

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



THE STATE OF CLIMATE AMBITION

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UNDP's Climate Promise is the largest global offer on NDC support, covering over 120 countries and territories, representing 80 percent of all developing countries globally – including 40 least developed countries, 28 small island developing states, and 14 high emitters – to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions under the global Paris Agreement. Delivered in collaboration with a wide variety of partners, it is the world's largest offer of support for the enhancement of climate pledges. Learn more at climatepromise.undp.org and follow at [@UNDPClimate](https://twitter.com/UNDPClimate).

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INTRODUCTION

There is no country in the Europe and Central Asia region where the impact of climate change cannot be seen and felt – from catastrophic flooding in Western Balkan countries to more widespread and prolonged droughts in the countries of Central Asia. Key climate risks identified in the region include heat-related deaths, heat and drought stress on crops, increased flooding, and sea-level rise¹. Meanwhile, increasingly limited water and land resources create trade-offs in considering adaptation options, including crop irrigation. The region is responsible for 15.4 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, of which the European Union, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Türkiye, Ukraine, and United Kingdom are collectively responsible for 11.5 percent².

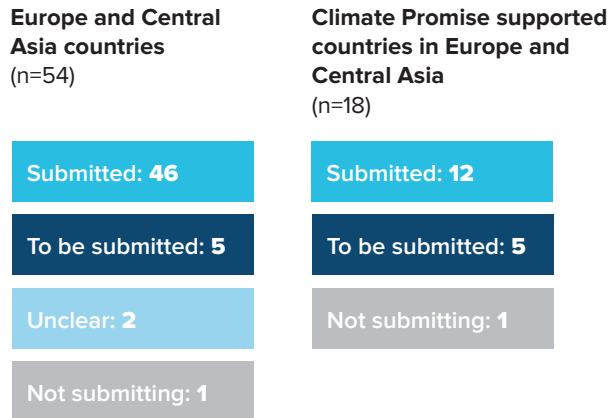
Of the 54 countries and territories in the region, 18 have received support through UNDP's Climate Promise to prepare second-generation Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)³. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine, these countries had encountered periods of moderate economic growth and poverty reduction successes. However, large sections of the population remain

vulnerable to poverty and at risk of exclusion due to a lack of formal sector employment opportunities, leading to increased insecurity and large migration flows. Most Climate Promise countries face interconnected social, economic and environmental challenges, while high and growing inequalities undermine prospects for sustainable development. While benefiting from almost universal household electrification (99.4 percent), countries are characterized by high levels of energy intensity and inefficiency, especially in the building sector⁴. Up to 96 percent of total primary energy supply comes from fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) – 16 percent higher than the global average – and reforms are needed to end decades of subsidized tariffs and distorted prices⁵. Despite their high potential, renewable energy sources (other than hydropower) account for only 1.38 percent of the energy supply due to high initial investment costs and lack of competitiveness⁶.

The analysis below provides a regional perspective that builds upon, and updates the information, from UNDP's NDC Global Outlook Report 2021: *The State of Global Ambition*, published in October 2021.

NDC SUBMISSION STATUS

FIGURE 1
NDC submission status in Europe and Central Asia, as of 15 June 2022



The 18 countries and territory that have received support through UNDP’s Climate Promise to revise their NDCs cover 3.5 percent of global total GHG emissions⁷. Of these, 12 (67 percent) had communicated updated or new NDCs as of 15 June 2022. **Kosovo** is not a signatory party of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. Whilst UNDP has provided support to Kosovo to develop a voluntary NDC there is no legal basis for Kosovo to submit a NDC and therefore they are identified as “not submitting”. Of the remaining five, **Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Serbia, and Turkmenistan** are expected to submit in Q3 2022, while **Türkiye** – which only ratified the Paris Agreement in October 2021 – is likely to communicate an updated NDC by the end of 2022.

