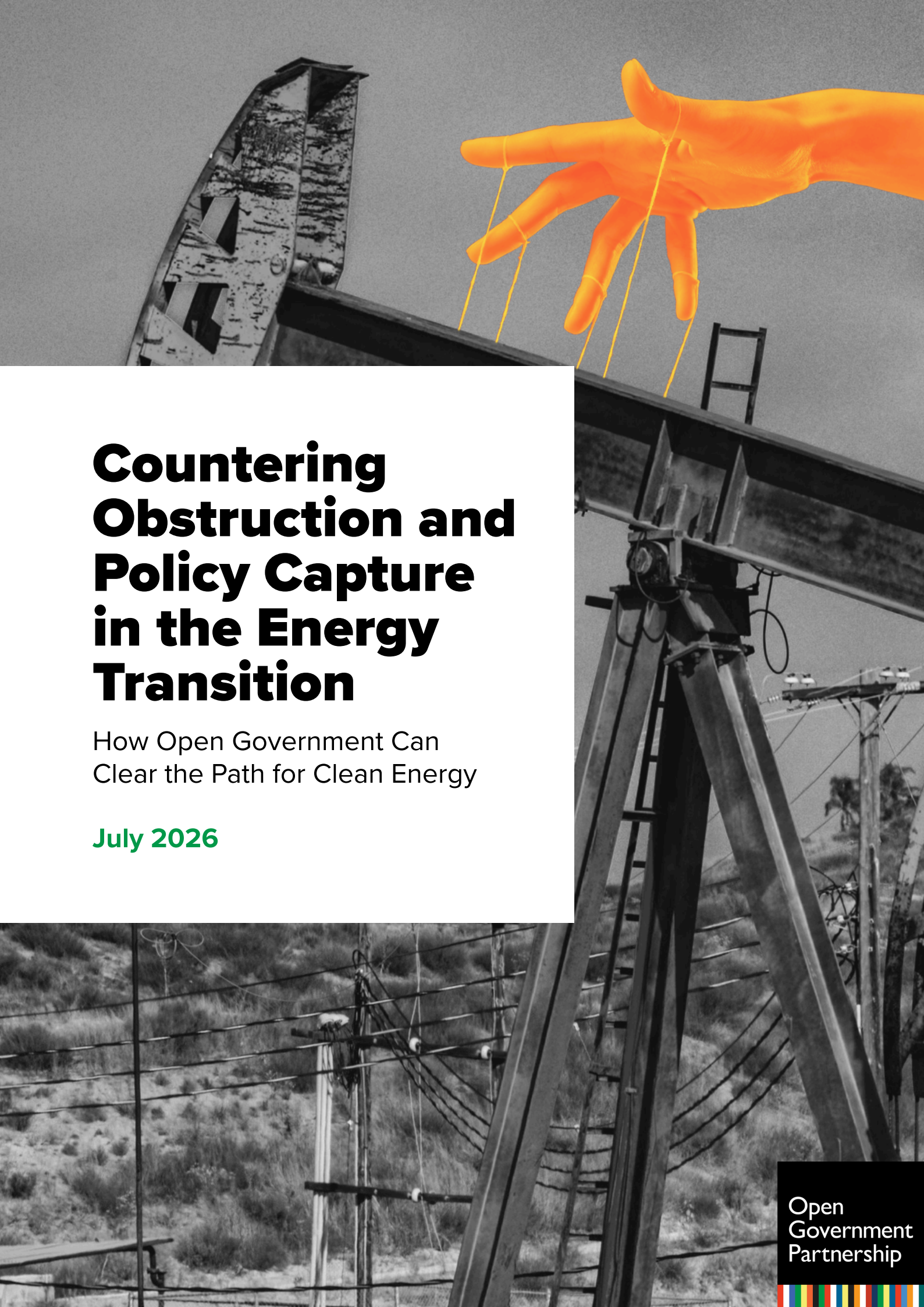




Countering Obstruction and Policy Capture in the Energy Transition

How Open Government Can
Clear the Path for Clean Energy

July 2026

Open
Government
Partnership



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group (UK)
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (UK)
BNDES	Brazilian National Development Bank (Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social)
CCC	Climate Change Commission (Philippines)
CCS	Carbon capture and storage
CCUS	Carbon capture, utilization, and storage
CFE	Federal Electricity Commission (Comisión Federal de Electricidad) (Mexico)
CO ₂ e	Carbon dioxide equivalent
COP	Conference of the Parties (UN climate negotiations)
EDGAR	Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EPIRA	Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Philippines)
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GW	Gigawatt
IEA	International Energy Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
LGU	Local government unit (Philippines)
LNG	Liquefied natural gas
MDB	Multilateral development bank
MWh	Megawatt hour
NDC	Nationally determined contribution (Paris Agreement)
NRGI	Natural Resource Governance Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PEMEX	Petróleos Mexicanos (Mexico's state-owned oil company)
PH-EITI	Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
PPP	Public-private partnership
PSC	Persons with Significant Control (UK beneficial ownership register)
RSF	Reporters Without Borders (Reporters sans frontières)
SENER	Ministry of Energy (Secretaría de Energía) (Mexico)
SLAPP	Strategic lawsuit against public participation
SOE	State-owned enterprise
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
V-Dem	Varieties of Democracy

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Executive Summary



The technology, economics, and knowledge for a successful energy transition are in place. Solar and battery costs have fallen by over 90 percent in fifteen years. Renewables are now cost-competitive almost everywhere. Global clean energy investment hit USD 2.3 trillion in 2025—double the amount going to fossil fuels.

Yet the global policy response has stalled. After two decades of accelerating climate action, progress plateaued in 2021, and began to reverse in some countries. Part of this is a lack of ambition or high costs. But more often than not, powerful interests, especially fossil fuel industries, are behind this slowdown.

This report, produced with the support of the KR Foundation, examines how deliberate obstruction by vested interests undermines the energy transition. It then looks at how open government can serve as a strategic counterforce. To illustrate this, the report presents in-depth profiles of four countries (Brazil, Mexico, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom), mapping how obstruction operates and what open government can do about it.

