



Dear colleagues,

The coronavirus pandemic is **threatening countries' plans to step up climate action and halt biodiversity loss** as respective efforts are being put on hold or postponed and resources transferred to address immediate crisis response measures. This happens at a critical moment: Five years after the Paris Agreement was adopted, country pledges to reduce GHG emissions are far from sufficient to reach the goal of limiting global warming to below 2°C. Governments are under pressure to not only submit more ambitious climate targets but also to provide information on long-term decarbonization strategies until 2050 and beyond. Moreover, countries are negotiating a post-2020 global biodiversity framework as a stepping stone towards the [2050 vision](#) of “living in harmony with nature”.

[According to the UN](#), the revised climate plans should not only demonstrate progress in implementation, but also examine how the states overcome trade-offs between targets of the 2030 Agenda. However: the COVID-19 pandemic is **making it difficult to ensure the quality, ambition and revision timeline of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies (LTSs)**. Additional challenges arise around collecting and validating data, maintaining communications and decision-making processes, and convening the stakeholders needed to bring about the requested climate commitments.

Safeguarding the health and livelihoods of citizens currently is a top priority. At the same time, avoiding future pandemics and restarting economic activity must be thought together. Climate and biodiversity protection as well as sustainable development patterns must be an integral part of the recovery process. Against this background, it will be crucial that the often short- and in some cases medium-term **stimulus packages to ignite economies are aligned with medium- and long-term objectives set in the NDCs and as such must follow sustainable long-term development pathways**. By setting ambitious long-term targets and using the 2030 Agenda as a compass out of the crisis, countries will be able to avoid stranded assets while boosting progress on climate, biodiversity and development goals.

The Build Forward Better Briefing #04 looks at **COVID-19 responses related to NDC updating and LTS development**. It further compiles the latest “green” stimulus measures and propositions by government, multilateral organisations, academia, civil society and other actors at the national and international level on what a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from the pandemic could look like.

In order to avoid “green washing”, green recovery investment plans must be made transparent and ideally emerge from consultation with diverse stakeholder groups and experts. In the next few months,

it will be critical to **track and assess the implementation progress and impact of green stimulus measures**. We will address this important aspect in a separate issue.

We hope you find this BFB Briefing insightful and look forward to your **feedback and thematic suggestions for future issues**.

Best regards,
BioFrame, CDCPIII, GET, SDG-RI & SPA

#04 NDCs and LTS - 17 September 2020

The **Build Forward Better Briefing** compiles the latest “green” stimulus measures and propositions by government, multilateral organisations, academia, civil society and other actors at the national and international level. It shares insights on what a **sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic** could look like. The current briefing focuses on **COVID-19 responses related to NDC updating and LTS development**.

This briefing is a **collaborative product by several GIZ IKI projects** (Support Project for the Design and Implementation of the New Global Biodiversity Framework, Capacity Development for Climate Policy in Southeast & Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, Phase III; Green Economy Transformation in Cooperation with the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE); Support Project on SDG Review and Implementation Processes; Support Project for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement). The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with views of the organisation. All previous issues of the BFB Briefing (#01 Monitoring, #02 Cities, #03 Tourism) can be accessed [here](#).

Note: Measures and resources are listed in alphabetical order, with measures related to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies (LTSs) listed first and highlighted in yellow.

Government

Africa

- **Ghana** launched the revision process of its NDC on 1 September. The Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP in Ghana, Silke Hollander, stressed the opportunities after the pandemic to build back better: “I am confident that the NDC revision and enhancement process will take into consideration the COVID-19 reality and its associated impacts across all sectors.”
- **Liberia** renewed its support for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Foreign Affairs Minister Henry B. Fahnbulleh said that focus must remain on fighting the impact of climate change despite the COVID-19 pandemic. He called for the establishment of the “Liberia Climate Change Trust Fund” stressing that the revision of the country’s NDC must be “inclusive, consultative and transparent”.
- **Rwanda** became the first African country to submit its updated national climate plan in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In a Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS), **South Africa** flagged an aspiration to become a net-zero economy by 2050, but its energy plan foresees a continued role for coal.

