



QUALITATIVE TOOL TO ASSESS NATIONAL LONG TERM STRATEGIES

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INTRODUCTION

Together with the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), the Governance Regulation enshrined a second key instrument to ensure Member States pave the way towards the Paris Agreement Goal: long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LTS). Under the Governance Regulation of the EU, each Member State should develop its national Long-Term Strategies (nLTS) with a perspective of at least 30 years contributing to the fulfilment of Member States' commitments under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

In these documents, each Member State has to describe, in a coherent manner, the strategy to move forward in the transition to a low carbon economy until 2050. It is a vision for the future of low emissions economies informed by the latest science and integrated into a continuous planning process expanding beyond 2030.

As the EU must advance its climate neutrality date and set a target reach net-zero emissions by 2040 to take its fair share under the Paris Agreement, these long term strategy documents are vital for determining and checking on national climate and energy policies in the long-term with a focus on the strategic path towards mid-century. This long-term vision should be harmonised with the NECP to ensure consistency and help drive action in the short term. The nLTS are thus directly relevant to Europe's ability to contribute to the long-term objectives of the Paris Agreement to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C and move forward with the necessary transformation to a decarbonised society.

Member States had to submit their nLTS to the European Commission by 1st January 2020. However, there has been a considerable delay in the submission of national LTS, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the European Council meeting in December 2019, Member States agreed to reach climate neutrality by 2050. Following this decision, in March 2020, the European Union submitted the climate neutrality objective to the UNFCCC as its long term commitment under the Paris Agreement.

The national Long Term Strategies were supposed to be used in the assessment of each Member State's path to climate neutrality latest by 2050. **In this context, this document includes a set of questions and background information which intends to help national stakeholders in their efforts to perform their own analysis of the nLTS, their compatibility with the EU's long term climate neutrality objective and the Paris Agreement long term goal of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5°C.**

Based on the [qualitative tool](#) developed under the [Unify](#) project for the assessment of National Energy and Climate Plans, 5 pillars related to the nLTS have been identified in order to foster an early transition to carbon neutrality and effectively achieve the Paris Agreement long term goal through a truly decisive transformational change. These pillars are looking into following elements of national Long Term Strategy documents:

- **Paris Compatibility:** Long-term objective (Emission Trading Scheme, Effort Sharing Regulation and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry emissions), date for climate neutrality target, use of offsets & loopholes
- **Decarbonisation:** Targets for Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, phase-out date for fossil fuel and fossil fuel subsidies, phase-out date for fuel and diesel cars.
- **Consistency:** Trajectories and projections, and policies and measures.
- **Budget:** Financing, and carbon pricing mechanisms
- **Transparency:** Public Participation, accountability & monitoring.

Under each pillar, there are a number of specific issues that are analysed, based on the information Member States must provide in their nLTS. For each of these, a short summary is presented explaining why it is important to analyse information contained in the nLTS. The different issues are broken down into individual evaluation questions for further targeted directions on what one should look for or check in each of them. The list of questions is not exhaustive but will provide as to what extent national stakeholders could do an informative evaluation of the quality and coherence of nLTS and the ambition of the Member States in reaching their climate neutrality.

1. PRIORITY PILLAR I: PARIS COMPATIBILITY

The Paris Agreement establishes the long-term objective of pursuing efforts to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The pillar ‘PARIS COMPATIBILITY’ focuses on whether the nLTS are in line with the long-term ambition adopted in the Paris Agreement.

1.1 National 2050 economy-wide greenhouse gas targets

Why it matters:

By agreeing on climate neutrality by 2050, EU Heads of State and Government adopted a clear target applying to the EU as a whole and to each Member State individually (with a temporary exemption given to Poland). To boost the move forward of its Member States, the EU must set a target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 65% by 2030 (instead of the net 55% reduction recently agreed) and reach net-zero emissions by 2040, in line with scientific findings and the EU's commitment to take its fair share of the effort to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, each Member State must act in line with its international commitment under the Paris Agreement to help limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C, increasing its climate ambition and going before the EU deadline.

