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POLICY CONTINUITY AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: EVALUATING THE TRANSITION FROM ERGP (2017-2020) TO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2021-2025)

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Abstract

This article evaluates policy continuity in Nigeria's transition from the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP, 2017-2020) to the National Development Plan (NDP, 2021-2025), with attention to governance capacity and sustainable development. It addresses a gap in Nigerian development-planning scholarship, which often assesses individual plans while giving less attention to continuity across planning cycles. A mixed-method design was used, combining survey evidence from 150 policy-relevant respondents with documentary analysis of official planning documents and development reports. Descriptive statistics, chi-square goodness-of-fit tests, and thematic document coding were applied. The findings show strong strategic continuity between the ERGP and the NDP in economic diversification, infrastructure, human capital, private-sector participation, and long-term development alignment. However, implementation continuity is weaker because the NDP recalibrates financing, monitoring, stakeholder engagement, and public administration reform. Chi-square tests indicate that positive responses on awareness, objective-level continuity, implementation continuity, and long-term alignment were statistically non-random. The article argues that Nigeria's challenge is not the absence of plans but the difficulty of converting adaptive continuity into disciplined implementation. It recommends legal anchoring of development plans, stronger links between planning and budgeting, better monitoring and evaluation, and more direct targeting of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

Keywords: *Policy continuity; governance; sustainable development; ERGP; National Development Plan*

Introduction

National development planning is a major instrument through which governments define priorities, allocate resources, coordinate public action, and pursue long-term socio-economic transformation. In developing states, planning is especially important because market forces alone often cannot overcome structural poverty, infrastructure deficits, weak industrial capacity, unemployment, and institutional fragility. Nigeria has produced several development frameworks, including the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, Vision 20:2020, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2025. Yet persistent poverty, unemployment, infrastructure gaps, fiscal stress, and weak governance continue to raise questions about the coherence and continuity of national policy frameworks.

The ERGP was introduced after the 2016 recession as a medium-term strategy for restoring growth, stabilizing the macroeconomy, diversifying the economy, improving infrastructure, and strengthening social investment. Its central concern was recovery: how Nigeria could return to growth after recession while reducing dependence on crude oil and improving competitiveness. When the ERGP expired in 2020, the NDP 2021-2025 emerged as a successor framework and the first medium-term implementation plan linked to the broader Vision 2050 aspiration. The NDP retained several ERGP priorities but also modified the planning architecture by emphasizing stronger monitoring, regional development, governance reform, and private-sector-led financing.

The shift from ERGP to NDP is therefore a useful case for examining policy continuity in Nigeria. Policy continuity refers to the extent to which successive policies preserve coherent objectives, priority sectors, institutional responsibilities, financing mechanisms, and implementation systems over time. Continuity matters because development policies often require a long period before they generate measurable results. Infrastructure projects, industrial diversification, public-sector reform, health investment, and human capital development cannot be completed within a single political cycle. When plans are abandoned, duplicated, or rebranded without careful evaluation, public resources are wasted, institutional memory is weakened, and citizens lose confidence in government capacity.

The research gap addressed by this article is specific. Existing discussions of Nigerian development planning often examine individual plans in isolation, with less attention to the transition between plans. Yet sustainable development depends not only on the quality of one plan but also on whether successive plans learn from, sustain, and correct previous frameworks. This article therefore asks: To what extent does the NDP reflect continuity with the ERGP? What institutional and political factors shaped the transition? How does continuity or discontinuity affect sustainable development objectives? What lessons can be drawn for future national development planning in Nigeria?

The article argues that the ERGP-NDP transition demonstrates adaptive continuity. The NDP retains the ERGP emphasis on diversification, infrastructure, human capital, and private-sector participation, but adapts the policy framework to post-pandemic realities, fiscal constraints, Vision 2050, and the Sustainable Development Goals. However, strategic continuity alone does not guarantee sustainable development. The core problem lies in converting policy language into disciplined implementation, predictable financing, measurable outputs, and visible improvements in citizens' welfare.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Public policy refers to the authoritative choices, actions, and inactions through which government addresses public problems and allocates societal resources. Development policy is a specific form of public policy because it seeks to transform economic and social conditions through targeted interventions in infrastructure, industry, human capital, poverty reduction, and institutional reform. The policy process is not limited to formulation; it includes implementation, evaluation, feedback, modification, and continuation. Continuation is particularly relevant to development planning because development results are cumulative and dependent on stable execution across time.

