



Sustainability
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CLIMATE FINANCING: FUNDING SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS

November, 2019

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



AVANT GARDE

SUSTAINABILITY TABLE DISCOURSE MONOGRAPH

**SUSTAINABILITY TABLE
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**CLIMATE FINANCING:
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PROJECTS**



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AVANT GARDE

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CLIMATE FINANCING: FUNDING SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS

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CLIMATE FINANCING: FUNDING SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS



INTRODUCTION

It has become very lucid that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) are ambitious goals that cannot be achieved without a clear financing framework. Climate financing or Sustainable finance serves as a funding mechanism and a valuable strategic tool for driving social, environmental and economic impacts, which contribute significantly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Sustainable Finance ensures and improves economic efficiency, prosperity, economic competitiveness which is ecologically balanced – short, medium and long-term, while contributing to environmental protection and ecological restoration, enhancing cultural diversity, social well-being and economic prosperity. Sustainable Finance activities include:

- Sustainable Funds
- Green Bonds
- Impact Investing
- Microfinance
- Active Ownership
- Credits for Sustainable Projects
- Development of the capital markets in a more sustainable way

Although, Nigeria has numerous untapped resources, rich potentials and opportunities that help facilitate increased long-term value for investments. There are sectors with huge deficits that require the channelling of sustainable finance and resources such as; infrastructure, housing, waste management, education and literacy employment and job creation. All these sectors and areas have Capital Market and Sustainable Finance solutions

This paper focuses on the opportunities available for financing sustainable projects.

Renewable Energy Financing - appropriate financing options for renewable energy installations and energy storage/ power optimization might be a

solution to energy poverty in low-income livelihoods.

Funding green retrofits? Or design for purpose; impacts and possibilities.

Critical Success factors for effective climate financing

Green bonds; their accessibility and other climate financing instruments

Carbon credits and environmental, social accountability.

This paper also elucidates and address's themes like;

How can the environmental component of the Nigerian Sustainable Banking Principles encourage environmentally sustainable development in Nigeria through financial business operations and activities?

How banks, fintech organisations and insurance companies implement environmental protection policies that could make a huge impact on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

How far the insurance industry in Nigeria address sustainability issues that can protect communities from climate-related risks and embrace a drive towards creating a green economy and developing products and services to encourage environmentally sustainable development. The role of the financial industry has to play in encouraging a circular economy.

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DISCUSSION

- PANEL EXCERPTS

MODERATOR:

This discussion aims to help us move from talking to doing, and to inform us how to access the resources we need to do the things that we need to do. A lot of us have budding ideas but when we get to the point where we have created all the plans and we know everything we need; we always come back to the most important thing, money. Let's begin from an assessment of the situation of climate financing in Nigeria so far.

OLUMIDE:

When you talk about climate financing, **I think you need to understand the spectrum and the breath of the infrastructure that you are looking at. Stereotypically, when people speak about climate financing, they make refer to energy and power because those are the ones that affect us the most in Nigeria.** However, the issue is broader and it affects every aspect of our lives. The idea is to reduce your carbon footprint not just as an organisation but as a person. If you think about it, it's about energy efficiency - the way you generate energy, the things that you do to ensure energy efficiency, even the way you move around.

Too many of us spend too much time in cars. In developed countries, the rich go

by trains while in Nigeria, it's the other way around. Everybody wants to drive their cars and some of them even go along with security escorts. Unfortunately, the mass transportation buses also consistently belch out fumes. So, it's not only about financing assets that talks about waste management, it even extends to ICT.

The carbon that is emitted from the buildings we live in; **have you ever asked yourselves why we need solid brick walls for internal walls in our houses?** I can understand the exterior of the houses in terms of security but why would you need six-inch bricks to build partitions between rooms? It is just not efficient. It means you would need more energy to power your air conditioners. So, we need to think beyond finance. We need to think about what we are going to do with the finance itself. How does it affect our lives and, more importantly, what are the risks that we are trying to mitigate?

