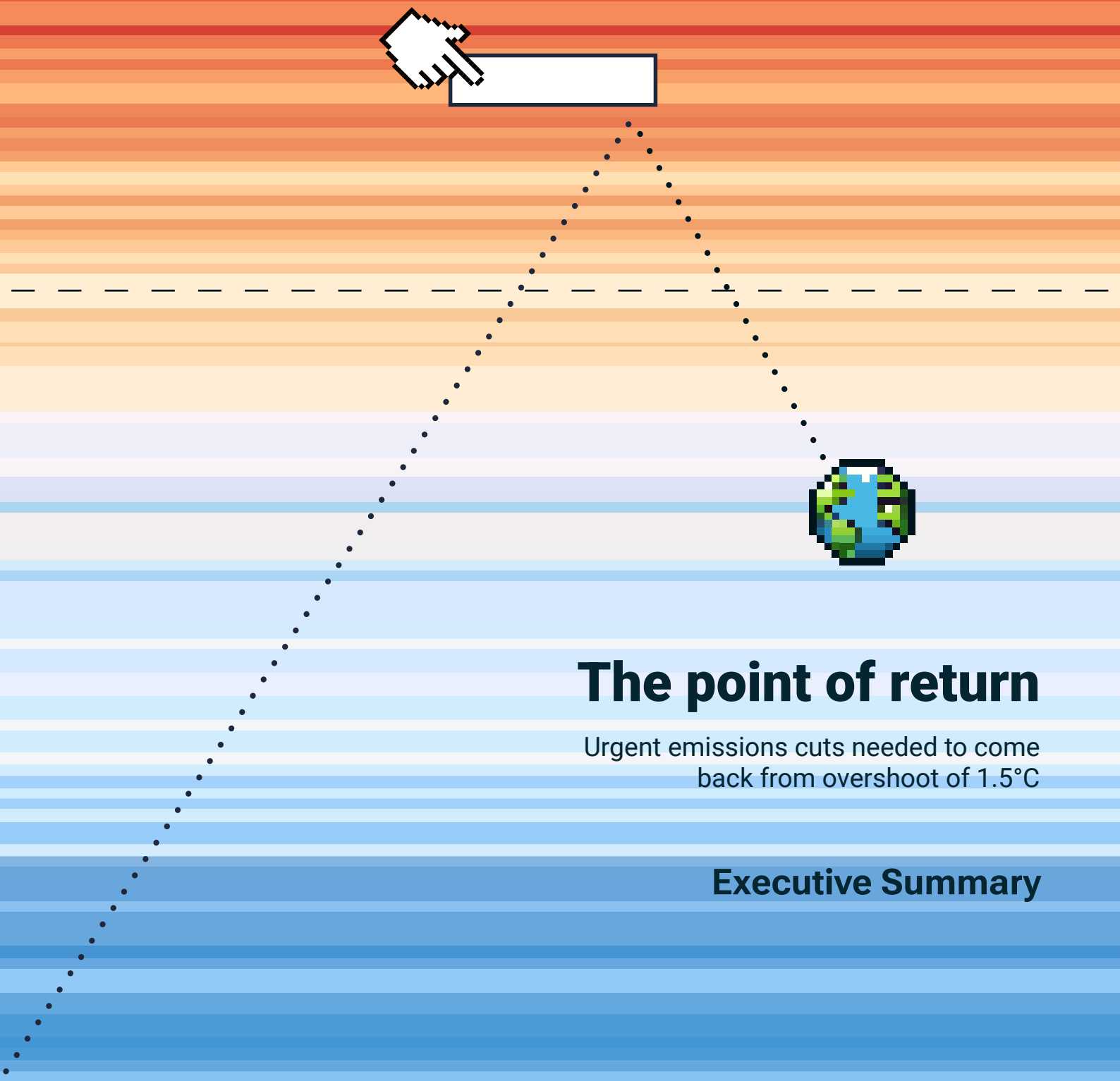
UN environment programme



The point of return

Urgent emissions cuts needed to come back from overshoot of 1.5°C

Executive Summary

Emissions Gap Report 2026

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Emissions Gap Report 2026

Executive Summary

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Decades of insufficient climate action makes exceedance of 1.5°C unavoidable – whether it will be temporary crucially depends on decisions taken today

The headline finding of this seventeenth Emissions Gap Report is sobering. The opportunity to bridge the 1.5°C emissions gap with 'no or limited' overshoot has been lost. Decades of insufficient mitigation action means that larger exceedance of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels based on multidecadal averages is now imminent and unavoidable.

Exceedance does not mark a single uniform state of risk. Every additional fraction of a degree and additional year of warming above 1.5°C raises the risk of irreversible changes including in ice sheets, permafrost carbon, ocean circulation and coral systems, along with devastating human impacts. The task now, therefore, is not only to ensure that global warming stays well below 2°C, but to minimize the duration and magnitude of overshoot and establish a credible return path to 1.5°C by the end of the century.

This year's report responds to this new reality by providing an initial assessment of such new overshoot pathways. It redefines the emissions gap against a 'lowest possible' 1.5°C overshoot scenario, which assumes that stringent mitigation action starts from 2025 and is characterized by limiting peak warming to 1.7–1.8°C with 66 per cent chance, and returning global mean temperatures to or below 1.5°C by 2100 with around a 50 per cent chance. This scenario is still aligned with the long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to well below 2°C, while pursuing 1.5°C. To get on such a pathway, global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must be reduced by 18 per cent by 2030, 45 per cent by 2035 and 69 per cent by 2040, all relative to 2025 levels. By contrast, the full implementation of the new nationally determined contributions (NDCs) submitted by around two thirds of all countries would reduce emissions by 5–8 per cent by 2030 and 11–15 per cent by 2035 relative to 2025 levels.