Policy continuity describes the preservation and sustained implementation of policy priorities across administrations, planning cycles, and institutional transitions. It does not mean that a successor government must repeat every previous policy without adjustment. Rather, continuity implies coherence between successive plans, retention of useful institutional memory, avoidance of unnecessary policy reversals, and gradual improvement based on evidence. Effective continuity therefore has at least four dimensions: continuity of objectives, continuity of priority sectors, continuity of institutional responsibility, and continuity of implementation systems.

Continuity should also be distinguished from mere repetition. A successor plan may repeat the language of a previous plan but fail to sustain financing, monitoring systems, and implementation discipline. Such superficial continuity produces the appearance of coherence without generating development outcomes. The ERGP-NDP transition is analytically important because it contains both continuity and adaptation. It retains priorities such as economic diversification, infrastructure, job creation, human capital development, and private-sector participation, but modifies financing mechanisms, expands the planning horizon, and introduces a broader governance and monitoring framework.

Governance is central to policy continuity. In public administration, governance refers to the processes and institutions through which public authority is exercised, coordinated, and made accountable. Good governance supports policy continuity by strengthening transparency, rule-based administration, stakeholder participation, fiscal discipline, and monitoring and evaluation. Weak governance produces fragmented implementation, politicized projects, corruption, delayed budget releases, and loss of institutional memory. Policy coherence for sustainable development therefore requires whole-of-government coordination across economic, social, and environmental goals.

Sustainable development provides the broader normative basis for the study. The Brundtland definition emphasizes intergenerational responsibility, while the Sustainable Development Goals operationalize sustainability through poverty reduction, health, education, infrastructure, decent work, reduced inequalities, climate action, and strong institutions. These objectives cannot be achieved through fragmented or short-term policies. They require consistent public investment, administrative capability, and coordination across planning cycles. In this sense, policy continuity is not only an administrative concern but also a sustainability requirement.

Nigeria's planning history reveals the difficulty of converting plans into results. Early post-independence plans emphasized infrastructure, industrialization, agriculture, and social welfare, but political instability and resource constraints affected implementation. Later reforms, including NEEDS and Vision 20:2020, attempted to link macroeconomic reform with poverty reduction and institutional strengthening, yet implementation remained uneven. The ERGP represented an attempt to respond to recession through a medium-term framework, while the NDP sought to consolidate recovery, create a path toward Vision 2050, and mobilize large-scale investment.

This article draws on institutional theory, incrementalism, and policy feedback theory. Institutional theory explains how formal rules, organizational structures, administrative routines, and informal norms shape policy choices and implementation capacity. Development plans are implemented through ministries, planning agencies, budget offices, monitoring units, and political executives. Institutional theory therefore explains why strategic continuity may exist on paper while implementation still suffers from bureaucratic inefficiency, coordination problems, and weak accountability.

Incrementalism explains why policy change often occurs through adjustment rather than wholesale replacement. Policymakers operate with incomplete information, limited administrative capacity, and complex social problems. As a result, successor plans often modify existing frameworks rather than abandon them entirely. The NDP reflects this logic: it retains ERGP priorities such as diversification, infrastructure development, human capital investment, and private-sector-led growth, while adjusting scope, financing, monitoring, and long-term alignment.

Policy feedback theory adds a learning perspective. Earlier policies create institutions, expectations, information, resource flows, and political constituencies that influence later policy design. The NDP's stronger attention to monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, private-sector financing, and long-term planning can be interpreted as feedback from ERGP implementation experience. Together, the three theories justify a multi-level assessment of continuity: strategic continuity, institutional continuity, implementation continuity, and outcome continuity.