1.2 Enhancement of removals and carbon sinks

Why it matters:

To address climate change effectively and trigger the necessary shift from incremental to structural change in a timely manner, each country needs to indicate a gradual pathway of the emission reductions needed for each sector separately in the long term. But this long-term perspective should not only specify the emission reduction trajectories of key emitting sectors, but also sectors covering the enhancement of removals such as carbon sinks (e.g. LULUCF and agriculture), with an outlook to achieving a balance between emissions and removals in accordance with the Paris Agreement. So, it is also critical to analyse expected enhancement of national carbon removals and to assess whether these natural sinks will actually be accounted domestically to achieve climate neutrality or will be used to offset domestic emissions.

1.3 No use of loopholes and international offsets

Why it matters:

The use of loopholes which can severely water down the overall ambition level of Member States' efforts is currently allowed by the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR). Currently, the most important ones are:

- Offsetting from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) activities;
- One-off use of ETS permits for compliance; ‘
- Safety reserve’ giving certain Member States the option of using pre-2020 surplus to achieve their 2030 targets;
- Lower income Member States have the option to receive emission reductions achieved by other Member States, if the 2030 targets should be overachieved.

Instead, targets should be reached through increased efforts in policies and measures that create lasting emission reductions through structural transformation. Member States should prioritise emission reductions at the domestic level, and given the uncertainty regarding the regulation of international carbon markets through Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, refrain from using this mechanism as a tool to achieve their nLTS objectives.

ISSUE	INDICATOR	EVALUATION QUESTION
National greenhouse gas emission targets	National 2050 economy-wide greenhouse gas target	<p>In December 2019, all Member States agreed to reach climate neutrality by 2050, with an exception given to Poland to further assess its implications at the national level.</p> <p>In the national LTS, is the climate neutrality objective established by 2050 or is there another date well before 2050 clearly mentioned? Is the objective mentioned in the nLTS in line with the 1.5°C goal?</p>
		<p>What would in your opinion be the ideal level of ambition of economy-wide emission reductions for your country, taking into account that the EU needs to reach net zero by 2040 in order to stay in line with the Paris Agreement goals?</p>
		<p>Are there any missed opportunities related to the level of ambition of the overall greenhouse gas emission reduction target included in the nLTS? If yes, which do you think are the most important ones (max 3) and why?</p>
	Enhancement of removals and carbon sinks	Does the nLTS mention CO ₂ removals by carbon sinks in relevant sectors such as LULUCF and agriculture? Does the country plan to enhance removals and carbon sinks (e.g. wetlands, croplands and grasslands, and forestry management)? Does the

		country plan to account these removals to reach net zero?
	Use of loopholes and international offsets	Does the country plan to use international offsets and/or other loopholes in target accounting to artificially reach net zero?

2. PRIORITY PILLAR II: DECARBONISATION

National Long Term Strategies should be adapted to the current reality by including their national trajectory to achieve climate neutrality at latest by 2050 and making a clear reference to increased 2030 climate target. The pillar ‘DECARBONISATION’ is essentially about the targets and objectives that are being set through the nLTS, with a focus on the energy targets for renewables and energy efficiency, together with the fossil fuel phase-out target.

2.1 National Renewable Energy (RES) target

Why it matters:

The current renewable energy target of at least 32% for 2030 is included in the revised Renewable Energy Directive (RED) of 2018 and is binding at the EU level, while Member States have set their own, non-legally binding “contributions” to the overarching EU goal.

While this renewable energy target will be amended in 2021 to achieve the EU’s new climate target of at least 55% net emissions reductions by 2030, it is of crucial importance that national contributions reach to a level of ambition which will facilitate the transition to 100% renewable energy system by 2040 and help the EU stick to its commitment to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. In addition, Member States must provide other details and national trajectories on bioenergy demand and biomass supply and, where applicable, on renewable energy produced by cities, renewable energy communities and renewable ‘prosumers’.

2.2 National Energy Efficiency (EE) target

Why it matters:

In 2018, the EU institutions adopted the revised Energy Efficiency Directive (EED), which includes a headline energy efficiency target of at least 32.5% for the EU by 2030. The Energy

Efficiency Directive will be amended in 2021 in order to implement the ambition of the new 2030 climate target of at least 55% net emissions reductions.

In this context, the upcoming legislative revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive present an opportunity to address the shortcomings of the current legislation such as missing national binding targets.

