→ BRIEFING



Amid global challenges and the need for strong governance: JETP as a potential driver of Senegal's energy transition

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Contents

2 Introduction

3 Senegal needs to establish robust, inclusive governance to make a success of its energy transition

6 Senegal needs to seize the opportunity to create a clear, coherent, cross-cutting public policy on energy transition

7 Senegal needs to put in place an effective public communication strategy – an essential factor for the acceptance and success of its energy transition

8 Conclusion

Key messages

- In an uncertain global context and facing urgent challenges in electricity access, the deployment of the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) offers Senegal a unique opportunity to build a clear and coherent public policy for its energy transition.
- To meet these challenges and succeed in its energy transition, Senegal must establish a robust, inclusive, and cross-sector governance framework to guide the JETP's deployment.
- This governance effort should be supported by effective public communication that reaches the most affected communities, providing the initiative with visibility and legitimacy.
- Repositioned strategic coordination, backed by strengthened interministerial leadership and an expanded, sustained steering committee (COPIL), is essential for an effective and inclusive energy transition.

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Introduction

With more than 4 million Senegalese still lacking electricity, Senegal now needs to secure transition financing, alongside the revenues it earns from hydrocarbon exploitation, so that it can convert its energy potential into an engine for inclusive development and social justice. The Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) is key to this. Signed in June 2023 for an initial period of 3–5 years, it is part of a partnership intended to increase access to electricity and clean up the energy mix by increasing the share of renewable energy to 40% by 2030, with a view to large-scale renewables deployment over the long term.

The Senegalese government is committed to the JETP and actively working to develop its investment plan, in spite of unfavourable global dynamics, notably including the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement and from JETPs entered into with Indonesia, South Africa and Vietnam. In this context, greater vigilance is needed around a crucial but often overlooked factor: governance.

Good governance requires that decision-making and implementation processes are based on key principles such as participation, consensus, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, inclusion and human rights.

Experience from extractive projects in Senegal and West Africa shows that a lack of transparency and participation can undermine the social legitimacy of public policies in a lasting way. Ignoring these governance principles when implementing the JETP risks repeating past mistakes: public opposition, poor resource allocation and capture of benefits by corrupt elites, resulting in profoundly unjust results for affected communities and workers. To live up to its ambitions and the local context, the JETP must be supported by strong, inclusive, and transparent governance structures that can ensure a fair and lasting impact.

This briefing sets out three priorities for Senegal to ensure that the JETP is truly just, effective and legitimate.



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Senegal must establish robust and inclusive governance to succeed in its energy transition

The recent withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement and the JETP, alongside ongoing uncertainties about the involvement of multilateral development banks, undermines the financial architecture intended to support these transitions. In addition, some decisions by the new U.S. administration, such as the suspension of USAID and the repeated pressure on NATO, could influence European countries and risk weakening their financial commitments to energy transition in the Global South. Such a reduction in funding availability makes it essential to manage JETP resources well and use them effectively, while exploring alternatives to existing funding commitments. This is especially important given that the JETP mainly relies on loans, meaning that rigorous, inclusive management of resources is needed.

For Senegal, this uncertain context calls for strategic reflection on the sustainability of current partnerships and the need to build up the resilience and autonomy of national energy governance. This entails not only proactively diversifying funding sources but also strengthening transparency, integrity and accountability mechanisms. The goal is to create a more sovereign, sustainable energy transition.

In this context, and in light of recent observations made by the Court of Auditors of Senegal on the management of public resources, it is imperative that the JETP process is rooted in a robust, cross-cutting and inclusive governance framework.

Upon signature of the JETP, an Interministerial Steering Committee (COPIL) was set up within the Ministry of Energy, Oil and Mines, supported by a dedicated coordination unit, the Directorate for Energy Transition. The current composition of the COPIL—largely dominated by sector-specific ministries and with minimal representation from social actors and local stakeholders—risks neglecting key issues for a truly just and inclusive transition.