Of the 17 Climate Promise supported countries in the region that can submit updated NDCs, the majority (88 percent) have raised mitigation ambition, or are likely to do so – including two of the region’s highest emitters (**Kazakhstan** and **Ukraine**) – while 82 percent have enhanced, or plan to strengthen,

NDC AMBITION INTENTIONS

the adaptation component of their NDCs (Figure 2). This level of ambition aligns closely with the overall ambition intentions for the whole of Europe and Central Asia, where 89 percent of countries have, or intend to, both raise mitigation ambitions and enhance adaptation efforts.

FIGURE 2
NDC mitigation and adaptation enhancement intentions in Europe and Central Asia

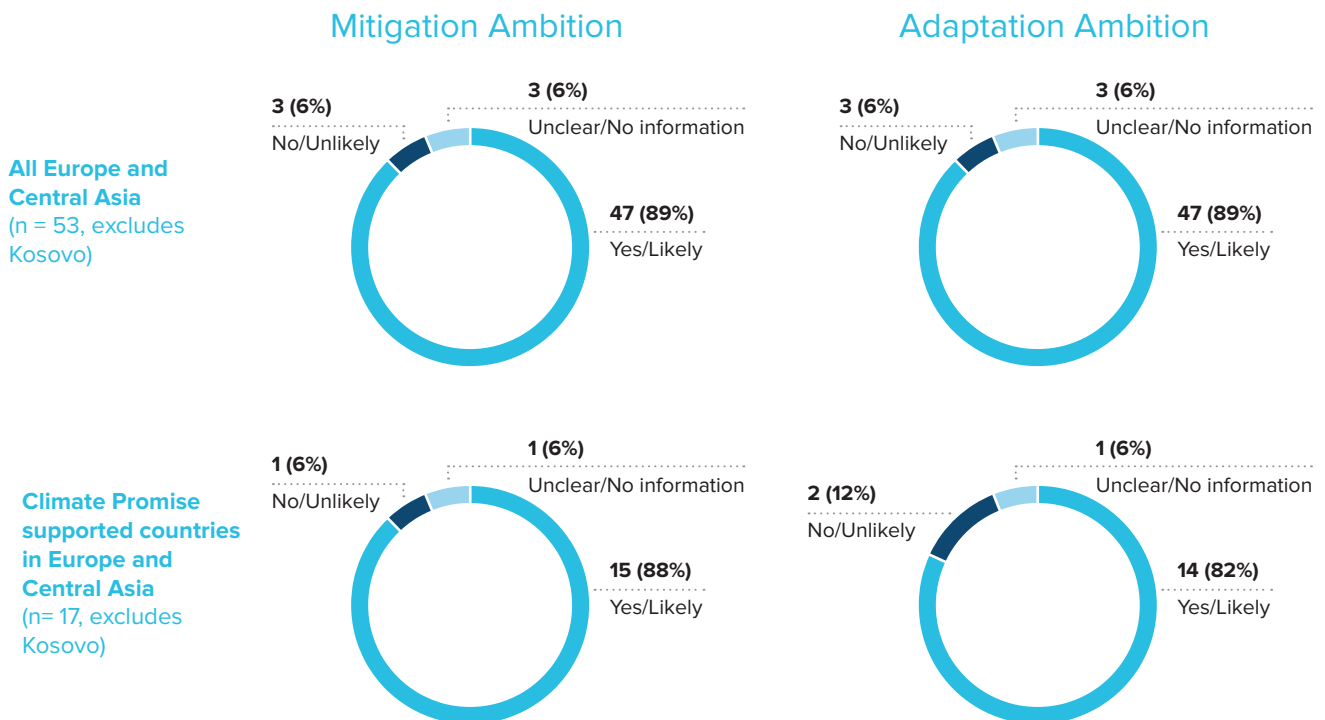


FIGURE 3

Selected mitigation and adaptation pathways of Climate Promise countries in Europe and Central Asia

Mitigation Pathways

- 12 (100%) Increase GHG emission reduction targets
- 10 (83%) Cover all GHGs or include new GHGs including SLCPs
- 9 (75%) Increase scope of unconditional mitigation targets
- 7 (58%) Add new mitigation sectors or increase scope within existing sectors

