



# PHASE OUT FOSSIL FUELS AND FAST TRACK CLEAN ENERGY

HOW TO TALK ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE,  
FOSSIL FUEL THREATS AND THE NEED FOR A  
FAIR ENERGY TRANSITION IN BRAZIL

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### **About the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty**

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is a global initiative to phase out fossil fuels and support a just transition. The world is beginning to recognise that unprecedented levels of international cooperation will be required to prevent the proliferation of fossil fuels, to phase out existing stockpiles and infrastructure, and to fast-track a just and peaceful transition to sustainable development and greater wellbeing for all.

[www.fossilfuel treaty.org](http://www.fossilfuel treaty.org)



### **About Climate Access**

Climate Access is a nonprofit organization focused on building political and public support for climate and clean energy solutions by developing and promoting the adoption of effective communication and engagement approaches. Climate Access draws from social science, best practices in the field and its in-depth climate communication and public engagement experience to make complex issues easy to understand and involve stakeholders in decision making and supporting policy and program implementation. Climate Access offers strategic framing, narrative, activation and engagement services and runs a resource and training center for more than 3,700 members from nonprofit, government, academic and community organizations.

[www.climateaccess.org](http://www.climateaccess.org)

*The “Phase out Fossil Fuels and Fast Track Clean Energy Brazil” Playbook was produced by Climate Access on behalf of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative with consultation from 350 Latin America.*

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# introduction

## BACKGROUND

Fossil fuels are responsible for more than 80 percent of the emissions causing climate change to date. Climate policies and programs focus on reducing emissions from the burning of fossil fuels but largely ignore the source of the problem – the production of coal, oil and gas – which governments and fossil fuel companies are expanding unchecked. Their plans, if allowed to continue, would generate more than twice the amount of emissions allowable to avoid catastrophic climate change.

This is not surprising given the influence of the fossil fuel industry and its government proponents in shaping the narrative around coal, oil, and gas, undermining support for impactful supply side policies. They amplify arguments about the necessity and inevitability of fossil fuels (despite their threat to humanity), the economic benefits they deliver and their role as innovators in advancing progress. Most recently, they claim the industry is part of the solution to climate change with hollow net zero commitments that rely on unproven, expensive technologies and unrealistic timelines that undermine our efforts to preserve a livable planet.

The movement in Latin America and around the world to shift from fossil fuels to clean energy and low-carbon technologies is growing and successfully blocking some of the expansion of new coal, oil and gas and coal projects despite being David in a fight with the ultimate Goliath. Yet fossil fuel expansion plans and existing production levels remain inconsistent with survival. Those advocating for a fossil fuel phase out and fair energy transition must scale up efforts to tell a new story about the imperative and benefits of a fossil fuel free world and how we get there.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAYBOOK

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative aims to change the narrative around fossil fuels and climate change as one of its core goals. This means elevating the risks associated with existing and planned fossil fuel production, connecting the need for a phase down of fossil fuels with the imperative of a global, fair transition to clean energy and outlining a pathway to achieve it.

In 2021, on behalf of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, Climate Access in partnership with Drive Agency conducted media, social media and polling analyses plus message testing in five countries – the United States, India, Brazil, Philippines and Kenya. This was done to inform the Initiative’s communication efforts and share with organizations addressing supply side issues including the network of groups advocating for a Fossil Fuel Treaty. In addition, Climate Access and the Climate Narratives Initiative conducted similar research in Canada and developed [framing guidance](#).

The Phase Out Fossil Fuels and Fast Track Clean Energy Brazil Framing Playbook offers guidance on how to talk about fossil fuel supply side issues, a fair transition and the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. A summary of key trends from the research sources listed below are included in an appendix.

## METHODOLOGY

Recommendations in the Phase Out Fossil Fuels and Fast Track Solutions Playbook are informed by the following research:

**[Brazil media analysis:](#)** Climate Access used Google News to track coverage in national news outlets from January to December 2021.

