Review

Technology-Led Greenhouse Gas Emissions (THGE) in Nigeria: A Narrative Review of Environmental Impacts and Digital Sustainability Strategies

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Posted Date: 14 March 2025

doi: 10.20944/preprints202503.1065.v1

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Technology-Led Greenhouse Gas Emissions (THGE) in Nigeria: A Narrative Review of Environmental Impacts and Digital Sustainability Strategies

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Abstract: The rapid expansion of Nigeria's digital economy, driven by advancements in information and communication technology (ICT), artificial intelligence-driven technologies, and industrial automation, is contributing to economic growth but also increasing technology-led greenhouse gas emissions (THGE). Globally, the hi environmental impact of digital infrastructure is gaining attention, yet limited research exists on its implications for developing economies like Nigeria. This study adopts a narrative review approach to assess the scale of THGE, identifying key emission sources. The analysis synthesizes peer-reviewed literature, national policies, and global best practices to highlight Nigeria's reliance on fossil fuels, inadequate regulatory frameworks, and the limited integration of renewable energy in ICT operations. Comparative insights from South Africa, Brazil, and India reveal gaps in Nigeria's sustainability strategies and policy enforcement. Findings indicate that weak emission reporting systems, inefficient e-waste management, and a lack of green technology incentives exacerbate environmental risks. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions, such as carbon taxation, enhanced regulatory enforcement, and incentives for renewable energy adoption in the ICT sector. Strengthening public-private partnerships and integrating sustainability into digital policies will be critical for aligning Nigeria's technology-driven growth with global climate goals. Future research should focus on sectoral emission tracking, green ICT policies, and sustainable digital economy models.

Keywords: Technology-led emissions; ICT sustainability; digital economy; Nigeria; carbon footprint; e-waste; renewable energy

1. Introduction

Technological advancement is widely recognized as a catalyst for economic growth, fostering industrialization, digital transformation, and improved service delivery. In Nigeria, the expansion of information and communication technology (ICT), financial technology (FinTech), and digital services has significantly contributed to GDP growth and job creation. However, alongside these economic gains, the digital and technology ecosystem has also become a growing source of energy demand and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Data centres, cloud computing, and the proliferation of digital devices increase electricity consumption, much of which is sourced from fossil fuels, exacerbating Nigeria's carbon footprint (IEA, 2022). Globally, several studies have examined the environmental impact of the digital economy. For example, Jones et al. (2021) analyzed the carbon footprint of cloud computing in the United States, highlighting the role of renewable energy adoption in mitigating emissions. Similarly, Hacker (2023) studied the ICT sector's emissions in the European Union, emphasizing regulatory frameworks that encourage sustainable digital infrastructure. China

 doi:10.20944/preprints202503.1065.v1

has also assessed the impact of its booming digital economy, with Liu et al. (2022) outlining policies to transition data centers towards greener energy sources. While global technological innovation is advancing energy-efficient solutions, the environmental sustainability of digital transformation remains a pressing concern, particularly in developing economies reliant on carbon-intensive energy sources (UNEP, 2023).

The global conversation on climate change mitigation has predominantly focused on traditional sectors such as energy, transport, and agriculture, with less attention given to emissions from digital and emerging technologies. However, the rapid expansion of Nigeria's digital economy—spurred by increasing broadband penetration, a growing startup ecosystem, and tech-based industrial activities—poses new environmental challenges. The ICT sector alone is projected to contribute nearly 14% of global GHG emissions by 2040 if unchecked (Belkhir & Elmeligi, 2018). In Nigeria, where over 80% of electricity generation relies on fossil fuels (IEA, 2023), the carbon footprint of data centers, blockchain technologies, and artificial intelligence (AI) applications is rising. Addressing these emissions is imperative to achieving Nigeria's commitment under the Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to climate action.

Despite the pronounced effect of technology on greenhouse gas emissions globally and particularly in Nigeria, there is a lack of systematic research assessing the scale of THGE and its implications for Nigeria's net-zero transition.

The aim of this review are to assess and provide an outlook of Nigeria's technology-led greenhouse gas emissions (THGE) through an analysis of current emission trends associated with digital infrastructure, energy consumption patterns in the technology ecosystem, and policy frameworks addressing sustainability within ICT-related or dependent industries. By synthesizing relevant literature, national policies, and international best practices, the review will also provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers to integrate climate-conscious strategies into Nigeria's digital transformation agenda.

Significance

Understanding and addressing the emissions footprint of Nigeria's digital economy is crucial for sustainable development and climate resilience. This study aligns with the objectives of international frameworks such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 2023 Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement, which emphasize the role of technology in achieving net-zero emissions (UNFCCC, 2023). Given Nigeria's position as Africa's largest digital market, its policy choices in managing tech-related emissions will have broader regional implications. By integrating sustainability into digital expansion, Nigeria can lead the way in fostering a green digital economy that balances economic prosperity with environmental responsibility. This study, therefore, serves as a critical resource for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and climate advocates working towards a low-carbon technology future.

2. Methodology

This study uses a narrative review methodology to synthesize existing literature to explore the environmental implications of Nigeria's technological increase rapidly on the digital economy that focuses on technology-led greenhouse gas emissions.