Adaptation Pathways

- 12 (100%) Align with NAP or other adaptation planning processes or instruments
- 9 (75%) Include clear adaptation objectives in line with the Paris Agreement including in a form of Adaptation Communications
- 6 (50%) Increase adaptation sectoral coverage or scope within existing sectors
- 3 (25%) Include quantitative or qualitative targets and provisions for a monitoring and evaluation system

As seen in Figure 3, all countries supported under the Climate Promise that submitted their enhanced NDCs have increased their GHG emission reduction targets as a way to raise **mitigation ambition**. Significantly, 83 percent are also raising ambition by covering all GHGs or including new GHGs in their NDC, while three-quarters (75 percent) are also opting to increase the scope of unconditional targets. Finally, 58 percent have added new mitigation sectors to their second-generation NDCs or increased the scope of existing sectors.

On **adaptation enhancement**, all countries have opted to align their NDC with a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) or other adaptation planning processes or instruments. Three-quarters (75 percent) of Climate Promise supported countries included clear adaptation targets, while half (50 percent) increased adaptation sectoral coverage or expanded scope in existing NDC sectors. Only 25 percent included targets and provisions for a monitoring and evaluation system, which could be an area of improvement in future NDCs.





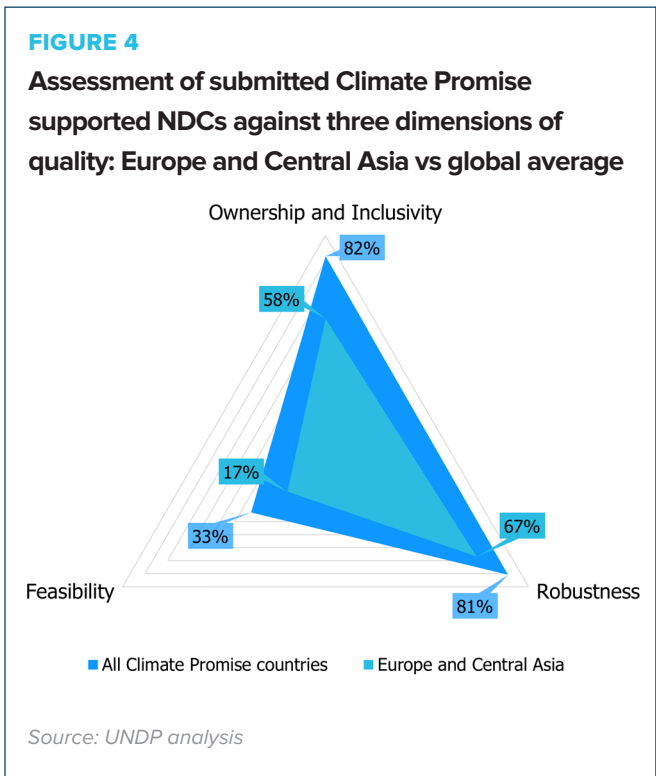
Armenia

ADVANCING NDC PARTNERSHIP PLAN

Under the Climate Promise, UNDP has been supporting the review of Armenia's NDC Partnership Plan, including the organization of public consultations. The Partnership Plan will be updated to reflect consultation outcomes once validated by the government. With funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Government of Germany (BMZ), an NDC Partnership facilitator was also embedded in UNDP to support and facilitate the work of national and international stakeholders to implement the Partnership Plan. To promote private sector involvement in the Plan's implementation, six stakeholder workshops were organized, each with 25-30 participants from targeted consulting companies, business associations, banks and non-banking financial institutions, and private sector companies operating in the domain of climate change mitigation and adaptation (such as energy, agriculture and water resources). Government, donor agencies and the expert community also participated.

