

# Credible implementation of the Paris Agreement

Input to the Talanoa Dialogue

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**The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment** was established in 2008 at the London School of Economics and Political Science. The Institute brings together international expertise on economics, as well as finance, geography, the environment, international development and political economy to establish a world-leading centre for policy-relevant research, teaching and training in climate change and the environment. It is funded by the Grantham Foundation for the Protection of the Environment, which also funds the Grantham Institute for Climate Change at Imperial College London. More information about the Grantham Research Institute can be found at: [www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute](http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute)

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The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, at the London School of Economics and Political Science, is collecting and analysing data on climate change governance and institutions to improve the evidence base and generate lessons learnt on climate legislation, institutions and governance, and on the credibility of climate change commitments. Some preliminary insights are provided in this document. Additional evidence in these areas will be provided for the second submission to the Talanoa Dialogue later in 2018.

## Question 1: Where are we?

*The commitment (planned and/or announced) as well as the actions taken so far that are in line with aims of Paris Agreement, the 1.5/2 degrees' goal and the transition towards a net-zero emission society by this mid-century*

The bottom-up nature of the Paris Agreement and the need for ratcheting ambition requires strong national policy frameworks that are aligned with the goals of the Agreement and with the NDCs. A recent study by the Grantham Research Institute (Averchenkova and Matikainen, 2016) developed the 'Paris consistency monitor' to assess whether the individual actions by the G20 countries on mitigation are consistent with the key requirements of the Paris Agreement, based on:

- The consistency of domestic emissions targets with those pledged in the NDCs;
- Progress towards meeting 2020 emissions targets pledged under the Copenhagen and Cancún Accords;
- Past performance on ratcheting up the ambition on mitigation based on evidence from country responses to the Kyoto Protocol and the subsequent Copenhagen and Cancún Accords.

The study showed significant scope for improvement across the G20. The majority of countries need to bridge a 'legislative gap', to bring the emissions targets embedded in domestic legislation and executive policies in alignment with those pledged in the NDCs. This requires adjusting the level, timeframes and/or scope of targets.

Meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement also requires that the NDCs are 'credible' – ensuring that policymakers will keep promises to implement their pledges. The credibility of the NDC commitments is influenced by several 'determinants': quality of domestic policy and legislation, decision-making processes, public and private bodies supportive of climate action, international engagement on environmental issues, public opinion, delivery on past climate change commitments, and frequency of policy abolition (Averchenkova and Bassi, 2016). An assessment of credibility of the NDCs of the G20 countries showed that all of the countries have at least some basis to support political credibility of their commitments. However, there are significant differences in the level of credibility displayed by each country across the various determinants, as noted below.

*Progress made so far against the above commitments, including success stories, case studies and gaps*

The growing body of strategic framework laws is playing an essential role in supporting climate governance. There are 1,500 climate change and related laws and policies globally (Nachmany and Setzer, 2018). However, the link between national climate legislation and the Paris Agreement process is still insufficient: only 25 of the 102 laws and policies passed after the Paris Agreement explicitly reference the Agreement or countries' NDCs (ibid). Strengthening the links between the national and international processes will be pivotal to aligning countries' actions with the Paris Agreement goals and making the NDCs more 'credible'. Based on the study on credibility of the NDCs, the areas where most improvement is required are: effective decision-making processes, the

support of public and private bodies to climate action, and public awareness of climate change (Averchenkova and Bassi, 2016).

One of the earliest and most comprehensive framework laws is the UK Climate Change Act (2008). Our recent analysis suggests that the Act has been instrumental in advancing British climate policy over the 10 years it has been in force (Fankhauser et al., 2018; see the infographic, page 4). The Act has contributed to improving political debate and maintaining political consensus on climate change, has strengthened the UK's international leadership and has enabled transformation of the power sector towards decarbonisation.

**In recent years courts have emerged as important actors on climate change governance.** Over 1,000 climate-related litigation cases have been identified globally. Our Climate Change Laws of the World platform includes over 276 court cases across 25 national courts (excluding the USA) and international adjudicatory bodies. Courts are being called to rule on the consistency of countries' actions with the Paris Agreement and also to hold major corporate emitters to reduce their emissions and to account for adaptation costs and climate-related damages (Nachmany and Setzer, 2018).

### Question 3: How do we get there?

*Ways in which the UN Climate Change process can help you achieve your vision and goals, and how your actions can help in expediting sustainable transitions to climate neutral societies*

**Successful implementation of the Paris Agreement requires strong national policy frameworks that are credible and aligned with the goals of the Agreement and with the NDCs.** It will also require filling the current gap between national climate legislation and the Paris Agreement process (see Q1 above and Nachmany and Setzer [2018 forthcoming]). Our analysis of whether the individual actions by the G20 countries on mitigation are consistent with the key requirements of the Paris Agreement shows that countries need to bridge a 'legislative gap', to bring the emissions targets embedded in domestic legislation and executive policies in alignment with those pledged in the NDCs. This requires adjusting the level, timeframes and/or scope of targets (Averchenkova and Matikainen, 2016).

**As explained under Q1 above, meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement also requires that the NDCs are 'credible' – ensuring that policymakers will keep promises to implement their pledges.** According to our analysis of G20 countries (Averchenkova and Bassi, 2016), several of them will need to improve their legislation and policy to raise the credibility of their NDC commitments. This will require, for instance, introducing or strengthening climate framework legislation, emissions reduction targets and carbon pricing.