This review is based on the sustainability science framework of the Triple Bottom Line Framework and evaluates the economic, environmental, and social aspects of Nigeria's digital transformation(Elkington, 2020). The Ecological Modernisation theory by Mol, (2020) emphasises that economic growth and environmental protection can be mutual in enforcing eco-innovation that can improve environmental quality while the Climate Policy Integration model is a critical approach in addressing climate change by using policies to ensure effective climate action (Persson & Runhaar 2020).

 doi:10.20944/preprints202503.1065.v1

Data Sources

This review explored the literature from 2010 till date to ensure relevance in assessing Nigeria's digital economy, energy consumption trends and sustainability policies.

This study relies on peer-reviewed literature, government reports, and industry publications to ensure a comprehensive assessment of technology-led GHG emissions in Nigeria. Sources include scholarly journals, policy documents from institutions such as the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), reports from relevant Nigerian government agencies and industry reports.

Search Strategy

A systematic search was conducted using key academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The search utilized keywords such as "technology and GHG emissions in Nigeria," "digital economy and carbon footprint," "ICT sector emissions in Africa," and "climate policy and technology sustainability." The use of boolean operators (AND and OR) was also used in this systematic search.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Studies were selected based on their relevance to Nigeria's technology sector and its contribution to GHG emissions. Inclusion criteria included research articles and reports that focus on Nigeria, the environmental impact of ICT, and climate policy interventions. Excluded were studies unrelated to Nigeria, those focusing solely on traditional industries without a technology component, and outdated sources published before 2010 unless deemed highly relevant.

Analysis Approach

A thematic analysis approach was employed to synthesize findings from the selected literature. The thematic analysis followed the process of familiarizing with the literature, identifying key themes, noting the relevant information and grouping the findings. Key themes include the carbon footprint of Nigeria's digital economy, renewable energy adoption in the tech sector, and policy frameworks supporting sustainable digital transformation. Themes were refined to ensure coherence and ensure structured insights and comparative analysis with global best practices were conducted to identify policy gaps and opportunities for intervention which provided the foundation for evidence-based recommendations.

3. Technology-Driven GHG Emissions in Nigeria

Nigeria's climate commitments, including its revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targeting a 47% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions below business-as-usual (BAU) levels by 2030 and a net-zero pledge by 2060, underscore the urgency of addressing technology-driven emissions. However, the nation's rapid technological adoption—spanning energy, telecommunications, and industry—has paradoxically intensified its carbon footprint. The ICT sector contributes to GHG emissions through multiple pathways, including energy consumption, device manufacturing, data transmission, and electronic waste generation (Malmodin & Lundén, 2018). In Nigeria, the increasing demand for internet connectivity, mobile devices, and cloud computing services has led to the expansion of energy-intensive data centers and telecommunication networks. Notably, many of these facilities rely on fossil fuel-based electricity, exacerbating emissions.

Key Contributors to ICT-Related Emissions and their environmental impact

Studies have identified five major contributors to ICT-related emissions:

1. **ICT and Digital Infrastructure:**

Research on ICT and digital infrastructure emissions indicates that data centers and mobile network operations are major energy consumers globally. Correspondingly, the expansion of ICT infrastructure in Nigeria has significantly increased energy consumption. Data centers, which power cloud computing, financial transactions, and digital storage, are particularly energy-intensive. Studies by Siddik et al. (2021) highlight that global data centers alone account for approximately 1% of total electricity use, with emissions set to triple by 2030. Nigeria's data center industry is expanding

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due to increased demand for cloud computing and digital financial services. However, most of these data centers are powered by diesel generators due to unreliable grid electricity (Oyedepo et al., 2021). This reliance on fossil fuels contributes significantly to CO_2 emissions, with some estimates suggesting that backup generators account for 40% of Nigeria's total ICT-related emissions (IEA, 2022). Comparisons with Ghana and Kenya (Energy Mix Report, 2022) show that those countries have integrated more solar energy into ICT operations. In Nigeria, some companies like MainOne have initiated solar-powered data centers, but widespread adoption remains low (IEA, 2022). A study by Okafor and Emodi (2019) recommends that Nigeria leverage its abundant solar potential to transition ICT operations toward renewable energy sources. Furthermore, the Nigerian National Renewable Energy Action Plan (2015) outlines strategic targets to increase clean energy adoption in ICT but faces significant implementation barriers.

2. **E-Waste Generation and Informal recycling practices:**

As one of Africa's largest importers of used electronic devices, Nigeria generates substantial quantities of e-waste annually, much of which is improperly managed. The lack of formal recycling infrastructure and reliance on informal recycling methods exacerbate both environmental pollution and GHG emissions. According to 2024 Global E-Waste Monitor, Nigeria generated over 500,000 metric tons of e-waste in 2022 with a recycling rate of less than 20%, making it the largest producer in West Africa and the third-largest in Africa after Egypt and South Africa. A significant portion of this waste originates from imported used electrical and electronic equipment (UEEE), 69% of these imports are non-functional or near end-of-life, effectively constituting e-waste upon arrival (Basel Convention Report, 2024).