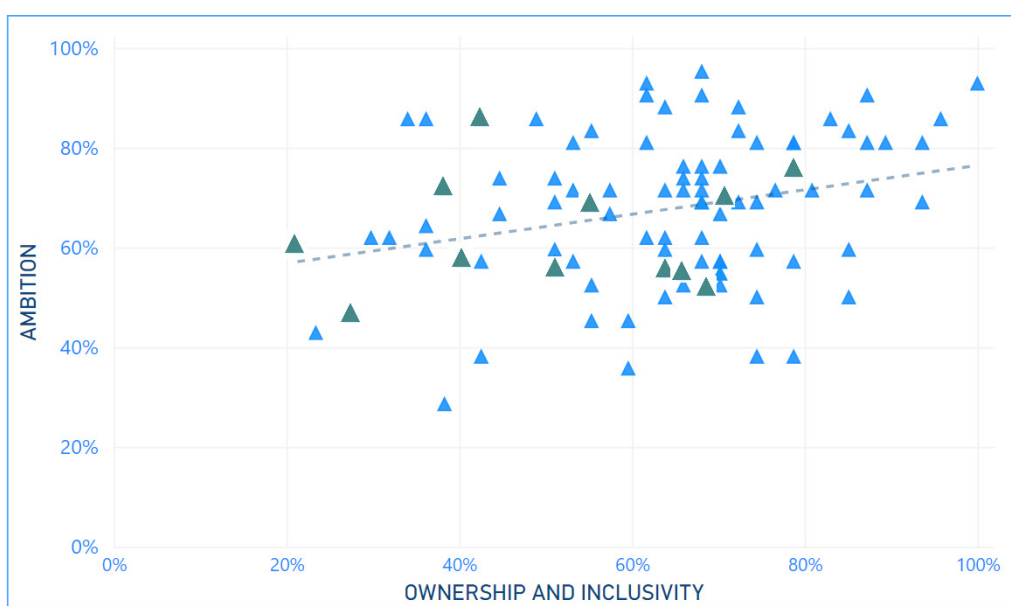
The quality of an NDC is arguably as important as its ambition. Higher-quality NDCs are more likely to lead to successful implementation and signal the government’s intention to be accountable for turning pledges into actions. Under the Climate Promise, UNDP developed a [Quality Assurance Checklist](#) that allows governments and/or other practitioners to systematically review opportunities to improve NDC quality against three dimensions: *i) Robustness*, *ii) Feasibility*, and *iii) Ownership and Inclusivity*. Using this checklist, UNDP undertook an in-depth analysis of second-generation NDCs submitted by Climate Promise supported countries, scoring NDCs based on a percentage of criteria that were met⁸.

In comparison to the global average, NDCs in the region scored lower on all three quality dimensions (Figure 4) – signifying that there are opportunities for improvement in future. The strongest regional dimension, robustness, was met by 67 percent of country’s NDCs, followed by 58 percent for ownership and inclusivity. The region’s weakest dimension was feasibility, with a score of 17 percent. This implies that future NDCs should focus in more detail on means of implementation. There is nonetheless a positive correlation between the level of NDC ambition in



Europe and Central Asia and the extent of inclusivity efforts during the revision process – in line with global findings (Figure 5). However, there remains a variance that may be due to different national circumstances and other factors that impact ambition (e.g., political will).

FIGURE 5
Mapping NDC ambition to inclusive approaches: Europe and Central Asia vs global average



Source: UNDP Analysis. Note: Green color triangles represent the 12 Climate Promise supported countries from Europe and Central Asia that completed the NDC Quality Assurance Review.