However, currently not having binding energy efficiency targets for Member States, makes it important to look into the national plans and strategies to verify whether each country delivers enough energy savings, considering national circumstances, to guarantee that the EU fulfills its commitment of the Paris Agreement goals. Reducing energy demand across sectors is the most direct way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as in buildings and transport, to ensure a fully efficient and decarbonised building stock and put in place a zero-emission automotive roadmap. Improving energy efficiency also offers other benefits such as a reduction in energy poverty, lower dependency on energy imports, job creation and improved health.

2.3 Phase out of fossil fuels and harmful subsidies

Why it matters:

Direct and indirect fossil fuel subsidies encourage wasteful consumption, distort markets, impede investment in clean energy sources, and undermine climate change policies. Including objectives and measures to phase out fossil fuel and their subsidies is thus a prerequisite, if changes in the economies are meant to be transformational. As EU Member States have committed to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies by 2020, they have to list national policies, timelines and measures planned to phase out fossil fuel and any harmful energy subsidies well before 2030.

ISSUE	INDICATOR	EVALUATION QUESTION
Decarbonisation	National 2050 Renewable Energy target	<p>Is there a national long term renewable energy contribution in the nLTS? What is the level of ambition of the national long term renewable energy contribution?</p> <p>In the national LTS, is there a 100% RES objective for latest by 2040 or is there another date well before 2040 clearly mentioned?</p> <p>Is the renewable energy objective mentioned in the nLTS in line with the 1.5°C goal?</p>

		<p>What would in your opinion be the ideal level of ambition of renewable energy contribution for your country, taking into account that the EU needs to be 100% RES latest by 2040 in order to stay in line with the Paris Agreement goals?</p> <p>Does the nLTS consider all possible RES sources to the extent of their potential?</p>
		<p>Does the nLTS include nuclear or “clean” fossil fuel technologies (e.g. advanced biofuels for transports)? How do you assess these?</p>
	<p>Sustainable use of biomass</p>	<p>Regarding the use of biomass as a renewable energy source, have your country added estimated trajectories on biomass demand?</p> <p>Did they include trajectories on the supply by feedstocks and origin?</p> <p>Have they made an assessment of the source and impact on the LULUCF sink in case forest biomass is proposed? Have they considered the impact of the use of biomass on soil management/fertility?</p>
	<p>Energy communities and renewables ‘prosumers’</p>	<p>Did Member States include concrete trajectories and objectives with regards to renewable energy communities and renewables ‘prosumers’? Are these sufficient and appropriate?</p>
	<p>National 2050 Energy Efficiency target</p>	<p>Is there a national long term energy efficiency contribution in the nLTS? What is the level of ambition of the mentioned contribution?</p> <p>Is the contribution mentioned in the nLTS in line with the 1.5°C goal? Please assess in line with your national position, if there are any.</p> <p>What would in your opinion be the ideal level of ambition of energy efficiency contribution for your country, taking into account that the EU needs to achieve at least 40% energy savings by</p>

		<p>2030 in order to stay in line with the Paris Agreement goals?</p> <p>Does your country include concrete long term trajectories and objectives with regards to energy efficiency contributions?</p>
	Efficient buildings and zero emission transport	<p>Does the nLTS mention energy efficiency measures in relevant sectors such as buildings and transport? Does the nLTS specify a date for the conversion to a fully efficient and decarbonised building stock? What is the level of buildings renovation estimated by 2050? Does the nLTS mention the amount of buildings by year to be renovated until 2050?</p> <p>Does the nLTS promote the use of renewable and local energy in public buildings ?</p> <p>Does the nLTS include a zero-emission automotive roadmap? Does the nLTS specify a date for banning the sale of fossil fuel based vehicles? What is the level of modal change to zero emission mobility for 2050? Does the nLTS mention the amount of electric vehicles by year to be incorporated in the market and present in the car fleet till 2050?</p> <p>“Sustainable” transport: Does the nLTS consider the reduction of transport needs (both regarding passenger transport and freight, eg. through the promotion of short supply chains, reduction of import/export needs through eg. food sovereignty, domestic tourism etc.)?</p> <p>Does the nLTS specify a level of modal share for low-emission transport e.g railway ? Does the nLTS consider reinforcing railway networks and fluvial roads, both for passenger transport and freight?</p>
	Sustainable and green cities	<p>In cities, does the nLTS consider the promotion of Low Emission Zones, more space for public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and nature,</p>

