Transport in the new NDCs 3.0 Nationally Determined Contributions

The year 2025 marks a crucial juncture for advancing sustainable, lowcarbon transport. Countries are expected to submit updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with enhanced 2035 targets, referred to here as third-generation NDCs*.

These submissions offer a vital opportunity to accelerate climate action in transport, aligning with national strategies and coordinating efforts across governance levels and sectors. This summary analysis outlines findings from the first 23 third-generation NDCs submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as of 16 May 2025.

* We consider all NDC submissions made since November 2024 to be part of the third generation of NDCs, regardless of the document's title or version number. Therefore, the findings may differ from those of other NDC 3.0 trackers.







Supported by:





INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE INITIATIVE

on the basis of a decision by the German Bundestag As of May 2025, a total of 23 third-generation NDCs had been submitted. These submissions are evenly distributed per region and account for 35.8% of global transport emissions (excluding international aviation and shipping). While all the submissions are from countries classified as middle- or high-income by the World Bank, Zambia stands out as a Least Developed Country according to UN definitions.

Progress on targets in new NDCs

The share of NDCs with transportspecific targets is rising: from under 25% in the first generation to 46% in the second, and to 52% in thirdgeneration submissions. Seven new NDCs include transport GHG targets, with Switzerland aiming for full decarbonisation by 2050. Additionally, 23 non-GHG transport were identified, targets 44% focused on zero-emission vehicles. However, many of these ambitions show lack of alignment with energy targets, particularly about renewable electricity, reducing their transform- ative potential. growing This trend shows recognition of transport's climate role. Strong targets can enhance accountability, attract investment, and support national strategies aligned with net-zero goals.

Transport GHG emission reduction targets in third-generation NDCs

Andorra

"50% reduction in domestic transport emissions by 2030". **TARGET YEAR**: 2030 – Unclear conditionality

Botswana

"429 Gg CO2-eq by 2030 (of which 146.78 Gg are conditional)". **TARGET YEAR**: 2030 – Unconditional

Marshall Islands

"40% below 2010 domestic shipping emissions by 2030 and complete decarbonisation by 2050". **TARGET YEAR**: 2050 – Unclear conditionality

Republic of Moldova

"52% below 1990 levels by 2030". **TARGET YEAR**: 2030 – Unconditional

Saint Lucia

"22% below 2010 levels by 2035 in transport and energy emissions". **TARGET YEAR**: 2035 – Unclear conditionality

Switzerland

"41% below 1990 levels by 2035, 57% through 2040 and 100% by 2050". **TARGET YEAR**: 2050 – Unclear conditionality

United Arab Emirates

"20% below 2019 levels by 2035, reaching 24.2 million t CO2-eq". **TARGET YEAR**: 2035 – Unconditional



Third generation NDCs feature a broader portfolio of mitigation actions

On average, the new NDCs include 8.3 transport-related measures, compared to 5.8 in the previous generation. Nearly 60% of these actions fall into two areas: first, electrifying vehicles along with the infrastructure and incentives that support them, and second, shifting trips toward public transport, cycling, walking or rail while reducing unnecessary travel.

On the downside is that aviation and maritime transport continue to receive much less attention, accounting for only 4.2 % of measures. This gap exists partly because emissions from international flights and voyages do not appear in national GHG inventories, reducing pressure to act, and partly because decarbonising these sectors is technically and politically tougher. Still, including them is relevant for a comprehensive transport strategy. The Marshall

Islands, however, sets an ambitious domestic shipping target and promotes innovative technologies like wind-assisted propulsion.

Actions on adaptation and resilience remain limited

Only half of the third-generation NDC include some form of adaptation action. Where action is described, it is mostly about infrastructure resilience such as raising road embankments, reinforcing bridges, and flood-resistant construction materials.

Measures related to transport adaptation addressing behaviour, land-use planning, finance or institutional capacity are comparatively scarce. Lesotho's submission stands out for its detailed adaptation actions, including climate-proofing roads and improving flood control infrastructure.



Transport modes explicitely mentioned in transport actions of third-generation NDCs

Climate actions on transport mostly point towards road vehicles

Road transport, which generates roughly three-quarters of global transport CO₂ emissions, is also the mode most often cited in third-generation NDCs. However, most of both adaptation and mitigation actions did not explicitly reference any specific mode of transport. Adaptation actions referred to specific transport modes far less often than mitigation actions, indicating a less targeted approach in adapting transport infrastructure to a changing climate.

The full potential of a balanced Avoid– Shift–Improve approach remains untapped

The continued dominance of "Improve" strategies within the Avoid-Shift-Improve (ASI) framework suggests missed opportunities for transformative change. "Improve" actions make up 65.6% of transport mitigation measures. In contrast, only 11.5% of measures target the "Avoid" pillar. Applying Avoid-Shift-Improve framework through integrated, inter-modal and balanced approaches is critical to unleashing the full benefits of sustainable, low carbon transport. Singapore's approach to active mobility and public transport investments is a strong example of a more balanced strategy.

Share of Avoid-Shift-Improve among transport mitigation actions in third-generation NDCs



Freight emissions growth continues unabated

Freight transport remains a major gap. Despite its growing emissions footprint, it continues to be only marginally present in mitigation strategies. Only a third of third-generation NDCs included mitigation actions covering freight or a combination of freight and passenger transport.

Stay tuned for the next insights on transport in new NDCs

If you have any questions or would like to share how you used the data, please contact:

Nikola Medimorec: nikola.medimorec@slocatpartnership.org María Belén Vásquez: maria.vasquez1@giz.de



Find all our resources on transport in NDCs on our website: https://changing-transport.org/ summary-analysis/

CHANGING TRANSPORT