

# PROGRESS OF NDC IMPLEMENTATION IN ASIA-PACIFIC:

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Environment and Development  
Technical Paper





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This paper, and the presented assessment framework of enabling factors for improving readiness of countries to accelerate implementation and develop ambitious NDC reviews, has been developed by a joint team from ESCAP, UNEP and the greenwerk, including Aneta Nikolova, Hannah Ryder, Mallory Bellairs, Mozaharul Alam, Sudhir Sharma and Björn Dransfeld and the greenwerk team. The paper would not have seen the light without the encouragement and constructive suggestions by management teams ESCAP and UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, including Katinka Weinberger, Stefanos Fotiou and Dechen Tsering.

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## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND

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#### OBJECTIVE OF THIS RESEARCH

The Asia-Pacific region is in a critical stage of its development, being the industrial and food production powerhouse of the world for a decade. Accelerated economic growth has brought remarkable social benefits of considerable proportion for the region's poor, however, those achievements are on the backbone of the fragile regional ecosystems' health. The impacts of the increasing climate crisis arising from growing climate risks including slow and first onset risks and disasters require decisive climate action for accelerating the efficiency and decarbonization of the regional economies.

This research aims to review and analyse the

state of implementation and ambition of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) across Asia and the Pacific region to deal with this existential crisis. For this purpose, a joint research team from ESCAP, UNEP and the greenwerk has developed an assessment framework to assess enabling factors that can help countries in enhancing the ambition of their climate action and pledges.

This paper provides an overview of the methodological framework and preliminary findings of the assessment of the readiness for implementation of the NDCs in Asia and the Pacific region, ahead of the release of the full publication in 2021.

## THE NEED FOR ENHANCED CLIMATE ACTION IN ASIA-PACIFIC

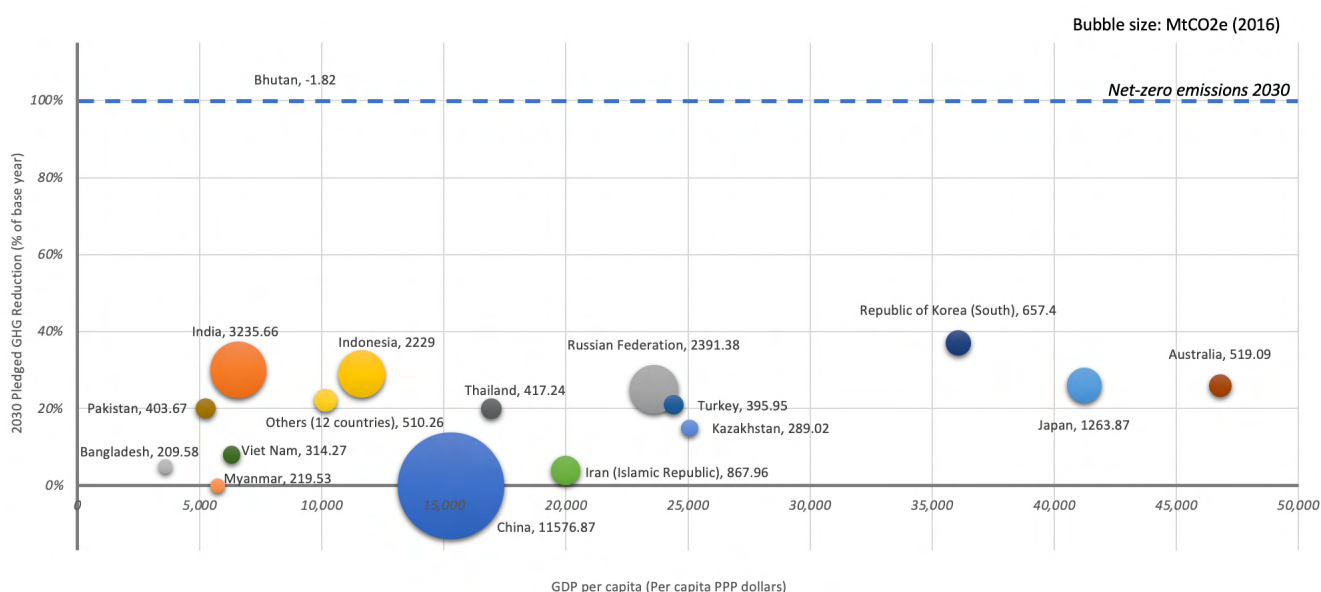
Countries in Asia and the Pacific urgently need to speed up climate action.<sup>1</sup> Despite greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions temporarily stalling due to COVID-19 lockdowns in the first half of 2020, cumulative emissions in Asia-Pacific are just below 35 GtCO<sub>2</sub>. These projected emissions are almost equal to the record of 36.7 GtCO<sub>2</sub> that was reached in 2019. The UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2019<sup>2</sup> showed that the required global GHG emission reductions from 2020 to 2030 to limit global warming at 1.5°C are 7.6 per cent per year, or 29-32 GtCO<sub>2</sub>, equivalent to the cumulative emissions of the six biggest world emitters.