It is a known fact that Lagos is below sea level and unfortunately, a lot of what we finance today will be underwater in 50 years. I would rather be living somewhere in Ikorodu or Abeokuta than Eko Atlantic.

MODERATOR:

We know that as much as climate financing is supposed to be a combination of an international and national pool of resources, we also know for a fact that it is almost easier to look to the already developed nations to provide the finance that we need. I will ask generally about your assessment of Nigeria's access to these funds from the relevant international bodies. Are we doing enough to put ourselves out there for these international bodies to help us?

AYOKUNLE:

Over the last 22 months, I've been working in capital market development and what we found out is that **there is still opportunity for capital formation, particularly for climate finance around infrastructure development and social issues.** I think an area we can focus on will be around **government regulations, tax incentives, personal opportunities for incentives and schemes that will allow us to attract international capital.**

The focus in the past two years has been on how we attain the 2030 SDGs and **all the investors we are coming across are seeking impact investment opportunities.** So, it's high time the Federal Government and key capital regulators such as the Central Bank and the Security and Exchange Commission, do more to deepen the opportunities that will allow us to attract global investors. Things like **tax incentives, grant schemes, interest buyback programs are quite instructive.** We found similar

structures in Singapore and this has worked quite well for them. So, for me, I will charge our regulators to look in this direction to see if we can do more.

JUBRIL:

We don't like to talk too much about regulations or government because we know government moves slowly. The climate change issue and its effects don't have time. We can all feel it and see what is going on in the global community.

What we have been doing for the past year is to train commercial banks, pension managers, Stock Exchange operatives and others on the fact that climate financing is nothing new. It does not require a bank executive or an investor to return to school. What climate finance is telling us is that whatever transaction or asset we are financing, we should be sure it is mitigating climate change. By that, we mean we want to reduce the major cause of climate change which is carbon emission. For example, if you're funding a coal power plant, that is not beneficial for the climate but if you are funding a solar power plant, that is a climate change mitigation strategy.

On the other hand, we are talking about adaptation. The whole of the north is facing serious desert encroachment. That is the reality. First of all, **90% of the food that we produce locally are rain-fed and the rains are not coming the way we want them to anymore.** There is also no fertile land for farming. So, adaptation is asking, "what kind of food production can

we engage in so that we don't have to rely on the behaviour of the planet?" We are saying let's do more greenhouse farming by adapting to the fact that there is no soil to farm on but that we can still do soil-less farming to feed everybody.

Finally, and also very important is that the only additional responsibility climate financing places on conventional financing are what we call Reporting. This is because international communities like the UN may need to connect people that are actively combating climate change, so everyone needs to collectively report. In Nigeria, we report to the Ministry of Environment whom we work very closely. In the same way, everything that any company or individual is doing concerning combating climate change in Nigeria should be reported to the ministry because they are the custodians of all activities concerning climate change.

There is no need for any specialised fund because all we are asking the current fund providers is to change the way they invest. Do not invest in a transaction of fossil fuel or coal. Invest in solar because, at the end of the day, a coal or a fossil fuel plant produces power and power has a price and a market. As long as you can establish the indices, it means there is a market for investment and the same goes for agriculture. Let's stop focusing on traditional farming on the soil. Let's do greenhouse farming. Let's do fertilizers that are climate-resilient. At the end of the day, it is still food production.

TEMITAYO:

As a follow-up to Jubril's point, **80% of the global economy is dependent on fossil fuel.** We don't have to look too far. As we know, in Nigeria, that is what all of our revenue is based on. When we talk about climate financing, what we should be looking out for is how to **reduce our dependence on fossil fuel** because it generates carbon emission which in turn is causing global warming, leading to climate change.