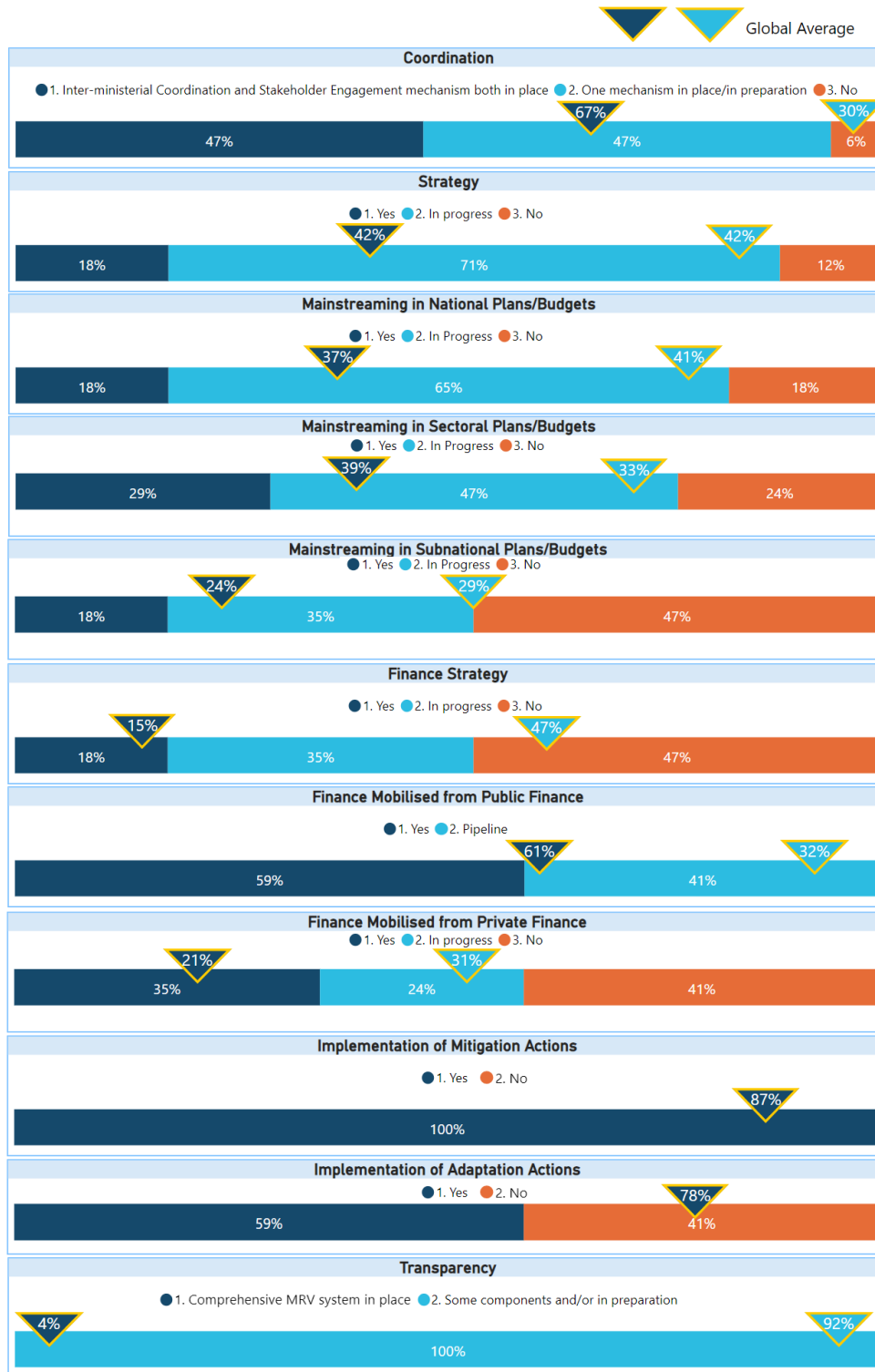
NDC IMPLEMENTATION READINESS

In 2019, UNDP defined and began monitoring seven “building blocks” for effective NDC implementation that are based on UNDP’s experience and lessons

learned from supporting countries throughout the NDC cycle⁹. Figure 6 compares progress in Europe and Central Asia against global averages (triangles).