		<p>carsharing, teleworking and transport electrification associated with smart grids?</p>
	<p>Phase out of fossil fuels</p>	<p>Is there a fossil fuel phase out target in the national LTS? If yes, are all fossil fuels relevant in the country included in this target? Is the phase-out date proposed in line with the 1.5°C goal? Have the communities of the most affected areas being considered through a solid and fair just transition roadmap?</p> <p>What would in your opinion be the ideal phase-out date for all fossil fuels for your country, taking into account that the EU needs to reach net zero emissions by 2040 in order to stay in line with the Paris Agreement goals?</p> <p>Does the nLTS specify the phase out of certain fossil fuel technologies?</p> <p>Does the nLTS say anything about unconventional gas? In what sense? (e.g. promote, reject, etc.)</p> <p>Does the nLTS mention a concrete phase-out date for coal? for oil? for gas?</p> <p>Does the nLTS mention a concrete phase-out date for fossil fuel subsidies?</p> <p>Does the nLTS include the phase out of fuel and diesel vehicles by 2030?</p>

3. PRIORITY PILLAR III: CONSISTENCY

The pillar 'CONSISTENCY' is focused on checking whether countries are missing alignment between trajectories and projections in the short, medium and the long-term objectives. This pillar also intends to identify whether both policies and measures are consistent with the long-term vision. Energy infrastructure planning is used as an example.

3.1. Trajectories and projections

Why it matters:

The nLTS long-term vision should be harmonised with the NECP to ensure consistency and help drive action in the short term, by providing trajectories and projections for all targets and sectors. To reach the targets and milestones set out and truly embark on a decarbonisation pathway to achieve the Paris Agreement goals, it is essential to guarantee that short-term trajectories and medium-term projections are aligned with the long-term targets.

3.2. Policies and measures

Why it matters:

To ensure the coherence of the strategic long-term vision, it is crucial to have a consistency among measures across sectors and policy areas and to avert and eliminate direct barriers to reaching the established targets. The details on concrete policies and measures (PAMs) are a key benchmark for solidity and credibility at achieving the targets. PAMs must be implemented using robust human rights, gender-responsive and environmental criteria, and ensuring to not create or lead to adverse conditions that impact the livelihoods of local communities or prevent communities from becoming truly net-zero economies and climate resilient.

ISSUE	INDICATOR	EVALUATION QUESTION
Consistency	Trajectories and projections	<p>Are short-term trajectories aligned with long-term targets? Are medium-term projections aligned with long-term targets? Is there a postponement of most of the measures after a certain date, which could put at risk the long-term target?</p> <p>Are the nLTS and the measures and trajectories proposed therein in line with those of the NECP and other relevant national strategic documents?</p>
	Policies and measures	<p>Are short- and medium-term policies and measures consistent with long-term vision?</p> <p>RES: Are the proposed RES technologies implemented in a sustainable and efficient way?</p> <p>Biomass: Is all the usage of biomass secured with sustainability appraisal? Does the use of biomass not exceed the local capacity to restore biomass used?</p> <p>Energy communities: Is the bottom up approach to the energy security used?</p> <p>EE housing: does the nLTS address EE renovation for all possible social groups (eg. social housing, private residential buildings, blocks, etc.) with appropriate measures (also in terms of financing schemes)?</p> <p>Transport: does the nLTS address the reduction of transport needs with relevant and sufficient tools (incl.</p>

		pricing, awareness-raising, short supply chains, etc.) Agriculture: does the nLTS address emissions from agriculture in specific? Are the proposed measures sustainable, sufficient, relevant? What is the role of awareness-raising, public participation in the nLTS?
	Energy infrastructure aligned with the Paris Agreement	Are proposed infrastructure investments aligned with the long-term climate goals i.e. national, European (if they are different) and Paris Agreement compatible long-term goals?
	Energy infrastructure supporting energy security	Does the nLTS lay out adaption strategies, investment needs, time frames and detailed measures for energy infrastructure that will help to increase the shares of domestic renewable energy and thus to reduce import dependencies?

4. PRIORITY PILLAR IV: BUDGET

National Long Term Strategies must be accompanied by financial measures to address the economic and social recovery, as well as the sectoral targets to revive the economy and tackle the climate crisis. The pillar 'BUDGET' is focused not only on the investment needs under policies and measures but also on EU funds planned to be used for achieving the energy and climate targets. It also includes the carbon pricing mechanisms for incentivising clean and green investments.