In general, GHG emissions are projected to grow to 50 GtCO<sub>2</sub> in 2060<sup>3</sup>, revealing that the NDC commitments of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region fall short of keeping the

global temperature rise below 1.5°C or the available global climate budget of 400 GtCO<sub>2</sub>, aligned with net-zero emissions in 2050 (see Figure 1).

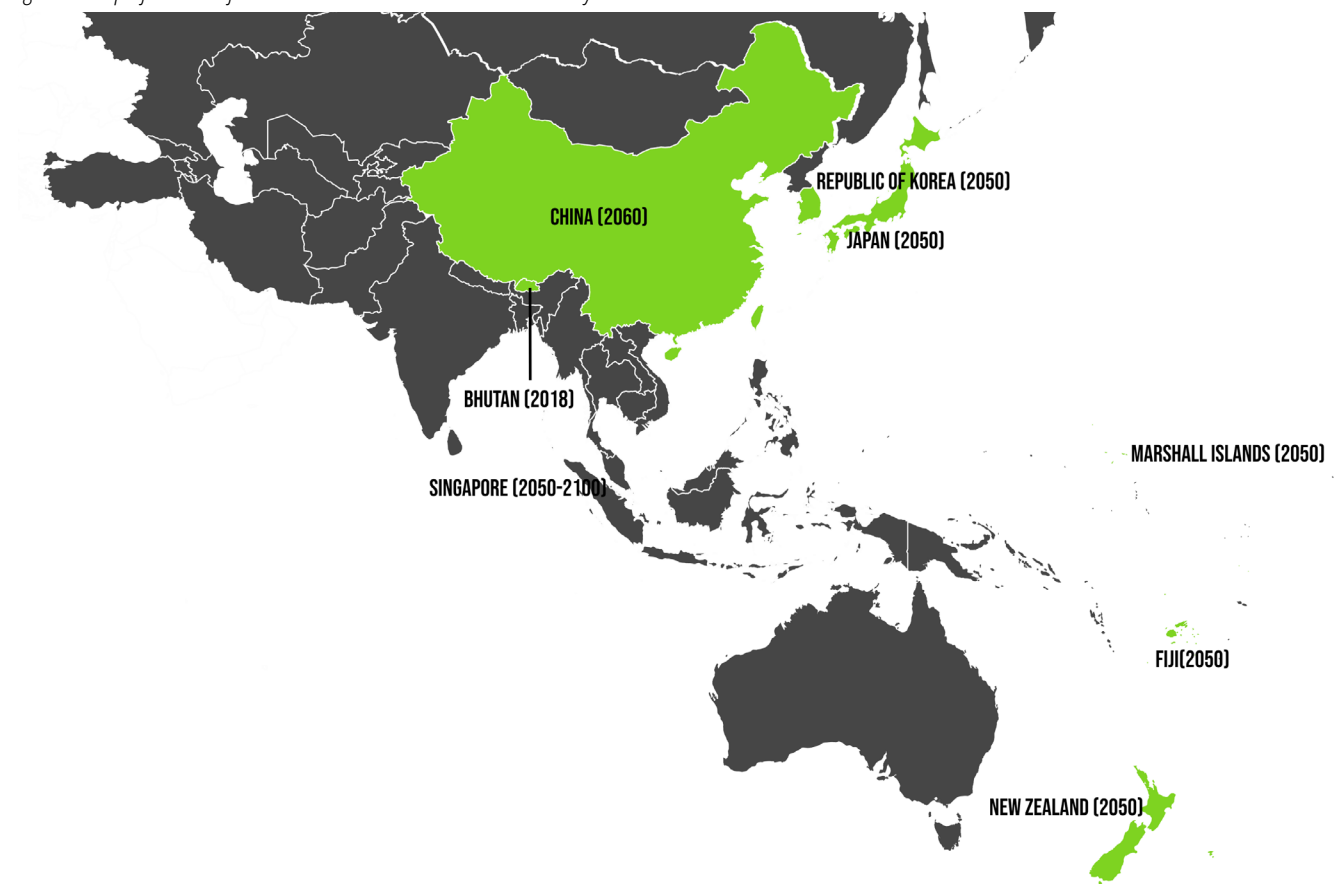
Even when it comes to overall ambitions in the future and while nine countries (Bhutan, China, Fiji, Japan, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Singapore, Republic of Korea) from Asia and the Pacific region have announced their carbon neutrality target by 2050, and China by 2060 or before,<sup>4</sup> as shown in the map below, there are still 41 other countries in the region that have yet to consider or make such pledges. At this critical juncture it is equally important to firmly commit to implementing those pledges as well as to raise the level of ambition of all other countries in the region for decisive climate action.

Figure 1. Asia-Pacific comparison of historical GHG emissions to GDP per capita and NDC pledges for GHG emission reduction



Source: ESCAP

Figure 2. Map of Asia-Pacific countries committed to carbon neutrality



Source: ESCAP

Indeed, further and more significant efforts to set up strategies and plans, initiate institutional and regulatory frameworks, engage with stakeholders and develop expertise and capacity for enhancing

domestic climate policy are thus urgently required. An important possibility are the ongoing and forthcoming reviews of NDCs, specifically in critical sectors (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Priority sectors for mitigation in NDCs from ESCAP member countries

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