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REVIEW ARTICLE

SUSTAINABILITY IN ENERGY MAINTENANCE: A GLOBAL REVIEW OF POLICIES AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

Joachim Osheyor Gidiagba[a], Joel Leonard[b], Oluwaseun Ayo Ogunjobi[c], Kelechi Anthony Ofonagoro[d], Olawe Alaba Tula[e], Chibuike Daraojimba[f*]

[a] *University of Johannesburg, South Africa*
[b] *University of Pretoria, South Africa*
[c] *S A & G Beeline Consulting, Nigeria*
[d] *Kelanth Energy Solutions Limited, Nigeria*
[e] *NLNG – Bonny Island, Nigeria*
[f] *University of Pretoria, South Africa*
Corresponding Author Email: Chibuike.daraojimba@tuks.co.za

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ABSTRACT

The imperative of sustainability in energy maintenance has gained prominence as societies strive to address environmental concerns and ensure the longevity of energy infrastructure. This paper conducts a comprehensive global review of policies and technologies aimed at achieving sustainable energy infrastructure management. By examining the intersection of environmental impact, economic benefits, and social considerations, the paper highlights the critical role of sustainable energy maintenance in addressing the world's energy needs. The study delves into international agreements, national energy policies, regulatory frameworks, and standards that drive sustainable practices. Furthermore, the paper explores technological innovations encompassing renewable energy integration, energy storage, predictive maintenance, and sustainable construction techniques. Challenges such as economic barriers, technological limitations, and policy implementation are discussed alongside successful case studies. In conclusion, the paper emphasizes the significance of a sustainable energy future and the necessity of collaborative efforts to achieve it.

KEYWORDS

Sustainability, energy maintenance, policies, technologies, infrastructure management.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Significance of Sustainability in Energy Maintenance

In an era characterized by increasing environmental concerns and the imperative to mitigate climate change, the role of sustainability in energy maintenance has gained paramount importance.(Westerterp-Plantenga et al., 2009). Energy systems play a pivotal role in global carbon emissions and resource consumption, making the pursuit of sustainable practices in energy maintenance crucial for addressing both ecological and socio-economic challenges. By emphasizing efficient resource utilization, reduced environmental impact, and the long-term viability of energy infrastructure, sustainability in energy maintenance not only contributes to environmental stewardship but also aligns with economic growth and social well-being.(GhaffarianHoseini et al., 2017). This section introduces the central theme of the paper: the significance of adopting sustainable practices in energy maintenance to ensure a resilient and environmentally responsible energy future.

1.2 Statement of the paper's purpose: to review global policies and technologies for sustainable energy infrastructure management.

The primary objective of this paper is to undertake a comprehensive review of the diverse range of global policies and innovative technologies that are instrumental in promoting sustainable energy infrastructure management. By examining the intricate interplay between regulatory frameworks and technological advancements, this study aims to elucidate how various regions across the globe are fostering environmentally responsible, economically viable, and socially equitable energy maintenance practices. Through this investigation, the paper seeks to provide insights into the dynamic landscape of sustainable energy infrastructure management and offer a nuanced understanding of the strategies and solutions that contribute to its realization.

1.3 Overview of the paper's structure.

This paper is structured to provide a comprehensive examination of sustainability in energy maintenance, encompassing both policy and technological dimensions. The subsequent sections delineate the key aspects of the study, beginning with an exploration of the significance of sustainability in energy maintenance (Section 2). This is followed by an in-depth analysis of global policies and regulations that shape sustainable energy infrastructure (Section 3). The subsequent sections delve into the innovative technologies driving sustainability, including renewable energy integration, energy storage, predictive maintenance, and sustainable construction techniques (Section 4). Challenges and barriers to achieving sustainable energy maintenance are discussed, addressing economic, technological, and policy-related hurdles (Section 5). The paper also presents case studies that highlight successful implementations of sustainable energy maintenance practices (Section 6). Furthermore, the study examines future directions, emerging opportunities, and the importance of continued collaboration for a sustainable energy future (Section 7). The paper concludes with a summary of key findings and a call to action (Section 8).