The informal sector dominates e-waste collection and recycling in Nigeria, employing crude methods such as open burning, acid leaching, and manual dismantling to recover valuable materials like copper and gold. These processes release hazardous substances, including lead, mercury, and cadmium, into the environment while emitting significant amounts of GHGs. Open burning is a prevalent method for managing e-waste in Nigeria due to its low cost and simplicity. However, it is also one of the most environmentally damaging practices. Burning plastic casings from electronics releases CO_2 and CH_4 into the atmosphere. Additionally, incomplete combustion produces black carbon—a short-lived climate pollutant with a global warming potential thousands of times greater than CO_2 over a 20-year period (Blanco-Donado et al., 2022). For instance, open burning of cables to extract copper releases carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and dioxins—highly toxic pollutants that contribute to climate change (Basel Convention Report, 2024). The informal recycling sector also employs pyrolysis for extracting metals from printed circuit boards. This process emits volatile organic compounds (VOCs) alongside GHGs like nitrous oxide (N_2O), which has a global warming potential 298 times that of CO_2 over a century (Basel Convention Report, 2024). The cumulative impact of these emissions underscores the urgent need for regulated recycling practices. Improper disposal of e-waste in landfills is another significant source of GHG emissions. When discarded electronics containing organic components degrade anaerobically in landfills, they release CH_4—a potent greenhouse gas. In Lagos alone, where over 290,000 metric tons of e-waste were generated in 2020, landfill sites like Olusosun have become hotspots for methane emissions due to the accumulation of improperly disposed electronics (Global E-Waste Monitor, 2024).

While formal recycling operations are limited in Nigeria—accounting for less than 20% of total e-waste processed—their energy-intensive nature also contributes to GHG emissions. Smelting operations for recovering metals such as aluminum and copper require high energy inputs, often sourced from fossil fuels due to Nigeria's reliance on diesel generators for electricity production. This energy demand adds an indirect layer of emissions associated with e-waste recycling.

3. **Telecommunication Infrastructure**

The telecommunications sector in Nigeria has grown exponentially, driven by increasing demand for mobile connectivity and data services. However, this growth has come with significant environmental costs, particularly in the form of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

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Telecommunications infrastructure, including base transceiver stations (BTS), towers, and data centers, is a major contributor to Nigeria's GHG emissions due to its heavy reliance on fossil fuels for power generation. Base transceiver stations (BTS) are the backbone of mobile communication networks, accounting for over 70% of the total energy consumption in the telecommunications sector globally (Oliyide & Olugbemi, 2024). According to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC, 2023), Nigeria has over 200 million mobile subscribers, and each network base station requires constant power to function, contributing significantly to THGE. A report by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC, 2023) states that over 30,000 telecom towers in Nigeria rely on diesel-powered systems, emitting significant amounts of CO_2 annually. In Nigeria, where grid electricity is unreliable, BTS sites rely predominantly on diesel generators to ensure uninterrupted service. As of 2022, Nigeria had over 127,294 BTS sites and 40,451 telecom towers, consuming more than 50 million liters of diesel monthly (UNFCCC, 2025). This reliance on diesel generators results in the release of approximately 4,000 tonnes of CO_2 daily into the atmosphere (Oliyide & Olugbemi, 2024). The high carbon footprint of diesel-powered BTS is further exacerbated by inefficiencies in generator operation. Many sites operate below optimal load conditions, leading to increased fuel consumption and higher emissions per unit of energy produced. Additionally, older generator models used at many BTS sites emit higher levels of particulate matter and nitrogen oxides (NO_x), contributing not only to climate change but also to local air pollution (Amole et al., 2023). Despite having a renewable energy potential of over 427,000 MW (IRENA, 2023), Nigeria's telecommunication sector remains primarily dependent on fossil fuels. Comparative studies from South Africa and India (Masanet et al., 2022) emphasize that the rapid digitalization in emerging economies without an equivalent investment in green energy leads to higher emissions, making Nigeria's case particularly concerning.

4. **E-commerce and Logistics**

The rapid expansion of e-commerce and logistics in Nigeria, driven by urbanization and digital transformation, has increased emissions through delivery logistics. The transportation sector, crucial for e-commerce logistics, contributes 18–30% of national GHG emissions, primarily from gasoline and diesel combustion in vehicles (CCC) Last-mile delivery systems exacerbate emissions due to inefficient routing and reliance on aging, fuel-inefficient vehicles. In Lagos, Nigeria's e-commerce hub, congestion-driven fuel wastage results in delivery trucks idling for hours in traffic, emitting approximately 0.87 kgCO_2 per liter of diesel consumed. According to DHL (2022), last-mile deliveries in emerging markets such as Nigeria account for up to 50% of supply chain emissions. Studies by McKinnon (2021) in Kenya and Brazil indicate that without electric vehicle adoption in delivery fleets, the carbon footprint of online shopping continues to rise. E-commerce platforms depend on energy-intensive digital infrastructure, including data centers and mobile networks. Nigeria's 127,294 telecom base stations, predominantly powered by diesel generators, emit 19.6 MtCO_2 annually—equivalent to 5% of national emissions[1,2]. Data centers required for processing online transactions consume substantial electricity, 80% of which is generated from fossil fuels due to grid instability. Consumer behavior, such as impulse purchasing encouraged by targeted algorithms and discounts, drives overproduction. A 15% surge in online orders during promotional periods correlates with a 20% increase in manufacturing emissions. Inefficient packaging practices remain a critical issue. Standard-sized boxes with excessive filler materials increase transport space utilization by 25%, raising per-shipment emissions[3]. Single-use plastics, still prevalent in Nigerian e-commerce, generate significant waste, with decomposition releasing methane—a GHG 28–34 times more potent than CO_2 over a century. While e-commerce in Nigeria offers pathways to resource efficiency, systemic reliance on fossil fuels, infrastructural deficits, and unregulated consumer practices amplifies GHG emissions.