As the report also shows, there is ample opportunity to accelerate action. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, global developments in solar photovoltaics and wind deployment have continuously outpaced even the most optimistic forecasts. Growth in fossil fuels has been slower than predictions made ten years ago, and there is evidence that climate policies have real effects on reducing emissions. These developments are reflected in global progress across several of the action areas of the first global stocktake. The pace must be accelerated, but opportunities to do so exist.

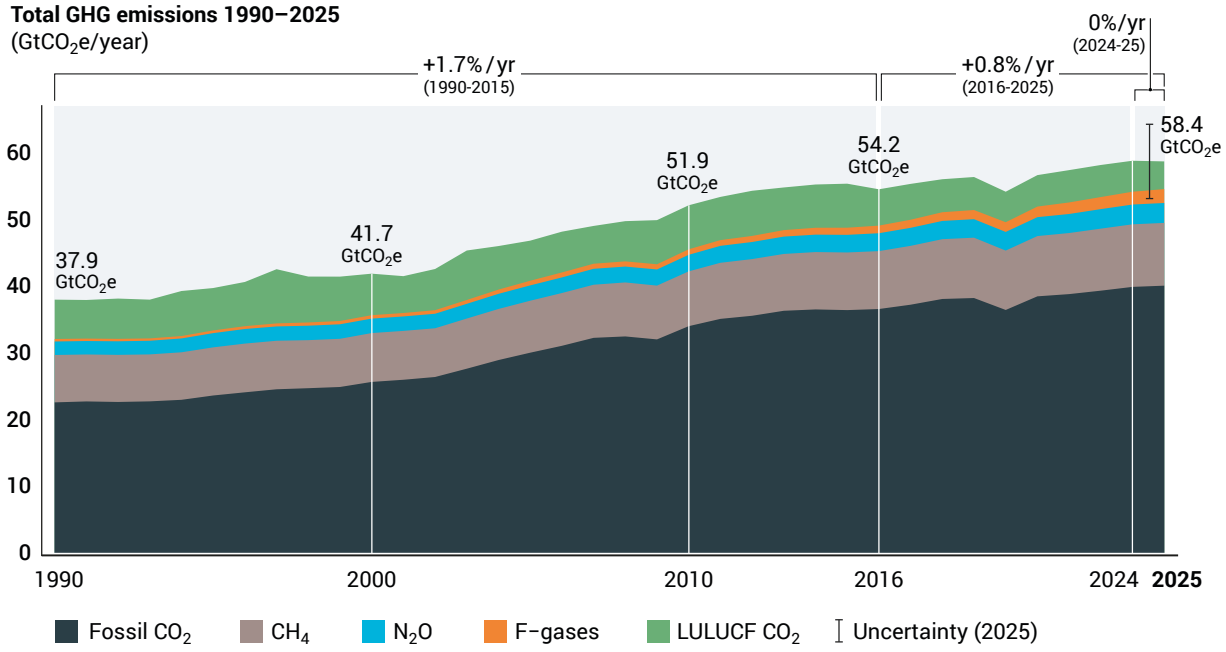
The call to Governments remains fundamentally unchanged. What has changed is the context. The opportunity to limit warming to 1.5°C without overshoot has been lost, but the future remains crucially dependent on decisions taken today. Countries can still limit peak warming, shorten the duration of overshoot and keep the goals of the Paris Agreement within reach. Doing so requires faster, deeper and sustained emission reductions starting immediately, as well as large-scale removals of carbon dioxide (CO_2) from the atmosphere.

1. Global GHG emissions in 2025 were similar to 2024 levels

- Global GHG emissions reached a total of 58.4 gigatons of CO_2 equivalent ($GtCO_2e$) (range: ±5.5) in 2025. Preliminary estimates suggest this to be a slight decline of 0.1 $GtCO_2e$ from 2024 levels (figure ES.1), but it is not possible to conclude on the overall direction of emissions in 2025, due to the high uncertainty range.[1] Nonetheless, this diverges from a trend of growth in global emissions over the past decade of 0.8 per cent per year, and of 1.7 per cent per year for the period between 1990 and 2016.
- However, CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion of oil, coal and gas, and nitrous oxide (N_2O) and fluorinated gases (F-gases) emissions continued to increase in 2025, while methane (CH_4) emissions remained almost the same as in 2024.
- These increases were offset by a decrease in CO_2 emissions from the land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector of about 0.5 $GtCO_2e$. The decrease in LULUCF CO_2 emissions was partially driven by a decline in biomass-burning emissions, including a decline in global wildfire carbon emissions in 2025, compared with the exceptionally active 2024 season.

1 Global GHG emissions in 2024 have been revised from the 57.7 $GtCO_2e$ reported in last year's report to 58.5 $GtCO_2e$, primarily due to a methodological revision in the Global Carbon Budget's calculation of land-use change emissions.

Figure ES.1 **Total net anthropogenic GHG emissions by gas, 1990–2025**



- Based on these trends, it is too soon to conclude that global emissions are plateauing or peaking. Collectively, G20 members, excluding the African Union, account for 76 per cent of global emissions, and their emissions excluding LULUCF increased by 0.7 per cent in 2025.

- Overall, while 63 countries decreased their emissions over the past decade (totalling -1.8 $GtCO_2e$), these were outweighed by 124 countries increasing their emissions (totalling +7.2 $GtCO_2e$). Several countries with high per capita and historical emissions have still to peak their emissions.