FIGURE 6

Progress on key NDC systems and architecture: Europe and Central Asia vs global average



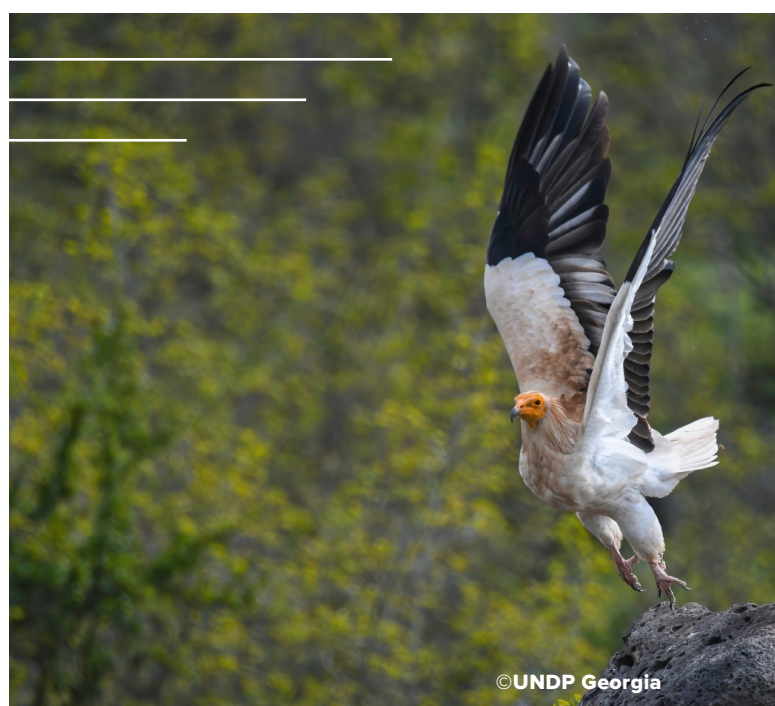
Source: UNDP analysis, 2021. n = 17 for Europe and Central Asia. Global averages are shown in the triangles.

Progress on putting in place the foundational “building blocks” of NDC implementation shows variance from the global aggregated results reported by 122 countries – although the region comprises a relatively small sample size.

- In terms of **key coordination and stakeholder engagement mechanisms**, nearly half (47 percent) of the region reports having these in place vs 67 percent globally. However, a further 47 percent of the region has one mechanism in place. **NDC implementation strategies** are completed in 18 percent of countries (vs 44 percent globally), although 71 percent of countries in the region are in the process of developing such documents.
- Fewer countries in Europe and Central Asia have **mainstreamed** NDC targets into *national* (18 percent), *sectoral* (28 percent) and *sub-national* (18 percent) plans and budgets than all Climate Promise countries globally (where the averages are 37 percent, 39 percent and 24 percent, respectively), yet many countries are in progress of mainstreaming the NDC targets – especially at national and sectoral level.
- Over half the countries in the region have prepared a **finance strategy** (18 percent) or are in the process of developing one (35 percent), in line with the global average. Meanwhile, all countries have either **mobilized public finance** (51 percent) or are in the process of doing so (49 percent). While fewer countries have accessed **private finance**, the region is still ahead of the global average with 35 percent of countries already having private finance locked in.
- All countries in Europe and Central Asia are **implementing mitigation** actions (vs the global average of 87 percent). **Adaptation implementation** is not as strong, with only 59 percent of countries reporting adaptation activities (vs 78 percent globally).
- All countries are also in the process of establishing **transparency** systems, although none has a comprehensive system in place at this time.

Support needs identified by Climate Promise supported countries in Europe and Central Asia

The findings of the NDC implementation survey are strongly aligned with future support needs identified by Climate Promise supported countries in the region¹⁰. Half the countries are seeking support to align and mainstream NDC targets. In **Armenia**, there is a challenge to transform the updated NDC targets into tangible actions. Specifically, they require support to advance ‘green recovery’, especially in the energy sector and in developing their Long-Term Low-Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS). Support to further institutional coordination and stakeholder engagement was also indicated as an area of future support for 35 percent of countries in the region. The Republic of **Moldova** wants to enhance youth engagement in implementation of the NDC and 2030 LEDES, as well as in decision making surrounding the development of a 2050 LTS. Moldova is also seeking to engage the private sector through the creation of an NDC/LEDES 2030 implementation platform that will look at energy and climate voluntary commitments/action. In **Belarus**, a Finance Strategy and Investment Plan is crucially needed to illustrate how NDC targets will be met through the use of financial mechanisms and international financial support. Transparency was also prioritized, with 35 percent of countries requesting support for MRV systems. In **Kazakhstan** and **Georgia**, support is wanted to systematically track progress for Biennial Transparency Reports.