Just recently, we concluded a fellowship program for young people across Africa and we were able to get grants for them to push their initiatives, some of them across agriculture and other areas. One particularly interesting one was a guy who built a solar cooling system for farms. So, it's just about us sitting down and thinking deeper about the question, about the strategy and also working collaboratively. When we try to address an issue such as climate change as individuals or as individual businesses, we may not be able to do much. **Systematic issues have to be dealt with in a systematic approach.** Looking at climate change, we would always have to talk about the fact that we need to have systems in place. We must be able to look beyond one organisation; whatever we need to be working towards must transcend even industries.

I would also like to touch on the **Nigerian Sustainable Banking Principles**. I think that is a very **solid example of working collaboratively to solve issues**. We have **9 principles and all of them are centred**

around enabling the Nigerian banking sector to come into a more sustainable system. We have the principle which talks about the activities of the banking sector, more specifically, their lending. Who do you lend to? Do you have exclusive clauses for who you lend to? Generally, even for corporate organisations, these are the kinds of things we need to start looking at. Within our value chains and working in other organisations, what are the strategies that we need to put in place to mitigate challenges that may arise?

Recently, I was reading an article and it mentioned the fact that humans are living as if we have all the time. However, scientific evaluation has shown that if we don't do what we need to do and we move beyond two degrees centigrade, it's going to be devastating for us. We need to look at things that way and ask ourselves, 'what are the strategies we need to put in place?'

I think impact investing is one thing we should exhaustively delve further into. When we talk about financing, everyone tends to look at just the financial system. But everyone is financing one way or the other. You are financing with your buying power because when you put your money on a certain product, you're financing that product. When you make purchase decisions, you are financing. So, each of us in this room is an investor. It is just dependent on the level of investment that you are doing. It is also about what gets rewarded. What are you rewarding? What are you buying? What are you praising?

Those are the things that move us from where we are to where we ought to be.

MODERATOR:

Mr Adeyemo, your company, Arnergy, recently raised about 9 million dollars. We would love to learn how you were able to achieve that.

ADEYEMO:

I would start by touching on a few things Olumide mentioned. There are huge opportunities and even as a country we are already tapping into global funds available. There are private investors and billionaires in this world who are already investing in climate financing. For instance, our lead investor is a fund put together by Bill Gates and his friends. They collectively pooled \$1 billion to attack climate change globally.

To your question about how we got the funding, I would say in my case that preparation met opportunity. The fund is called Breakthrough Energy Ventures and is based in Boston, Massachusetts and their lens are beamed to Africa. Of course, one of the fastest ways to mitigate climate change is through power, so they were interested in what we were doing. They saw how we were deploying solar energy to homes and businesses in Nigeria so they approached us. It was a long journey that took 12-18 months. At the end of the day, they were joined by the Norwegian Government through a fund called the Norwegian Government Fund For

Developing Countries. They were also joined by the European Union Electricity Financing Initiative and then Shell. So, those were the four investors that invested \$9 million into our company. They invested in us to put solar in homes and businesses. Instead of asking them to acquire our solar solutions upfront, we have different acquisition models that allow schools, hospitals, hotels, offices to purchase and pay every month.

MODERATOR:

Would you like to shed more light on some of the specific challenges that you faced during the process of acquiring this funding as they may be similar to what some other entrepreneurs are currently going through?

ADEYEMO:

I can tell you that we didn't start from zero to \$9 million. Certainly not! I was living abroad before I moved back in 2013 when climate change and power were one of the biggest challenges and opportunities in the country. My background is rooted in telecoms and I was a part of the telecoms revolution in Nigeria. I was a witness to how - from nowhere, **the telecoms sector grew from less than 400, 000 lines to more than 4 million.** I told myself that if there was any other sector that offered a similar opportunity comparable to the telecoms sector, it was the power sector. So, I decided to tap into the opportunity.

Six years ago, I was crazy enough to leave

all the consulting opportunities I had abroad to return home. Of course, it was difficult. We bootstrapped by using personal monies to start the company after which we began applying for grants. We applied to the UK government and from inception until now, we have gotten over £250,000 worth of grants Europe. Similarly, we received \$100,000 from the US government too. In addition, Nigeria's Bank of Industry was able to extend debt capital to our company because they saw how we had pooled funds together and had even gotten external grants to deploy solar to homes and businesses.