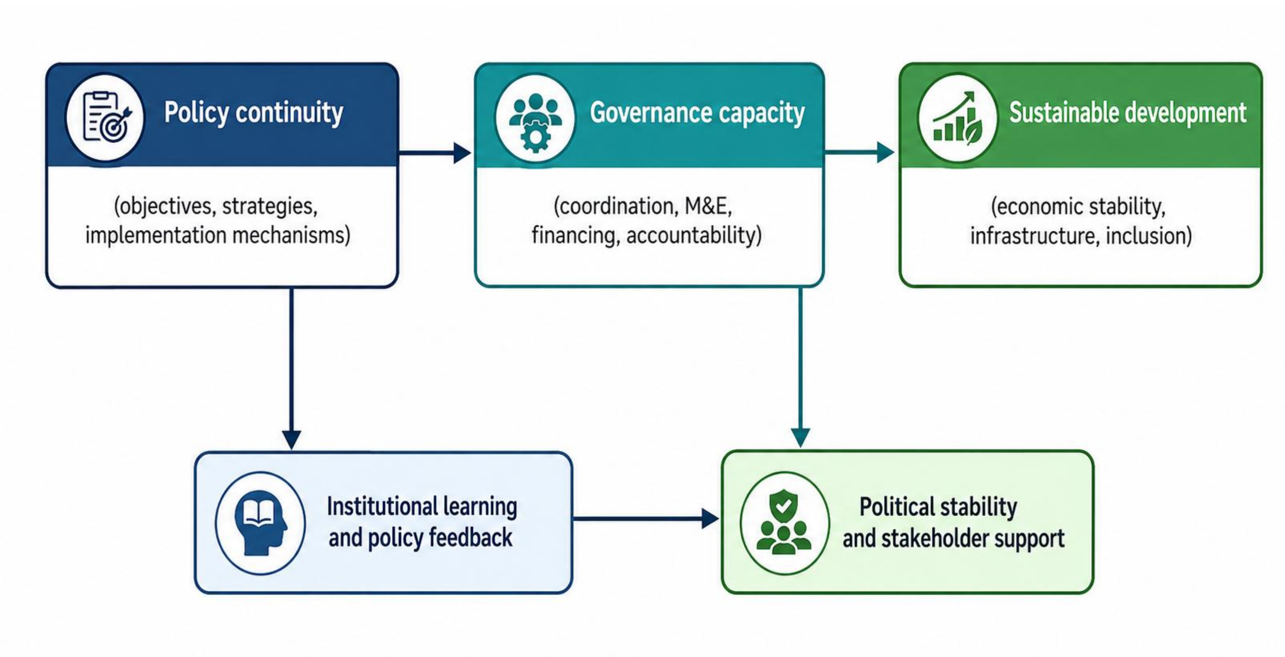

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of policy continuity, governance, and sustainable development

Note. The framework shows how policy continuity interacts with governance capacity, institutional learning, political support, and sustainable development outcomes.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method research design combining quantitative survey evidence with qualitative documentary analysis. The design was appropriate because policy continuity has measurable and interpretive dimensions. Quantitative data were needed to identify patterns in respondents' perceptions of policy continuity, while documentary analysis was required to compare the policy content of the ERGP and NDP and explain the governance context of the transition.

The population consisted of public servants, policy analysts, development practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders involved in national planning, policy implementation, monitoring, and development analysis. The institutional focus was the federal level because the ERGP and NDP are national development frameworks. Respondents were drawn from federal ministries, departments and agencies, research institutes and think tanks, development organizations and non-governmental organizations, and private-sector consultancy institutions. These groups were selected because of their professional knowledge of national planning and policy implementation processes.

A total of 150 respondents participated in the survey. Stratified purposive sampling was used. Stratification ensured representation across four institutional categories, while purposive selection ensured that respondents possessed relevant exposure to development planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, public administration, or policy analysis. The institutional distribution was as follows: federal ministries and MDAs, 96 respondents; research institutes and think tanks, 24 respondents; development organizations and NGOs, 18 respondents; and private-sector or consultancy institutions, 12 respondents. The sample was therefore policy-relevant even though it was not intended to represent the general population.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire with two sections. Section A collected socio-demographic information, including gender, age, education, professional affiliation, and years of experience. Section B contained Likert-type items measuring awareness of the ERGP and NDP, perceived continuity in objectives, continuity in implementation strategies, institutional facilitation, political stability, and alignment with long-term development goals. The scale ranged from 5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree, while the awareness item used a comparable ordinal scale ranging from Very Aware to Not Aware.

Instrument validity was strengthened through face and content validation. The items were checked against the study objectives, research questions, and key constructs of policy continuity, governance capacity, and sustainable development. The validation process focused on wording clarity, relevance to the ERGP-NDP transition, suitability for policy practitioners, and coverage of the main dimensions of continuity. The final instrument was included as Appendix A to address the review concern that the questionnaire should be visible to readers.

Reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, a widely used statistic for determining the internal consistency of Likert-scale items in social science research (Field, 2018). The reliability test was based on six Likert-type items measuring policy continuity, governance effectiveness, and sustainable development outcomes: continuity between ERGP and NDP objectives, institutional implementation capacity, inter-agency coordination, political stability, contribution of continuity to sustainable development, and monitoring and evaluation effectiveness. Each item was measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The SPSS reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .84, indicating good internal consistency and confirming that the instrument was reliable for empirical analysis.

Cronbach's Alpha was interpreted using Field's (2018) reliability threshold: .70 and above indicates acceptable reliability, .80 and above indicates good reliability, and .90 and above indicates excellent reliability. The coefficient was computed using the standard formula: alpha = [k / (k - 1)] [1 - (sum of item variances / variance of total score)], where k is the number of items. In this study, k = 6.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Measure	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	.84
Number of Items	6

Note. The coefficient of .84 indicates good internal consistency among the six Likert-type questionnaire items.

Table 2: Item Statistics for Cronbach's Alpha Computation

Item Code	Questionnaire Item	Mean	Variance

PC1	Continuity exists between ERGP and NDP policy objectives	4.12	0.74
PC2	Government institutions effectively implement development plans	3.68	0.81
PC3	Inter-agency coordination supports policy continuity	3.54	0.88
PC4	Political stability promotes policy consistency	3.77	0.79
PC5	Policy continuity contributes to sustainable development	4.01	0.69
PC6	Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are effective	3.42	0.92

Source: Field survey, 2026.

Note. Items were measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .84 demonstrates that the instrument possesses strong internal consistency. This implies that the questionnaire items consistently measured the underlying constructs of policy continuity, governance effectiveness, and sustainable development. Consequently, the instrument was considered sufficiently reliable for data collection and empirical analysis.

Documentary analysis was conducted in three stages. First, the ERGP, NDP 2021-2025, Nigeria Agenda 2050, SDG-related documents, and development reports were reviewed to identify stated objectives, priority sectors, financing assumptions, monitoring arrangements, and institutional responsibilities. Second, the two plans were coded under six categories: policy objectives, priority sectors, implementation mechanisms, financing strategy, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainable development orientation. Third, the coded evidence was compared with survey findings to determine whether perceived continuity was supported by documentary evidence.

Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean Likert scores, and chi-square goodness-of-fit tests. The chi-square tests were used to determine whether the observed response distributions differed significantly from equal response distributions. This strengthened the analysis beyond descriptive frequencies. Qualitative evidence from documents was interpreted thematically, with attention to strategic continuity, implementation adaptation, institutional learning, financing changes, political support, and sustainable development implications. Ethical care was observed by reporting responses in aggregate form and avoiding identification of individual respondents or institutions beyond broad professional categories.

Table 3: Sampling distribution by institutional category

Institutional category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Federal ministries/MDAs	96	64.0
Research institutes/think tanks	24	16.0
Development organizations/NGOs	18	12.0
Private sector/consultancy	12	8.0
Total	150	100.0

Note. n = 150. The sample was stratified across policy-relevant institutional categories.

Table 4: Documentary analysis coding matrix

Code category	Guiding question
Policy objectives	What core goals are stated in the plan?
Priority sectors	Which sectors receive strategic emphasis?
Implementation mechanisms	Which institutions and processes are assigned implementation responsibility?
Financing strategy	How does the plan propose to fund implementation?
Monitoring and evaluation	What mechanisms are proposed for tracking progress?
Sustainable development orientation	How does the plan address growth, inclusion, and institutional sustainability?

Note. The coding matrix guided comparison of ERGP and NDP policy content.

Results

The socio-demographic profile of respondents indicates that the sample was professionally relevant. Male respondents constituted 61.3% of the sample, while female respondents accounted for 38.7%. Most respondents were in the 30-49 age range, suggesting that the survey captured mid-career professionals likely to have policy process experience. Educational attainment was also high: 52% of respondents had master's degrees, 12% had PhDs, and 28% had bachelor's degrees. In professional terms, 64% of respondents were from federal ministries and MDAs, 16% from research institutes or think tanks, 12% from development organizations or NGOs, and 8% from the private sector or consultancy institutions.