Kyrgyz Republic

ENGAGING SOCIETY ON CLIMATE ACTION

The Kyrgyz Republic received significant support from [UNDP](#) and the [NDC Partnership](#) to submit a more ambitious NDC in October 2021. Specifically, the [Climate Promise](#) supported the entire update process from the calculation of NDC targets to broad stakeholder consultations in the process of drafting and finalizing the [updated NDC](#). The inclusive process included a public awareness campaign and targeted stakeholder engagement and participation on various elements of the [Action for Climate Empowerment \(ACE\)](#) process, including education, training, public awareness and participation. A draft NDC Implementation Plan developed under the [Climate Promise](#) was also circulated for comments and inputs from a wide group of constituencies (governmental authorities, civil society, academia, youth associations, development partners, etc.). UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic intends to continue stakeholder engagement for various elements of the NDC implementation plan processes, using ACE as the framework for empowering society to contribute to more inclusive and enhanced climate action in key sectors.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CLIMATE PROMISE SUPPORT TO DATE

Finance and investment

Half the region has undertaken preparatory work to support the development of financing strategies or investment plans or are in the process of doing so. In **Turkmenistan**, cost estimates for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures were developed that also considered the sources of investment (i.e., international climate finance, domestic public finance, and private sector). This information was validated with stakeholders and presented in the revised version of the NDC.

Policies, institutions and capacity building

The majority of countries in the region have been supported on assessments and analyses of NDC baselines and scenarios, targeted reviews and/or NDC updates for priority sectors. In **Uzbekistan**, UNDP and IRENA collaborated with Uzhydromet to update NDC targets and conduct an audit of available data/statistics on renewable energy and energy efficiency (as per the national corresponding targets outlined in a national strategy for transition to green economy). Utilizing this audit, ambitious new NDC targets were adopted that will reduce specific GHG emissions per unit of GDP by 35 percent (up from 10 percent).

Societal ownership and inclusivity

Whole-of-society engagement was supported across the region during the NDC revision process. In **Montenegro**, a series of activities were conducted to better understand youth and climate dynamics. Youth's awareness about climate change globally and in Montenegro, as well as willingness to take part in future climate-related activities, was assessed through a survey administered to a representative sample of 1,252 participants from 23 Montenegrin municipalities. Additionally, a series of focus groups were organized with various types of young people (high school students, university students, young professionals, students studying abroad, and young people in hard-to-reach areas). Reports on both the survey research and focus group consultations were shared with the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism in preparation for COP26.

Ten of the twelve Climate Promise supported countries that have submitted enhanced NDCs also included gender dimensions.



TAKING THE LONG VIEW

The government of Türkiye is being supported under the Climate Promise to prepare a Long-term Low GHG Emission Development Strategy (LTS) and a revised NDC. The LTS, which will be prepared in line with the UNDP and World Resource Institute [quality assurance checklist](#), will pave the way for Türkiye's 2053 net-zero target and green revolution policy, incorporating measures on mitigation, adaptation, and nature-based solutions. Sectoral policy actions for reducing GHGs in seven sectors (energy, transport, industry, buildings, waste, agriculture and forestry), adaptation strategies at urban and national level to build resilience in key sectors including public health and disaster risk reduction, a finance framework for accelerated action, and just transition measures to ease social and economic burdens through job creation measures will be studied with stakeholders from public and private sector, NGOs, academia, and municipalities. A LTS communication strategy will be funded by Pathway 2050 and implemented by UNDP. The aim is to significantly raise the level of community awareness to the opportunities and threats brought about by climate change, including responsibilities to adapt to, and mitigate against its impacts. The strategy will provide examples of best practices surrounding how to communicate about climate change, the LTS and measures to reduce GHG emissions.