5. Industrial Automation and AI

The increasing adoption of industrial automation and AI-driven processes in Nigeria's manufacturing sector has led to an upsurge in electricity consumption and rising energy demand.

 doi:10.20944/preprints202503.1065.v1

PwC (2021) estimates that industrial automation could increase Nigeria's electricity demand by 30% over the next decade. While AI-based predictive maintenance, robotics, and automated production lines enhance efficiency but consume significant electricity. According to PwC (2021), automation in Nigeria's industrial sector could lead to a 30% rise in electricity demand over the next decade. In global contexts, reports by the World Economic Forum (2022) show that automation in industrial processes, while increasing efficiency, also results in significant emissions if powered by fossil fuels. In Nigeria, where industrial facilities rely on diesel generators due to inconsistent power supply (NERC, 2022), AI-driven manufacturing further exacerbates emissions. The lack of widespread renewable energy integration in automated manufacturing processes further compounds the sector's GHG emissions.

4. Nigeria's Tech-Generated Greenhouse Emissions (THGE) in a Global Context Comparative Analysis

Historically, Nigeria's technology sector has contributed relatively lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than developed economies due to its smaller digital footprint and slower industrialization in the ICT sector. However, the country's rapid digital transformation, marked by increased internet penetration, mobile connectivity, and data center expansion, has led to a sharp rise in emissions over the past decade (International Energy Agency [IEA], 2022).

Comparing Nigeria's tech-sector emissions with other emerging economies highlights a significant disparity in sustainability strategies. South Africa, for instance, has implemented well-documented policies focusing on green ICT, renewable energy integration, and sustainable e-waste management (South African Department of Environmental Affairs, 2021). Additionally, Brazil has pioneered climate-smart ICT policies, leveraging hydropower and other renewable sources to power data centers, thereby reducing reliance on fossil fuels (Oliveira & Martins, 2022).

In contrast, Nigeria lacks a comprehensive digital sustainability strategy, placing it at a disadvantage in aligning with global net-zero targets. The absence of a national policy specifically addressing emissions from the ICT sector means that the country's growing digital economy risks exacerbating environmental degradation. The need for a structured framework to regulate the sustainability of digital infrastructure is urgent, as seen in economies with structured emission-reduction plans, such as India, where policies encourage investments in green computing (Sharma et al., 2021). Without such interventions, Nigeria risks falling behind in global sustainability efforts while continuing to increase its carbon footprint.

Commitments to International Agreements

Nigeria has signed several global agreements aimed at reducing carbon emissions, including the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the African Union Agenda 2063. These commitments emphasize the need for nations to implement policies that promote environmental sustainability across all economic sectors, including technology (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2020).

However, despite these commitments, Nigeria's national climate policies do not sufficiently address the ICT sector's role in emissions. Unlike countries such as Germany and Sweden, which have explicitly integrated green ICT strategies into their environmental policies, Nigeria lacks legislative mandates targeting the tech industry's carbon footprint (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2021). This gap poses a challenge to achieving national and international climate targets, as the digital sector continues to expand without corresponding sustainability measures.

To align with international best practices, Nigeria must incorporate ICT-specific emission reduction policies into its broader climate action plan. This could include establishing carbon taxation for data centers and tech firms, mandating energy efficiency standards for electronic devices, and providing incentives for ICT companies to transition to renewable energy sources. Additionally, partnerships with global organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Bank could facilitate access to funding for green technology initiatives.

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Moreover, policy implementation remains a significant challenge. While Nigeria's government has launched various climate action plans, enforcement mechanisms are often weak, leading to poor compliance (Nwokolo et al., 2023). strengthening institutional capacity and promoting public-private collaborations could enhance policy effectiveness, ensuring that Nigeria's tech sector aligns with global sustainability goals.

5. Policy Gaps and Challenges in Managing THGE

a. Regulatory Shortcomings

The regulatory framework governing technology-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Nigeria remains inadequate due to weak enforcement mechanisms and institutional inefficiencies. While the country has enacted various environmental policies, including the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Act and the Climate Change Act of 2021, their implementation is often inconsistent (NESREA, 2019; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021). The enforcement of these policies is hindered by limited institutional capacity, insufficient funding, and a lack of inter-agency collaboration. Unlike developed economies where regulatory agencies have clear mandates and enforcement capabilities, Nigeria's regulatory bodies often operate in silos, leading to fragmented climate action and sustainability practices within the ICT sector.

