



WWF Expectations Paper: 21-25 June 2021

## High-level Dialogue on Energy: Ministerial-level Thematic Forums

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### Introduction

On 21 to 25 June, Ministerial-level Thematic Forums will be convened, bringing together key stakeholders virtually over five days, to mobilize voluntary climate action in the field of energy. The events are another 'milestone' on the road to the High-level Dialogue on Energy in September 2021 and, ultimately, COP26.

The five days will follow five themes: (1) Energy Access, (2) Energy Transition, (3) Enabling SDGs through Inclusive Just Energy Transitions, (4) Finance and Investment, (5) Innovation, Technology and Data. Prior to the Ministerial Thematic Forums, separate multi-stakeholder working groups presented a set of recommendations that are expected to become a Global Roadmap to frame the discussion for each theme.

WWF welcomes the collective effort while reminding that the elected officials are still holding back from translating intent into real world commitment. This paper describes our vision on the level of ambition needed - especially from those national governments that are actively championing the process. Further, as the parallel processes to strengthen commitments on climate and define the global biodiversity goal will unfold in the coming months, it is vital that the Dialogue acknowledges the connection between the two and its implications for the energy agenda.

### Solving the twin crises: why the energy-nature link must be given a seat at the table

Assertive conservation efforts and a rapid ramp-up of renewable energy, particularly wind and solar, are both pivotal to prevent habitat loss and species extinctions and avoid catastrophic climate change. While the aggressive expansion of renewable energy is essential to society and the thriving of biodiversity itself, the way in which this unfolds may pose a threat to global biodiversity. It is already clear that renewable energy can be land-use intensive and is affecting conservation areas. If nations pursue renewable energy expansion without the needed guardrails, they risk undermining the global mission to avert the biodiversity crisis. Joint strategic planning of the twin desired missions of renewable energy expansion and biodiversity conservation, is essential - and requires political recognition each time energy transition is debated.

## WWF's top line political expectations for the [Ministerial Thematic Forums](#)

1. **WWF calls on invited leaders who have stepped forward as champions<sup>1</sup> to demonstrate leadership, through ensuring their NDCs have strong and specific energy components and supporting policies, positively contribute to Energy Access, Energy Transition, Just Transition, and Finance & Investment while joining up the climate and nature agendas.** Each champion government taking part must show leadership to accelerate the energy transition towards a net-zero emission society and a nature-compatible 100% renewable energy system by 2050 at the latest.
2. **Energy compacts:** non-state actors should align with a 1.5°C and net-zero emissions world and a just energy transition<sup>2</sup>.

## WWF's expectations for each core themes individually (see full list in Annex)

1. **Energy Access:** Attract investment and build markets in remote locations through policies and regulation.
2. **Energy Transition:** Accelerate and ensure an exit from fossil fuels through phasing out coal power generation by 2030 (EU/OECD)/ 2040 (rest of the world), while expressly starting a rapid decline of the oil & gas sector, including halting exploration for new resources.
3. **Just Transition:** Integrate inclusively and transparently developed, 1.5-aligned and equitable national and local 'just energy transition' strategies into all policies, including long-term strategies and NDCs.
4. **Finance & Investment:** Eliminate finance to all fossil fuels through public bilateral and multilateral channels, subsidies and private finance, while also addressing finance's relationship with nature loss.

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<sup>1</sup> China, the European Union (EU), Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Germany, India, Nigeria, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom, Iceland, Honduras, Nauru, Panama, Portugal, United Arab Emirates, Finland, Mauritius, Morocco, Dominican Republic, Italy, Netherlands, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia.

<sup>2</sup> There are various international initiatives that can help these actors on their way, including [Science-based Targets Initiative](#), [Alliances for Climate Action](#), [Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance](#), and the [One Planet City Challenge](#). Important initiatives relating to nature-based solutions include [Business For Nature](#), [CitiesWithNature](#).

# Annexure: Recommendations Per Thematic Area

## Energy Access

### Recommendation 1:

**Promote private sector engagement and social inclusivity.** involving commitment to establishing effective policy frameworks to reduce future uncertainty, with clear targets and regulation that will encourage private investment. Governments must create a favourable business environment for renewable energy applications, and develop ambitious renewable energy plans, including consideration of low interest rates, subsidies, licenses and support for open markets.

### Recommendation 2:

**Energy-sector stakeholders in each African country must work together to advance energy access, sustainable and renewable energy and energy efficiency.** This involves supporting a platform to allow information exchange between countries, identifying best practices for national conditions, and new ideas to common challenges.

### Recommendation 3:

**Finance institutions must develop and roll-out affordable energy access financial instruments in collaboration with representatives from target countries who understand the local business environment.** In addition, financial institutions need to design and offer innovative, more flexible and affordable financial instruments that businesses and in-country users can access.

