

The Future of Race to Zero

Context

Race to Zero was launched by the UN High Level Climate Action Champions in June 2020 to rally non-state actors – including companies, cities, regions, financial, educational, and healthcare institutions – to take rigorous and immediate action to halve global emissions by 2030 and deliver a healthier, fairer zero carbon world in time. All members are committed to the same overarching goal: reducing emissions across all scopes swiftly and fairly in line with the Paris Agreement, with transparent action plans and robust near-term targets. Race To Zero mobilizes these actors outside of national governments to join the Climate Ambition Alliance, which was launched at the UNSG's Climate Action Summit 2019 by the President of Chile, Sebastián Piñera.

To ensure the integrity of the campaign, Race to Zero established a minimum floor for robust net zero commitments, introducing the [Minimum Criteria](#) (known as the 4 P's, requiring members to Pledge, Plan, Proceed and Publish). All members are managed by their relevant [Partner initiative](#) to meet these criteria. Race to Zero has committed to annually strengthen, clarify and update its criteria ([last updated April 2021](#)) - a process led by the [Expert Peer Review Group](#) - to continue driving upward convergence in best practice around net zero targets.

Progress to date

The campaign has gained exponential momentum over the past eighteen months, despite the pandemic, with now over 6,200 non-state actors from over 110 countries, together representing close to 15% of the global economy, almost 11% of global GHG emissions and nearly 1 billion people [pledging to contribute their fair share of halving emissions by 2030 and getting to net zero as soon as possible](#). COP26 marks a critical milestone for Race to Zero to harness this momentum and accelerate the translation of these ambitious commitments into action.

Looking ahead

Recognising the dire scientific warnings and real-life evidence of severe climate impacts, and building on the momentum to date, Race to Zero will increase its focus next year on implementation and action. Key components of this include clarifying expectations of members' **plans**, enhancing **transparency** and **accountability** to track **progress** in the campaign and ensuring the integrity of member commitments. Moving forwards, the campaign therefore looks to continue strengthening, clarifying and advancing best practice around each of the 4 'P's of the minimum criteria (pledge, plan, proceed and publish) and will explore introducing new requirements for members to ensure consistency and alignment of policy and advocacy to accelerate action.

Based on internal strategic discussions, on the feedback from the [public consultation](#), on bilateral discussions with key partners, and on engagements with the UNFCCC and the Expert Peer Review Group, the UN High Level Climate Action Champions outline below how Race to Zero will help its members deliver on their commitments around each of the 4 'P's in order to accelerate non-state actor climate action over the next year, in order to keep 1.5C alive.

I/ PLEDGE

The Pledge criterion is recognised by the [Expert Peer Review Group](#) as establishing a robust minimum floor for science-aligned net zero commitments, setting members on the path to a 1.5C-aligned future. The campaign will look to continue accelerating growth in membership across all actor types, with a focus on regional and sectoral expansion.

Focuses for moving forward:

- 1) **Enhancing regional diversity:** While the 6,200+ Race to Zero members come from 110 countries, 60% are currently based in Europe. The campaign will therefore look to further diversify its membership base regionally with the support of Partner initiatives and other relevant entities.
 - 2) **Enhancing sectoral diversity:** All sectors are needed to deliver the transition to a 1.5C world. Race to Zero is therefore committed to supporting members from all industries to meet the Race to Zero criteria and take action
 - 3) **Continue the Annual Review process:** The EPRG will continue its process of reviewing Partner initiatives on an annual basis, providing further guidance for driving upward convergence where appropriate.
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II/ PLAN

Purpose:

A key priority for the next phase is to strengthen best practice and clarify expectations of members, with the support of Partner initiatives, in submitting clear action plans. Ensuring that all members produce high-quality plans will help attract investment and provide clarity across the value chain, and will enable Race to Zero to give confidence to civil society and national governments that non-state actors are clear on what steps they will take to contribute their fair share of halving emissions by 2030.