**[Brazil polling analysis:](#)** The Climate Access team reviewed available public opinion research conducted in 2020 and 2021 on climate change, the phase out of fossil fuels, climate and clean energy solutions. A total of 5 studies were analyzed from sources including ITS/IPEC, Yale, Pew, IPSOS and UNDP.

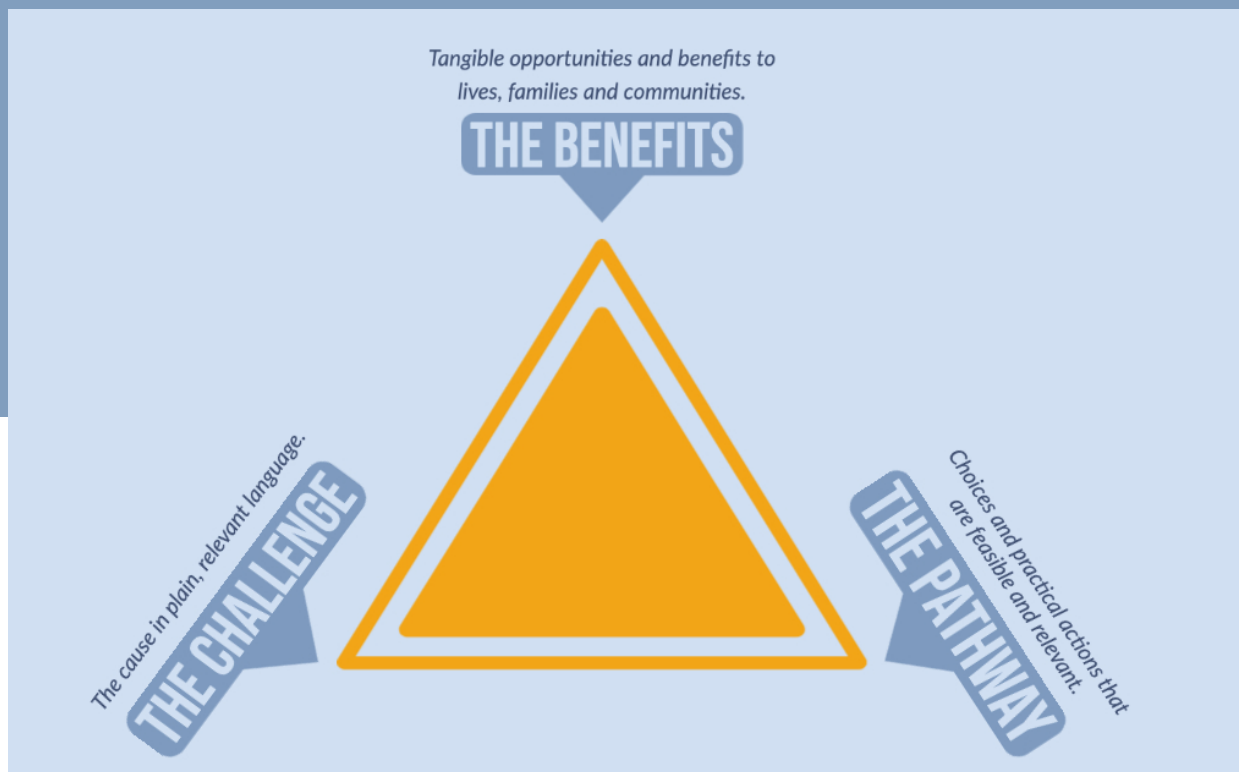
**[Brazil message testing:](#)** Climate Access worked with Drive Agency on message testing via social media. Drive Agency also conducted a social media analysis.