*Concrete solutions that have been realized while implementing your commitments, including lessons learnt from success stories and challenges, and case studies that are in line with the 1.5/2 degrees' goal and can support the Parties in achieving their NDC goals, enable higher ambition and inspire engagement of other non-state actors*

According to our analysis, **to strengthen credibility of the NDCs most countries will need to improve their decision-making processes**, notably through mechanisms for building buy-in (such as consultations) from stakeholders, processes to limit policy reversal, and transparent, consistent and effective administrative and enforcement mechanisms (Averchenkova and Bassi, 2016). In some countries credibility will be reinforced by setting up or strengthening dedicated climate change

bodies supported by consultative bodies. Countries will also have to build a track-record of delivering on climate change commitments, especially those that currently have underperformed or withdrawn from UNFCCC initiatives (like the Kyoto Protocol). Countries with a track record of sudden abolition or weakening of climate policy will also have to prevent this from happening in the future. In countries where the private sector or public is currently disengaged or opposed to climate action, support will need to be built with these groups to bring them on board.

**An important lever for credible implementation can be provided by framework climate change legislation**, an example of which is the UK Climate Change Act (2008). Our recent analysis suggests that the Act has contributed to improving domestic political debate and maintaining political consensus on climate change, has strengthened the UK's international leadership and has enabled transformation of the power sector towards decarbonisation (Fankhauser et al., 2018; see the infographic, p4 below).

**Sharing the experiences and lessons learnt on national climate governance and legislation as part of the agenda of the Talanoa Dialogue** would provide important guidance to countries and assist them in developing credible frameworks for implementing their NDCs and for raising ambition in the future. Furthermore, assistance for setting up and developing national governance frameworks consistent with the international objectives of the Paris Agreement should be among the priorities for international financial and capacity-building support to developing countries.

## References

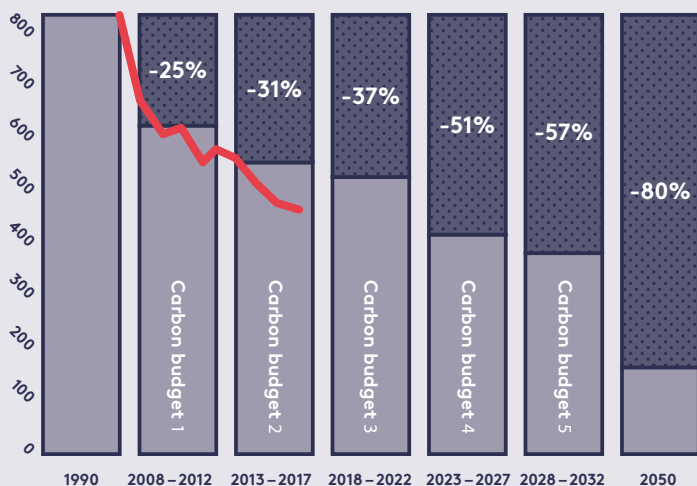
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# How does the UK Climate Change Act work?

## Carbon budgets

What and how?	Outcomes
Sequence of 5-year targets	Basis for concrete policy
Recommended by Committee on Climate Change (CCC)	Long-term target translated into near-term actions
Debated and legislated by Parliament	Flexibility built in
Set 12 years ahead	Progressive, ratcheted emissions cuts

Actual emissions



Million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> - equivalent

## Long-term target to 2050

### What and how?

Reduce emissions by at least 80% on 1990 levels

Covers the whole economy and all greenhouse gases

### Outcomes

Long-term direction of travel

Defines the UK's contribution to solving climate change



## Continual adaptation planning

### What and how?

5-year cycles of adaptation programmes and risk assessments

Scrutinised by CCC

### Outcomes

Introduced climate change risk into public and private sector decision-making

Prepares for the now unavoidable impacts



## Independent advisory body

What and how?	Outcomes
Committee on Climate Change: experts and secretariat	Independent, objective analysis
Recommends carbon budgets	Long-term consistency in approach across government
Monitors progress on emissions reduction and climate resilience	Transparency and legitimacy
	More informed decision-making



## Duties and powers to deliver

### What and how?

Government is accountable to Parliament to deliver

Government obliged to produce plans to meet budgets

CCC provides annual progress reports to Parliament

Judicial review if non-compliant

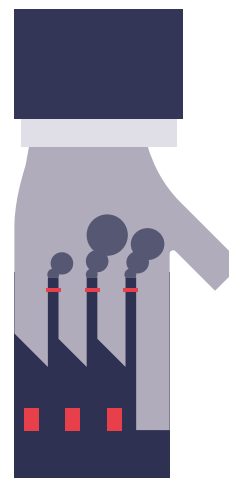
### Outcomes

Assigns clear responsibilities

Holds government accountable

Enables public scrutiny

Provides basis for policy implementation



## Differences made by the Act



1 A better political debate on climate change



2 The climate consensus has held



3 International leadership, inspiring others to act



4 Share of low-carbon power up from 20-45% by 2016

Sources for carbon budget data: Committee on Climate Change, 2017 (targets); Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, 2017 (actual emissions)