

NATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY POLICY:

A NOTE

POLICY SUMMARY:

The initiative by the Government of Zimbabwe to develop and implement a national energy efficiency policy is commendable. Energy efficiency has been identified as one of the most significant policy interventions to help address the substantial growth in energy demand. Zimbabwe [launched](#) its National Energy Efficiency Policy (NEEP) on April 9, 2025, during the International Renewable Energy Conference. [NEEP was adopted in 2024.](#)

The overall goal of the NEEP is to establish energy efficiency programmes to promote sustainable development as the country transitions to an upper-middle-income society, in accordance with the objectives of [Vision 2030](#). Zimbabwe has vast opportunities for energy savings on both the supply and demand sides, but the current efforts are insufficient to achieve significant benefits in terms of offsetting investments in new plant capacity and [improving the supply situation](#).

The policy is based on the principles of [development, sustainability, affordability, accessibility, gender equity, and employment creation](#). It aims to stimulate energy efficiency by promoting a comprehensive, integrated, and grounded energy efficiency strategy that drives social and economic development. NEEP also defines roles and responsibilities for the implementation of energy efficiency interventions.

Lastly, the policy provides a framework for setting targets in various sectors: mining, residential, agriculture, commercial, transport, and industrial. To support the policy's vision of achieving low carbon emissions in the energy sector and climate-resilient energy-efficient systems, the policy will be anchored by an Energy Efficiency Law, a National Energy Efficiency Strategy, and standard energy efficiency regulations and protocols. The policy also mandates energy efficiency audits.



GAPS AND POSSIBLE FIXES

Despite the laudable effort, the policy has a few gaps and challenges, including the Absence of a National Data System, leading to the policy's failure to solve challenges related to limitations in available data on energy savings. Zimbabwe lacks adequate data to establish energy savings, which results from adopting more efficient technologies, fuel switching, and changes in habits and processes; therefore, the potential energy savings are underestimated.

The National Energy Efficiency Data System (NEEDS) should be established to improve the understanding of energy usage and efficiency in both residential and non-residential properties. This system should align electricity consumption data with sub-national energy consumption statistics. The data must be comparable to energy efficiency targets and measures implemented by the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA). Furthermore, the system should encompass property attributes and characteristics sourced from various channels. Zimbabwe can gain significant insights from the UK's National Energy Efficiency Data Framework, which provides reliable data to facilitate the delivery and monitoring of reductions in energy use and emissions.

Second, the NEEP does not include specific public awareness-raising initiatives aimed at enhancing information and knowledge about energy efficiency among electricity users. Globally, this has resulted in failures of energy efficiency policies, as electricity consumers frequently lack access to essential information and knowledge regarding energy efficiency.

NEEP should create a comprehensive and inclusive public awareness campaign that goes beyond billboards, television commercials, and social media to include multiple components such as clear messaging, grassroots outreach, and budget.

Third, Zimbabwe has faced over thirty years of economic challenges and downturns, which may affect consumers' and small-to medium-sized businesses access to finance to implement energy efficiency measures. Capital is the primary barrier to energy efficiency programme adoption in many countries. The lack of financial institutions willing to fund energy efficiency programmes due to their initial capital intensity hinders their adoption.

Zimbabwe should consider establishing an energy efficiency fund that provides financial services to consumers, facilitating a swift transition to energy-saving technologies. The fund should pool resources from both the public and private sectors to promote a sustainable energy market and foster climate protection through collaborative approaches that contribute to climate change mitigation and ensure efficient electricity use in an age of scarcity.

Fourth, the Zimbabwe energy sector has outdated equipment in the residential, industrial, and mining sectors, resulting in low levels of energy efficiency. Zimbabwe's energy performance ranks among the bottom three in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, following Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Policy Coordination with supporting and complementary policies, such as the Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) which sets the minimum efficiency based on the size or capacity of the product to allow market entry. MEPS generally creates a "market push" and prevents the least efficient appliances and equipment from entering the Zimbabwe market.