- A new partnership between the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and **Sudan** has approved US\$25.6 million in new funding to support the country's NDC implementation and several climate resilience projects designed to promote agriculture, health, and food and water security.
- A status update on what has so far been achieved by the Great Green Wall Initiative, led by the **African Union**, was released. It states that "close to 20 million hectares of land was restored, over 350,000 jobs were created and around US\$90 million in revenues was generated from 2007 to 2018 through the GGW activities". The 11 member countries have pledged to continue their support for the initiative, especially in light of their economic recovery after the pandemic.

Asia & Oceania

- **China** is considering carbon neutrality as part of its long-term climate plan, the country's foreign ministry announced following a summit with EU leaders: "China is willing to contribute more and we are now considering and studying a mid-century long-term vision for climate change, including such issues as the peaking of carbon dioxide emissions and carbon neutrality." EU leaders had pushed China to aim for climate neutrality by 2060 or face punitive carbon tariffs.
- A new "COVID-proof" city is being planned near Beijing, **China**, designed for people to live in during future lockdowns. The community in Xiong'an is set to become self-sufficient, featuring wooden apartment blocks with large balconies, vegetable gardens, greenhouses, solar panels, communal workspaces, a pool, food market, kindergarten, and terraces designed for drone deliveries.
- In **India**, thousands of jobseekers have been recruited into a trench-building scheme aiming to boost scarce water supplies by catching rainfall. The project in India's Madhya Pradesh state is part of a government jobs programme to boost employment during the COVID-19 crisis.
- **New Zealand's** Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has promised to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030 if her party wins re-election in October. Ardern tied this goal to a green recovery: "The COVID-19 economic recovery represents a once in a generation opportunity to reshape New Zealand's energy system to be more renewable, faster, affordable and secure".
- Halimah Jacob, President of **Singapore**, announced a "major push for sustainable growth" as the city-state recovers from the pandemic. She stated the ambition to reimagine city planning, redesign urban mobility and develop a low-carbon future.
- **South Korea** will shut down 30 additional coal power plants by 2034 in line with the country's ambition to cut greenhouse gas emissions and promote eco-friendly energy sources, President Moon Jae-in announced. At the same time, the country will more than triple the number of solar and wind power facilities by 2025 compared with last year. Korea will also work to boost the number of electric cars and increase the number of hydrogen vehicles.

Europe

- Ursula von der Leyen, **President of the European Commission**, announced on 16 September that the EU is eager to step up its emission reduction goal for 2030 from -40% to -55%. The European Parliament as well as the EU leaders now have to agree to this goal.
- The **UK** wants the ambition to build back better to be at the heart of the COP26 Presidency, as Kwasi Kwarteng, Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, stated. He stressed the vital importance of submitting ambitious NDC updates and LTSs before COP26 in order to strengthen the goal of net zero emissions.
- The **French Minister for Economy, Finance and the Recovery** launched a €100 billion recovery plan. It is supposed to boost employment and pave the way for a greener, more competitive, resilient and inclusive economy. €10 billion are foreseen "to speed up the greening of the economy, for investments in energy performance renovations for buildings, in "green" infrastructure and mobility, to reduce the carbon-intensity of manufacturing processes, and in the development of new green technologies (hydrogen, biofuels, recycling)".
- **Scotland** emphasizes the role of the rural economy in the country's green recovery and supports the forestry and agriculture sector with £160 million. Also, the Scottish Government has launched a

Green Investment Portfolio, promoting market-ready projects that will help Scotland transition to a net-zero economy by 2045, with ten projects of £1.16bn investment potential.

- **Spain** has announced to inject €181 million of state funds into renewable energy projects in seven regions, aiming to boost employment and cut carbon emissions. Projects that could benefit from the subsidies include those generating power from sunlight, wind, biomass, and renewable gases including hydrogen in sectors including agriculture, industry and services.
- In the **UK**, the country's first citizens' climate assembly has called on the government to avoid party politics and put policies such as taxes on frequent flying, a ban on selling SUVs, a cut in meat and dairy consumption and increased investment in wind and solar energy at the forefront of its green recovery.