MODERATOR:

Mr Ayokunle, would you say that our financial institutions are taking the issue of environmental protection seriously? Are they doing enough to drive investment in those kinds of projects?

AYOKUNLE:

I know that the banks, through the Nigerian Sustainable Banking Principles, are looking that way and they are **taking into cognisance the importance of environmental protection.** One way they are doing that is through the impact assessment from the loans they give out. I looked at the insurance sector yesterday and what we found out was that in China, there is a law that states that companies operating in oil and gas and chemical production must have what they call 'Environmental Protection Insurance'. In Nigeria, we don't have that. I think that's a

huge opportunity for insurance companies. In the event where there is environmental degradation, people must pay for it and it leaves the environment very well protected.

Last week I was at a conference organised by LAPO MicroFinance. Interestingly, it was revealed that it is the largest microfinance bank in Nigeria and they are doing a lot in the areas of **upscaling Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors**. I think they now have a board committee fully responsible for ESGs and they have implemented things like paperless operation which has been able to save about 4 million sheets of paper. In terms of cost profile, **we are looking at savings of about N150m**. Yes, the banks are there but we believe that the microfinance banks are the ones that directly interface with the bottom of the pyramid which is where we want to get to. I think those sorts of models are what we should be looking at. The microfinance banks need to come together like the commercial banks have done, and have something like the Nigerian Sustainable Banking Principles and then we would begin to see some leverage and footprints in that area.

MODERATOR:

What would you say about expectations from the insurance companies about climate financing?

AYOKUNLE:

I am not sure if the insurance companies can do anything on their own. In China, there was a law that supported that and any company that was not operating sustainably was required to have environmental protection insurance. Until we have an enabling law that brings that up, the insurance companies will not see any need to develop that sort of product. Bear in mind that these are products for big institutions such as Dangote and Shell so the premium will be quite high. So, again, if it's not backed by law then we probably won't see anything of that sort. I had a chat with a few guys in the insurance sector and they confirmed that it doesn't exist and they said the reason why it doesn't exist is that they have not put themselves together as an advocacy group and gone to government to say: "Look, this is a clear area we could drive progress and see some clear action points." Until that happens, I am not sure that any insurance company in this country right now will be interested. In fact, they are presently struggling to meet their capitalisation requirement, so this is not the time for product development for them. But we will get there eventually. I am sure post-capitalization, if there are enabling laws, there will be a need to develop such products.

OLAMIDE:

I would like to speak to the audience. I look across this room and the audience, in terms of demography, is representative of the population of this country. What bothers me every single time I speak to people is that people are trying to relocate to Calgary, Canada - anywhere but Nigeria. The truth is that climate financing is just a means to an end. We've spoken about how transport, buildings and other problems were there before climate financing came along. There were other means of finances. I look to the audience and I see young folks who will probably be the most impacted by the change that is coming our way. It's all about solving problems. Capital will come.

You asked a question earlier on why aren't we attracting investors? These are business people. Whether you call it impact investing or whatever sort of investment, investment basically looks to a reward. You prize the risk: "What risk am I taking?" The co-founder of Apple said China stopped being a low-cost place of doing business many years ago. What they've done to their population is to educate themselves and build up their skills which means people want to go and invest there. There is a need to invest in our education system. That is a part of the mitigation strategy. There's a need to solve the problems that will come your way. People will lend you money when they know their money will not disappear. So, when you take your business to whoever is financing it, make sure you've done your homework. Make sure it's solid

business. Grants are not free money. There is a cost to money. The mere fact that someone is putting money on the table for free means he is losing out somewhere else and he is trying to empower you. A grant is a part and not the whole sum.