2. The number of new NDCs with mitigation pledges for 2035 has roughly doubled since last year, but global ambition has not kept pace

- As of 1 September 2026, 124 Parties accounting for approximately 76 per cent of global GHG emissions had submitted new NDCs, up from 57 submissions covering 63 per cent last year. While the quality of NDCs is improving, their scope has not expanded substantially. More countries now use more robust target formats, such as base-year and fixed-level emissions targets, which strengthen transparency, comparability and accountability. However, progress in setting economy-wide GHG targets and extending coverage across all sectors and gases, as called for by the first global stocktake, remains limited.

- The full implementation of the new NDCs would reduce expected global emissions in 2035 by 3.5–4 $GtCO_2e$ compared with 2030 NDC levels, indicating that while collective ambition has increased compared with 2030 targets, it is far from the scale required (table ES.2). These estimates remain similar to last year's, despite the increase in the number of new NDCs.

3. The global implementation gap for 2030 is still considerable, and enhanced ambition in 2035 remains limited

- The global implementation gap for **2030**, defined as the difference between projected emissions under current policies and emissions consistent with full implementation of NDC targets, remains significant. Expected emissions in 2030 based on current policies are about 2 and 4 $GtCO_2e$ above the levels implied by unconditional and conditional NDC scenarios respectively. While the year 2030 is drawing closer, collectively countries have still not aligned policies with NDC targets.

- While there has been an apparent narrowing of the global implementation gap since last year's report, this does not reflect stronger policy action. Instead, it is largely explained by the withdrawal of the United States of America from the Paris Agreement, which led to the removal of its NDC target from global aggregations and its replacement with current policy emissions projections by global modelling teams.

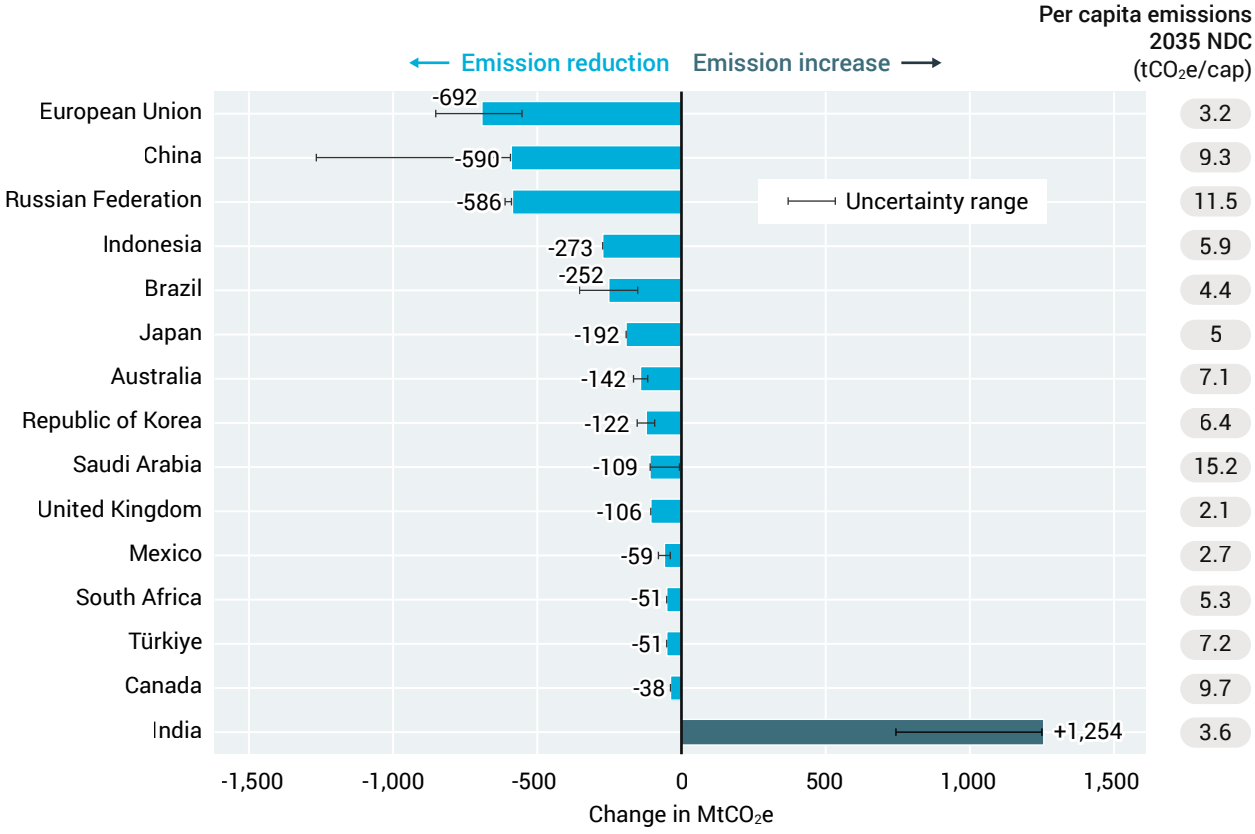
Excluding this effect, there has been little overall progress in aligning policies with NDC targets for 2030.

- A substantial global implementation gap for **2035** would have suggested that the new NDCs enhance ambition significantly beyond what existing policies would deliver. However, compared with 2030, the 2035 implementation gap widens by only 1 $GtCO_2e$ for the unconditional NDCs and 2 $GtCO_2e$ if in addition the conditional NDCs are fully implemented, indicating limited enhanced collective ambition of 2035 NDCs. The implementation gap for 2035 is estimated at 3 $GtCO_2e$ for the unconditional NDCs, and 6 $GtCO_2e$ if the conditional NDCs are also considered.