Latin America & Caribbean

- **Jamaica** has made the mitigation component of its NDC more ambitious. This increase in ambition comprises both a broadening of the NDC's sectoral scope and the delivery of greater emission reductions.
- In **Colombia**, the recently launched Climate Promise programme will address ten climate-related challenges in different regions, for which women and youth propose solutions. The selected projects receive initial funding, intensive training and personalized guidance to help draw on experiences and strengthen capacity to face the climate crisis in the territories.

North America

- In the **US**, Republicans in the Senate failed in their efforts to advance new economic stimulus measures worth about US\$500 billion, after Democrats voted to block the legislation on the grounds that the package was too small. Meanwhile, Democratic lawmakers unveiled an economic recovery agenda that would bolster union jobs while tackling climate change and racial injustice.
- Also in the **US**, more than 20 cities, companies and non-profits have pledged to plant more than 800 million trees by 2030 as part of a global effort to tackle climate change, improve health and boost job creation in communities reeling from the coronavirus pandemic.

International Organisations, Partnerships & Initiatives

- The report "Long-Term Strategies for Climate Change – A Review of Country Cases" by the Coalition of **Finance Ministers for Climate Action** reviews different country approaches for the design of long-term strategies to address climate change. The publication "Ministries of Finance and Nationally Determined Contributions – Stepping Up for Climate Action" highlights the essential role of Ministries of Finance in climate action and explores avenues for them to engage in the preparation, update, and implementation of NDCs.
- Within the framework of its NDC and the associated goals of increasing access to renewable energies and energy efficiency, a new partnership was established between **India's** largest renewable energy company (ReNew Power), and the **UN Environmental Programme** (UNEP). The aim is to make the heating and cooling sector more efficient and to promote solar off-grid projects, studies and assessments.
- The **International Climate Initiative** (IKI) has highlighted the importance of a green recovery in its Corona Response Package. For instance, the implementation and development of ambitious NDCs in partner countries shall be strengthened by cooperating closely with the NDC Partnership. In addition, the Corona Response Package prioritizes emergency measures for nature reserves and biodiversity hotspots and the prevention of pandemics.
- **Race To Zero** is a science-driven global umbrella campaign that aggregates net-zero commitments from a range of leading networks and initiatives across the climate action community. Race To Zero mobilizes actors outside of national governments to join the Climate Ambition Alliance, which was launched at the UNSG's Climate Action Summit 2019.

- To what extent the pandemic has influenced international climate policies is analysed in the [report](#) “Better Recovery, Better World: Resetting climate action in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic” by the **Coalition of Finance Ministers** for Climate Action, which includes a set of policy options for Finance Ministers as well.
- “Emerging Stronger From the Great Lockdown”: Managing director Kristalina Georgieva and chief economist Gita Gopinath of the **International Monetary Fund** (IMF) lay out a [strategy](#) for sustained recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The **OECD** has published the new [policy brief](#) “Making the green recovery work for jobs, income and growth”. It undertakes a preliminary review of announced recovery and stimulus policies in OECD and Key Partner countries. Moreover, a set of indicators to measure and evaluate the environmental impacts of recovery policies over time is proposed for this purpose.
- The **United Nations General Assembly** (UNGA) has adopted an [“omnibus resolution”](#) seeking a comprehensive and coordinated global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It underscores the need for this to be done “through responses that are people-centred, gender-responsive, with full respect for human rights, multidimensional, coordinated, inclusive, innovative, swift and decisive at all levels”. The resolution urges exchange of information, scientific knowledge and best practices.