As the obstruction of energy transition policy has evolved, so too must the toolkit to counter it. The aim of this report is to identify potential actions that reformers inside and outside of government can undertake to clear the path for cleaner, cheaper, and more abundant energy.

The Obstruction Problem

Obstruction of the energy transition operates through three interconnected spheres.

The first is through **direct influence on the policy process**: lobbying, political donations, revolving doors, and capture of regulatory bodies. In the UK, fossil fuel interests took part in 343 ministry-level meetings in 2023 under the previous government, rising to over 500 in the government's first year. That's roughly twice per working day. In Brazil, Petrobras, the state-owned oil company, is so deeply embedded in the political establishment that it has a documented track record of illegal exchanges to assert its interests. In Mexico, Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX), the state-owned oil company, has absorbed over USD 100 billion in public bailouts while state energy policy remains structured to protect it.

Second, obstruction works through the **sphere of ideas and evidence**: shaping what counts as credible research and feasible policy. Think tanks involved in climate disinformation collectively earned USD 900 million annually between 2003 and 2010. Fossil fuel companies have also funded university energy centers, which are systematically more favorable toward natural gas than renewables. In the UK, less than 1 percent of industry-sponsored energy research covers renewables, and 50 to 60 percent of expert advisory group minutes are redacted before publication.

Third, obstruction operates through **public opinion and media**: deploying advertising, disinformation, astroturf campaigns, and intimidation to shift or suppress public debate. In the Philippines, environmental defenders face threats while concentrated media ownership limits coverage of transition alternatives. In Brazil, the media sector is tightly controlled by a small set of private actors, and [news avoidance](#) has reached 46 percent. Across all four countries studied, these spheres reinforce each other, creating a self-sustaining system that slows the transition.

The political economy is heavily skewed but not hopeless. The fossil fuel industry has trillions at stake: staying within safe planetary limits would leave 60 to 80 percent of

known reserves in the ground, hitting companies with USD 13–17 trillion in valuation losses. But pro-transition forces are also gaining ground. Renewable employment now exceeds fossil fuel employment globally, the green economy has reached USD 8 trillion in market value, and public concern about climate change remains high across all four countries studied.