4.1. Credibility of efforts to pursue the targets

Why it matters:

As a response to the collateral crisis provoked by COVID-19, the EU and Member States are developing measures aimed at longer-term economic recovery. This could represent an

opportunity for EU Member States to address both the economic and climate crises by putting the transition to climate neutrality at the heart of these recovery measures.

In order not to only pump liquidity into the markets, but rather to ensure that long-term capital and infrastructure investments into the transition towards climate neutrality are made, the EU and its Member States need to launch large scale and long-term sustainable investment initiatives. These investments must be guided by a long-term and predictable legal and economic framework. National Long Term Strategies, if done properly, can provide exactly this certainty to investors.

ISSUE	INDICATOR	EVALUATION QUESTION
Credibility of efforts to pursue the targets	Finance measures for climate and energy targets – EU funds	<p>Does the final nLTS contain sufficient and robust information on the additional climate and energy-related investments required and their potential sources (national public fundings, private funding, EU funds)?</p> <p>Does the nLTS give an indication of the economic benefits of transition to a carbon-neutral economy?</p> <p>Does the nLTS give an indication of the current and expected costs of non-action? (ie. failure to achieve carbon neutrality)</p>
		<p>Are the short-term financing capacities aligned with long-term needs?</p>
	Carbon pricing mechanisms	<p>Has the nLTS established a specific carbon pricing mechanism? Is there a trajectory for carbon pricing in order to incentivise investments? Is the level aligned with the need for the EU to reach climate neutrality by 2040?</p>
		<p>Are there funds secured for the divestment of the old coal-based industry and restoration of the land taken for this kind of industry?</p>

5. PRIORITY PILLAR V : TRANSPARENCY

The pillar ‘TRANSPARENCY’ is focused on whether Member states facilitated public participation while all options were still open and whether citizens were able to input into the development of the nLTS. This is essential for a meaningful and effective policy process.

Why it matters:

A real and effective public participation is key in any policy process for better understanding and analysing how Member States lived up to their obligations. Stakeholder participation in the nLTS preparation and development processes is intended to provide opportunities to communicate asks and insights about the future direction of national energy and climate long-term action to decision-makers. Different EU Member States have different practices on the degree and manner they allow for such public consultations. However, there are certain legal standards that Member States are obliged to follow.

Background on the legal basis

Article 7 of the Aarhus Convention determines standards for participation in the preparation of plans: Each party has to adopt rules that give the public an opportunity to access information about the planning process early on, to have sufficient time to form an opinion and to express its views, and to be heard by decision-makers. The Maastricht Recommendations on Public Participation in Decision-making of 2015 provide further guidance on what that means in [practice](#) (see especially pages 46-51).

ISSUE	INDICATOR	EVALUATION QUESTION
Effective stakeholder participation	Participating in the nLTS preparation processes	<p>Was there a consultation process during the nLTS preparation?</p> <p>Was the public participation open to everyone or was it limited and only certain stakeholders were able to comment?</p> <p>If the first, how much time did the stakeholders have to prepare and submit their comments on the draft and/or final nLTS: (a) two weeks or less, (b) one month or less (c) longer than one month.</p>

		<p>If the second, which stakeholders were invited to participate (NGOs, academia, research institutions, industry, etc.)?</p>
		<p>Has the final nLTS been made public at national level when submitted to the European Commission?</p>
		<p>Has there been a comprehensive report accompanying or being part of the final nLTS on how the comments of the stakeholders participating in the public consultation have been taken into account?</p>
		<p>What is in your opinion the ideal situation regarding the process of stakeholders' involvement in the development of the nLTS in your country? In this context, are there missed opportunities related to the process followed in your country? If yes, which do you think are the most important ones (max 3) and why?</p>
	<p>Preparing for the nLTS implementation processes</p>	<p>What is in your opinion the ideal situation for stakeholders' involvement in monitoring the implementation of the final nLTS?</p>
		<p>Has your country used the opportunity of the nLTS process to set up structures that will further enable the multilevel climate and energy dialogue?</p> <p>Are there any safeguards in the nLTS to ensure its implementation? Does the nLTS introduce any schemes/initiatives for the monitoring and accountability of its implementation? (i.e. what happens if targets are not achieved, measures not implemented?)</p>