# recommendations

## TOP LEVEL FRAMING RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Lead with or incorporate a positive vision of a world without fossil fuels where the Amazon, Indigenous people and the oceans are protected and people have access to clean, reliable and affordable energy.
- ▶ Focus on the link between climate change's impact on nature and the role of fossil fuels.
- ▶ Emphasize that fossil fuels are not needed to meet Brazil's energy needs given renewable energy is available and affordable. Brazil can generate new economic opportunities and jobs by expanding solar and wind power.
- ▶ Recognize the role that the global community must play in accepting their historical responsibility for the climate crisis as well as offering significant technical and financial support to nations like Brazil and other countries in Latin America in making the transition.
- ▶ Amplify that it's not an energy transition if fossil fuel producing countries keep growing the problem – oil, gas and coal production. The first step is to end expansion.
- ▶ Point out the need for a plan to reduce the environmental and climate risks and economic volatility related coal, gas and oil and achieve energy and economic security via a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty where the Global North takes responsibility for their fair share of the climate crisis and supports developing countries to move to clean energy.





## THE MESSAGE TRIANGLE

A message triangle can help guide you to create a story that sticks. This tactic helps to keep things simple amidst the noise and connect the dots between what people care about and what can be done. It highlights key themes to integrate and amplify in communications while allowing room for specific messages to be tailored for different stakeholders and audiences.

When you hit each of the points, you remove barriers to engagement and create a complete narrative for your audience with a clear challenge, pathway forward and benefits of taking action.

**The challenge** – the cause in plain, relevant language.

**The pathway** – choices and practical actions that are feasible and relevant.

**The benefits** – tangible opportunities and benefits to lives, families and communities.

You can start at any point, depending on where your audience is on the issue and cares about, then link to the other two points.

The benefits — the vision of what a fair shift away from fossil fuels will be like — is often left out or downplayed yet is needed to generate a sense of hope and momentum. Consider leading with it. All three components are needed. Individuals must feel a challenge to want to engage yet it must be balanced. If you dial up the threats, also dial up the pathway and the opportunity.

# THE MESSAGE TRIANGLE IN ACTION

## Fossil Fuel Treaty Meta-Narrative

Here is an example of how to bring the three points of the message triangle together into a cohesive narrative. This is a high-level framework offering key themes to integrate and amplify across fossil fuel supply side campaigns.

### ► Vision/Benefits

The Amazon, Indigenous people and Brazil's biodiversity can be protected by accelerating the shift away from fossil fuels and the adoption of clean energy from the sun, wind and water. Phasing out coal, oil and gas will protect us from extreme weather by cutting the emissions driving the climate crisis harming our forests and oceans. Brazil can meet its energy and economic needs by expanding renewable energy and other low-carbon solutions. There is enough renewable energy potential in every region of the world. Tapping into it is the way to achieve global security and prosperity.

### ► Challenge

Brazil has already paid a high price for oil with the massive spill in the Southwest Atlantic impacting eleven states, beaches, mangroves, seagrasses and wildlife as just one example. Oil drilling and deforestation threaten the Amazon and the climate. Now the Amazon releases more carbon than it can absorb because of the fast pace of deforestation and emissions from oil, gas and coal are making extreme weather worse. Meanwhile, the fossil fuel industry is making windfall profits while many Brazilians struggle to make ends meet as energy and other costs rise due in large part to the fossil fuel funded war in Ukraine. Fossil fuel companies have plans to expand production, locking in pollution, climate, security and economic risks. The countries most responsible are in the Global North. Countries such as the United States, Canada, Norway, the UK and Australia that have created most of the climate pollution and have benefitted the most from fossil fuel production. These countries are not yet providing significant enough financial and technical support to help spur a just transition in Latin America.

### ► Pathway

It's time to protect the environment and people from fossil fuels, deforestation and more extreme droughts and floods due to climate change by making a global plan to fast-track the adoption of clean energy and low-carbon technologies while starting to phase out coal, oil and gas. These are the three products that cause the greatest harm to our health and future. A plan that ensures countries most responsible for the climate crisis and with the greatest capacity to accelerate a clean energy transition lead and support nations in Latin America to be part of it. That's why a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is needed so countries work together to move to clean energy, end the expansion of fossil fuels and start to wind down production to achieve Brazil's environmental, climate, economic and energy goals.