4. Fewer than half of the G20 members are on track to closing their implementation gaps for 2030 and stringency of 2035 NDC targets varies

- All G20 members except Argentina, Saudi Arabia and the United States of America have new NDCs with mitigation targets for 2035. Mexico is the only G20 member to have strengthened its 2030 target as part of its new NDC.
- Under current policies, only six G20 members (China, India, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa and Türkiye) are assessed as likely to achieve their unconditional 2030 targets, while the assessment of the European Union is inconclusive. Overall, this suggests limited progress in narrowing implementation gaps across the G20. Changes to the emission projections under current policies for the G20 members are limited since last year.
- The new unconditional NDC targets for 2035 result in lower expected emissions than the 2030 targets for all G20 members with such targets except India (figure ES.2). The European Union shows the largest absolute emission reduction, followed by China. While India is projected to continue increasing its economy-wide GHG emissions under its NDC, its per capita emissions remain far lower than those of most other large emitters (figure ES.2).

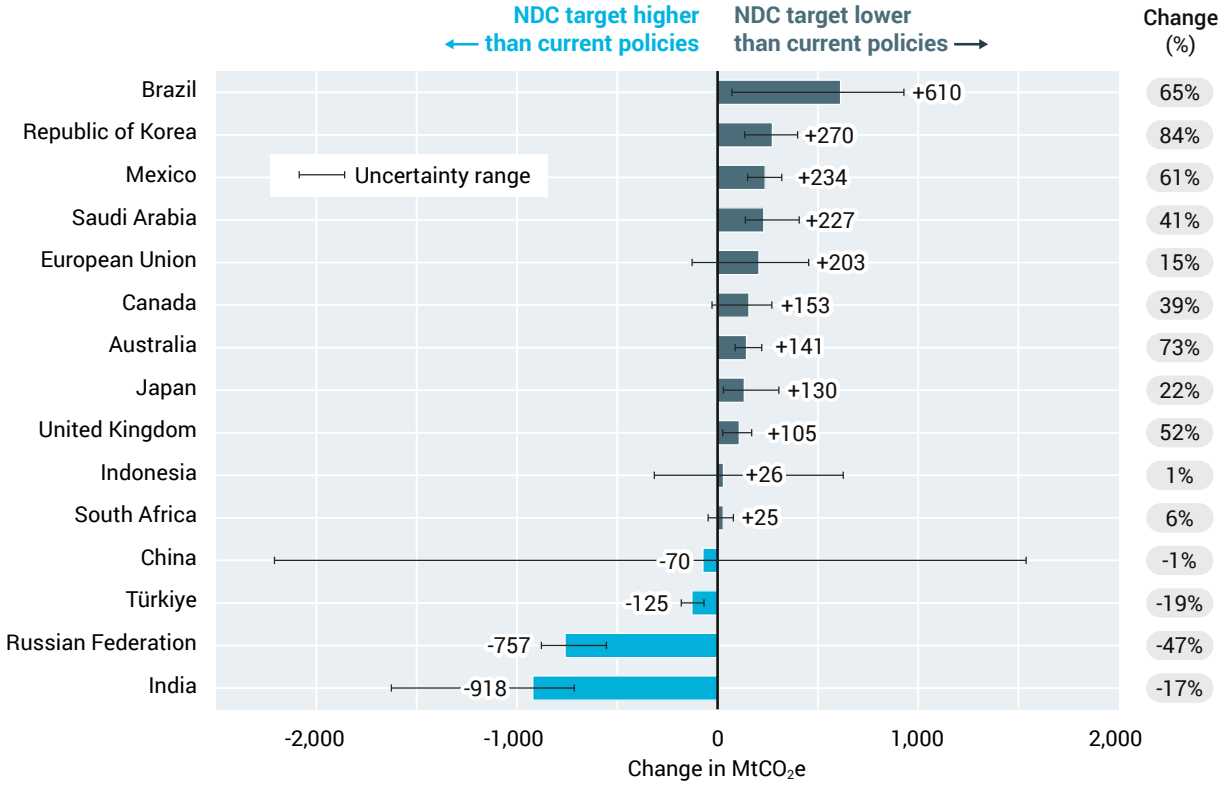
Figure ES.2 GHG emissions in 2035 relative to 2030 levels resulting from the full implementation of the new NDCs of G20 members ($MtCO_2e/yr$) and associated per capita emissions (tCO_2e/yr)



- Many G20 members will need stronger policies to meet their 2035 NDCs, while some have set new NDC targets that are above the levels expected under current policies (figure ES.3). This is particularly the case for the Russian Federation and Türkiye, suggesting limited stringency of their new 2035 NDCs, as achieving the targets does not require additional policy measures.

- India also appears likely to achieve its 2035 target based on policies already in place. However, this should be interpreted differently, because India's NDC is formulated as an emissions-intensity target. Strong economic growth combined with improvements in the carbon intensity of the economy can lead to substantial emission reductions relative to gross domestic product, while total emissions continue to grow.
- Most G20 members would also need to accelerate emission reductions beyond current policy trends and NDC commitments to achieve their long-term net-zero goals.

Figure ES.3 GHG emissions in 2035 resulting from the full implementation of the new NDCs of G20 members compared with current policies projections, absolute ($MtCO_2e/yr$) and percentage (%) change



5. The opportunity to limit warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot has been lost – stringent mitigation action could still return global warming to or below 1.5°C by the end of the century

- After decades of insufficient climate action, it is no longer possible to close the gap between current climate pledges and a pathway that limits warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot, defined as a temporary exceedance of less than 0.1°C. While it is now inevitable that warming will exceed 1.5°C by more than 0.1°C, it is still possible to minimize the magnitude and duration of this overshoot, and to return global warming to or below 1.5°C by the end of the century.
- This conclusion builds on newly developed mitigation pathways, which are replacing the outdated scenarios from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report (IPCC AR6). The new pathways, which will inform the IPCC AR7, acknowledge the failure to cut emissions to date, and apply a set of guardrails for feasibility and sustainability. Starting with stringent mitigation action from 2025, the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario that is still available has a 66 per cent chance of limiting peak warming to 1.7–1.8°C, while returning global warming to 1.5°C by 2100 with around a 50 per cent chance. The below 2°C scenario, which has also been updated with emissions cuts starting from 2025, has a 66 per cent chance of limiting peak warming to 1.9°C (table ES.1).
- In addition to higher peak warming, the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario creates a need for aggregate CO_2 removal from the atmosphere and its permanent sequestration of roughly 320 $GtCO_2$ over the course of this century in order to return warming to 1.5°C by 2100. Our ability to remove such large amounts of CO_2 from the atmosphere is uncertain, because of

socioeconomic and technological challenges to the scale-up of CO_2 removal measures and technologies.