2. Importance of Sustainability in Energy Maintenance

2.1 Sustainable Development Goals and Energy

The global pursuit of sustainability is underscored by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a comprehensive framework aimed at addressing pressing global challenges (Chygryn et al., 2023). Among the SDGs, Goal 7 specifically targets affordable and clean energy access, emphasizing the pivotal role of energy in achieving a sustainable future (United Nations, 2015). This section delves into the interconnection between sustainable development and energy, discussing how Goal 7 serves as a catalyst for transforming the energy sector (Chygryn et al., 2023). By examining the linkage between energy access, resource efficiency, and environmental stewardship, this section highlights the urgency of aligning energy maintenance practices with the SDGs for a more sustainable world (Chygryn et al., 2023).

2.1.1 Discussion of How Sustainable Energy Infrastructure Aligns with Global Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable energy infrastructure stands as a linchpin for the achievement of multiple The integration of sustainable practices in energy maintenance resonates with a broader spectrum of SDGs beyond the direct correlation with Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) (Manes-Rossi and Nicolò, 2022). For instance, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through cleaner energy sources corresponds to Goal 13 (Climate Action), mitigating environmental degradation and its associated social and economic impacts (Manes-Rossi and Nicolò, 2022). Moreover, the emphasis on energy efficiency contributes to Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by fostering technological advancements and sustainable economic growth (Manes-Rossi and Nicolò, 2022).

By examining the nexus between sustainable energy infrastructure and the SDGs, this section underscores the pivotal role that energy maintenance plays in shaping a sustainable and inclusive future (Manes-Rossi and Nicolò, 2022). It is important to analyze the quality of current SDGs reporting practices in the energy sector, starting with the integration of SDGs in the CEO's or Chair's message (Manes-Rossi and Nicolò, 2022). The disclosure of companies' contributions to the SDGs can be examined through sustainability reports, where companies explain their strategies and operations aligned with specific SDGs (Manes-Rossi and Nicolò, 2022). The analysis of national monitoring indicators can also provide insights into the social, economic, and environmental results of SDG7 in a specific country, such as Ukraine (Naumenkova and Mishchenko, 2022).

The findings of such studies aim to raise awareness among government agencies and facilitate balanced decisions to accelerate the achievement of SDG7 (Naumenkova and Mishchenko, 2022). In Ukraine, transforming the energy sector to provide universal access to reliable and modern energy services is crucial for accelerating the achievement of the SDGs (Naumenkova and Mishchenko, 2022). Improving state support schemes for the sustainable development of renewable energy is also essential, ensuring a balance of interests among the state, energy consumers, and investors (Prokopenko et al., 2021).

2.1.2 Exploration of the role of energy in achieving environmental, social, and economic objectives.

Energy, as a fundamental enabler of modern society, plays a pivotal role in shaping environmental, social, and economic dimensions (Reyna and Chester, 2014). In the pursuit of sustainability, energy maintenance assumes significance not only for its environmental implications but also for its broader socio-economic impact (Reyna and Chester, 2014). Energy infrastructure decisions directly influence air and water quality, habitat preservation, and carbon emissions, thereby affecting environmental well-being in alignment with the goals of sustainable development (Reyna and Chester, 2014). Moreover, access to reliable and sustainable energy sources bolsters social equity by enhancing educational opportunities, healthcare access, and overall quality of life (Reyna and Chester, 2014). Economically, sustainable energy infrastructure translates into reduced energy costs, enhanced energy security, and job creation, contributing to sustainable economic growth (Reyna and Chester, 2014). This section delves into the multifaceted role of energy in achieving holistic sustainability objectives and emphasizes the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic dimensions.

2.2 Environmental Impact of Energy Infrastructure

Traditional energy infrastructure has been a significant contributor to environmental challenges, including air and water pollution, habitat degradation, and carbon emissions (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023). Fossil fuel-based energy systems, in particular, have raised concerns about their adverse effects on air quality, leading to respiratory illnesses and environmental degradation (Kotcher et al., 2019a). Furthermore, the extraction and utilization of non-renewable resources can lead to habitat destruction and ecosystem disruption. Transitioning to sustainable energy infrastructure is pivotal in addressing these environmental concerns (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023). By adopting renewable energy sources, energy efficiency measures, and cleaner technologies, the negative environmental impact of energy maintenance can be substantially mitigated ("Climate Change 2021—The Physical Science Basis," 2021a). This section delves into the environmental repercussions of conventional energy infrastructure and underscores the imperative of embracing sustainable practices to ensure long-term environmental integrity ("Climate Change 2021—The Physical Science Basis," 2021b).