What the Evidence Reveals

Each of the four country profiles are built around a structured obstruction risk dashboard and informed by in-country convenings with reformers, activists, and practitioners in late 2025 and early 2026. Each profile offers structured obstruction risk dashboards covering transition opportunity, policy challenge, obstructive force, and integrity safeguards. Each reveals strikingly different patterns, with some common threads.

Brazil has enormous transition potential, with 88 percent renewable electricity, third-ranked globally in installed capacity, and major critical mineral reserves. It also faces obstruction rooted in the political power of Petrobras and the agribusiness lobby, weak anti-capture protections, and concentrated media ownership. Convening participants identified multi-layered funding chains, corporate dominance of government relations, and intimidation of environmental defenders as priority concerns.

Mexico has massive untapped renewable potential, as it is in the top 20 percent globally for solar power, and its wind potential is 15 times the current electricity demand. However, its political economy is organized around protecting PEMEX. Executive centralization, sovereignty narratives, and institutional inertia keep fossil fuel interests entrenched, while over USD 100 billion in public resources have flowed to PEMEX without meaningful reform. Transparency has also actively deteriorated: access to emissions and procurement data is increasingly restricted, and climate plans disguise weak ambition through inconsistent accounting methods.

The Philippines presents a paradox. The country ranks first on the World Risk Index for climate vulnerability and has some of the highest electricity prices in Southeast Asia. Fossil fuels employ very few people, generate a tiny share of government revenue, and are not deeply rooted in the domestic economy. And yet coal, the most polluting fossil fuel, still generates over 60 percent of electricity in the country, with no phase-out timeline. A small group of politically connected conglomerates maintains this dominance.

The **United Kingdom** was the first G7 nation to eliminate coal. It has most of the “correct” institutions to prevent conflicts of interest and corruption, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Yet these same evaluations find that the country’s governance tools are inadequate. Obstruction has shifted “upstream” to think tank funding, research sponsorship, and narrative framing. There are also clear gaps in practice. For one, the UK is alone among major OECD economies in not publishing official responses to public consultation about energy transitions, and its lobbying register covers only a fraction of actual influence activity. A gold standard set of rules is also outmaneuvered by sophisticated, less-regulated forms of influence.

Open Government as a Strategic Response

The report identifies four complementary approaches through which reformers inside and outside government, including through the Open Government Partnership (OGP) action framework, can address the governance vulnerabilities that obstruction exploits.

1. **Targeted institutional reforms:** This includes interventions at the specific institutions where capture has the greatest consequences, such as energy regulators, grid operators, permitting bodies, and state-owned enterprises. This means transparency requirements for regulatory meetings, conflict-of-interest disclosure for utility boards, and open data on grid connections and approval rates.
2. **Upstream integrity safeguards:** This includes structural reforms (lobbying registers, beneficial ownership transparency, revolving-door regulations, and political finance disclosure) that create a healthier governance ecosystem with knock-on effects for energy policy. Countries with robust lobbying registers and public ownership registries are inherently less vulnerable to the quiet capture that delays the phasing out of fossil fuel.
3. **Targeted disclosure:** This includes focusing on transparency in specific domains where information gaps are most damaging, such as information on methane emissions, think tank and research funding, fossil fuel advertising, and greenwashing claims. There are no commitments in any OGP action plan dealing with think tank funding, research sponsorship disclosure, or climate-specific disinformation. This is a clear frontier for action.
4. **Civic participation and protection:** This includes strengthening the capacity of citizens and civil society to participate in transition decisions through citizens' assemblies, co-creation mechanisms for just transition planning, anti-SLAPP legislation, and protections for environmental whistleblowers and defenders.