Strong interministerial leadership is needed to ensure that the energy transition is effective. While the establishment of COPIL is a commendable government action, it now needs to be part of an interministerial effort. By way of comparison, in South Africa the JETP is directly linked to the Presidency via a dedicated team and a project management office (the Presidential Climate Commission). In Vietnam, it is managed by an interministerial committee led by the Prime Minister. In Indonesia, an interministerial office under the authority of the Ministry of Energy coordinates with sector ministries and regional authorities. These countries have established robust frameworks that include governance, projects and funding.

Senegal's current configuration, attached to a sector ministry, could limit the cross-cutting scope of the JETP and make it more difficult to incorporate budgetary, social, regional and environmental considerations. It may be appropriate to consider repositioning strategic coordination under the auspices of the President or the Prime Minister, with the support of an interministerial technical body, in order to improve the consistency and scope of the initiative.

The division of responsibilities among various energy sector entities—such as AME, ASER and ANER—would benefit from clarification to avoid overlapping mandates and improve operational efficiency. Strengthening the overall governance framework and coordination among ministries and agencies is also necessary to ensure greater consistency between JETP initiatives and related public policies, especially in agriculture, transport, infrastructure, industry, water and forestry.

A more diverse and inclusive decision-making structure would also add value. Among the reforms under consideration, it would be appropriate to institutionalize the COPIL beyond the development of the investment plan and expand its membership to include members of parliament, local governments and independent oversight bodies. Strengthening accountability mechanisms at all institutional levels—including integrating clear indicators of transparency, integrity and performance into project selection, monitoring and evaluation processes, and introducing a code of conduct—is also essential.

Senegal could take inspiration from South Africa, where the Presidential Climate Commission serves as a model of inclusive governance. The commission brings together 38 members from government ministries, local governments, trade unions, the private sector, civil society, youth groups and religious and traditional leaders. This diversity helps ensure that community consultations are systematically published and meaningfully incorporated into decisions.

In Senegal, despite the announcement of 120 consultations (compared to more than 200 in Indonesia) and the participation of civil society in some working groups, most discussions have taken place in Dakar, with limited representation from the areas most affected by climate change.

However, from the beginning of the process, civil society anticipated the need for broad public engagement by creating the Platform of Civil Society Actors for a Just Energy Transition in Senegal (PACTEJ). The platform aims to strengthen public debate, improve transparency and establish citizen monitoring mechanisms for commitments made by the government, its partners and investors.

Fighting corruption and improving governance are foundational pillars of a just, inclusive and sustainable energy transition—and cannot be sidelined. Senegalese civil society must have access to information and fully participate in decision-making, priority-setting, reporting and evaluation. A representative, long-term mechanism for citizen participation must urgently be established—one that goes beyond one-off consultations.

Promoting collaboration between national and international experts is also essential. JETP governance in Senegal currently faces a high degree of technical dependence on international actors who play a central role in defining strategic direction and guiding the investment plan. While this arrangement can provide technical advantages, it limits national ownership of the process and may compromise local priorities related to accountability and long-term sustainability.

To ensure real national ownership of the JETP, technical inputs should be led as much as possible by national actors. Senegal could promote more partnerships in the form of joint ventures or close cooperation between international and national experts, to strengthen local capacity while benefiting from external expertise.

Table: Comparison of JETP Steering Approaches by Country

Country	Senegal	South Africa	Indonesia	Vietnam	Challenges
Supreme authority	Secretary-General (Ministry of Energy)	President of the Republic	Secretary-General (Ministry of Energy)	Prime Minister	Ensuring strong coordination with other state entities and with the top authority responsible for implementing government policy
Governance structure	Steering committee Coordination and Monitoring Unit Working groups	Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) JET Programme Management unit (PMA), hosted by the President of the Republic Working groups	Secretariat led by the Secretary-General, supported by working groups and the Asian Development Bank	Interministerial committee chaired by the Prime Minister JETP Secretariat hosted in the Ministry of Energy and led by the Minister, supported by ADB	Avoiding centralization of project decisions within the supervisory ministry
Steering committee meeting frequency	Quarterly	Quarterly	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of working groups	4 groups	5 groups	4 groups	4 groups	N/A