Table 5: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage

			(%)
Gender	Male	92	61.3
	Female	58	38.7
Age	20-29 years	18	12.0
	30-39 years	54	36.0
	40-49 years	48	32.0
	50 years and above	30	20.0
Education	Bachelor's degree	42	28.0
	Master's degree	78	52.0
	PhD	18	12.0
	Others	12	8.0
Professional affiliation	Federal ministries/MDAs	96	64.0
	Research institutes/think tanks	24	16.0
	Development organizations/NGOs	18	12.0
	Private sector/consultancy	12	8.0
Years of experience	1-5 years	24	16.0
	6-10 years	48	32.0
	11-15 years	42	28.0
	Above 15 years	36	24.0

Source: Field survey, 2026.

Note. n = 150.

The first substantive finding is strong awareness of both plans. A combined 84% of respondents were either very aware or aware of the ERGP and NDP. This high awareness is important because respondents could reasonably assess the extent of continuity between the two frameworks.

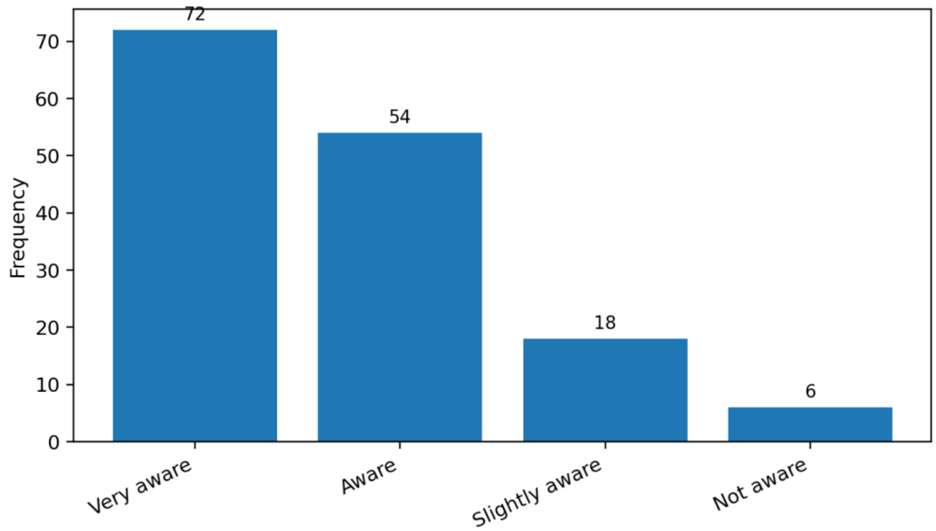

Figure 2: Awareness of ERGP and NDP among respondents

Note. The figure shows that 84% of respondents were aware or very aware of both policy frameworks.

Table 6: Respondent perceptions on awareness, continuity, and long-term alignment

Indicator	Positive response n (%)	Neutral / slightly aware n (%)	Negative response n (%)	Combined positive (%)
Awareness of ERGP and NDP	126 (84.0%)	18 (12.0%)	6 (4.0%)	84.0
Continuity in policy objectives	114 (76.0%)	18 (12.0%)	18 (12.0%)	76.0
Continuity in strategies and implementation	108 (72.0%)	24 (16.0%)	18 (12.0%)	72.0
Alignment with long-term development goals	120 (80.0%)	18 (12.0%)	12 (8.0%)	80.0

Note. Positive responses combine very aware/aware or strongly agree/agree. Negative responses combine disagree/not aware and strongly disagree where applicable. Field survey, 2026.

The second finding is strong perceived continuity in policy objectives. A combined 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the NDP maintains the core objectives of the ERGP. The most frequently identified areas of continuity were economic diversification, infrastructure development, human capital development, and private-sector-led growth. This shows that the

NDP did not represent a wholesale abandonment of the ERGP; rather, it extended the strategic logic of the earlier plan within a longer-term development vision.

The third finding is that implementation continuity is weaker than objective-level continuity. A combined 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there was continuity in strategies and implementation frameworks. This is slightly lower than the 76% for policy objectives, suggesting that the NDP preserved broad development priorities but altered aspects of execution, including financing, monitoring, public-private partnerships, and the connection to Vision 2050.