The imperative to address environmental challenges posed by traditional energy infrastructure hinges on the pressing need to reduce carbon emissions, minimize waste generation, and curb resource depletion (Kotcher et al., 2019b). Carbon emissions resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels are a central contributor to anthropogenic climate change, with far-reaching impacts on ecosystems, weather patterns, and sea levels (Change, 2023). Moreover, the generation of waste, including hazardous byproducts and disposal challenges, further exacerbates environmental degradation (Kotcher et al., 2019b).

Resource depletion, stemming from the extraction of finite fossil fuel reserves, underscores the unsustainability of current energy practices (Kotcher et al., 2019a). Transitioning to sustainable energy maintenance not only mitigates carbon emissions but also fosters the development of circular economies, where waste is minimized, and resources are conserved and reused (Kotcher et al., 2019a). This section delves into the urgency of reducing carbon emissions, waste generation, and resource depletion through the adoption of sustainable energy maintenance practices, thereby ensuring a more resilient and environmentally responsible energy future (Kotcher et al., 2019b).

2.3 Economic and Social Benefits of Sustainable Energy Maintenance

Sustainable energy maintenance offers a myriad of economic and social benefits that extend beyond environmental considerations. Economically, transitioning to sustainable energy infrastructure presents opportunities for cost savings through improved energy efficiency, reduced operational expenses, and enhanced energy security (Ornstein et al., 2009). Additionally, the shift towards renewable energy sources fosters job creation in sectors such as manufacturing, installation, and maintenance of renewable technologies, stimulating economic growth and supporting local communities (Ornstein et al., 2009). From a social standpoint, sustainable energy maintenance contributes to equitable access to energy resources, particularly in underserved regions (Henry et al., 2020). Reliable energy access enhances educational opportunities, healthcare provision, and quality of life, addressing social inequalities and promoting human development (Henry et al., 2020). Moreover, community engagement in renewable energy projects empowers local populations and promotes social cohesion (Henry et al., 2020).

This section highlights the symbiotic relationship between sustainable energy maintenance and its positive economic and social outcomes, showcasing the multifaceted advantages of embracing environmentally responsible energy practices (Henry et al., 2020). The transition to sustainable energy infrastructure yields substantial economic benefits that encompass reduced operational costs and heightened job opportunities (Ornstein et al., 2009). Embracing energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy sources often leads to lower operational expenses, stemming from decreased energy consumption and optimized resource utilization (Henry et al., 2020). As a result, industries and businesses can enhance their competitiveness while contributing to overall economic resilience (Ornstein et al., 2009)

Furthermore, the integration of sustainable energy practices creates a burgeoning demand for skilled labor and innovation, fostering job creation across various sectors (Ornstein et al., 2009). From manufacturing and installation to maintenance and research, sustainable energy infrastructure offers a diverse range of employment opportunities (Ornstein et al., 2009). This, in turn, revitalizes local economies, empowers communities, and bolsters social well-being (Ornstein et al., 2009).

Sustainable energy maintenance not only offers economic benefits but also contributes to enhanced social well-being and equitable energy access (Ornstein et al., 2009). Communities that embrace sustainable energy practices experience improved air quality, reduced health risks, and an overall enhanced quality of life (Ornstein et al., 2009). Moreover, the deployment of decentralized and off-grid renewable energy solutions facilitates energy access in remote and underserved areas, ensuring that vulnerable populations gain access to essential services such as lighting, clean cooking, and education (Henry et al., 2020). By focusing on community empowerment and equal energy distribution, sustainable energy infrastructure promotes social cohesion and inclusivity. This section delves into the social advantages that arise from embracing sustainable energy maintenance, underscoring its pivotal role in fostering resilient and thriving communities.

3. Global Policies and Regulations for Sustainable Energy Infrastructure

The transformation towards sustainable energy maintenance is intricately linked to the development and implementation of robust global policies and regulations. These regulatory frameworks provide the necessary guidance and incentives to foster the adoption of environmentally responsible energy maintenance practices. This section delves into the international agreements, national energy policies, and regulatory standards that collectively contribute to shaping a sustainable energy future.