- Importantly, without stringent mitigation action from 2025, the lowest 1.5°C overshoot pathways available today will also slip away, undermining the possibility of achieving the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement. Every five years of emissions at current levels adds around 200 $GtCO_2$ to the atmosphere, and pushes the peak warming up by around 0.1°C.

Table ES.1 Global total GHG emissions in 2030, 2035 and 2050, and global warming characteristics of different scenarios consistent with limiting global warming to specific temperature limits

Scenario	# scenarios	Global total GHG emissions ($GtCO_2e$)				Estimated temperature outcome		
		In 2030	In 2035	In 2040	In 2050	50% chance	66% chance	90% chance
Below 2.0°C (66% chance)	44	52 (45–58)	45 (28–53)	37 (15–43)	22 (3–30)	Peak: 1.7 (1.7–1.9)°C In 2100: 1.5 (1.2–1.8)°C	Peak: 1.9 (1.8–2.0)°C In 2100: 1.7 (1.3–2.0)°C	Peak: 2.2 (2.1–2.6)°C In 2100: 2.1 (1.7–2.6)°C
Lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario	8	49 (36–50)	33 (22–39)	20 (13–24)	6 (4–11)	Peak: 1.7 (1.6–1.7)°C In 2100: 1.3 (1.1–1.6)°C	Peak: 1.8 (1.7–1.8)°C In 2100: 1.4 (1.3–1.7)°C	Peak: 2.1 (2.0–2.2)°C In 2100: 1.8 (1.6–2.2)°C

6. The emissions gap is still large: new NDCs reduce global emissions 5–8 per cent below 2025 levels by 2030, and 11–15 per cent by 2035, whereas 18 and 45 per cent are required for the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario

- To secure the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario, countries need to make immediate, deep, rapid and sustained cuts in global GHG emissions of 18 per cent (range: 15–36) from 2025 levels by 2030, 45 per cent (range: 30–60) by 2035 and 69 per cent (range: 60–76) by 2040. Global CO_2 emissions would still need to reach net zero by 2050 (range: 2046–2058), around which time temperatures also peak.
- To meet these new lowest 1.5°C overshoot benchmarks, Parties must collectively reduce their emissions by an average annual rate of 5.7 per cent (range: 3.4–8.7) between 2025 and 2035. This necessitates even more rapid action than would previously have been required to limit warming to 1.5°C with no more than 0.1°C of overshoot, starting in 2019: the previous benchmark of cutting emissions to 43 per cent below 2019 levels by 2030 required an average reduction rate of 5.0 per cent per year.
- The updated below 2°C scenario also relies on an immediate peak and decline in emissions of 11 per cent by 2030 (range: 0–23), 24 per cent by 2035 (range: 9–51) and 37 per cent by 2040 (range: 26–73), all relative to 2025 levels.
- Despite new submissions since last year, the latest NDCs will neither deliver the cuts needed to align with the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario, nor the below 2°C scenario. They are only sufficient to cut emissions to 5–8 per cent below 2025 levels by 2030, 11–15 per cent by 2035 and 20–27 per cent by 2040, depending on the conditionality of NDCs.
- This means there is a large and expanding emissions gap of 5 $GtCO_2e$ in 2030 and 16 $GtCO_2e$ in 2035, between the full implementation of current conditional and unconditional NDCs and the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario. For the below 2°C scenario, the gaps are 1 $GtCO_2e$ and 5 $GtCO_2e$ respectively. The gaps are even larger if only unconditional NDCs are implemented (figure ES.4, table ES.2).
- These gaps are not directly comparable with last year's report, which was benchmarked against scenarios that are now unachievable. Specifically, there is now an unbridgeable gap of 9 $GtCO_2e$ in 2035, between the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario and the level of emissions that would have been consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C with an overshoot of no more than 0.1°C (figure ES.4).

Figure ES.4 Global GHG emissions under different scenarios and the emissions gap in 2035 with respect to the below 2°C and lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenarios

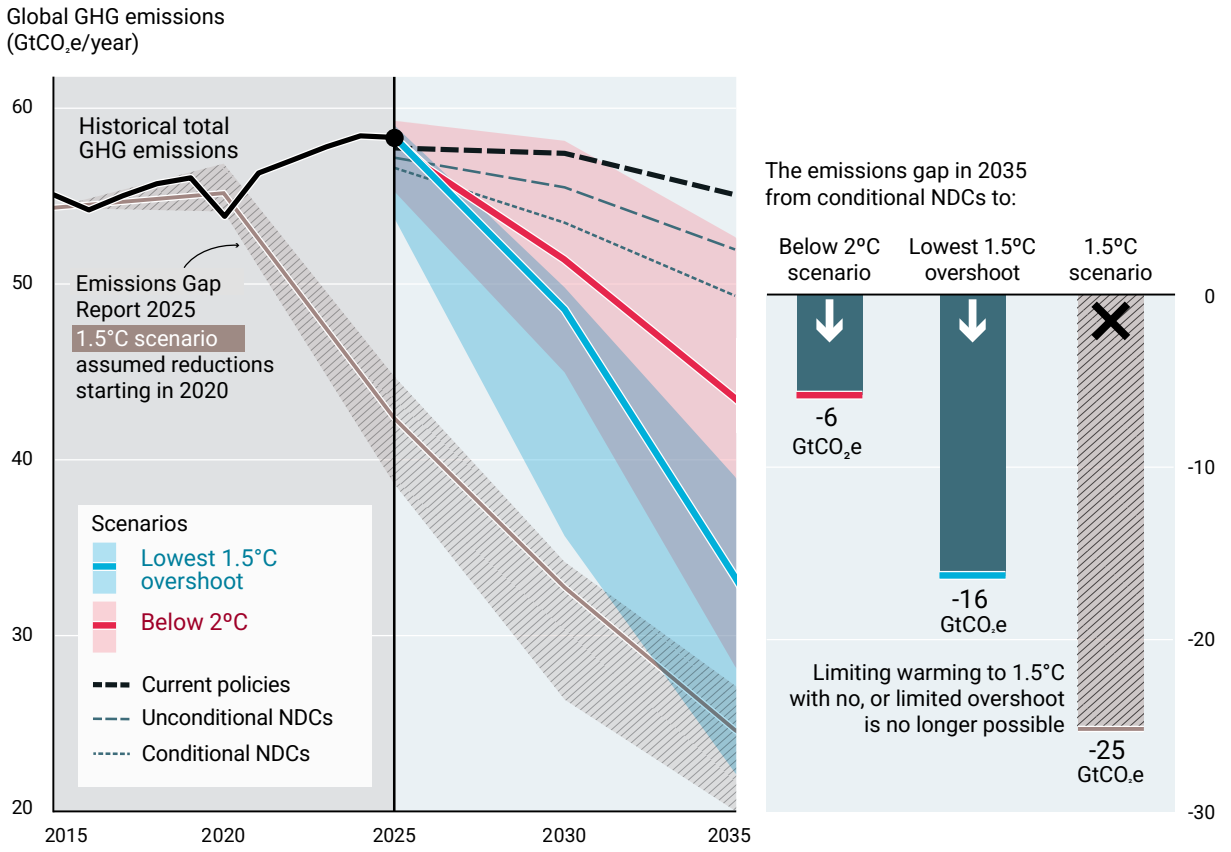


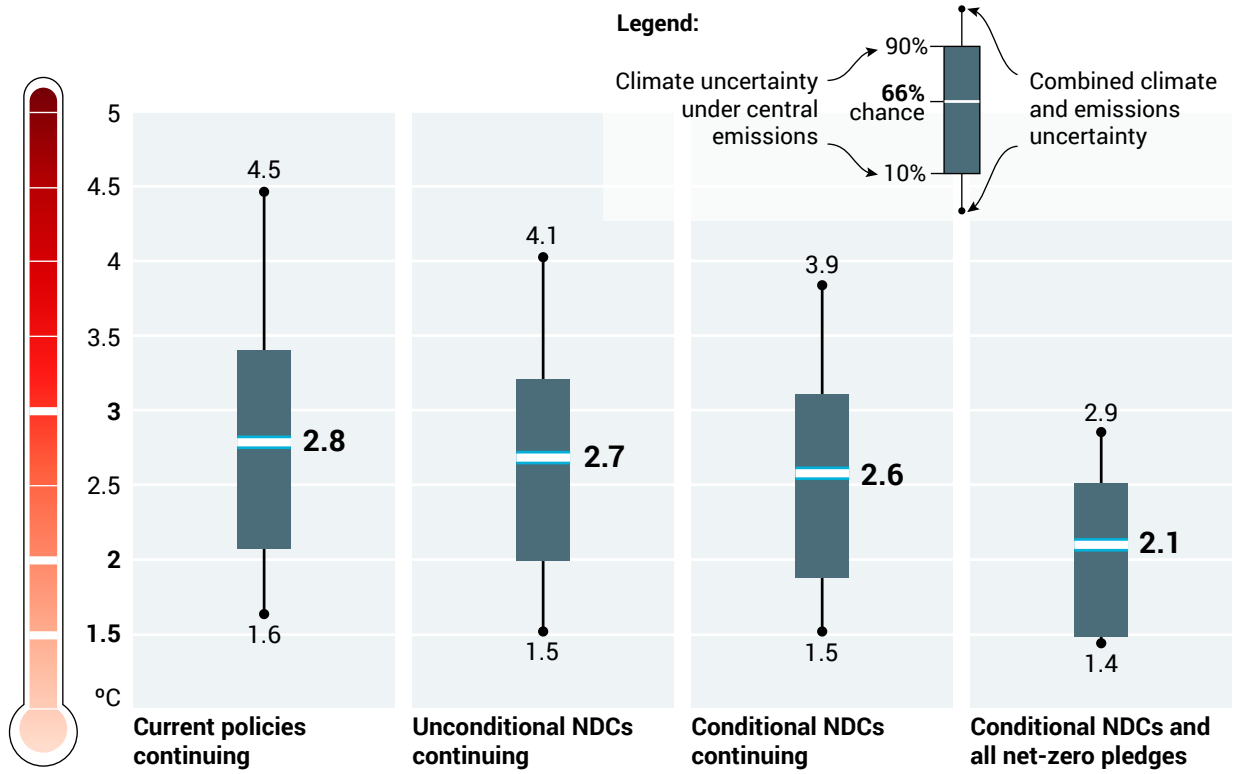
Table ES.2 Global total GHG emissions in 2030 and 2035, and estimated gaps under different scenarios