Academia, Private Sector & Civil Society

- **NewClimate Institute** and **Fraunhofer ISI**, in their [report](#) “Fair contributions versus fastest possible reduction”, discuss equity considerations in the context of the Paris Agreement and the climate emergency.
- Also, **NewClimate Institute** in cooperation with **GIZ** [released](#) a “guide to policy makers on how to develop an LTS for submission in 2020 and future revision cycles” to support implementation of low GHG strategies.
- The **United States Agency for International Development** (USAID) and ICF published a [Scoping Analysis Report](#) on transparency and long-term strategies, to better understand the current activities and needs related to LTS in developing countries. Country-specific profiles in Africa, Asia, Caucasus, and Latin America & Caribbean are presented.
- **E3G**’s [new report](#) “A Vision for Sustainable Finance in Europe” proposes key actions by European institutions over the next two years to support a green and fair recovery, focusing on the upcoming Renewed Strategy for Sustainable Finance. Recommendations span public and private finance, and cover a variety of themes such as inclusion, resilience and systemic risk.
- Supporting innovative ideas and efforts is a crucial step to tackle climate change. The **EIT Climate-KIC** contributes €4 million to nine [highly innovative climate impact ventures](#) who are affected by COVID-19 to support European green recovery.
- In a [new report](#) commissioned by the European Climate Foundation, **EY** provides a list of “shovel-ready” green recovery investment opportunities, i.e. projects that can support jobs in the short term and contribute to the EU’s climate objectives. According to EY, the 1,000 selected projects all have the potential to create social, environmental and economic value in the next 2 years and just need a “last push” (e.g. additional financing or overcoming other barriers) to be realized.
- The **German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety** (BMU) and the World Resources Institute (WRI) have hosted a [series of global dialogues](#) on how the world can respond to the COVID-19 crisis in ways that align with the objectives of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. The 5 dialogue sessions also addressed biodiversity, land-use and nature-based solutions in the context of green recovery. The informative [summary of the dialogues](#) is now online.
- **IIED** published the report [“Tackling the triple crisis: Using debt swaps to address debt, climate and nature loss post-COVID-19”](#). The paper shows how, as part of COVID-19 response packages, governments have an opportunity to address simultaneously the crises of debt, climate change and biodiversity loss through a new use of the system of debt for climate and nature programme swaps.
- **ING** Think’s [report](#) examines “Asia’s lamentable green response to Covid-19”, claiming that “too many countries in the Asia-Pacific region are failing to reach for the environmental reset button”.

- **NewClimate Institute** published the [report](#) “Exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global emission projections”, assessing the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated recovery measures on emissions out to 2030 and global emission pathways towards meeting the Paris climate goals.
- The **World Economic Forum COVID Action Platform** runs a [blog series](#) called “Seizing the moment”, in which the Energy Access workstream of the Global Future Council on Energy explores how countries and regions are using the window of opportunity that has opened through the COVID-19 pandemic to recover better with sustainable energy.
- **WWF** launched the [Living Planet Report 2020](#), a science-based report on trends in global biodiversity and the health of the planet. It calls on world leaders to come together to build a more sustainable and resilient post-COVID-19 world for people and nature. The [full report](#) and the [summary](#) are available online.

Information Hubs

- Developing long-term, net-zero GHG, climate-resilient and sustainable development pathways on a country level as well as solving problems collectively is the goal of the [2050 Pathways Platform](#). It was launched at COP22 to support national strategies and long-term low-emission planning.
- The **Climate Action Tracker (CAT)** is [an independent scientific analysis hub](#) that tracks government climate action and measures it against the globally agreed Paris Agreement aim.
- **ClimateWatch** provides an up-to-date exploration of the world’s [NDCs](#) and [LTSSs](#), including their content, status and over 150 indicators that can be used for analysis and cross-country comparison.
- The **NDC Partnership** interviewed several representatives of their partner countries to better understand how COVID-19 has affected the progress of their National Adaptation Planning. The [short videos can be accessed here](#).
- During a [ministerial meeting](#) in Japan on 3 September, an online platform for sustainable and resilient remediation of COVID-19 (“[Platform for Redesign 2020](#)”) was launched. It provides information on policies and measures on climate change and environmental issues being taken by countries around the world in their green recovery efforts. Responsible for the website are the Japanese Ministry of Environment, UNFCCC and **the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)**.