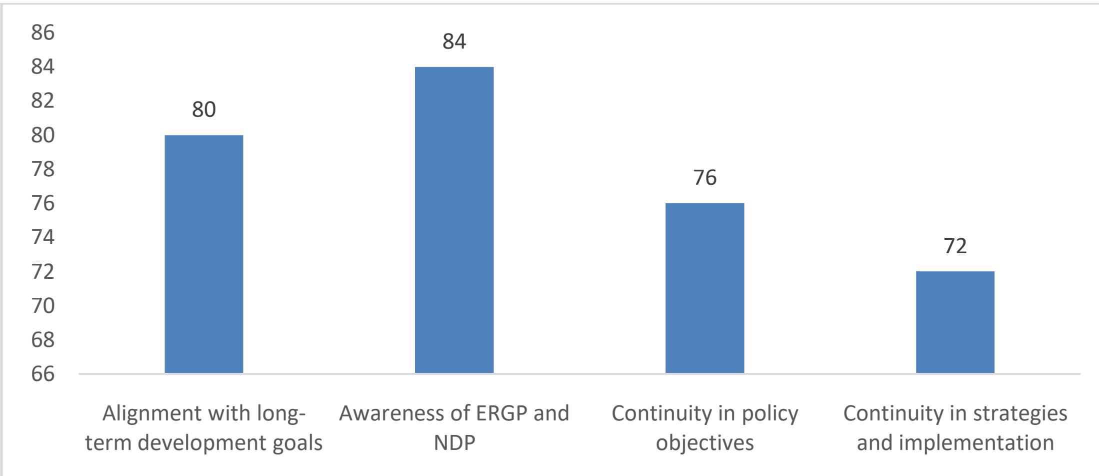

Figure 3: Summary of core continuity indicators

Note. The figure summarizes combined positive responses for the core indicators in Table 6.

The fourth finding is that the ERGP and NDP are perceived as aligned with longer-term development goals. A combined 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that both plans align with Nigeria's broader development agenda, including Vision 2050 and the SDGs. This suggests that national development planning is gradually moving from isolated medium-term programmes toward a more integrated planning architecture.

Table 7: Policy continuity and adaptation between the ERGP and NDP

Policy dimension	Continuity from ERGP to NDP	Major adaptation in the NDP
Economic growth and diversification	Both plans emphasize diversification away from oil dependence, agriculture, manufacturing, competitiveness, and private-sector participation.	The NDP places diversification within the Vision 2050 architecture and gives stronger attention to large-scale investment mobilization.
Infrastructure	Both plans prioritize transport,	The NDP uses a larger investment

development	power, and infrastructure expansion as foundations for productivity and growth.	framework and gives more prominence to PPPs and private finance.
Human capital and social development	Both plans recognize education, health, employment, and social investment as development priorities.	The NDP broadens the social development cluster and links it more explicitly to inclusive growth.
Governance and public administration	Both plans acknowledge the importance of implementation capacity and public-sector effectiveness.	The NDP gives more explicit attention to public administration reform, M&E, data systems, and institutional strengthening.
Monitoring and evaluation	Both plans include implementation and monitoring concerns.	The NDP reflects stronger emphasis on data-driven monitoring, stakeholder engagement, and policy feedback.

Note. The matrix is based on document coding of ERGP, NDP, Nigeria Agenda 2050, and related development reports.

Table 8: Chi-square tests of response distributions

Indicator	Mean	SD	Chi-square	df	P
Awareness	3.28	0.83	75.60	3	< .001
Objective continuity	4.00	1.10	84.00	4	< .001
Implementation continuity	3.88	1.07	72.00	4	< .001
Long-term alignment	4.14	0.98	106.20	4	< .001

Note. Goodness-of-fit tests compare observed response counts with equal expected distributions across response categories. All distributions were statistically significant at $p < .001$.