Scenario	Projected GHG emissions ($GtCO_2e$)	Estimated emissions gap to lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario ($GtCO_2e$)	Estimated emissions gap to below 2°C scenario ($GtCO_2e$)
	Median and range	Median and range	Median and range
2030			
Current policies	57 (53–62)	9 (4–13)	5 (0–9)
Unconditional NDCs	55 (51–59)	7 (3–11)	3 (-1–7)
Conditional NDCs	53 (50–56)	5 (2–7)	1 (-2–3)
2035			
Current policies	55 (52–61)	22 (18–28)	10 (7–16)
Unconditional NDCs	52 (49–55)	19 (15–22)	7 (4–11)
Conditional NDCs	49 (47–52)	16 (14–19)	5 (3–7)

7. Temperature projections have increased slightly compared with last year – only the scenario based on current policies remains unchanged

- If current policies continue, there is a 66 per cent chance that warming will be limited to 2.8°C by 2100, while continuing to increase thereafter (figure ES.5).
- If all NDCs are delivered and similar efforts continue, there is a 66 per cent chance that warming will be limited to 2.6°C by 2100. This is a worse outcome than expected last year, as a result of the formal withdrawal of the United States of America from the Paris Agreement and revised estimates of historical emissions. New NDCs submitted since last year have a near-zero impact on expected emissions and warming.
- In the most optimistic pledge-related scenario considered in the report, where all NDCs and net-zero targets are achieved, and similar efforts are maintained thereafter, there is a 66 per cent chance that global warming will be limited to 2.1°C this century, 0.7°C below current policies. Again, this is worse than expected last year due to the withdrawal of the United States of America, and revised historical emissions estimates.
- The most optimistic pledge-based scenario is the only case with a greater than 50 per cent chance of limiting warming this century to below 2°C – and a non-zero chance for returning to 1.5°C.
- This shows that immediate and effective implementation of all pledges, including long-term net-zero targets, could significantly reduce expected warming. However, even the most optimistic pledge-based scenario results in around 0.25°C more peak warming than the lowest 1.5°C overshoot. This highlights the need to go beyond existing pledges, and to deliver on more ambitious pledges through accelerated action.

Figure ES.5 Projections of global warming under the pledge-based scenarios assessed in the report



8. The world agreed to strong sectoral goals and actions in the first global stocktake. Most require urgent acceleration

- The first global stocktake underscored the need for deep, rapid and sustained reductions in GHG emissions to keep the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement within reach. To that end, Parties agreed to the collective tripling of renewable energy capacity and doubling of the annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030, transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, accelerating the uptake of zero- and low-emissions technologies, reducing non-CO_2 emissions, and halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation.

- Significant progress has been made since the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015. Global solar and wind deployment has expanded far more rapidly than anticipated a decade ago. Global renewable electricity capacity grew three times faster than current policies scenarios anticipated in 2015, with solar photovoltaics build-out increasing seven times faster than anticipated.

- A continuation of these promising recent trends in the scale-up of renewables, supported by additional policies, would bring the world on track to achieve the global stocktake's goal of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030, and increase the share of wind and solar in electricity generation to levels consistent with the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario.

- Despite these advances, progress across most global stocktake action areas remains insufficient. Recent rates of change across all indicators tracking absolute GHG emissions, including CO_2 emissions in energy systems, road transport emissions and non-CO_2 emissions, notably methane emissions, are heading in the opposite direction to the global stocktake targets. While current policies scenarios project that these emissions will stabilize by 2030 across some sectors, none show declines occurring at the pace and scale needed to minimize the magnitude and duration of overshoot of 1.5°C. These trends highlight that scaling up zero- and low-carbon technology adoption alone will not be sufficient to achieve the global stocktake's outcome.

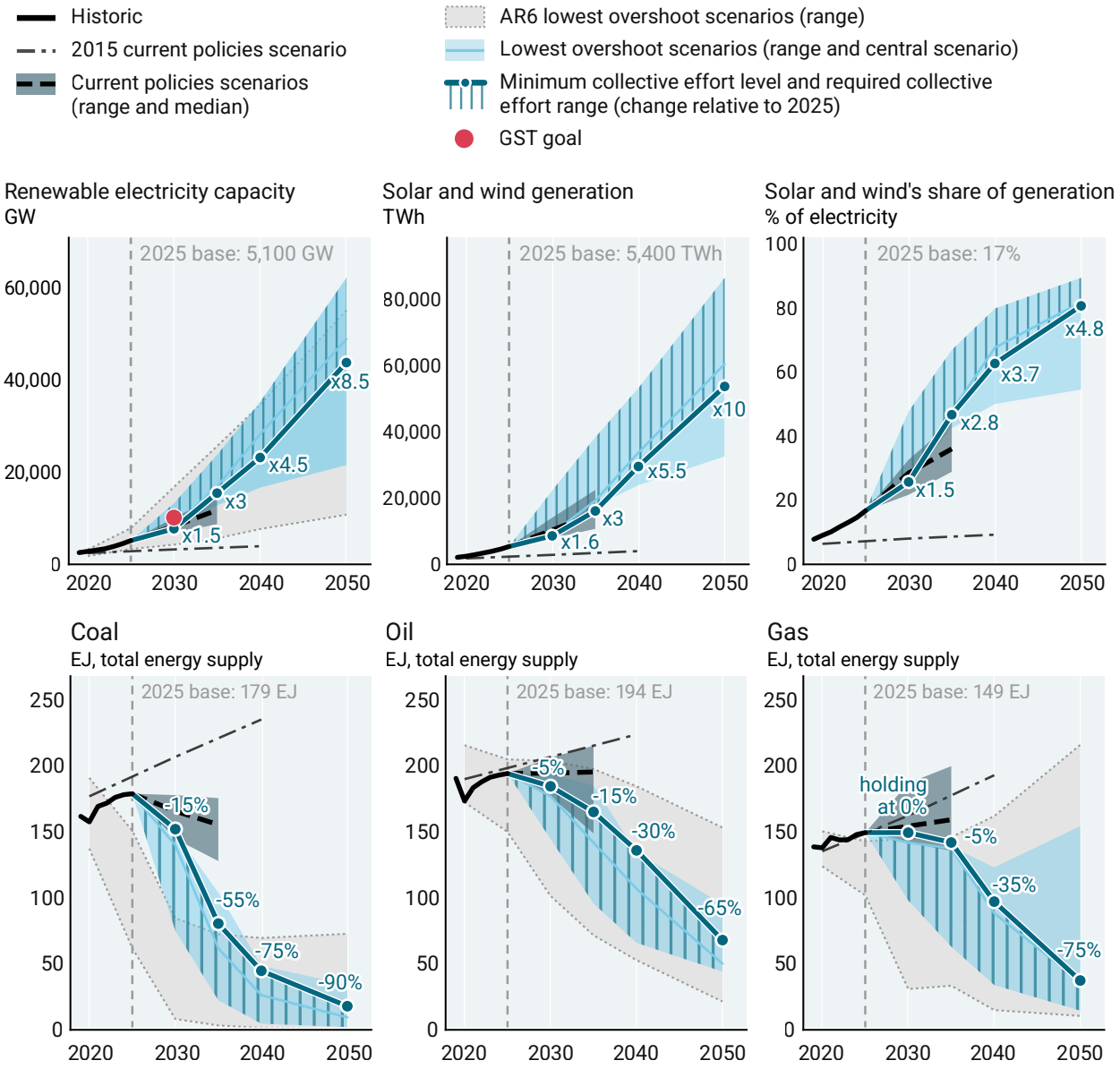
- Progress in transitioning away from fossil fuels and other emissions-intensive activities is lagging particularly far behind. Total energy supply from coal, oil and gas continues to rise globally, albeit at a slower rate than was projected in 2015. Looking ahead, while the implementation of current policies is set to trigger a peak and decline in coal before 2030, use of oil and gas will likely continue to increase this decade.