### Recommendation 4:

**Support small and medium-sized businesses that are active locally.** This is necessary to develop innovations that are flexible, affordable and local context-specific. This will assist them to capture demand and overcome barriers associated with distribution and marketing. Identify local entrepreneurs, and build their business skills in order to open new, sustainable markets in the targeted local communities.

### Recommendation 5:

**Commit to full assessment of the environmental impact of energy systems aimed to provide increased energy access to remote areas,** with a view to the recommendation of technologies that cause minimum negative impact on nature and related biodiversity (which will otherwise cause economic constraints to remote communities in the longer term). Examine the trade-offs between different energy pathways to increased access

# Energy Transition

## Recommendation 1:

**Start the rapid decline of the oil and gas sector.** Commit to no further exploration for new oil and gas resources while prioritizing and further developing alternatives that reduce demand for fossil fuels products and infrastructure. Commit to a phase out of existing oil and gas production and infrastructure in line with the 1.5°C threshold<sup>3</sup>.

## Recommendation 2:

**Ensure full exit from the coal sector.** Call for the global and immediate cessation of any coal supply expansion (mines, infrastructure) or increased coal demand (power plants, coal-dependent industrial facilities). Phase out existing power generation based on coal in OECD and EU countries by 2030 at the latest, and by 2040 at the latest for other countries;

## Recommendation 3:

**Rapid increase in investments in renewable energy projects** with least harm to nature, and energy efficiency measures that will reduce and replace the need for use of fossil fuels.

## Recommendation 4:

**Decommissioning of high carbon assets must include restoration of the original ecosystem functions.**

## Recommendation 5:

Ensure that **NDCs and long-term strategies (LTS) contain clear reference to energy transition measures** including specific policies, strategies and plans, supplemented with quantitative targets and timelines. NDCs and LTS should also contain mitigation and adaptation measures related to cross-sector opportunities including energy efficiency, electrification, hydrogen technologies, green infrastructure, and carbon pricing.

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<sup>3</sup> See WWF's The Transition away from Oil & Gas: WWF Network Position (May 2021), access at: [https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf\\_policy\\_position\\_the\\_transition\\_away\\_from\\_oil\\_gas.pdf](https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_policy_position_the_transition_away_from_oil_gas.pdf)

# Enabling SDGs through Inclusive, Just Energy Transitions

## Recommendation 1:

**Recognize the interdependence of social and environmental goals underpinned by the development of common benchmarks for consistently designing, implementing and monitoring just energy transitions.** These common benchmarks must uphold the ILO guidelines for just transition and recognize the need for energy transitions to end all fossil fuel use on a specified timeline, to be sustainable and in line with the Paris Agreement to limit global average temperature rise to 1.5°C, aligning wholly with and promoting progress on all SDGs.

## Recommendation 2:

**Establish capacity building networks and platforms to elaborate common standards and best practices;** especially on participation, implementation and monitoring; informing the inclusive and transparent development and implementation of place-based, just energy transition strategies at national, subnational, local and company level that support the achievement of the SDGs.

## Recommendation 3:

**Uphold the ‘polluter pays’ principle in policies and the development of strategies while investing in frameworks to enable inclusive, job-creating development through the expansion of clean and sustainable production and innovation.**

## Recommendation 4:

**Minimize the burden on the most vulnerable and ensure that wealth and natural resources are shared equitably,** such that everyone can lead a decent life. At the global level, this implies equitable burden sharing by wealthier countries with poorer ones.

## Recommendation 5:

**Integrate inclusively and transparently developed national and local just energy transition strategies into all policies,** including long-term strategies and NDCs.

# Finance and Investment

## Recommendation 1:

**Unambiguous commitments to address public and private fossil fuel finance.** This includes announcing the end of all overseas finance to fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas, especially through bilateral and multilateral channels<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, financial institutions must align their investments and financial services with Paris-aligned pathways entailing no new investment in the development of oil and gas reserves beyond that which had already been sanctioned by January 2020 and no new investment in new coal. Phasing out of support to existing fossil fuel capacity must start simultaneously, ensuring the phase-outs happen in appropriate timelines (see recommendations 1 & 2 under Energy Transition).

## Recommendation 2:

A firm commitment to **eliminate and re-purpose all fossil fuel** (including coal, oil and gas), **as well as harmful agriculture and fisheries subsidies**<sup>5</sup>.

## Recommendation 3:

**Harness the power of private finance to mobilize investors**, including through the **Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures** (TCFD) and the **Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures** (TNFD).

## Recommendation 4:

Developed countries should contribute to the **financing of a just transition** for developing countries.

## Recommendation 5:

Developed countries should provide clarity on levels of **international support for energy transition technologies** including supporting conditional elements in NDCs, and any support for fossil fuels to ensure transparency.

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<sup>4</sup> Covering public finance institutions such as export credit agencies, government-backed insurers, and development banks. Also state-owned enterprises should be considered.

<sup>5</sup> Governments should phase out fiscal benefits such as tax breaks, uplift, fast depreciation, and feed-in tariffs.