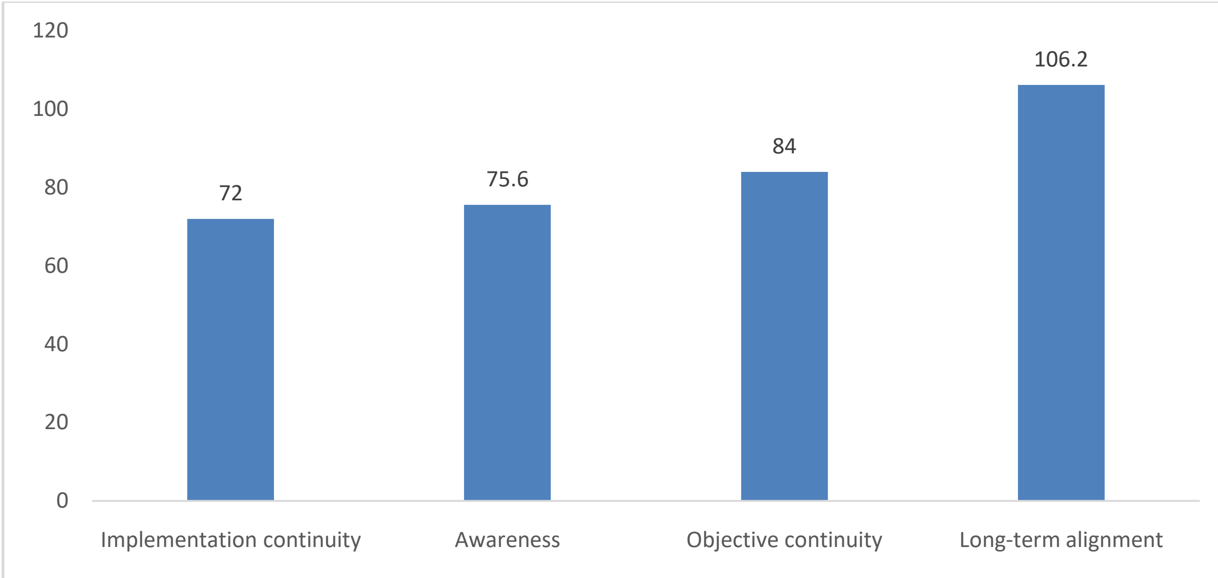

Figure 4: Chi-square values for response distributions

Note. The tests indicate that respondents' response distributions were not evenly spread across categories.

Institutional and political dynamics shaped the transition. Respondents identified the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning as a key factor in coordinating the transition and preserving policy memory. The continuity of political leadership during the transition reduced the likelihood of abrupt policy reversal. However, persistent constraints included bureaucratic inefficiency, inter-agency rivalry, inadequate funding, weak sub-national alignment, and political interference. These constraints show that Nigeria's problem is not simply plan formulation but administrative capacity to implement plans consistently.

Discussion

The results support the distinction between strategic continuity and implementation continuity. At the strategic level, the ERGP and NDP are clearly connected. Both prioritize economic diversification, infrastructure expansion, human capital development, private-sector participation, and alignment with sustainable development goals. At the implementation level, however, the transition is more complex. The NDP introduces larger financing expectations, broader development clusters, stronger monitoring language, and a more explicit long-term vision. These changes show learning, but they also create implementation demands that require strong administrative capacity.

From an incrementalist perspective, the transition is an example of policy evolution rather than policy replacement. The NDP did not discard the ERGP's priorities. It refined and scaled them within a broader planning framework. This form of continuity is valuable because it reduces the waste associated with abandoning programmes before completion, strengthens investor confidence, and improves the predictability of government priorities. However, incremental adjustment is beneficial only when it is accompanied by implementation discipline.

Institutional theory helps explain why strategic continuity may coexist with weak execution. Plans are implemented through organizations with routines, incentives, capacities, and conflicts. If ministries and agencies lack coordination, data capacity, budget discipline, and accountability, even well-designed plans will struggle. The concerns raised by respondents about bureaucratic inefficiency, weak coordination, political interference, and inadequate funding show that continuity must be institutionalized, not merely announced.

The transition also reflects policy feedback. The NDP appears to have absorbed lessons from the ERGP, particularly regarding financing, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement. Stronger emphasis on public-private partnerships reflects recognition that public resources alone are insufficient for Nigeria's development financing needs. However, reliance on private financing introduces risks. Private investment depends on macroeconomic stability, regulatory confidence, security, infrastructure, and credible institutions. If these enabling conditions are weak, private-sector-led development may remain aspirational.