Focus for moving forward:

- 1) **Define expectations of what a good plan should look like** across regions, sectors and actor types. A critical component of a high quality plan for relevant entities will also include its alignment, where relevant, with sectoral plans for systemic change, including for instance the [2030 Breakthroughs](#) and the [Marrakech Partnership Climate Action Pathways](#).
 - 2) **Help provide guidance to members for how to meet the expectations defined, and explore how to support members whose plans are deemed insufficient** for meeting their targets. Race to Zero will explore how to foster deeper collaboration between its Partner initiatives, and between Partners and other organisations with relevant expertise, to support members in developing satisfactory plans and accelerating delivery of their pledges.
 - 3) **Explore with Partner initiatives how to establish a clear and consistent process for members to submit their plans** within their twelve months of joining, as required in the minimum criteria.
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III/ PROCEED

The campaign brings together a rich ecosystem of members across the taking action on climate, in order to accelerate progress towards halving global emissions by 2030. Race to Zero and its Partner Initiatives are also uniquely placed to support members by encouraging them to share examples of actions underway, and promote best practice for other members

to emulate.

Focus for moving forward:

- 1) **Foster a deeper collaboration** between Partner initiatives, and between Race to Zero members and the 2030 Breakthroughs. In line with the above section, Race to Zero will explore how to better connect Partners and their members with the 2030 Breakthroughs, for members in the Race to deliver the systemic change required for a zero carbon future.
 - 2) **Spotlight leaders in the Race** who are demonstrating best practice in each of the 4P criteria. Race to Zero acknowledges the different types of leadership and progress demonstrated by its members, depending on their region, sector and actor type. Race to Zero also recognises the multiple sources of information and measurement of leadership and progress from external organisations. Building on these sources of information, as well as through exchanges with Partner initiatives, Race to Zero looks to identify these leaders in order to:
 - a) Give confidence to national governments and civil society that members in the Race to Zero are meaningfully driving change in emissions reduction;
 - b) Clarify expectations of what members are expected to achieve by joining Race to Zero, and provide concrete examples for peers to follow;
 - c) Highlight Race to Zero's commitment to transparency and accountability.
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IV/ PUBLISH

Transparency and accountability are central to ensuring robust climate action, and the avoidance of greenwashing. While Race to Zero currently requires its members to publish their progress annually on a public platform, there is an ever growing need for even more transparency, as well as clarity in what is being published.

Focus for moving forward:

1. **Explore ways of clearly identifying how members are faring in the Race** to demonstrate the progress made over time by Race to Zero members. Clearly tracking how members are faring against each of the 4 'P's and communicating this will also help to underline the fact that the campaign establishes a minimum floor whilst also looking to push the boundaries of leadership in climate action.
 2. **Work with Partner initiatives and independent organisations tracking member progress** to pull together an overarching report for the Global Stocktake to inform progress made as well as projected impact.
 3. **Continue working closely with the Glasgow Finance Alliance for Net Zero** to strengthen transparency and accountability in financial institutions' climate commitments and actions.
 4. **Commission an independent, regular audit on Race to Zero members** to verify that members are complying with the 4P criteria.
 5. **Create a structured process to deal with public enquiries or concerns on any member of the Race to Zero.** This process to hold members accountable will continue strengthening Race to Zero's commitment to radical transparency and will enable the campaign to call out entities whose integrity is questioned. It will also help target support for members who are struggling to meet their targets.
 6. **Explore how to more consistently remove individual entities** who are unable to meet the Race to Zero requirements within a certain grace period.
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V/ Introducing a 5th 'P': Persuade

Climate change poses an unprecedented threat to actors all across the real economy. While voluntary actions to reduce emissions are important, they are even more powerful when combined with the public policy, regulations and behaviour change which can together deliver emissions reductions at the speed and scale needed to limit the worst impacts of climate change. Race to Zero is therefore committed to exploring how it can best support its members in making climate policy lobbying, positive advocacy and proactive communication integral components of members' work. It will also explore, with its Partners, how to clarify expectations and potentially set new requirements in this field.

Race to Zero and its Partner initiatives already require members to meet leadership principles. Building on these requirements, Race to Zero will explore how to further enhance these leadership principles, including addressing inconsistencies in advocacy or policy.

In addition to Race to Zero consolidating guidance and requirements around the existing 4 'P's and considering introducing new guidance or requirements on a fifth 'P' of Persuade, the campaign will also continue to facilitate important discussions necessary to better understand how we can continue accelerating the transition to a 1.5C world.

Race to Zero and the Expert Peer Review Group continue to strive to be forces that together drive the climate action community toward best practice. The campaign will look to continue engaging the Expert Peer Review Group to progress discussions with relevant stakeholders around key themes which still require more detailed understanding. Such themes may include (but would not be limited to) enhancing a global, common understanding of net zero; defining high quality offsetting principles; defining scope 3 for different industries