A significant policy gap arises from the lack of integration between Nigeria's environmental and technology regulations. The absence of explicit policies addressing ICT emissions within national climate strategies further complicates efforts to mitigate the environmental impact of the sector. In comparison, countries such as Germany and Sweden have developed comprehensive frameworks that integrate digital sustainability into broader climate policies, ensuring that the tech industry adheres to emission reduction targets (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2021). Without a dedicated policy framework for technology-driven emissions, Nigeria risks exacerbating its carbon footprint, particularly as the digital economy continues to expand.

Furthermore, the lack of penalties for non-compliance weakens regulatory effectiveness. Studies indicate that industries are more likely to adopt green technologies when there are stringent regulatory penalties and incentives for compliance(Yang et al., 2024). In Nigeria, the absence of legally binding mandates for ICT companies to reduce emissions allows continued reliance on fossil fuels, particularly diesel-powered generators for data centers and telecommunications infrastructure. Addressing these regulatory shortcomings requires a comprehensive approach, including strengthening enforcement mechanisms, establishing clearer inter-agency coordination, and aligning national policies with international sustainability standards.

b. Data and Reporting Issues

Accurate measurement and reporting of technology-related greenhouse gas emissions in Nigeria remain a fundamental challenge. Many technology firms do not measure, track, or disclose their carbon emissions, making it difficult to quantify the environmental impact of the sector (Osibanjo & Nnorom, 2007). The lack of standardized emission reporting frameworks further exacerbates this challenge, leading to gaps in national climate assessments and policy formulation.

Globally, countries with effective emission reduction strategies have adopted mandatory reporting systems for technology firms, ensuring transparency in corporate sustainability practices. For instance, the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) mandates large companies, including those in the ICT sector, to report their environmental impact (Waas, 2023). In contrast, Nigeria lacks a centralized emissions reporting system, resulting in data inconsistencies and difficulties in tracking progress towards climate goals.

Another significant issue is the absence of independent audits and third-party verification of corporate sustainability reports in Nigeria. While some multinational corporations voluntarily disclose their emissions, there is no standardized mechanism to verify the accuracy of such data. The implementation of a centralized and publicly accessible emissions reporting database, modelled after international best practices, could help address this gap (Haladu and Bin-Nashwan 2021). Such a

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system would improve transparency, facilitate better policy formulation, and encourage companies to adopt greener business models.

Additionally, the informal nature of Nigeria's digital economy contributes to data challenges. A significant portion of Nigeria's technology sector operates outside formal regulatory oversight, making it difficult to collect reliable emissions data. While the Nigerian Startup Act, enacted in 2022, fosters an enabling environment for technology-enabled startups in Nigeria by providing legal clarity, financial incentives, and support mechanisms, it does not specifically incorporate measures related to digital sustainability, such as promoting energy-efficient technologies, reducing electronic waste, or integrating renewable energy solutions within the tech industry. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the ICT industry often lack the technical capacity to measure their environmental impact, further complicating data accuracy (Eze & Chinedu, 2021). Bridging this gap requires investment in digital monitoring tools, mandatory sustainability disclosures, and enhanced capacity-building initiatives to support emissions tracking, whether Scope 1, 2 or 3, across all levels of the technology sector.

c. Green Innovation Barriers

Nigeria's transition to a low-carbon technology sector faces multiple structural and economic barriers, hindering the adoption of green innovations. One of the primary obstacles is limited access to green financing. Unlike developed economies where governments and financial institutions provide extensive funding for green technology initiatives, Nigeria lacks dedicated funding mechanisms to support research, development, and deployment of sustainable ICT solutions (Betiku & Okon Bassey, 2022).

Buba et al. (2021) explain that Investment in green technology is further constrained by high import costs for energy-efficient equipment and renewable energy solutions. Many ICT firms in Nigeria rely on imported solar panels, battery storage systems, and energy-efficient data center technologies, which remain prohibitively expensive due to high tariffs and import duties. In contrast, countries such as India and China have implemented policies to subsidize green technology imports and incentivize local production, thereby reducing costs and promoting widespread adoption (Ganesan et al., 2021).

Moreover, inadequate research and development (R&D) incentives hinder innovation in Nigeria's technology sector. Developed countries with strong climate policies have established government-backed R&D programs to drive sustainability in the ICT industry, leading to advancements in energy-efficient computing, green data centers, and low-carbon telecommunication networks (Sharma et al., 2022). In Nigeria, however, R&D in green ICT is underfunded, with minimal collaboration between the government, academia, and private sector players. Strengthening public-private partnerships, increasing funding for climate-focused innovation, and establishing green tech incubators could help bridge this gap.

Infrastructure limitations also pose a significant challenge to the adoption of sustainable ICT solutions. The unreliable national power grid forces most tech firms to depend on fossil fuel-based backup power sources, undermining efforts to reduce emissions (World Bank, 2021). In countries such as Kenya, renewable energy-powered telecommunications infrastructure has been successfully deployed to mitigate reliance on diesel generators (Gicheru, 2022). Nigeria could adopt similar models by incentivizing private sector investment in off-grid renewable energy solutions for the ICT industry.

Additionally, there is limited awareness and expertise in sustainable ICT practices among tech firms in Nigeria. Many businesses lack the technical knowledge required to implement energy-efficient solutions, further delaying the transition to a low-carbon economy (Olaniyan & Akande, 2022). Capacity-building initiatives, sustainability-focused training programs, and government-led awareness campaigns could help address this challenge by equipping stakeholders with the necessary skills to integrate green technologies into their operations.

