



# The UN Releases its NDC Synthesis Report in Advance of COP26

## Technology will be a key driver in reducing global carbon emissions

On September 17, the UN released the second NDC Synthesis report, following the recent July 30th deadline for parties to the Paris Agreement to submit their updated NDCs to the UN. This is an exciting and important milestone as we start the real march towards our 2030 emissions reduction targets.

### What is the UN NDC Synthesis report?

The UN NDC Synthesis report is a “synthesis of climate action plans as communicated in countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions.” A Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is the commitment that each of the 191 countries who have ratified the Paris Agreement has pledged to make to meet greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets of the Agreement. Countries must submit an NDC every five years and, importantly, each successive NDC must be more ambitious than the previous one. Assuming that the countries meet their commitments, this will result in progressively deeper cuts in emissions over time.

### Why is it important?

The synthesis report was requested by the Parties to the Paris Agreement in order to help them prepare for the upcoming Conference of the Parties (COP) in Glasgow in November. COP26, which was delayed by a year due to Covid-19, is a particularly important one, especially in light of the dire findings of the [Sixth Assessment Report](#) of the IPCC, which was released in August. Amongst other things, COP26 is intended to finalize the rules needed to implement the Paris Agreement.

As the IPCC report made clear the time for climate action is now (well, it was actually years ago, but now is the next best alternative). The Paris rules will dictate things such as how developed nations will flow their financial commitments—up to \$100 billion per year—to finance climate initiatives in developing nations, as well as how the exchange of carbon credits between nations will work. Accordingly, countries are being asked to put forward NDCs that will align with reaching net zero globally by 2050.

### What can we learn from it?

The synthesis report allows us to track Parties’ progress toward the 2030 emissions reductions targets embodied in their initial NDCs. Echoing the urgent findings of the IPCC report, the synthesis report reveals that the current NDCs of all 191 Parties taken together would lead to global GHG emissions in 2030 that are 16 percent higher than 2010. In other words, we’re going the wrong way.

On a positive note, it appears that we may be starting to bend emissions curve downward (that is, the right way). The synthesis report found that for the 113 countries that submitted new or updated NDCs, greenhouse gas emissions are projected to be 12 per cent lower by 2030 compared to 2010.

Additionally, it appears that countries are getting better at monitoring their emissions. A [UN press release](#) announcing the report states, “The new or updated NDCs show a marked improvement in the quality of information presented, for both mitigation and adaptation.” If it’s true that you can’t manage what you don’t measure, this bodes well for our ability to start seriously reducing GHG emissions.

### Emerging data monitoring and managing tools

The latter point highlights the fact that emerging technologies are creating excellent tools for the identification, quantification and monitoring of emissions. This is particularly true of methane, a ubiquitous and particularly potent greenhouse gas. Addressing methane emissions allows an easy, cost-effective, technologically ready way to start bending the curve down.

New methane detection techniques—particularly related to satellite imagery, drone-mounted sensors, optical gas imaging (OGI)—are offering more vivid, accurate pictures of methane emissions than we’ve ever had before. Furthermore, emerging integrated software solutions are presenting more powerful tools for data management, emissions monitoring and more robust performance metrics to track local and global emissions trends.

## We have the technology, we can do this

We're extremely fortunate to have these tools emerging at this crucial juncture. We at CarbonAi believe that such integrated software solutions give us the ability to respond to the climate crisis in a timely, effective and universally accessible manner. There are reasons for optimism. Within the challenge of climate change lie great opportunities. The NDC synthesis offered a glimpse of a future in which nations are already bending the curve of GHG emissions downward (the right direction).

As Alok Sharma, incoming president of COP26, stated: "We can change the course of history for the better. We can and must act, for ourselves, for vulnerable communities and future generations." We have the tools, we have the technology: we can do this.

## The time to deliver reductions is now

While having technology, tools and more ambitious targets is great, those things alone will not get us to where we need to go. As is many things, the hard work gets done on the field and in the trenches and we need a concerted effort to reduce emissions now and that is a key part of our mission at CarbonAi. We are executing large-scale, emission reduction projects, with an immediate focus on methane. We look forward to sharing our progress and in the weeks and months to come.