Past Events

- The **Caribbean Virtual Exchange Series** offered an exchange on best practices and knowledge on NDCs and the processes under the Paris Agreement for the Caribbean Region. All webinar sessions and materials can be found [here](#).
- The **International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)** hosted an [online event](#) on “Experience sharing on long-term strategies in least developed countries” on 13 August. You can watch the event [here](#).
- The **NDC Partnership’s** green recovery high-level [forum](#), entitled “A New Development Reality: NDCs at the Heart of COVID-19 Responses”, took place in June 2020 and highlighted how to put climate plans at the heart of COVID-19 economic recovery efforts.
- “Enhancing the NDCs: An Opportunity for Addressing Water Interactions” was organized by the **UNDP**, the **World Resources Institute (WRI)** and other organizations on 24 August. During this [event](#), Peru and Somalia shared their experiences on integrating water into their NDCs. The discussion was held with regards to the current pandemic and its linkage to the NDC revision process under the aspect of “building back better” and opportunities for green recovery.
- The **Convention on Biological Diversity** has launched the 5th UN Global Biodiversity Outlook on 15 September. The [report](#) synthesizes the state of nature worldwide and provides the scientific basis for the currently negotiated post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. In addition, it addresses COVID-19 economic stimulus measures and the risk that these could contribute to undermining nature. The launch event can be watched [here](#).

- The **Convention on Biological Diversity** and the **Government of Egypt** jointly organized a webinar conference on “Building Back Better: Protecting biodiversity, combating land degradation and mitigating climate change to reduce the risks of future pandemics, and the importance of a coherent approach” on 10 September. The [recording of the webinar](#) is available online.

Upcoming Virtual Events

- On 23 September, **Climate Analytics** hosts the [event](#) “The long and short of it: Interlinkages between NDCs and mid-century decarbonisation strategies” during Climate Week NYC.
- **Race To Zero** will hold [virtual dialogues](#) in November, under an umbrella programme curated by the High-Level Champions.
- In a Climate Week NYC [event](#), the **Climate Action Tracker** (CAT) will present its analysis of the COVID-19 recovery packages of five major emitters – China, EU27, India, South Korea and the USA – and its latest global temperature update, which includes the economic impact of COVID-19. The CAT team will also explore the do’s and don’ts for a green economic recovery with concrete examples for each sector of the economy.
- **Climate Week NYC** (21-27 September) is the biggest [climate summit](#) taking place this year. As the focus shifts to how we rebuild after COVID-19, Climate Week NYC 2020 will explore what lessons we can learn in the pursuit of a net-zero future through just transition. All events will be available to view from Climate Group’s [Facebook Watch page](#) starting Monday, 21 September.
- **The European Sustainable Development Week** (ESDW) 2020 was postponed and will now be taking place from 18 September to 8 October, with the core event happening from 20-26 September.
- The **FAO** launches its “Green Cities Initiative to build back better for SDGs” on 18 September. Starting with a keynote address by FAO Director-General QU Dongyu on “FAO’s vision for Green Cities and innovation”, the [event](#) will feature high-level speakers and testimonials from cities.
- The **Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Korea** and the **Green Climate Fund** (GCF) are co-hosting the [International Conference on the Green New Deal: Green stimulus in the post-COVID-19 era](#) and beyond on 17 September.
- [“Global reset: a stronger, greener recovery”](#) is a public event held by the ODI on 22 September that focuses on the ambition needed for climate action while recovering from the pandemic.
- On 29 and 30 September, the Finnish Innovation Fund **Sitra** is hosting the [World Circular Economy Forum](#) virtually, diving into why and how a circular economy can help reboot and build resilience in the economy.
- The [SDG Business Forum](#), co-hosted by UN Global Compact, **UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs** (UN DESA) and the **International Chamber of Commerce** (ICC) on 23 September, coincides with the start of the UN’s Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs. This Forum will showcase companies that are using their influence to lead the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The main focus is on how the private sector – in partnership with governments and civil society leaders – is leveraging the framework of the SDGs to respond to immediate threats in their communities. Register [here](#).
- The **UN Summit on Biodiversity** will be convened by the President of the General Assembly on 30 September, at the level of Heads of State and Government and under the theme of “Urgent action on biodiversity for sustainable development”. Leading up to the summit, the [Nature for Life Hub](#) will offer a virtual venue for multiple events that address putting nature at the heart of sustainable development and green recovery (24-25 September and 28-29 September). The hub is hosted by UNDP, UNEP and the CBD.