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6. Implications of THGE on Digital Sustainability efforts

The challenges associated with technology-led greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Nigeria have far-reaching implications for environmental sustainability, economic development, and international climate commitments. Without targeted policy interventions, the country's ICT sector will continue to contribute significantly to its carbon footprint, undermining national and global climate goals.

1. Failure to Meet International Climate Commitments

   Nigeria is a signatory to several international agreements, including the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which require reductions in carbon emissions. The absence of specific policies targeting ICT-sector emissions places Nigeria at risk of non-compliance with these commitments, potentially leading to diplomatic and economic consequences such as reduced access to climate finance and foreign investment (UNEP, 2020).
2. Economic and Competitive Disadvantages: The lack of green technology investments in Nigeria's ICT sector puts the country at a competitive disadvantage compared to nations that have adopted sustainable digital economies. Countries such as South Africa and India have incentivized green computing and renewable energy integration, attracting international investors and tech companies seeking sustainability-driven markets (Ganesan et al., 2021). Without similar measures, Nigeria may struggle to attract global technology firms that prioritize environmental responsibility.
3. Increased Environmental Degradation and Public Health Risks: Unchecked technology-driven emissions contribute to worsening air pollution, resource depletion, and climate-related disasters, which have direct and indirect effects on public health and livelihoods. Poor e-waste management, for example, leads to hazardous environmental conditions, particularly in urban centers where informal electronic waste disposal is prevalent (Osibanjo & Nnorom, 2007). Without stringent regulatory frameworks and enforcement, Nigeria's digital expansion may exacerbate environmental degradation.
4. Energy Security and Infrastructure Challenges: The ICT sector's reliance on diesel-powered generators due to an unreliable electricity grid further strains Nigeria's energy security. In the absence of a transition to renewable energy sources, the continued dependence on fossil fuels will not only increase emissions but also escalate operational costs for businesses, limiting sectoral growth and sustainability (World Bank, 2021).

7. Practical Recommendations for Sustainable eDigital Transformation in Nigeria

To bridge the existing policy gaps and mitigate the adverse effects of technology-led GHG emissions, Nigeria must adopt a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach that integrates government intervention, private sector collaboration, and international partnerships.

Achieving this can be achieved through the following contextually relevant recommendations:

1. **Establish a National THGE Reporting System**

The government must develop a national database for ICT-related emissions, ensuring that all technology related business disclose their carbon footprints annually. Such standardized emissions tracking framework help to improve data accuracy and policy enforcement across Nigeria's technology ecosystem. South Africa has implemented the National Atmospheric Emission Inventory System (NAEIS), which mandates businesses to report their emissions data, enabling more accurate monitoring and policy interventions. Nigeria can adopt a similar approach to track and manage ICT-

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related emissions effectively. The Federal Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) can work collaboratively to effectively deploy such system, integrating data that is collected, collated and analysed from tech companies, telecommunications providers, and industrial ICT users. This must happen across state and local levels with environmental protection agencies handling reporting efforts and local governments ensuring compliance by technology-enhanced businesses. Moreover, companies should be required to undergo independent sustainability audits to validate their emissions data and environmental claims, enhancing transparency and accountability.

2. **Promote and Incentivize Green Innovation and Technology Adoption**

The Federal Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (FMSTI) should work with the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) and the Bank of Industry (BOI) to provide tax breaks, grants, and low-interest loans for companies investing in energy-efficient technologies. At the state level, ministries of innovation and digital economy should support startups and research institutions developing sustainable ICT solutions. Local governments can facilitate small-business participation through community-led innovation hubs. For example, Kenya has successfully introduced tax incentives for companies that adopt green technology solutions, particularly in the renewable energy and digital sectors. Nigeria can learn from Kenya's Green Energy Tax Incentives and implement similar policies to encourage sustainable practices in its ICT industry. Additionally, the government can encourage local production of sustainable technologies by reducing import tariffs on energy-efficient ICT equipment and provide incentives for local manufacturing of green tech solutions, such as solar-powered data centers and sustainable computing devices. By also providing increased funding for university-led and industry-led research and development efforts, there will be acceleration of local development and commercialization of eco-friendly technologies.

3. Implement Carbon Taxation and Green Tariffs

By introducing financial penalties for high-emission tech companies and offering incentives for those utilizing renewable energy sources, Nigeria's efforts to promote digital sustainability and green transition will be greatly enhanced. For example, in 2011 while releasing her Green Growth and Climate Resilience National Strategy for Climate Change and Low Carbon Development under its National Environment and Climate Change Policy, Rwanda introduced carbon pricing mechanisms, ensuring that industries, including ICT, are held accountable for their emissions. By adopting a structured carbon taxation policy, Nigeria can encourage tech companies to transition to greener operations while generating revenue for environmental initiatives. The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) in coordination with the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning needs to introduce carbon taxes on high-emission ICT operations and offer tariff reductions for companies within the technology, energy, telecommunications and transportation sectors transitioning to renewable energy sources. The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) can also align with state-level energy commissions to ensure grid access to green energy for ICT firms.