## Unpacking the Triangle

Lead with the vision/benefits of a fair and fast energy transition. Choose which points to highlight based on the stakeholders you aim to reach (i.e. health, economic, climate, equity). Be sure to link to oil, gas and coal as the main driver of the challenge and the risk of fossil fuel expansion.

### The Vision/Benefits

- ▶ Make the benefits clear and tangible.
  - *It's possible to protect the Amazon, Indigenous people, our coasts and biodiversity if we move away from coal, gas and oil.*
  - *Renewable energy from the sun, wind and water can give everyone access to affordable, reliable energy and help Brazil achieve our economic goals and create good jobs into the future.*
  - *Brazil already uses more than 80 percent renewable energy for our electricity. We can leverage our to deliver more renewable energy and low-carbon solutions.*
- ▶ Make the case that the benefits of action outweigh the costs of inaction. We have more options and it will take fewer resources to make a shift now, rather than spending more each year to respond to and recover from extreme weather events. Moving money out of fossil fuels will protect assets from being stranded as the world moves away from oil, gas and coal.
- ▶ Provide examples of how the transition is already underway and gaining momentum in Brazil and around the world. Include local examples as much as possible. For example, Brazil is already a leader when it comes to creating renewable energy jobs, following only China. Address environmental concerns directly by highlighting the impact of fossil fuels as the main threat being faced.

## The Challenge

- ▶ Deforestation is threatening the Amazon and its Indigenous people and has made the region a source of climate pollution, rather than a sink for it. It's also what's under the forest. Oil which Brazil has paid a high price for in the past with the last impact of oil spills on the ocean, our beaches and wildlife.
- ▶ Oil, gas and coal are also what's driving the climate crisis behind the extreme droughts and floods we are experiencing. These three products are also responsible for more than 80 percent of emissions causing climate change that is bringing more extreme weather with flooding that is already displacing and killing hundreds of people across the country.
- ▶ Highlight the financial risks of relying on fossil fuels including the impact of volatile energy prices on workers in Brazil.
- ▶ Point out the impacts of oil, gas and coal (i.e. coal ash pollution) on workers and communities living near its production.
- ▶ Emphasize that scientists (IPCC) and energy experts (IEA) agree there can be no new fossil fuel projects and we need to accelerate the adoption of clean energy and other low-carbon solutions or we will lock in catastrophic climate impacts. Yet the evidence is being ignored as countries pledge climate action while building out more of the problem.
- ▶ Highlight that countries have plans for expansion that would lock in two times the amount of climate pollution than the levels needed to have a safe climate. Cite the United States, Canada, U.K. and other wealthy fossil fuel producing countries as examples of who is behind the problem and that have benefited the most from fossil fuels. Don't let Brazil off the hook. Expanding renewable energy is key but it's also time to reduce dependence on dirty oil, gas and coal at the same time. It's not an energy transition if we keep expanding fossil fuel production.
- ▶ Pivot to who is responsible for the problem – the fossil fuel industry.
  - *Fossil fuel companies and their executives are making record profits as people face higher prices for energy and rising costs across the board.*
  - *The fossil fuel industry has deceived the public for decades, burying evidence that their products cause climate change just as tobacco companies lied about cigarettes causing cancer. Now oil, gas and coal companies are saying they can continue to expand, misleading the public with empty promises based on false solutions. Take net zero pledges where the emphasis is capturing emissions through technologies that don't work, are expensive and not at scale.*
  - *Fossil fuels are funding Russia's invasion of Ukraine and driving*

*conflicts around the globe. Fossil fuel companies are profiting while people struggle with high energy and food costs and lack of availability.*

- ▶ Elevate the gaps in government action and international cooperation.
  - *Governments around the world are letting oil, gas and coal companies off the hook. Most climate policies have ignored the production of fossil fuels. Even the global Paris Agreement where nations committed to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius avoids the issue by not even mentioning the words oil, gas and coal.*
  - *With nothing to hold them accountable, most countries are not willing to move away from oil, gas and coal, assuming their products will be among the last in the climate era or arguing if they cut production, others will up theirs.*
  - *Wealthy countries are not contributing their fair share to address the climate crisis. They have failed to live up to their commitments to provide climate financing to support a transition to renewable, clean energy as well as deal with the impacts of climate change.*

