

## UK, EU TARGET 100 GW JOINT OFFSHORE WIND TO STRENGTHEN ENERGY SECURITY

At the Future of the North Seas Summit in Hamburg, European leaders committed to advancing a new wave of hybrid offshore energy projects that will connect many gigawatts of wind power directly into cross-border electricity networks. This initiative strengthens cooperation between the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Denmark, France, Belgium, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, positioning the North Sea as a shared strategic clean-energy hub for Europe.

Joint offshore development has quickly become central to Europe's energy security strategy. Three years ago, North Sea nations collectively aimed for 300 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2050. The Hamburg Declaration updated that goal by dedicating 100 GW specifically to cooperative projects rather than national installations alone. These hybrid assets will connect wind farms to multiple countries simultaneously, enabling electricity to flow towards markets with the highest demand and best pricing conditions. The cooperation model requires major investment not only in turbines and sea-bed areas but also in sub-sea cables, converter stations, market-linking systems, and new rules for sharing costs and distributing revenues. European investors increasingly see interconnectors as a safeguard against market fragmentation and a pathway to more flexible energy portfolios. However, the success of the 100 GW objective depends heavily on regulatory alignment.

Policymakers continue to work on electricity market reforms, cross-border balancing, ETS coordination, and state-aid frameworks. The offshore pact adds a strategic push toward aligning supply chains, cable production, grid integration, and permitting processes.

The Hamburg Declaration also sends signals internationally. Regions such as East Asia and the Gulf of Mexico each examining their own multinational offshore corridors are watching how the North Sea develops its regulatory structures and financing models. The framework establishes a benchmark for using shared marine areas to minimize geopolitical risks, combine capital resources, and speed up decarbonization.

<https://esgnews.com/uk-eu-target-100-gw-joint-offshore-wind-to-strengthen-energy-security/>

## NITI AAYOG SEES INDIAN CEMENT SECTOR EMISSIONS FALL UP TO 85% BY 2070

India's cement industry could cut its greenhouse gas emissions by up to 85% by 2070 if three major

decarbonization strategies are expanded quickly, according to a new national roadmap. The report warns that high costs, regulatory gaps and limited infrastructure remain significant hurdles. Cement production in India is projected to grow almost seven-fold by 2070 from 391 million tonnes in 2023, driven by rapid urbanization and infrastructure demand. Without action, emissions are expected to rise sharply from 246 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023 to 945 million tonnes in 2047 and 1,323 million tonnes by 2070. India is already world's second-largest cement producer, contributing about 6% of national greenhouse gas emissions.

Prepared by NITI Aayog with support from WRI India, the roadmap evaluated 22 decarbonization approaches. After assessing scalability, cost and long-term impact, it prioritized three key pathways:

- Greater use of refuse-derived fuel (RDF) from municipal waste
- Higher adoption of supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) to cut clinker use
- Carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) technologies

Together, these could reduce sectoral emissions by 80–85% by 2070, assuming supportive policies and feasibility. Raising RDF use to a 20% thermal substitution rate by 2030 could avoid about 80 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e (10% cut in energy-related emissions). India generates 62 million tonnes of municipal solid waste annually, projected to reach 165 million tonnes by 2031 and 436 million tonnes by 2050. Co-processing this waste in cement kilns could ease disposal pressures and reduce reliance on coal and pet coke.

However, inconsistent waste quality, low calorific value, contamination and high investment needs pose challenges. The roadmap recommends long-term public-private waste-management agreements and third-party quality checks. Initial implementation costs are estimated at \$4.9 billion, with another \$18 billion in potential value-chain investments and around 65,000 new jobs. Since process emissions from limestone calcination make up more than half of Cement Sector's total emissions, the report identifies CCUS as the only viable solution to address 35–54% of the sector's emissions.

It calls for stable regulation, coordinated policy measures and access to climate finance, including government funds, multilateral climate support, donor contributions and green bonds.

<https://www.esgimes.in/climate/carbon/niti-aayog-sees-india-cement-sector-emissions-fall-up-to-85-by-2070/>

## UK LAUNCHES \$19B WARM HOMES PLAN TO CUT BILLS AND ACCELERATE HOUSEHOLD CLEAN ENERGY

The UK government has announced a £15 billion Warm Homes Plan designed to retrofit millions of houses with insulation, solar panels, home batteries, and heat pumps. The initiative aims to lower energy bills, tackle fuel poverty, and speed up the nation's transition to clean energy. The Project is being described as the largest government investment ever made in upgrading residential properties, offering targeted support for low-income households, a universal scheme for homeowners, and stronger protections for renters.

The programme builds on the recent Budget's emergency cost-of-living measures, which reduced typical energy bills by £150 from April and delivered an additional £150 Warm Home Discount to around six million households. The new package represents a move from short-term assistance toward long-term affordability and fairness.