4. **Enhance E-Waste Management Regulations**

More than ever before, it is imperative that Nigeria strengthens the implementation and enforcement of e-waste policies to promote responsible disposal, recycling, and the adoption of circular economy models. Ghana's e-waste management system, under the Electronic Waste Control and Management Act, provides a structured approach to handling electronic waste through designated recycling plants. Nigeria can enhance its existing e-waste policies by adopting Ghana's model, which includes nationally recognised producer responsibility schemes and formalized recycling processes. NESREA, in partnership with E-waste Producer Responsibility Organisation Nigeria (EPRON), should enforce stricter regulations on electronic waste disposal and recycling. At the state level, ministries of environment should work with either existing state-led or private sector waste management authorities to implement collection and recycling programs. Local governments

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should collaborate with informal e-waste recyclers to formalize sustainable disposal mechanisms. There are several e-waste collection systems running locally and led by entrepreneurs whose models can be adopted, scaled and internalised systemically.

5. **Promote Renewable Energy Adoption in ICT Infrastructure**

As seen across several industries, the use of renewable energy has proven instrumental in addressing energy poverty and promoting energy conservation. With a robust support system to facilitate investment in solar and wind energy for data centers, telecommunications networks, ICT hubs, innovation centres and other digital facilities, Nigeria can foster the integration and utilisation of renewable energy sources, leveraging its abundant solar energy potential to transition ICT operations away from fossil fuels, ensuring long-term sustainability in the sector. This is identical to what Morocco has successfully done in integrating renewable energy sources into its tech infrastructure, with solar and wind projects providing power to industrial and ICT hubs. The Rural Electrification Agency (REA), in conjunction with the Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN) and the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) can lead this charge, working with state energy agencies to provide incentives for technology companies and ICT firms to transition to off-grid renewable solutions while ensuring community energy projects are developed to support households and small ICT businesses. A critical action that can also strengthen Infrastructure for Renewable Energy Integration is to develop Smart Grid Solutions for ICT Sustainability by collaborating with private sector players to enhance Nigeria's electricity grid reliability. This will not only reduce dependence on diesel-powered generators but also drive energy efficiency through distributed renewable energy systems.

6. **Facilitate Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)**

According to a 2018 report from the Brookings Institution, the role of private capital investments in sustainable infrastructure is vital to addressing the effects of climate change. With global public debt running at an all-time high of over 80% of global GDP, it will increasingly fall to the private sector to make the critical investments in smart new energy infrastructure that will bring energy access and resilience to people around the world. One of the most efficient ways of finding innovative ways to drive and achieve the energy transition on a national scale is to facilitate and establish mutually beneficial collaboration between government agencies, private enterprises, and academic institutions to drive sustainable digital transformation. In Ethiopia, several public-private partnerships in the ICT sector have facilitated the development of green data centers and energy-efficient telecommunications networks. Digitalization, decarbonization, diversification and discovery are strategies that fundamentally underpin the technology industry's ability to respond to severe weather and climate-related risks while supporting the needs of developed and developing communities for affordable and resilient energy. Achieving this will be dependent on how the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) can engage different categories of private sector companies in developing and managing sustainable ICT projects. For example, from eco-friendly data centers to smart city projects and green technology infrastructure research, the Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy should coordinate with major telecommunications companies and tech giants to galvanize investments and foster collaborations between universities, research institutions, and industry stakeholders into green technologies across several sectors that are implicated in the emission.

7. **Promote Green Technology Innovation Transfer and Production**

With a steady stockpile of smartphones, workstations, refrigerators, and other gadgets, the prevalence of consumer electronics and home appliances is expected to continue in the coming years. By 2030, more PCs are expected to be dumped in the developing countries, which will create more opportunity to make business in recycling and recovery of value-added products from E-waste. This presents an opportunity to create an enabling environment for the development of new and improved techniques and methods that promote the use of environmentally friendly materials and

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processes to reduce the negative impact on the planet. The National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) and Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology can create a high-level triple helix innovation group that would identify key planet-saving innovations that can help tackle different problems specifically associated with human-induced emissions. This can be initiated nationally and scaled downwards to the local levels including Low-carbon construction, Carbon capture and storage, Renewable energy storage and mass production of fuel cell electric vehicles.

8. **Conduct nationwide capacity building training and awareness campaigns:**

The government and private sector must invest in training programs that equip tech firms with skills in green computing, sustainable energy management, and digital sustainability practices. The NITDA, FME and NOA, BOI should launch national campaigns and industry workshops to educate businesses and consumers about energy-efficient digital practices, e-waste recycling, and sustainable tech consumption. These learning experiences will shape Industry-Led Sustainability Initiatives whereby technology startups and other related businesses are equipped with the knowledge and tools to develop internal sustainability policies, track their carbon footprints, and participate in voluntary carbon offset programs.

8. Future Research Directions

To enhance understanding and support effective policy interventions for managing technology-led greenhouse gas emissions (THGE) in Nigeria, future research should focus on the following key areas:

8.1. Sectoral Emissions Tracking and Quantification

Accurate data on THGE in Nigeria is limited, making it difficult to assess sector-specific contributions and design targeted mitigation strategies. Future research should focus on developing comprehensive emission inventories for Nigeria's ICT sector, quantifying emissions from data centers, telecommunications infrastructure, e-commerce logistics, and industrial automation. Studies should establish standardized methodologies for measuring Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions from digital operations (Malmodin & Lundén, 2018; Masanet et al., 2022; Adebayo & Fagbohun, 2022). This will provide empirical evidence for policymakers and guide Nigeria's transition to a sustainable digital economy.

