

## The Future of Race to Zero

June 2021

*This document sets out the context and outlines the process for the open consultation to shape the future of Race to Zero. This process, driven by the High-Level Champions on Climate Action and all the Race to Zero Partners, will explore how to drive cooperation and coordination within the climate action ecosystem to leverage different non-State actors' capacities and expertise with a view to ensure the implementation of robust climate action based on credible net-zero targets.*

*In realizing this vision, each actor and institution is encouraged to reflect upon the contributions they can offer and the functions they must perform to halve emissions by 2030 and accelerate the shift towards a 1.5°C aligned trajectory.*

*The process for the public consultation is as follows:*

- *The High-Level Climate Champions, the UNFCCC and the Expert Peer Review Group will convene an opening session on **Wednesday, 23 June at 17:00 BST** to launch the consultation.*
- *Written submissions will be welcomed from **Wednesday, 23 June, 18:00 BST** until **Friday, 3 September, 12:00 BST**.*
- *Responses will be reviewed by the UN High Level Climate Action Champions, the Race to Zero Partners and the UNFCCC. A closing session to outline the findings from the written submissions will be held in mid-September.*
- *Based on the feedback, the UN High Level Climate Action Champions, with the engagement of the Race to Zero Partners and through consultation with the UNFCCC and the Expert Peer Review Group, will lead a process to launch the second phase of Race to Zero, involving all relevant partners.*

## **I. SUMMARY**

Race to Zero is arguably winning the momentum game: between June 2020 and June 2021, the campaign has rallied over 4,000 non-State actors to meet robust minimum criteria and commit to contributing to halving emissions by 2030 and ultimately achieving [net zero](#) by 2050. The exponential growth of actors joining Race to Zero is made possible thanks to the commitment and hard work of all the campaign's partner initiatives.

These partner initiatives are the entry point for individual non-State actors to join Race to Zero, and it is these initiatives who carefully vet, manage and support their members as part of Race to Zero. It is only thanks to the success of the partner initiatives that we have seen rapidly increasing commitments to robust climate targets.

Whilst this represents a substantial - and very needed - step up from non-State actors in addressing the climate crisis, the Champions are keen to work with the partners to understand how the campaign can best transition out of COP 26, to help implement and measure these commitments made by members.

## **II. PROCESS**

The High-Level Climate Champions, the UNFCCC and the Expert Peer Review Group, with the support of the Race to Zero Partners, will host an open session on **Wednesday, 23 June at 17:00 BST**, from which date a public call for written submissions on four key topics, guided by specific questions, will be launched.

Written submissions will be welcomed **from Wednesday, 23 June, 18:00 BST until Friday, 3 September, 12:00 BST**. All submissions will be published on the Race to Zero website.

Responses will be reviewed by the UN High Level Climate Action Champions, the Race to Zero Partners and the UNFCCC. A closing session to outline the findings from the written submissions will be held in mid-September.

Based on the feedback, the UN High Level Climate Action Champions, with the engagement of the Race to Zero Partners and through consultation with the UNFCCC and the Expert Peer Review Group, will lead a process to launch the second phase of Race to Zero, involving all relevant partners.

The Champions will strive to ensure that this consultation process is made accessible globally and represents voices from across the global economy and areas of society. They will create space for all voices to be heard and listened to, through flexibility in format, in language and in timing.

## **III. CONTEXT**

### **1. A stock-take of Race to Zero**

[Race to Zero](#) is the UN-backed global campaign rallying non-State actors across the global economy – including companies, cities, regions, financial and educational institutions – to take rigorous and immediate action to halve global emissions by 2030 and deliver a healthier, fairer zero-carbon world in time. Through its partners, the campaign mobilizes actors outside of national governments to join the

Climate Ambition Alliance, which was launched at the UN SG Climate Action Summit 2019 by the President of Chile, Sebastián Piñera.

Over the last year, net-zero targets have proliferated: now 70 per cent of the global economy is covered by so-called 'net-zero' commitments, a concept almost unthinkable five years ago. However, this rapid expansion of net-zero commitments underscores the importance of ensuring the correct concept for those targets, with the need to be robust and aligned with the science. Race to Zero and its partners accept only those members who have committed to meaningful targets and who are prepared to take action immediately in order to fulfil their commitments.

## **2. Getting net-zero right, not rid of**

[*excerpts from Richard Black, Steve Smith and Tom Hale from [The Conversation article](#)*]

"Recently, three climate change academics described net zero as a "fantasy" and a "trap", while Greta Thunberg said that "these distant targets" are about "making it seem like we're acting without having to change".

Yet the necessity of reaching net-zero emissions globally is abundantly proven in science, and particularly reinforced by the IPCC 1.5°C report, in which national governments pledged in the 2015 Paris Agreement to achieve "a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks" in mid-century, in pursuit of holding global warming to 1.5°C.

To be credible, a non-State actor proclaiming a net-zero target should have certain measures of robustness in place: at the very least, a high-level commitment, a published plan, immediate emission-cutting measures and an annual reporting mechanism. It must ensure that all its attributable emissions are covered, and that any "netting" uses high-quality, verified and permanent removals."

## **3. The pivot from momentum to credibility**

Race to Zero was designed from the outset to be the signal in the noise for what a robust net zero looks like. The campaign therefore requires all its members to meet [minimum criteria](#) in order to join the Race. From the outset, the Champions committed to reviewing the criteria on an annual basis in order to ensure these were keeping abreast of new developments in knowledge and in technologies, and to continue expanding our understanding of how actors across the global economy and areas of society can meaningfully drive towards a 1.5°C trajectory.

Between January and March 2021, the University of Oxford led an extensive criteria refinement process to [strengthen and clarify](#) the Race to Zero criteria - a process [summarised by the University of Oxford](#) - which produced:

- [Version 2.0 of the Race to Zero criteria](#);
- An [interpretation guide](#) for these criteria;
- A [lexicon](#) to help clarify specific terms used in these criteria.

As the campaign continues to influence major non-State actors to adhere to these minimum criteria, it must make sure that Race to Zero members are equipped to build up to and out from COP with clarity in what comes next after setting credible commitments.

#### 4. Race to Zero Partners:

- [Business ambition for 1.5](#) (Led by the Science Based Targets initiative in partnership with the UN Global Compact and the We Mean Business coalition)
- [The Climate Pledge](#)
- [B Corp Climate Collective](#)
- [Exponential Roadmap Initiative](#)
- [Business Declares](#)
- [SME Climate Hub](#)
- [Pledge to Net Zero](#)
- [The future Net Zero standard with CBN Expert Community](#)
- [UN-Convened Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance](#)
- [Net Zero Asset Managers initiative](#)
- [Paris Aligned Investment Initiative](#)
- [Cities Race to Zero](#)
- [Under2 Coalition](#)
- [Japan Climate Initiative – Race to Zero circle](#)
- [Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges](#)
- [Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action](#)
- [Water UK](#)
- [International Wineries for Climate Action](#)
- [Health Care Without Harm](#)