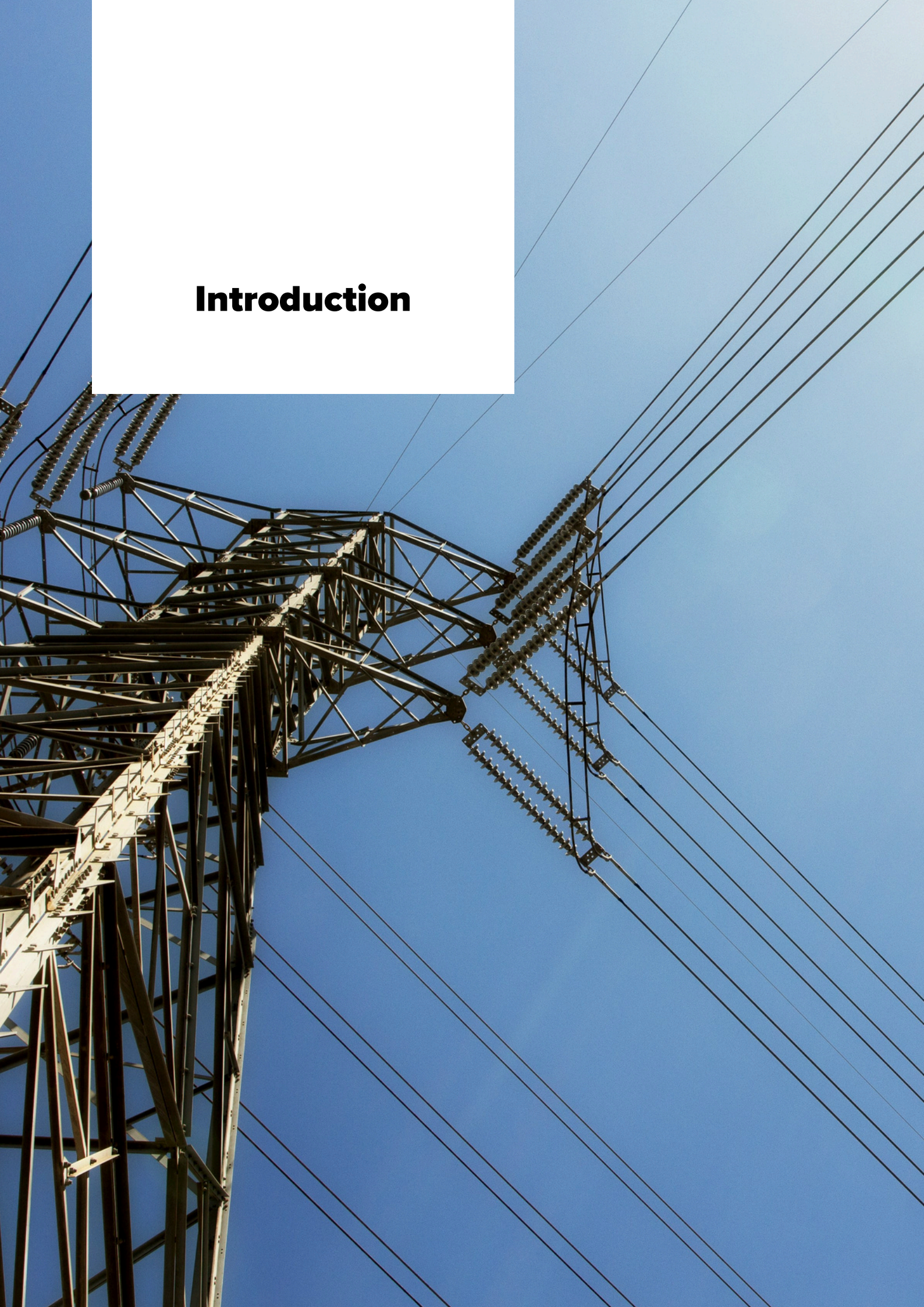
Strategic Implications

The country convenings and broader evidence base point to five strategic considerations.

1. **Protect the rise of renewables while challenging fossil fuels.** On a level playing field, renewables already win economically. Shielding them from sabotage by incumbent industries may matter more than confronting fossil fuel use directly.
2. **Focus on systemic reforms, not individual scandals.** Prioritize pivotal governance processes and persuadable audiences rather than responding to every individual transgression. There are signs of exposure fatigue in the broader public, and the more effective posture is the long game.
3. **Watch for ineffective policies that serve incumbent interests.** Of more than 1,500 climate policy interventions studied, only 63 demonstrably reduced emissions. Obstructive actors can steer efforts toward solutions that are either lucrative for special interests or sufficiently ineffective to leave fossil fuel business models intact.
4. **Guard against democratic tools being turned against climate action.** Fossil-fuel-aligned actors increasingly co-opt ballot initiatives, requests for government information, anti-SLAPP laws, and the language of freedom and autonomy to obstruct climate action from within democratic frameworks.
5. **Prepare for more aggressive and overt obstruction.** The US experience may be a harbinger, not an outlier: by the end of 2024, 459 local-level and 20 state-level restrictions on renewable energy were in place (Theis, Sikirica, and Betancourt 2026).

