

10 tests for countries' new climate plans that will make or break 1.5C

The next generation of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) will determine whether global leaders can keep the 2015 Paris Agreement alive and deliver on the critical promise they made a decade ago: limit global warming to 1.5C, essential for ensuring a healthy and stable future.

The 2023 COP28 decision agreed to by all countries in Dubai was crystal clear: 'pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5C.' They decisively recognized that 'the impacts of climate change will be much lower' at the temperature increase of 1.5C.

These national climate plans, which serve as implementation roadmaps, must not only set ambitious targets for 2035 but also revisit and strengthen 2030 targets and long-term strategies. Doing so will signal how countries can decisively shift their economies off fossil fuels, halt and reverse deforestation and degradation, transform food systems, and build resilience in this critical decade in line with climate science.

National climate plans, aligned with the global 1.5C goal, are blueprints for resilient development—creating jobs, attracting global investments, ensuring energy security, and driving innovation, while also building accountability for a just transition and demonstrating climate leadership.

As it stands, both individual country and global efforts currently fall far short of what's required. This adds extra pressure on world leaders to submit an ambitious set of national plans by the Paris Agreement deadline of February 2025.

We know every country will have different pathways to 2035, and developing countries in particular require financial, technical, and capacity support in meeting these goals. But the fundamentals of a high-ambition NDC aligned with 1.5C are clear—and it is vital that all plans pass the following 10 tests:

- 1 Is there an explicit commitment to end fossil fuel expansion and foster a just economic transition?**
Governments must enact policies to cut both consumption and production of fossil fuels in a just and equitable way, in line with a 1.5C emissions trajectory, and with a minimum benchmark of not opening new upstream coal, oil, and gas. Countries should set clear timelines and ambitious goals to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, redirecting those funds toward social welfare and a clean, equitable energy transition.
- 2 Is there an ambitious, 1.5C-aligned greenhouse gas reduction target?**
A fair and equitable NDC that's aligned with the global 1.5C goal—that also enables net zero global emissions by 2050—is the minimum standard for collective action, ensuring that we limit the most catastrophic impacts of climate change and secure a safe, livable future for all.
- 3 Does the NDC include economy-wide and sector specific targets?**
The COP28 decision (paragraph 39) is clear that this, along with multi-level delivery plans, is vital to foster implementation accountability and to accelerate delivery. An effective NDC will not simply engage with the energy sector but also transport, buildings, industry, agriculture, forestry, land use, cities, and regions.
- 4 Does the plan include stronger actions to help protect communities against climate impacts?**
NDCs should incorporate clear adaptation and loss and damage objectives. As climate change worsens, countries must continue to build resilience against dangerous climate impacts.
- 5 Is the plan aligned with the global goal to triple renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency gains by 2030?**
As detailed in the COP28 decision (paragraph 28).
- 6 Is the plan transparent, detailed, and free from deceptive metrics?**
The plan should explicitly list absolute emission cuts, reductions and assumptions from land use, land use change, forestry (LULUCF), and CO2 removals. The NDC needs to also be consistent with other national, sectoral, regional, and local development plans.
- 7 Are the targets backed by strong government policy?** NDC targets need to be supported by government policies to ensure urgent, effective implementation, developed through inclusive and participatory processes that involve Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, and youth. Strong policy agendas will also create certainty for progress in the climate transition and spur investments.

8 Have governments committed to significantly scale-up climate finance?

A 1.5C world cannot be achieved without significantly ramping up climate finance to support a just transition in lower-income countries. Wealthier countries need to dramatically increase affordable, accessible needs- and grant-based finance through an ambitious new climate finance goal at COP29 (the New Collective Quantified Goal) and the continued delivery of 100 billion U.S. dollars climate finance through 2025.

9 Does the plan include measures to protect and restore ecosystems?

Goals must address all types of ecosystems—forests, mangroves, grasslands, mountains, and water-related habitats—including halting and reversing deforestation by 2030 and aligning with the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions should be integrated into mitigation and adaptation solutions.

10 Does the NDC comprehensively address food systems?

Actions should reduce food loss, repurpose harmful subsidies, promote sustainable agriculture, and provide adaptation support for farmers through sustainable land and water management. The largest agricultural emitters should deliver cuts in methane and nitrous oxide emissions. Ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions should enhance food security and benefit local communities, including small-holder and family farmers.