The sustainable development implications are mixed. Policy continuity can support SDG-related progress by sustaining investment in infrastructure, education, health, employment, and economic transformation. However, respondents expressed concern that progress in poverty reduction, unemployment, and inequality remains limited. This shows that sustainable development requires more than aggregate growth or policy consistency. It requires distributional attention, social protection, employment creation, access to basic services, and stronger accountability for inclusive outcomes.

The results should also be interpreted cautiously. The survey captures perceptions of knowledgeable stakeholders; it does not directly measure national development outcomes. Therefore, conclusions are framed as evidence of perceived and documentary continuity rather than definitive proof that continuity has caused development improvement. This caution directly addresses the risk of overstating conclusions from perception data. Future research should combine survey evidence with project-level administrative data, budget execution records, and sector-specific performance indicators.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This article evaluated policy continuity and governance in Nigeria's transition from the ERGP 2017-2020 to the NDP 2021-2025. The study found substantial continuity at the level of strategic objectives, especially economic diversification, infrastructure development, human capital development, and private-sector-led growth. It also found evidence of policy learning because the NDP modifies implementation arrangements by emphasizing structured monitoring, public-private partnerships, governance reforms, and alignment with Vision 2050. However, implementation continuity remains moderate because persistent institutional weaknesses, funding constraints, bureaucratic inefficiency, inter-agency rivalry, and political interference continue to affect execution.

The central conclusion is that policy continuity is necessary but insufficient for sustainable development. Continuity between policy documents must be supported by strong institutions, effective governance, adequate financing, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and legal mechanisms that protect development plans from unnecessary political reversal. The ERGP-NDP transition shows that Nigeria is developing some capacity for strategic policy continuity, but sustainable development will remain limited unless continuity is converted into disciplined implementation and visible welfare improvement.

Recommendations should be prioritized. In the short term, government should strengthen coordination and monitoring by creating a central plan-implementation dashboard, publishing regular progress reports, and clarifying the deliverables of ministries, departments, and agencies. It should also improve data transparency so that legislators, researchers, civil society organizations, and development partners can assess implementation progress. In the medium term, planning should be integrated with budgeting. Annual budgets and medium-term expenditure frameworks should be tied directly to NDP targets and SDG indicators. Ministries should show how proposed expenditures contribute to specific plan targets.

In the long term, national development plans should be legally and institutionally anchored. Legislative endorsement can create continuity obligations, improve oversight, and reduce the tendency for each administration to abandon or rename predecessor programmes. The social-development dimension also requires stronger priority. Future plans should include employmentintensive infrastructure, skills development linked to industry demand, rural enterprise support, targeted social protection, and stronger investment in public education and healthcare. Without direct improvements in citizens' welfare, continuity in planning will not translate into sustainable development.

Table 9: Prioritized recommendations for strengthening policy continuity

Time horizon	Priority reform	Administrative action
Short term	Strengthen coordination and monitoring	Create a central plan-implementation dashboard; publish annual progress reports; clarify MDA deliverables.
Short term	Improve data and transparency	Make implementation data accessible to legislators, researchers, civil society, and development partners.
Medium term	Integrate planning and budgeting	Link annual budgets and medium-term expenditure frameworks to NDP targets and SDG indicators.
Medium term	Build administrative capacity	Train MDAs in project appraisal, procurement discipline, performance monitoring, and inter-agency collaboration.
Long term	Legally anchor development plans	Provide legislative backing and continuity obligations for national development plans.
Long term	Strengthen inclusive outcomes	Tie future plans to measurable poverty, unemployment, inequality, health, and education indicators.

Note. Recommendations respond to identified weaknesses in coordination, implementation, funding, and inclusion outcomes.

Limitations of the Study

First, the study relies on perceptions of knowledgeable stakeholders and documentary analysis. Although respondents were selected because of their professional relevance, perception data may be influenced by institutional position, political judgement, or uneven access to implementation information. Second, the study focuses on federal-level planning because the ERGP and NDP are national frameworks. This focus is appropriate for evaluating the transition between the two plans, but it does not fully capture state and local government implementation. Third, the manuscript analyzes aggregate response distributions rather than a retained respondent-level item dataset. Consequently, Cronbach's alpha cannot be calculated retrospectively from the available tables. Future work should preserve the raw questionnaire dataset and report internal consistency before manuscript submission.

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