Looking ahead, this report offers a key framing that can be applied beyond the energy transition. The same dynamics of concentrated interests, governance capture, and information manipulation play out across other domains where OGP works, from political finance to public health to extractive industries. Climate inaction is a human-created problem, and thus has solutions that can also be created by humans.

Introduction



This report examines how deliberate obstruction by vested interests undermines the energy transition and how open government can counteract these efforts. With the support of the KR Foundation, this report has been produced in the context of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) to inform and inspire reform efforts that strengthen the integrity of climate and energy policy-making.

The report is organized in two parts.

- **Cross-cutting analytical overview.** This section establishes the critical importance of policy for the energy transition and the alarming scale of the current policy gap, one that is not merely the result of insufficient ambition or capacity, but is actively widened by organized obstructive influence. The analysis then maps the political economy of obstruction: the constellation of interests and the spheres through which influence operates, from direct engagement with the policy process, through the shaping of evidence and ideas, to the mobilization of public opinion. Against this diagnosis, the report makes the case for open government as a strategic response and identifies concrete entry points where OGP-style reforms can address the governance vulnerabilities that obstruction exploits.
- **Country profiles.** Four countries (Brazil, Mexico, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom) were selected for their distinctive relevance to the energy transition and the diversity of their political, economic, and institutional contexts, as well as an existing network of reformers around open government. Each country section presents an obstruction risk profile built around a structured dashboard, as well as a summary of the in-country convening(s) that brought together key stakeholders and practitioners to identify concrete opportunities for open government to counter obstructive influence.

While the energy transition is the focus of this report, the analytical framework it develops—mapping how concentrated interests exploit governance weaknesses to obstruct policy reforms, and identifying open government responses—has broader relevance for reformers. The same dynamics of lobbying capture, information manipulation, and the suppression of countervailing voices play out in areas from political finance reform to public health regulation to extractive industry governance.

The tools and strategies identified here are transferable. Where powerful incumbents benefit from the status quo and public interest reforms threaten their position, the open government toolkit described in this report offers a strategic response.

Obstructive Influence on the Energy Transition



Policy is the Bottleneck

The fundamentals are clear: the technology, knowledge, and resources needed to avert the worst effects of climate change are already in place or within reach. The energy transition is about protecting the planet. But it also presents major economic opportunities: cheaper, more abundant, and more decentralized energy; greater efficiency and innovation; and reduced geopolitical friction and supply-chain fragility. Just three empirical points help illustrate this potential:

- **The 90 percent drop:** Costs for solar installations and battery storage have both fallen by more than 90 percent over the last fifteen years. (For its part, wind power has fallen by 40 percent.) As of 2026, 90 percent of newly installed utility-scale renewable projects are cheaper than comparable fossil fuel alternatives. Renewables are now at least cost-competitive if not cheaper in most countries around the world (Turner 2026).
- **The tripling of efficiency potential:** The electrification of transport, heating, and so on offers prospects for making energy use three times more efficient than conventional fossil fuel methods. Projections suggest that this will support a genuine decoupling of economic growth and energy use, with a doubling of GDP by 2050 supported by a 30 percent reduction in primary energy use (Turner 2026).
- **The geo-economic dividend:** If green supply chains can be managed, the resulting energy system can be more distributed and interconnected across countries and communities. This would translate into far less dependence on a small number of energy producers and transport chokepoints, and lower vulnerability to geopolitical disruption (Scholten et al. 2020).

The technology, science, and economics of the energy transition all point in the same direction. But without the right policies, leadership, and coalitions, the transition will happen more slowly, to everyone's detriment.