8.2. Feasibility and Impact of Green ICT Policies

There is a need for research on how effectively Nigeria can integrate green ICT policies into its regulatory framework. Key areas of focus should include the implementation of energy efficiency standards for data centers, carbon pricing mechanisms for high-emission tech companies, and policies that promote circular economy models in e-waste management. Comparative studies with countries that have successfully implemented green ICT strategies, such as Germany and Sweden, can provide insights into best practices adaptable to Nigeria (Sharma et al., 2022; Persson & Runhaar, 2020; Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2021). Evaluating the socio-economic impact of these policies can help design tailored interventions for Nigeria's digital sector.

8.3. Renewable Energy Integration in Digital Infrastructure

Given Nigeria's reliance on fossil fuels for ICT infrastructure, future research should explore the feasibility of renewable energy adoption in data centers, telecommunications networks, and other digital operations. Studies should assess the economic viability of solar-powered base transceiver stations (BTS), hybrid energy systems, and incentives for private sector investment in clean energy (Ganesan et al., 2021; Oyedepo et al., 2021; International Renewable Energy Agency [IRENA], 2023).

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Understanding the challenges associated with grid reliability, financing mechanisms, and regulatory barriers will be crucial for transitioning Nigeria's digital sector to a low-carbon model.

8.4. Consumer Behavior and Digital Consumption Patterns

Consumer behavior significantly influences the carbon footprint of digital services, yet it remains an underexplored area in Nigeria. Research should examine the impact of e-commerce habits, device usage trends, and online retail logistics on emissions. Additionally, studies should explore behavioral interventions that promote sustainable digital consumption, such as energy-efficient device usage, e-waste recycling, and low-carbon supply chain practices (McKinnon, 2021; Oliveira & Martins, 2022; Rita & Ramos, 2022)). Insights from behavioral studies can guide awareness campaigns and policy initiatives aimed at reducing emissions linked to digital consumerism.

8.5. Circular Economy and E-Waste Management Innovations

Nigeria generates significant volumes of e-waste, yet formal recycling remains limited. Future research should investigate the effectiveness of extended producer responsibility (EPR) frameworks, sustainable recycling technologies, and ways to integrate the informal sector into regulated e-waste management systems (Osibanjo & Nnorom, 2007; Basel Convention Report, 2024; Global E-Waste Monitor, 2024). Comparative studies with countries that have successfully implemented circular economy models, such as Ghana and Rwanda, can provide valuable insights into policy frameworks that improve e-waste sustainability.

8.6. Sustainable Logistics and Transportation for E-Commerce

E-commerce-driven logistics are a growing source of emissions due to the reliance on fossil fuel-based transport systems. Future research should assess the feasibility of integrating electric vehicles (EVs) into last-mile delivery, optimizing delivery routes using AI, and leveraging alternative fuels for logistics fleets (DHL, 2022; Masanet et al., 2022; McKinnon, 2021). Understanding the economic and environmental trade-offs associated with these interventions can help shape policies that promote greener logistics solutions in Nigeria's expanding digital economy.

8.7. Economic and Regulatory Barriers to Green Innovation

The transition to a low-carbon digital economy in Nigeria faces structural, economic, and regulatory barriers. Future studies should investigate the impact of limited access to green financing, high import costs for renewable energy technologies, and weak regulatory enforcement on sustainable digital transformation (Adewuyi et al., 2020; Bello & Adebayo, 2023; Gicheru, 2022). Research should explore policy mechanisms such as tax incentives for clean technology, public-private partnerships, and government-backed funding for R&D in green ICT solutions.

9. Conclusions

Nigeria's rapid technological growth, particularly in sectors like energy, digital software and hardware production, automation, manufacturing, telecommunications, e-commerce, and logistics, has significantly contributed to its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Telecommunications infrastructure alone emits approximately 4,000 tonnes of CO_2 daily due to its reliance on diesel generators for powering base transceiver stations (BTS) and data centers. Similarly, e-commerce and logistics exacerbate emissions through inefficient transportation networks and energy-intensive digital operations. E-waste accumulation further compounds the problem, with improper disposal methods such as open burning releasing potent GHGs like methane and black carbon. These trends underscore the urgency of integrating climate-smart solutions into Nigeria's technology sector to align with its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. Without decisive action, Nigeria risks missing its 2030 emission reduction targets while exacerbating environmental degradation. To mitigate technology-driven GHG emissions, Nigeria must prioritize

 doi:10.20944/preprints202503.1065.v1

the adoption of climate-smart policies. Key measures include enforcing carbon pricing mechanisms for high-emission sectors like telecommunications, incentivizing renewable energy adoption (e.g., solar-powered BTS), and mandating energy efficiency standards for digital infrastructure. The Climate Change Act (2021) provides a framework for these interventions but requires stronger enforcement mechanisms and financial incentives to accelerate implementation. Furthermore, fostering public-private partnerships can catalyze investments in green technologies while promoting circular economy practices to address e-waste challenges.

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