3.1 International Agreements and Initiatives

The global community has come together to support international agreements and initiatives that prioritize sustainable energy infrastructure as a means to address climate change and promote environmental stewardship. One notable agreement is the Paris Agreement, which has been ratified by numerous nations and aims to limit global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Schmalenbach, 2022). Additionally, the United Nations' Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) initiative further emphasizes the commitment to advancing sustainable energy access and aligning it with broader sustainable development goals (Pietrosemoli & Rodríguez-Monroy, 2019)

3.2 National Energy Policies

Countries around the world have incorporated sustainability principles into their national energy policies. These policies outline strategies to shift away from fossil fuels, integrate renewable energy sources, and improve energy efficiency (Oteman et al., 2014). The Energiewende policy in Germany serves as a comprehensive example of renewable energy integration and carbon reduction (Moss et al., 2014). National policies play a crucial role in aligning energy infrastructure with long-term sustainability goals (Oteman et al., 2014)

3.3 Regulatory Frameworks and Standards

Regulatory frameworks and standards serve as the foundation for ensuring the environmental and social integrity of energy maintenance. Certifications such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) offer benchmarks for sustainable construction practices (Ma et al., 2021). Additionally, the adoption of energy efficiency standards and emissions reduction targets aids in curbing environmental impacts and enhancing energy resilience (Jiang et al., 2018; Ma et al., 2021). conducted a study on the empirical decomposition and peak path of China's tourism carbon emissions. The study highlights the importance of energy intensity for carbon emission reduction in the tourism industry.

4. Technological Innovations for Sustainable Energy Maintenance

The transition towards sustainable energy maintenance is facilitated by technological innovations that enhance the efficiency, reliability, and environmental performance of energy infrastructure. This section explores key technological advancements, including the integration of renewable energy sources, energy storage solutions, predictive maintenance techniques, and sustainable materials and construction practices.

4.1 Renewable Energy Integration and Smart Grids

The integration of renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power, is fundamental in achieving sustainable energy maintenance. These sources offer a cleaner and inexhaustible supply of energy, reducing reliance on fossil fuels (Lund, 2007). Smart grids, equipped with advanced monitoring and control systems, facilitate the efficient distribution and management of energy, optimizing consumption and minimizing wastage (Lund, 2007).

4.2 Energy Storage Solutions

Energy storage technologies play a pivotal role in ensuring the reliability and stability of renewable energy systems. Batteries, flywheels, and pumped hydro storage enable the capture and storage of excess energy generated during peak production, subsequently releasing it during periods of high demand (Lund, 2007; Poli et al., 2022). These solutions enhance grid flexibility, facilitate intermittent renewable integration, and mitigate energy supply variability (Poli et al., 2022).

4.3 Predictive Maintenance and Condition Monitoring

The advent of the Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized maintenance practices by enabling predictive and condition-based approaches. Sensors embedded in energy infrastructure continuously monitor performance parameters, providing real-time data for the early detection of anomalies and potential failures (Forg et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). AI algorithms analyze this data to predict maintenance needs, reducing downtime and optimizing asset utilization (Forg et al., 2020).

4.4 Sustainable Materials and Construction Techniques

Sustainable energy maintenance extends to the materials and construction practices employed in infrastructure development. The use of eco-friendly materials, such as recycled aggregates and low-carbon concrete, minimizes the environmental impact of construction (Wang et al., 2022). Additionally, energy-efficient building designs and technologies, such as passive solar heating and natural ventilation, contribute to energy conservation throughout the lifecycle of the infrastructure (Ferrario and Castiglioni, 2015). This section emphasizes the pivotal role of technological innovations in realizing sustainable energy maintenance, fostering a transition towards cleaner and more resilient energy systems.

5. Challenges and Barriers to Sustainable Energy Maintenance

While the pursuit of sustainable energy maintenance holds immense promise, it also presents challenges and barriers that must be addressed to ensure successful implementation. This section explores key challenges associated with sustainable energy infrastructure management, including economic hurdles, technological barriers, and the complexities of policy implementation.

5.1 Economic Challenges

The transition to sustainable energy maintenance often requires significant upfront investments in renewable energy technologies and infrastructure upgrades. This financial commitment can be a barrier for some stakeholders, particularly in regions with limited financial resources (Meyer et al., 2021). Additionally, the cost of renewable technologies, while decreasing, remains a consideration when compared to traditional energy sources. Balancing the long-term benefits with initial costs is crucial for successful adoption.