### The Warm Homes Plan stands on 3 main pillars:

1. Low-income households will receive packages of upgrades fully funded by the State, including insulation and rooftop solar with batteries where suitable. These interventions are supported by five billion pounds of public funds and could cover full system costs currently estimated at nine thousand to twelve thousand pounds for solar and storage. Social housing estates could receive area wide upgrades that improve warmth and comfort street by street.
2. A universal offer aims to triple the number of homes with rooftop solar by 2030 through zero and low interest government backed loans. These products will also cover batteries and heat pumps. Heat pumps will be supported through a seven-thousand-five-hundred-pound universal grant, while air to air units that can both heat and cool will become eligible for the first time. Future homes standards due in early 2026 will require solar panels as a standard in new builds, lowering operating costs for future buyers.
3. The Government will expand protections for renters. 1.6 million children live in properties suffering from cold, damp or mould. Updated rules will require landlords to ensure homes are safe, warm and affordable, lifting an estimated half a million families out of fuel poverty by the end of the decade. Rules would be phased in to allow landlords to upgrade properties on a fair timetable.

<https://esgnews.com/uk-launches-19b-warm-homes-plan-to-cut-bills-and-accelerate-household-clean-energy/>



## HONG KONG EXPANDS SUSTAINABLE FINANCE TAXONOMY TO INCLUDE TRANSITION AND ADAPTATION CATEGORIES

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) released the Phase 2A update of the Hong Kong Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance on 22 January, aiming to accelerate the development of the region's transition finance market and bolster climate adaptation investments in key sectors. This update substantially broadens the Taxonomy's technical scope by adding transition-focused activities and resilience elements, while expanding sector coverage and increasing the number of defined economic activities from 12 to 25.

The HKMA has been developing the Taxonomy in phases. Phase 1 was issued in May 2024, followed by a consultation on the proposed Phase 2A prototype in September 2025. According to the HKMA, stakeholders across banks, asset managers, corporates, NGOs, think tanks and public-sector bodies supported the broader scope and the inclusion of transition and adaptation components. The Central Bank also published a consultation report outlining market feedback and its responses. In its announcement, the HKMA stated that the Taxonomy is intended to strengthen green and sustainable capital flows, enable Hong Kong's low-carbon transition, and establish a credible classification framework for environmental sustainability.

The most significant update is the introduction of a structured transition category, created to guide capital toward carbon-intensive sectors and define time-bound decarbonisation pathways. Under the new framework, the HKMA has organised climate-mitigation activities into three groups:

- **Green:** Activities already operating at net zero or aligned with a 1.5°C pathway.
- **Transition:** Carbon-intensive activities that are on a time-bound trajectory toward 1.5°C alignment and net zero by 2050.
- **Exclusion:** Activities that are incompatible with a 1.5°C future or have low climate relevance.

Within the Transition category, Phase 2A differentiates between a “**Transition Activity**”, which refers to activities not yet 1.5°C-aligned but moving toward alignment or delivering near-term emissions reductions, and a “**Transition Measure**”, which refers to specific interventions that partially improve emissions performance — such as sourcing low-carbon energy inputs.

A key governance feature is that transition activities must be time-bound, with sector-specific sunset dates shaped by technology maturity, environmental considerations, and regulatory factors.

Phase 2A also introduces climate adaptation for the first time. The initial focus is on “adapting measures” that enhance resilience within broader activities, including technologies, materials, processes and services. For now, the HKMA is using a whitelist approach, allowing defined measures to qualify without further technical screening. It intends to develop more stringent criteria as adaptation science advances and local benchmarks become clearer.

<https://esgnews.com/hong-kong-expands-sustainable-finance-taxonomy-to-include-transition-and-adaptation-categories/>

### UNESCO PUSHES FOR SUSTAINABLE AI GOVERNANCE AS CLIMATE STAKES RISE

At the Adopt AI Summit in late November, UNESCO used a crowded mainstage session to urge governments, corporations, and UN agencies to address AI’s expanding climate impact while simultaneously accelerating its use for climate mitigation and adaptation. The panel emphasized that AI is quickly becoming a form of climate

infrastructure — one that relies on growing amounts of energy, water, data, and computing power. At the same time, it supports critical functions such as early-warning systems, resource efficiency, and environmental monitoring.

The conversation highlighted a central dilemma: AI is becoming essential to climate action, yet its long-term contribution will depend on whether it can evolve sustainably and remain within planetary limits. UNESCO’s hydrology division underscored the urgency emerging from climate science. The expanding role of AI in water management, early warning systems, and environmental forecasting was highlighted. It was noted that UNESCO is stepping up its efforts on green, energy-efficient AI by providing policy guidance and building capacity to help governments apply AI to climate and water challenges without increasing infrastructure demands beyond what they can support. Alongside the panel discussion, UNESCO also ran a booth at the summit showcasing its work on green AI, sustainable digital transformation, data governance, and the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. The space became a hub for participants from government, academia, industry, and civil society to reflect on how ambitious global goals often meet real-world challenges — such as limited data availability, high infrastructure costs, and institutional inertia. Positioned after COP30 in Belém and ahead of the India AI Impact Summit in February 2026, the event underscored how AI is becoming an integral part of the climate diplomacy agenda.

<https://esgnews.com/unesco-pushes-for-sustainable-ai-governance-as-climate-stakes-rise/>