## The Pathway

- ▶ Identify the present as the crossroads moment to address mounting threats from air and water pollution, extreme weather, rising energy prices and development needs.
  - *The pathway forward to climate, economic, health and global security is investing in clean energy from the sun, wind and water. Brazil is already a clean energy leader and can expand on this to foster development and increase the well-being of all Brazilians.*
  - *While we need to accelerate the growth of renewable energy, we need to weed out the source of the problem - coal, oil and gas at the same time.*
- ▶ Amplify that there are enough fossil fuels already in production to support us through a transition and enough [renewable energy capacity](#) in every part of the world to deliver energy security for every Brazilian and person around the world. Focus on the fact that the solutions we need to power our businesses, homes, communities and lives from clean energy are available now and affordable. Brazil has the ingenuity and solutions to be a renewable energy and low-carbon technology leader.
- ▶ Stress that the window of opportunity to act is still open according to scientists, but it is small and requires action to start today.
- ▶ **Pinpoint that now what's needed is a plan to phase out fossil fuels and fast track clean energy and other low-carbon solutions.**

- *What the world needs now is a coordinated plan where every country contributes their fair share.*
- ▶ Call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty as the vehicle to create a global plan.
  - *A Fossil Fuel Treaty would bring countries together to agree to accelerate a transition to clean energy and low-carbon solutions where no country, community or worker is left behind; end the expansion of fossil fuels and wind down existing production to levels that ensure a safe climate.*
- ▶ Emphasize that when countries call for a Fossil Fuel Treaty, it puts pressure on the Global North to do its fair share to accelerate a shift to clean, renewable energy and weed out the threat of oil, gas and coal.
- ▶ Showcase the momentum underway in Brazil and globally.
  - *With the Fossil Fuel Treaty proposal putting the notion of equity at the heart of its fossil fuel exit strategy, the initiative is gaining traction within both civil society and institutional structures.*
  - In Latin America, more than 50 organizations across 18 countries in the region are supporting the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty including the city of Lima which was the first community in Latin America to do so. This endorsement came shortly after the inauguration of Colombian president Gustavo Petro and Vice President Francia Márquez whose climate leadership to phase-out fossil fuels demonstrates that the Latin American extractivism model is being seriously questioned. Supporters of a Fossil Fuel Treaty include COICA, a network of nine organizations representing all Amazonian countries such as the group COIAB (Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira) and are advocating for an Amazonian Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Zone.
  - The Fossil Fuel Treaty network, in partnership with local partners and the Parliamentarians' Call for a Fossil Fuel-Free Future, showed its support to the new Colombian government via a [letter of international support from +80 parliamentarians](#).

## THE PATHWAY TO A TREATY

- **Reference examples of when the world has come together to take on great challenges such as closing the hole in the ozone layer, phasing out asbestos, banning landmines or winding down nuclear weapons.**
- **Outline how the campaign for a Fossil Fuel Treaty is as important as achieving a binding agreement.**
  - ➔ The campaign for a Fossil Fuel Treaty is generating the pressure and social norms needed to spur a phase out of oil, gas and coal and fair expansion of clean energy. Since its launch in late 2020, the campaign has already prompted local and state governments to call on higher levels of government to act, compelled 101 Nobel Laureates to demand international cooperation to address fossil fuels and activated hundreds of scientists and academics and more than 1,300 civil society organizations to advocate for government leadership.
  - ➔ Not every country needs to sign on. In fact, this was the case with the Mine Ban Treaty where a small group of countries were willing to lead and compel others to join.
- **Lay out the steps to a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.**
  - ➔ A critical first step is mobilizing a broad and large cross-section of civil society organizations as well as academics and government, Indigenous, youth, business and other leaders around a common global call for action: Phase out fossil fuels and fast track clean energy in a fair way.
  - ➔ Local, state and national governments endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and compel other governments to join.
  - ➔ It is also important to increase transparency and accountability related to emissions from fossil fuels. A new Global Registry of Fossil Fuels is being developed which will be the first publicly accessible database of all current, planned and potential oil, gas and coal production and the climate pollution they would lock in. This can be used by governments as a basis for negotiating countries' fair share of the responsibility for action, by advocates to demand government action and investors assessing the risk of stranded assets.
  - ➔ The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative is calling for a Global Commission on Fossil Fuels to create an initial group of first mover countries, enhance transparency and develop a formal process for a legal agreement. This can draw on the World Commission on Dams as one of many examples.