Every country must deliver the highest possible ambition in this decisive third round of NDCs. Meeting the Paris Agreement’s 1.5C temperature goal will not be possible unless rich, fossil fuel-producing countries take the lead and significantly ramp up support for developing countries. Each and every country has the opportunity to demonstrate global leadership in their climate actions, while still advancing their own domestic priorities.

A comprehensive, transparent, and equitable set of NDCs across the board can limit the devastating impacts of climate change and keep us within reach of 1.5C and the promise of the Paris Agreement alive.



NDC Resource Annex

[Climate Action Tracker: The CAT guide to a good 2035 climate target](#)

[World Resources Institute \(WRI\): Next Generation NDCs: Setting Sectoral Targets to Maximize Impact](#)

[WRI: Next-generation Climate Targets: A 5-Point Plan for NDCs](#)

[WRI: What Are Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\) and Why Are They Important?](#)

[E3G NDC Plan CECG Presentation](#)

[Mission 2025: NDC Plan](#)

[Energy Transition Commission \(ETC\): Credible Contributions: Bolde Plans for Higher Climate Ambition in the Next Round of NDCs](#)

[NDC Partnership/United Nations Climate Change: NDC 3.0 Navigator](#)

[International Energy Agency \(IEA\) : COP28 Tracking the Energy Outcomes](#)

[World Wildlife Fund \(WWF\): The NDCs We Want](#)

[International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\): How the Transition Away From Fossil Fuel Production Can Be Included in New Climate Commitments and Plans](#)

[Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development: Insights for designing mitigation elements in the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#)

[LGMA \(Cities and Regions in the UNFCCC process\) and Bloomberg Philanthropies: Delivering CHAMP-Aligned NDC 3.0](#)

[The Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change \(IIG-CC\): Making NDCs investable—the investor perspective](#)

[Climate Action Network \(CAN\): Guidelines for NDCs 3.0: Delivering on the GST outcome and beyond](#)

[The Lilongwe Declaration on Climate Change 2024 by the Ministers of the Least Developed Countries](#)

[Care About Climate's NDC Equity Tracker](#)

[We Mean Business: Time to deliver: Business call to action for ambitious and investible NDCs](#)

[C2ES: "What are 'investible' NDCs?"](#)

[Global Reporting Initiative \(GRI\) and Carbon Disclosure Project \(CDP\): Engaging Business in the NDCs](#)

[Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action: Joint Call to Action: Finance Ministries are Key to Accelerated Climate Action through Ambitious NDCs](#)

[Global Renewables Alliance \(GRA\) NDC Open Letter](#)

[International Emissions Trading Association \(IETA\): How Governments Can Implement NDCs Cooperatively and Encourage Private Sector Investment](#)

[Mission 2025: Global coalition of economy leaders urging governments to align their upcoming national climate plans with the Paris Agreement target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C.](#)

[C40 Cities: NDC Ambition Handbook](#)

[CLASP: Net Zero Appliances NDC Toolkit](#)

[GIZ: Enhancing Ambition and Transparency in the Next Round of NDCs](#)

[Partnership For Active Travel and Health: Active Travel NDC Template](#)

[SLOCAT: Guidelines, tools and resources to increase transport ambition in the next generation of NDCs](#)

[International Association of Public Transport: Public transport national determined contributions template](#)

[Climate Focus & WWF: Unlocking And Scaling Climate Solutions In Food Systems: An Assessment of Nationally Determined Contributions](#)

[Climate Focus & WWF: Food Focused NDCs](#)

[Global Alliance for the Future of Food: Untapped Opportunities for Climate Action: An Assessment of Food Systems in Nationally Determined Contributions](#)

[Principles for Responsible Investment: Collaborative Sovereign Engagement on Climate Change](#)

[NDC Partnership: NDC Investment Planning Guide and Checklist](#)

[The Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action: Strengthening Finance Ministries' capacity and engagement in the Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\) process](#)

[The Global Climate and Health Alliance \(GCHA\): 2023 Healthy NDC Scorecard](#)

[The Global Climate and Health Alliance \(GCHA\): Clean Air NDC Scorecard](#)

[Germanwatch: An Ambitious EU Climate Target for 2040: Slashing Emissions while Strengthening Energy Security](#)

[Union of Concerned Scientists \(UCS\): Three International Climate Priorities for UNGA and NYC Climate Week](#)