for in Goal 16, and for strengthening implementation of Goal 17, both of which underpin achievement of the SDGs as a whole, as well as the ESP and other medium and long term developmental plans.</p> <p>To fulfil the far-reaching potential of the ESP and the country's national development plans, including building a resilient economy, technologies must be used innovatively to ensure significant and enduring changes in the way citizens interact with public services. Exploring digital technologies for delivering services has far reaching potentials for improving institutional processes, workflows for greater efficacy, emergency response, building community resilience and effectiveness of public service delivery, including citizens participation and government accountability.</p>	Public service delivery models that supports the economic success and wellbeing of Nigerians.

Policy Priority Area	Link to the ESP <i>(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)</i>	Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs	Justification	Expected Outcomes
Financial Inclusion	<p>Not available in the ESP, however it can be delivered under the cross-cutting imperatives for a post-COVID economic recovery of the plan.</p> <p>Collaboration between government, the telecoms ecosystem, and banking sector to provide a national identification number to every Nigerian.</p>	<p>Goal 8.10 (Target level)</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.</p>	<p>Millions of Nigerians carry out daily economic activities outside the banking system, including thousands of small and medium-scale business owners who transact without banks. Many communities across the country lack access to formal financial services, which could have significant positive impact on their livelihoods and wellbeing.</p> <p>Financial exclusion disproportionately impacts people in rural and peri-urban areas and compromises the achievement of the SDGs as well as specific national development objectives.</p>	<p>Inclusive financial services for people living in rural and peri-urban communities across the country.</p>

Policy Priority Area	Link to the ESP <i>(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)</i>	Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs	Justification	Expected Outcomes
Gender-Based Violence	Not available in the plan	<p>Goal 5.2 (Target level)</p> <p>Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.</p> <p>Goal 16.1</p> <p>Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.</p>	<p>Women and girls are subject to various forms of violence physical, sexual, economic, mental, emotional abuse, trafficking, exploitation, among others. With growing cases of gender-based violence across the country before the COVID pandemic era, GBV has been further exacerbated by the pandemic. With lockdowns, restriction of movements, and associated closures, there has been a surge in reports of violence against women and girls.</p> <p>Urgent actions are needed to ensure prevention of occurrence of any form of GBV through sensitization and awareness creation, and provision of support for survivors through effective service delivery such as shelter, access to legal aid, and dissemination of information about support structures and services.</p>	Protection of the rights of women and girls.

Policy Priority Area	Link to the ESP <i>(How ESP sets us on the path to attain the policy priority)</i>	Integration of Policy Priority to the SDGs	Justification	Expected Outcomes
Industrial Growth	<p>Cross-cutting imperatives for a post-COVID economic recovery</p> <p>Promote strategic investment to make Nigeria a major hub for the manufacturing of generic medicines.</p> <p>Create a special fund for medical and pharmaceutical research, pooling funds from existing schemes in TETFUND and from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions.</p> <p>Supporting Small Business: Guaranteed off-take scheme for MSMEs.</p>	<p>Goal 9</p> <p>Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.</p>	<p>Promoting inclusive and sustainable industries and continuing investment in physical infrastructure, innovation and research are vital to the country's long-term economic development.</p> <p>Sustaining the growth in manufacturing and industrialisation is necessary to address the impact of disruptions in global value chains, decline in industrial outputs as well as job losses and declining work hours exacerbated by COVID-19 and to stabilize progress towards the SDGs and other national developments.</p> <p>The support for the aviation sector in the short term should be sustained over the medium term to accelerate recovery in other sectors such as tourism and trade.</p>	<p>Significant increase in industrial growth capable of withstanding external shocks.</p>

CONCLUSION

The story of 2020 for many Nigerians is one that began with great uncertainties, health crisis, and financial shock resulting in loss of jobs, lives, and resources. Many families and households are fighting hard to hold on to their little savings or assets. Plans for recovery must be even, yielding results for all without leaving anyone behind. As the nation develops its medium- and long-term plans, a strong focus must be on overarching themes, topics, and issues that can help build back better, equally, inclusively, and sustainably in ways that guarantee the resilience of economies and societies to pandemics, disruptive events, and climate change, including other possible national and global development challenges.

Underpinning this as a cross cutting theme is the use of big data in planning, serving as the lifeblood of decision-making and the raw material for accountability. Taking stock of lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic period has enabled us to better develop policy imperatives for short, medium, and long-term planning.

The key takeaway is clear: policymakers must deliberately create targeted policies and programs that support economic growth through job creation, social investments, as well as availability of affordable, accessible, and meaningful internet connectivity, among others. To achieve the SDGs and other national development plans and ensure recovery from the pandemic and growth for the nation, targeted and bold investments in the areas we have identified is an imperative.

This will not only serve as a protective measure against shocks occasioned by unexpected disruptions and uncertain times, it will – most importantly - bolster Nigeria's socio-economic fabric and set her on a path of economic and sustainable growth.