In addition to the support needs identified above, the following trends are emerging in the region according to UNDP analysis that all interconnect around the transformation of the energy sector:

Renewable energy: Although there is excellent regional potential for solar, wind, biomass, small hydropower and geothermal energy, the majority of these resources remain untapped. In recent years, however, there has been a positive trend of installing solar PV and wind power plants, which have the highest potential for renewable energy production. Increased access to renewable energy, coupled with more opportunities for energy efficiency, are supporting countries in their transition to a green economy. For example, in **Kazakhstan**, a national concept for transitioning to a green economy will deploy renewable energy as a top priority.

Just transition: Increasingly, the region – especially the Western Balkans – is showing interest in adopting just transition approaches. With Climate Promise support, **Albania**, **Türkiye**, and **Serbia** have undertaken relevant activities such as: assessing NDC measures to ensure they are aligned with principles of green recovery (Albania), conducting a [Green Jobs Assessment](#) for energy transition (Türkiye), and preparing a baseline analysis to initiate a just transition in coal-intensive regions and communities (Serbia). Serbia is now working to ensure that [principles of just transition are defined and incorporated](#) into efforts for green

transformation and decarbonization of the economy for all NDC sectors, culminating in a Just Transition Plan to a Low-Carbon Economy. Meanwhile, **Bosnia and Herzegovina** will introduce a just transition mechanism into the country's strategic, institutional and industrial framework to identify negative impacts of a low-carbon transition on vulnerable industries, small- and medium-size enterprises, women, youth, and communities. The government will formulate a country-wide blueprint to address these impacts, support those most affected and build capacities of relevant actors to conduct a just transition in parallel to implementation of the NDC by 2030.

Carbon markets: Following COP26, there is more discussion in the region around carbon finance, including Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Carbon markets aim to mitigate GHG emissions by creating an economic incentive for reducing emissions as cost-effectively as possible, fostering the transition to a low-carbon economy. The **Kyrgyz Republic** has made a commitment to green development as a means to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and organized events surrounding the Article 6 outcomes from COP26 to raise awareness among public and private sector. As more countries across the region develop long-term strategies to phase out coal and gas, develop renewable energy strategies, and improve carbon sink potential through forests, the Article 6 mechanisms become relevant instruments to incentivize investment for a transition towards low-carbon economies.





ENDNOTES

- 1 IPCC, 2022. Sixth Assessment Report Working Group 2. [Fact sheet — Europe](#).
- 2 Based on 2018 Climate Watch (CAIT) data, including Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry sector.
- 3 The content of this Regional Snapshot focuses on the 18 countries and territories supported by UNDP's Climate Promise, namely: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Kosovo* is defined according to the UN SC Resolution 1244. However, the whole of Europe and Central Asia is used for comparative purposes in Figures 1 and 2.
- 4 UNDP, 2022. UNDP Website: [Europe and Central Asia Regional Bureau webpage](#).
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Based on 2018 Climate Watch (CAIT) data, including Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry sector.
- 8 Global results were first published in UNDP's [State of Climate Ambition Report \(2021\)](#) with data from 67 countries. This information has been updated to include data from 96 of the 99 submitted NDCs (as of 15 June 2022) from Climate Promise supported countries. Three countries submitted interim NDCs were not included in this update. For more detailed information on the methodology used, please refer to the 2021 report.
- 9 A UNDP survey on NDC implementation readiness obtained 133 developing country responses in 2019 and 122 developing country responses in 2021. The 2021 data included responses from 17 Europe and Central Asia countries supported under the Climate Promise.
- 10 Data comes from 85 percent of Climate Promise supported countries that responded to a question on future support needs as part of 2021 Q4 reporting.



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