We have had speakers talk about their experiences in several industries well. It is because they understand the industries. The reason why foreigners come to this country is not because they like us. There is no other place to make money than in Nigeria. The popular saying is that everybody wants to hit it big but I will tell you this - here in Nigeria, you can build it big. Dangote did not start yesterday. Stop trying to make it big, rather, build it big. You have got to build it. You have got to educate yourself. You have got to understand the problems you're trying to solve. I have often said to people that the Israelites made a 40-day journey into 40 years. For a group of people born into the Promised Land, we have spent 50 years trying to get out. This is where we can make our money and our future. You don't make money where things are fine. It is where you have problems to solve that you can make money. Educate yourself and the money will come to you. You have to do the preliminaries. When you build the business and make the business case, people will invest in it.

Remember the word "Investment." It is not free money. You have to put yourself in a position where preparation will meet opportunity. So many of us spend so much

time looking at the wrong things on Facebook and using the internet inappropriately.

TEMITAYO:

While I think that regulation is important, I also think that when we begin to look at the climate change issue from the angle of opportunity, then the perspective will change. As much as climate change is now considered as the single biggest threat to humanity, it is also where we have the most opportunity. According to the World Business Council Report (I can't remember the year now), the Sustainable Development Goals hold about \$12 trillion dollars in opportunities that can come out of it by 2030. So, we need to look at it from that angle.

I heard Onyeka of FarmCrowdy comment about the fact that we now have insurance companies backing them. It's not just them. If you will look at the agri-tech sector in Nigeria today, you will see that most of the players have backings from insurance companies. It wasn't always so. A few years back, you couldn't get insurance to back agriculture because they felt it was too risky. However, with these guys coming in and trying to put some level of predictability into that space and then bringing out the opportunities that were there, they were able to attract the right kind of funding. I think that is what needs to happen in climate financing. People need to work together. Adeyemo was telling us that he got his funding to fund others. That means that he was the one de-risking the issues by

training, mentoring and putting a lot of things in place to ensure the business succeeds. And like Olumide said, as some people are trying to jump out of the window of Nigeria, the gates are open and other nationals are rushing in. If people are thinking about Nigeria in this light, maybe we need to take a step back and look at Nigeria from the perspective of the foreigner. We don't need to look too far. It's about us. It's about our numbers and everything we have as a nation. We need to start looking at ourselves from the position of the opportunities that others see in us.

AYOKUNLE:

Linking back to the insurance companies, they are the most vulnerable financial institutions when it comes to climate change issues. The insurance companies in America have woken up and have said they won't provide insurance for houses located in areas where the sea levels are rising. Now, **there is over \$23 trillion from institutional investors internationally that is available for investment in developing economies like Nigeria and Africa.** These monies might not directly go to companies like Arnergy, rather they will have to go through commercial banks. Interestingly, commercial banks are finding it hard to raise capital even with so much opportunity. The problem is, the only colour of capital in the international market is green. That means, as a company, you have to ensure when working with banks that they have a green structure in place to attract international

capital so that they can lend these monies to SMEs.

The other thing that is important to mention here is that **a lot of the times when people mention green finance, they talk about green bonds.** A bond is just one of the financial instruments for financing unemployment. We have the equities, we have grants, we have debts and all these will have to go into any activity that is commercially viable before we now start talking about social impact because money has to come in first.

Finally, in Nigeria, we don't go on strikes as regularly as is the scenario in European countries whereby traders go on strike on Fridays. However, it is very refreshing to see that lately, at least within the last one year, the private sector has been organising conferences on SDGs and climate change in Nigeria. That is another way to get the message out there and to ensure we really tackle this climate change issue because by 2050, the population will continue rising and this population will need to commute and feed. So, we need to use trains and buses more. We need to do more climate-friendly agriculture to feed the growing population.

MODERATOR:

I am going to round up with some other interventions we haven't spoken about because we have essentially dwelt on power and energy. So, as an individual, if I have a technology innovation project I want to pursue, who is the first person that I should meet?