- Global efforts to halt deforestation by 2030 also remain significantly off track. Although permanent forest loss has slowed, the current rate of decline must accelerate by more than a factor of ten to meet the target of the first global stocktake.

- New global milestones beyond 2030 can help identify opportunities to strengthen collective ambition and action, while informing discussions during the second global stocktake on 2040 NDC targets. Figure ES.6 illustrates such milestones for selected global stocktake mitigation action areas aligned with the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario and pathways.

- The second global stocktake can build on the first by (1) reaffirming priority mitigation action areas that offer the most significant opportunities to bridge the emissions gap; (2) extending quantified goals to 2035 and 2040 to inform the next round of NDCs; and (3) making existing action areas more tangible through clearer and, where possible, quantified targets. This would help guide collective action and support implementation through clarifying related finance, technology and capacity-building needs. The thirty-first United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 31) Presidency's proposal to increase global electrification rates to 35 per cent by 2035 offers one example of further elaboration of an action area, with a level of effort assessed to align with the lowest 1.5°C overshoot scenario.

Figure ES.6 Global developments in selected mitigation action areas of the global stocktake and milestones beyond 2030 aligned with limiting the peak and duration of overshoot



9. Expanded understanding of what works in climate policies can support and inform accelerated action

- Climate policies can and have reduced emissions. The challenge is how fast they can be scaled. Evidence from tracking of major structural shifts in national and sectoral emissions, causal policy evaluations, and sectoral case studies shows that implemented climate policies generally deliver emission reductions. However, successes remain concentrated in specific sectors, countries and periods. Bridging the emissions gap requires economy-wide and global replication and sustaining.
- A total of 63 major structural shifts in developed and developing countries, resulting in emission reductions of more than 5 per cent over the evaluation period, and relative to a no-policy baseline, have been identified to coincide with the introduction or strengthening of climate-related policies.
- More than 220 policy evaluations provide causal evidence that climate policies reduce emissions across a wide range of sectors and country contexts. For example, evaluated policies in the electricity sector have resulted in average emission reductions of 9 per cent over the evaluation periods relative to a no-policy baseline, with average reductions typically ranging from 2–13 per cent across policy instruments used.

- Only a few hundred of the thousands of climate policies in place have been rigorously evaluated. For carbon pricing, the evaluated share covers under a third of operating schemes. Studies cluster in Europe, North America and China, while developing and emerging economies remain significantly underrepresented. Studies focus on pricing, leaving the most widely used policy instruments globally including regulation, standards, public investment and subsidies, largely unassessed in the academic literature.
- Based on available studies, the introduction of economic instruments, including carbon cap-and-trade schemes and carbon taxes, the instruments most frequently evaluated, have resulted in average emission reductions of 5–13 per cent across sectors over the evaluation period relative to a no-policy baseline. However, the estimated effects vary widely with design, sector and country context, and often the conditions under which an instrument was applied is as important as the instrument itself in emission reduction outcomes. Regulatory instruments can perform similarly, but limited evidence exists.
- The design of policy packages matters, and adding policies does not necessarily result in deeper emission reductions. Where large emission reductions have been detected, price signals often operate alongside regulation and subsidies addressing distinct market failures. This suggests that effective climate action requires coherent policy mixes tailored to development priorities and local conditions. Developing economies lean towards regulation, developed economies more often towards pricing.
- Bridging the evidence gap around effective climate policy could support bridging the emissions gap. Governments can do this by (1) designing evaluation into new policies from the outset, with baselines and data access specified before implementation; (2) reporting achieved reductions systematically so effects can be compared and learned from across countries; and (3) funding evaluation capacity in regions where assessment is scarcest.

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