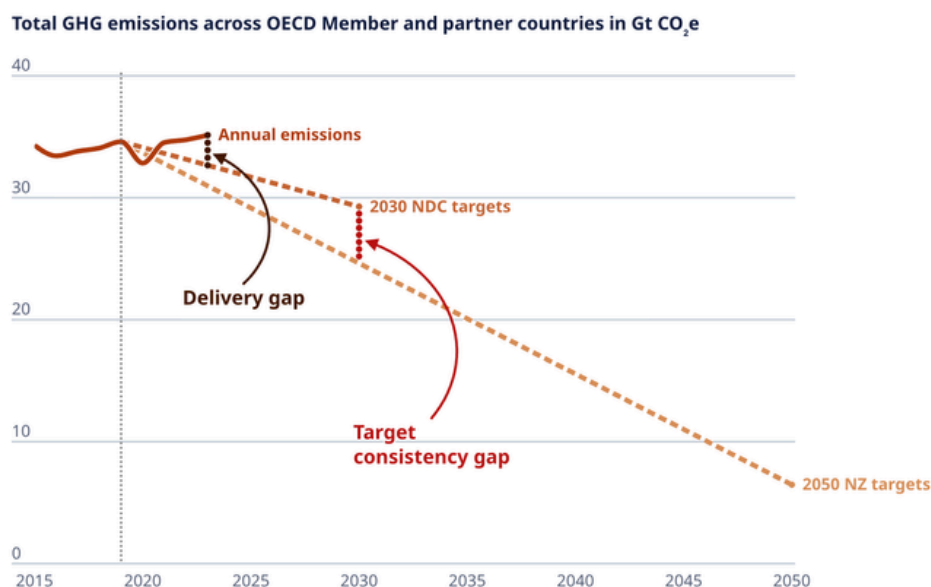
THE POLICY GAP

Public debate often focuses narrowly on a few contested interventions and quickly appears stuck when controversy arises. In reality, the policy toolkit is vast and can be tailored to local circumstances to manage costs and disruption.

The OECD tracks more than 270 policy variables grouped into 87 policy types, and this still covers only 90 percent of the interventions catalogued by the [IPCC](#) (OECD 2025).

The difference that policies make is enormous. It is the difference between keeping warming to +1.5°C (where the consequences are costly but manageable) and a trajectory of +2.5°C or worse under current ambitions, where disruption and costs escalate sharply. The gap between low-ambition and high-ambition climate policies translates into a far larger gap in economic and social outcomes.

At a global level, the current policy gap is twofold: we set insufficient policy targets to get us to net-zero by 2050 and we put in place insufficient policy measures to even reach these targets. The OECD is tracking both the delivery and target consistency gap across OECD countries.

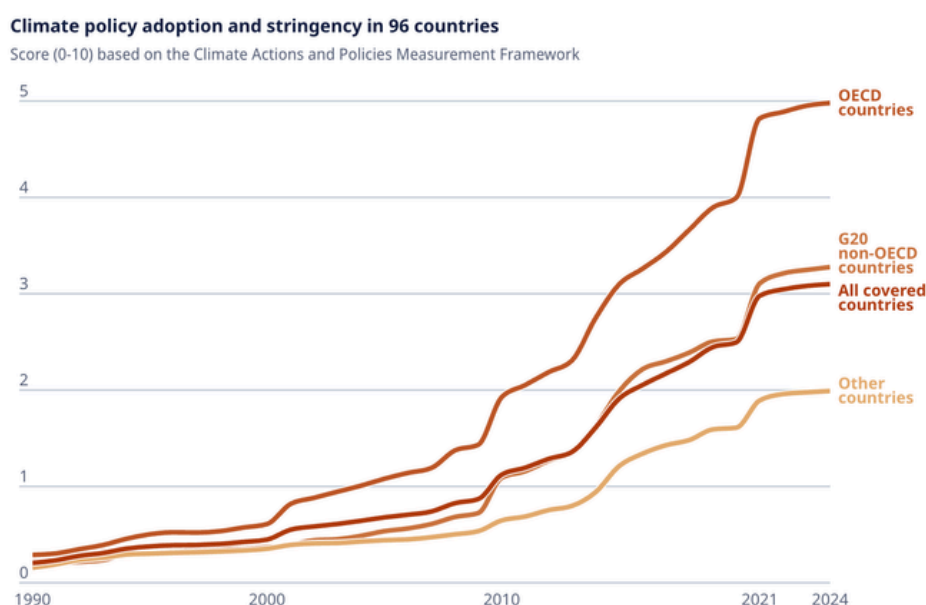


This chart includes land use, land-use change, and forestry. “NDCs” are nationally determined contributions and “NZ” is net zero. Source: [OECD 2025](#).