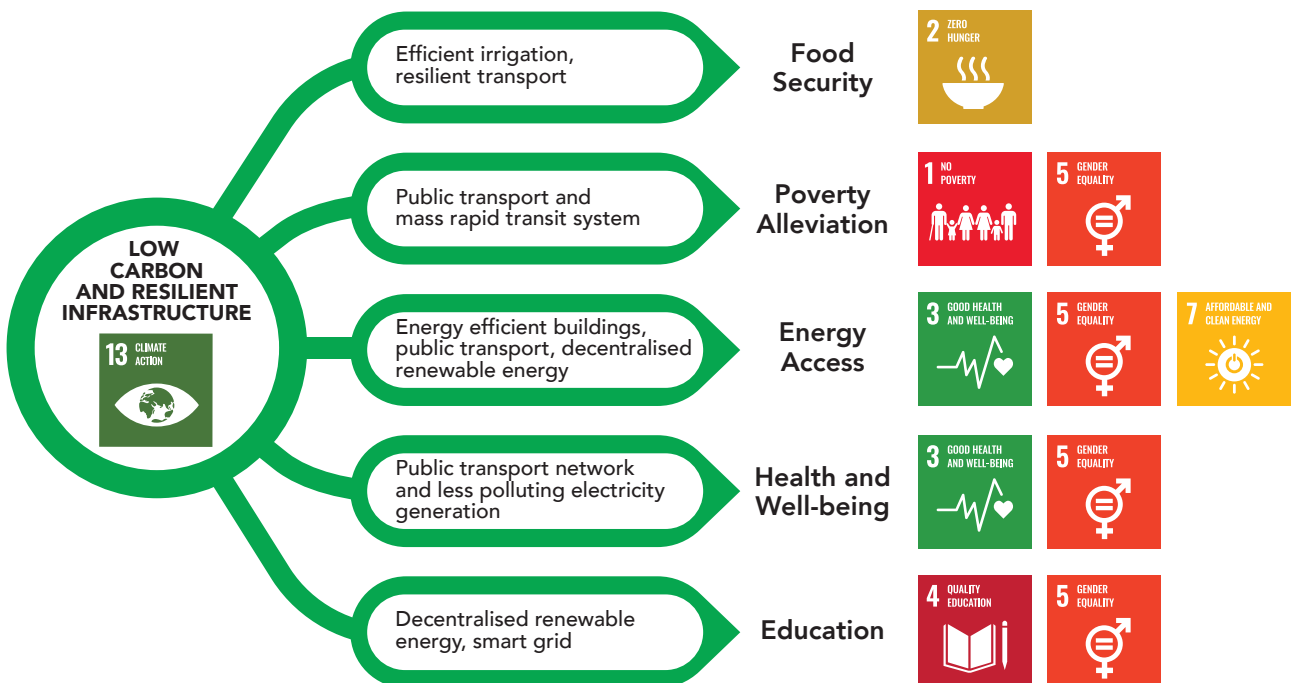
ADEYEMO:

There are few organizations in Nigeria already. The Nigerian Climate Innovation Centre (NCIC), the Lagos Business School, is one of them, and then there is All-On. If it is tech enabled, the likes of CC Hub are there. The information is out there these days. It's just for us to do our bit. Like Olumide highlighted, we should spend less time on Facebook and do more productive work. Use the time to educate yourself.

SUSTAINABILITY TABLE COMMENTS AND VIEWPOINT

It is interesting that the Financial industry seems to have made tremendous effort pertaining to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), evident from the Nigerian Sustainable Banking Principles as well as the availability of green bonds and climate finance albeit low availability and popularity/awareness. Sustainable Finance provides a medium to finance the global shift to low-carbon and climate resilient development and growth, attracting investors who are Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) inclined. There are strong links between climate resilient infrastructure and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The links between **low-carbon, climate-resilient infrastructure** and the **SDGs**