# resources

For more information on the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, visit [www.fossilfuel treaty.org](http://www.fossilfuel treaty.org) or reference these [FAQs](#).

Check out communication resources available at [Climate Access](#), [Fossil Free Media](#) and [Potential Energy](#).

## appendix

### ► **Protection of the Amazon, Biodiversity and Oceans is Top of Mind**

- Climate change is largely discussed in the media and on social media through the lens of how it will impact the Amazon, biodiversity and oceans. Effects on water resources and agriculture and cities' vulnerability to climate impacts were also topics covered.
- A lot of attention is given to the challenge that the Amazon region is now emitting more carbon than it is capturing. Deforestation is a driver and President Jair Bolsonaro is called out in the media and on social media for his policies. Industrial food practices are also noted as a cause.
- Climate change and environmental protection are for the most part not being connected to fossil fuels in the media. On social media that was the case as well except mentions of the impacts of oil spills on the environment and environmental risks related to ocean oil drilling licenses.
- Framing the need to move away from oil, gas and coal (via a Fossil Fuel Treaty) due to environmental impacts resonated the most in message testing.

### ► **Climate Change is a Major Concern Yet Polarization is high**

- 96 percent of the public say climate change is happening. Of the 31 countries surveyed, this was the second highest level of issue acceptance. 59 percent are very alarmed about it (as compared to 33 percent in the US which is at an all time high). 77 percent say it is primarily due to humans and 67 percent of Brazilians feel they know a lot or a moderate amount regarding the topic.
- Younger Brazilians, women, those more educated and politically left-leaning people care most about climate change.
- There is a strong political divide with right wing conservatives downplaying the crisis while left wing parties advocate for environmental issues in the media and on social media. President Bolsonaro is framed as being a climate denier and someone who is committing crimes against humanity by destroying the Amazon.



- The need for global action on climate change is recognized in the media and in particular Global North countries needing to support the least responsible and most vulnerable countries like Brazil and Latin America in general. Environmental racism was also a topic of media coverage regarding how Indigenous communities are not protected as well as the reproduction of capitalist economic models in the green economy with a specific focus on the power turbine fields in Fortaleza in Northern Brazil.
- In message testing, focusing on natural disasters and linking them to the need to transition away from fossil fuels through a global treaty performed the best except with the youth movement which responded to the air pollution frame. Following extreme weather, focusing on the threat fossil fuels present to the environment gained the best response.

► **Some Support for Moving Away From Oil and Gas but Not a Big Topic of Conversation**

- 54 percent of Brazilians think there should be somewhat or much less fossil fuels used versus 34 who think it should remain the same, or increase somewhat and much more (19 percent).
- The role of fossil fuels in driving climate change is not being acknowledged in both the media and on social media. The impact of oil spills on Indigenous communities as well as the ocean and beaches, rising oil prices and the impact of volatile oil prices on workers however were covered.
- 91 percent of Brazilians favor using more solar power and 77 percent favor more hydro. There are however, online campaigns and conversations regarding the environmental impacts of hydro. Slightly more people (69 percent) want to see more gas used than want to see more wind (65 percent). 74 percent of Brazilians think renewable energy should be prioritized as the way to meet the country's energy needs.



 **FOSSIL  
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