Seizing the opportunity to develop a clear, coherent and integrated energy transition policy in Senegal

Two years after the signing of the JETP, Senegal has yet to finalize the long-term strategy originally envisioned as a cornerstone of the process. This strategic gap weakens the alignment between planned projects and broader structural transformation goals—and contributes to the perception that the agenda is largely externally driven. Without a strong, consensus-based national framework, Senegal's ability to negotiate effectively with international partners is diminished. In its absence, the country risks following a path shaped primarily by the availability of external financing and shifting global geopolitical dynamics.

It is therefore urgent to finalize this strategy, ensuring that it is developed through an inclusive process involving all national stakeholders—including members of the PACTEJ platform—to promote collective ownership and strengthen political legitimacy.

The development of Senegal's JETP investment plan presents a unique opportunity to design an energy transition policy that is coherent across political, economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions. The JETP should not be seen as just another funding mechanism but as a key framework for planning and implementing a just, inclusive and sustainable transition anchored in a long-term vision.

South Africa offers a valuable point of comparison. In 2024, it passed the Climate Change Act, which aims to ensure a just transition toward a low-carbon, resilient, environmentally sustainable, and socially inclusive economy—while also creating decent jobs and eradicating poverty. This law builds on a national just transition strategy and serves as a guiding framework for public action.

Senegal could draw inspiration from this approach to move beyond the current fragmentation across sector-specific strategies (energy, agriculture, transport, etc.). While these documents sometimes include climate considerations, they often lack a shared vision and unified framework. A common strategic framework would improve coherence across sectors and help avoid trade-offs between short-term economic priorities and long-term climate goals.

Such a framework should be built on shared principles, collective social, environmental, cultural and economic values, inclusive governance, and a strong monitoring system. The forthcoming National Development Strategy for 2025–2029 provides a key opportunity in this regard—particularly its Objective 3.3, which calls for a cleaner energy mix through the gradual replacement of fossil fuels with renewables, guided by principles of justice and equity.

Senegal must develop an effective public communication strategy to support its energy transition

The JETP process in Senegal still needs improvement in public communication: its objectives, mechanisms, planned projects, selection criteria, and concrete implications remain poorly understood—even among the most affected populations. This lack of visibility risks undermining trust and understanding of the process's governance.

Other countries have demonstrated greater openness. South Africa, for example, publishes in its JETP Implementation Plan (2023–2027) a detailed description of its institutional architecture, project portfolios, funding sources, and governance and evaluation mechanisms. Both Indonesia and South Africa have established regularly updated websites dedicated to implementing their energy transition policies, including their JETPs. These platforms include government documents, stakeholder consultation reports involving communities, technical and quarterly implementation reports, financing platforms, monitoring dashboards, and project registries.

Implementing a similar transparency mechanism in Senegal as part of the JETP rollout would be a major asset for implementers, civil society organizations, and communities alike.

The validation and implementation of the JETP Investment Plan should be preceded by regular public consultations at the local level, especially in areas directly impacted by transition projects. These forums must provide opportunities to gather the expectations, concerns, and proposals of the population, thereby strengthening their ownership of the process.

An inclusive communication strategy combining visuals, infographics, videos, community radios, and local outreach is essential to democratize the process.

Conclusion

The JETP can fulfill its promises and drive an ambitious energy transition in Senegal if it is rooted in a cross-cutting public policy, supported by robust, inclusive governance, and underpinned by an effective communication strategy. The JETP should not be seen merely as a funding tool, but as a genuine lever for structural transformation of the energy sector aligned with national priorities, taking into account community concerns and meeting the requirements of climate justice.

Senegal has a unique opportunity to build an exemplary model of energy transition based on inclusion, transparency and effectiveness.



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