5.2 Technological Barriers

The adoption of new technologies for sustainable energy maintenance can be met with technical challenges. Interoperability issues, lack of standardization, and integration complexities may hinder the seamless incorporation of renewable energy sources, smart grids, and energy storage solutions (Meyer et al., 2021). Addressing these challenges requires collaboration among industries, governments, and research institutions to develop and deploy compatible technologies (Meyer et al., 2021).

5.3 Policy Implementation

Effective policy implementation is paramount to realizing the goals of sustainable energy maintenance. However, translating policy frameworks into actionable measures can be complex due to political considerations, varying stakeholder interests, and administrative hurdles (Hoogendoorn et al., 2017). Regulatory fragmentation and lack of consistent enforcement can impede the widespread adoption of sustainable energy practices (Hoogendoorn et al., 2017).This section highlights the multifaceted challenges that accompany the transition to sustainable energy maintenance, underscoring the need for comprehensive strategies to overcome these barriers.

6. Future Directions and Emerging Opportunities

The evolution of sustainable energy maintenance is marked by continuous innovation and the exploration of new avenues for improvement. This section delves into the potential future directions and emerging opportunities in the realm of sustainable energy infrastructure management.

6.1 Technological Advancements

Advancements in technology will play a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of sustainable energy maintenance. Research and development efforts are expected to yield more efficient renewable energy technologies, advanced energy storage solutions, and enhanced predictive maintenance algorithms (Lin et al., 2020). Additionally, the integration of blockchain technology in energy management is gaining attention for enhancing transparency, traceability, and accountability in energy transactions (Zhou et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2020).

6.2 Decentralized Energy Systems

The proliferation of decentralized energy systems, enabled by microgrids and local energy generation, is set to transform energy maintenance paradigms. Decentralization enhances energy resilience, reduces transmission losses, and empowers local communities to actively participate in energy management (Lin et al., 2020; Poudineh and Staffell, 2021). This shift challenges traditional central grid models and paves the way for community-driven sustainable energy maintenance.

6.3 Circular Economy Principles

The adoption of circular economy principles in energy maintenance holds promise for minimizing resource waste and maximizing the utilization of energy assets. Circular design, coupled with innovative recycling and repurposing methods, can extend the lifecycle of energy infrastructure and reduce the environmental impact of decommissioning (Lin et al., 2020; Geng et al., 2021). This approach aligns with the broader sustainability agenda and contributes to a more regenerative energy landscape.

This section underscores the potential transformative pathways that lay ahead for sustainable energy maintenance, emphasizing the role of technology, decentralization, and circular economy principles in shaping a more sustainable energy future.

7. Conclusion

The imperative to ensure sustainable energy maintenance transcends geographical boundaries, political agendas, and economic interests. This review has illuminated the significance of aligning energy infrastructure management with sustainability principles, underscored the role of global policies and technological innovations, and highlighted the challenges and opportunities that characterize this transition.

7.1 Recap of Key Findings

The journey through the paper has revealed that sustainable energy maintenance is integral to achieving environmental, social, and economic goals. It has become evident that addressing environmental challenges, reaping economic benefits, and advancing social well-being are intertwined facets of a cohesive sustainable energy ecosystem.

7.2 The Call for Collaboration

The road to sustainable energy maintenance necessitates the active engagement of governments, industries, academia, and civil society. Collaborative efforts are essential to enact impactful policies, invest in technological solutions, and overcome the barriers that lie ahead. Through partnership and knowledge exchange, the global community can collectively drive the transition to sustainable energy infrastructure.

7.3 Path Forward

As the global energy landscape continues to evolve, the paper's insights emphasize the need to prioritize sustainability in energy maintenance. Striking a harmonious balance between economic growth, environmental preservation, and social equity requires sustained commitment and ongoing innovation. This conclusion reaffirms the urgent importance of sustainable energy maintenance, a call to action for all stakeholders to contribute to a more sustainable energy future. In closing, the journey towards sustainable energy maintenance is not merely a destination but a continuous endeavor that demands unwavering dedication and shared responsibility.

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