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

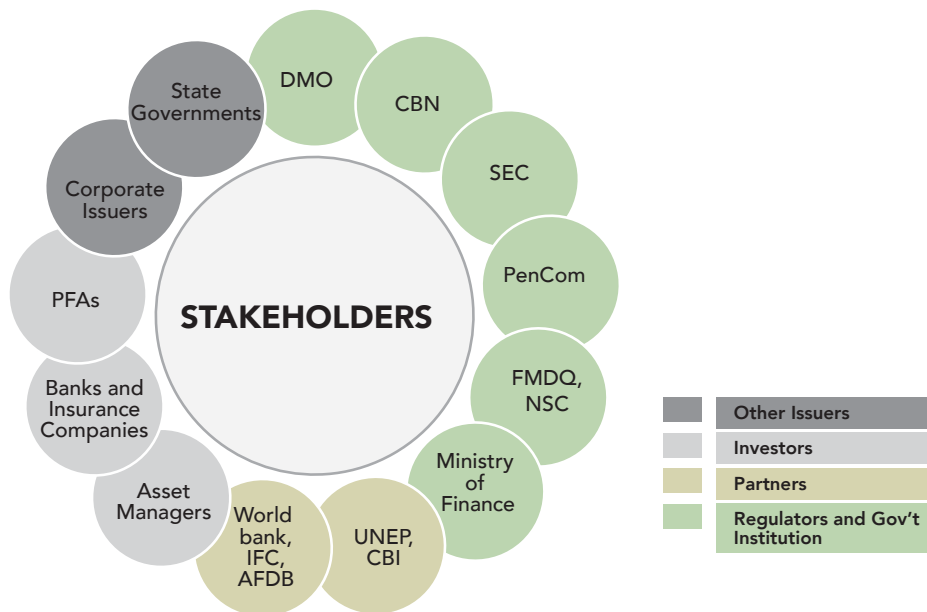
CARBON FOOTPRINT REDUCTION

Typically, when people talk about climate financing, they refer to energy and power because those are the critical infrastructure needs that affect us the most in Nigeria. However, the issue is a lot broader and deeper, thus it affects every aspect of our lives. The idea is to reduce carbon footprint not just as an organisation but as individuals. Energy efficiency is important – both from a generation and utilization perspective. There are numerous instruments from carbon credits to even raising sustainable/ green finance that a company can benefit from by harnessing green energy to reduce CO2 emission. This pose both environmental and economic benefits.

GOVERNMENTAL REGULATIONS

There is an intensifying need to engage government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAS) as well as regulatory agencies/institutions to develop a plethora of incentives that will support issuances/investments of sustainable finance-related instruments.

STAKEHOLDERS IN DEVELOPING GREEN BONDS IN NIGERIA



The incentives would encourage investments in sustainable/green infrastructure projects for environmental benefits and economic prosperity.

INNOVATION FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Corporate organisations should consider retrofitting high-carbon, resource-intensive technologies and processes for greener alternatives to reduce carbon footprints

CAPACITY BUILDING AND EDUCATION

It is imperative to ensure capacity building and institutional knowledge development in Sustainability related matters by advocating for the incorporation of sustainability in the curriculum of schools within the educational systems in Nigeria. Enshrining the SDGs into the school curriculum and having SDG clubs would drive innovation with the youth to proffer creative solutions in green areas to achieve the SDGs and create a pipeline of green ventures for sustainable finance.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (ESG) REPORTING

Every activity that any company or individual is doing concerning combating climate change in Nigeria should be reported. The lack of environmental journalism and low reporting is deterring the deployment and channelling of resources/ sustainable finance in Nigeria.

There are numerous opportunities in environmental journalism and reporting to create new jobs and drive sustainable finance.

REPOSITORY/PIPELINE OF DEALS + COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Very similar to the book of states, curated by the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), it would be interesting to have a repository and database that comprises a pipeline of bankable green projects that will be connected to potential domestic and international investors/sponsors to facilitate successful implementation across the board.

Climate Financing is one of the key elements of the international discussions addressing climate change in the medium and long term. Beyond relying on grants and international intervention, however, a combination of sources is needed to protect the environment including insurance, adaptation, government regulations, tax incentives, and responsible consumption

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