FROM STALLED PROGRESS TO DELIBERATE OBSTRUCTION

So much remains to be done on the policy front to bend the emissions curve. In fact, there is ample empirical evidence to confirm that specific policy interventions have directly contributed to significant emissions reductions in a wide range of different countries (Stechemesser et al. 2024).

Until very recently, the global policy response had continued to be inadequate but had gained considerable momentum. Between 2000 and 2020, countries across the world stepped up their policy efforts significantly. However, since 2021, the momentum has slowed down quite significantly. A growing set of headwinds from geopolitical turmoil to domestic economic difficulties to the politicization of energy policies have resulted in a very concerning plateau of the global policy effort, as the OECD tracking exercise clearly shows. The rate of expanding transition policies and making them more stringent has almost ground to a halt, despite the imminent challenge to do more, faster.



Data represent around 81 percent of global GHG emissions. This chart includes all OECD countries except the United States, all G20 economies, and all countries emitting over 1 percent of global GHGs. Source: [OECD 2025](#).

While many factors account for both the acceleration and slowdown, the common explanations—external pressures, domestic constraints, lack of political will—mask the deliberate obstruction by interests that stand to lose from the transition. Obstruction, or the deliberate efforts to slow, derail, or undermine effective energy transition policies, has been extensively documented as a significant drag on policy progress and effectiveness. This began as outright climate denialism aimed at keeping alarming evidence and urgent calls for action off the mainstream policy agenda. Yet this strategy became less effective as scientific consensus grew, people increasingly experienced the impacts of a warming planet firsthand, and public concern pushed policy makers to accelerate the adoption of climate policies.

In response, obstruction shifted toward more diverse strategies. Outright denial gave way to delay, diversion, and confusion—tactics deployed along the entire policy-making chain, from shaping public debate and the policy process itself to enforcement. By the 2020s, these strategies found fertile ground in a world of growing polarization, populism, disinformation, and economic anxiety—a context in which the energy transition could be framed as an elite, unaffordable project imposed at the expense of ordinary people’s livelihoods and freedoms.

Annex 2 provides a typology of the common arguments fossil fuel advocates use to slow the energy transition. Recognizing these narratives can help identify where obstruction is occurring in policy debates.

The Big Picture: Mapping the Political Economy of the Energy Transition

The following sections map the political economy of the transition: who stands to lose, who stands to gain, and how influence operates.

The stakes for the fossil fuel industry are enormous. The top ten companies alone earned more than USD 2.5 trillion in revenue and USD 220 billion in profit in 2024 (Fortune Global 500). Under moderate-ambition scenarios, global oil demand was projected to peak before 2030. Under current policy trends, it may not peak before 2050 (IEA 2025b). Every year of delay is worth trillions to the industry. Staying within safe planetary limits would require leaving 60 to 80 percent of known coal, gas, and oil reserves in the ground (Roberts 2025). This could cost fossil fuel companies USD 13 to 17 trillion in valuation losses by 2040 (Hansen 2022).

These gains are highly concentrated. In the US, 50 percent of the windfall profits oil and gas companies earned when prices spiked in 2022 went to one percent of the population, specifically large shareholders and private company owners (Semieniuk et al. 2025). The financial incentives to obstruct are enormous and concentrated in the hands of a few.

Meanwhile, the societal benefits of the transition, such as lower pollution, fewer climate disasters, and cheaper and more secure energy, are far greater than the private losses, but they are dispersed across populations and stretched over time. The industries that benefit most are still growing, and the gains are harder to quantify than the concentrated losses. Those hit hardest by climate change are often the least politically powerful, while the benefits of effective transition accrue across generations. This creates a classic asymmetry: a small number of well-resourced, well-organized actors with strong incentives to obstruct, versus a much larger but more dispersed group of beneficiaries who are harder to mobilize.

A collective action problem of concentrated losers and scattered winners combines with a time-horizon mismatch: costs now, benefits later.

These headwinds are real.

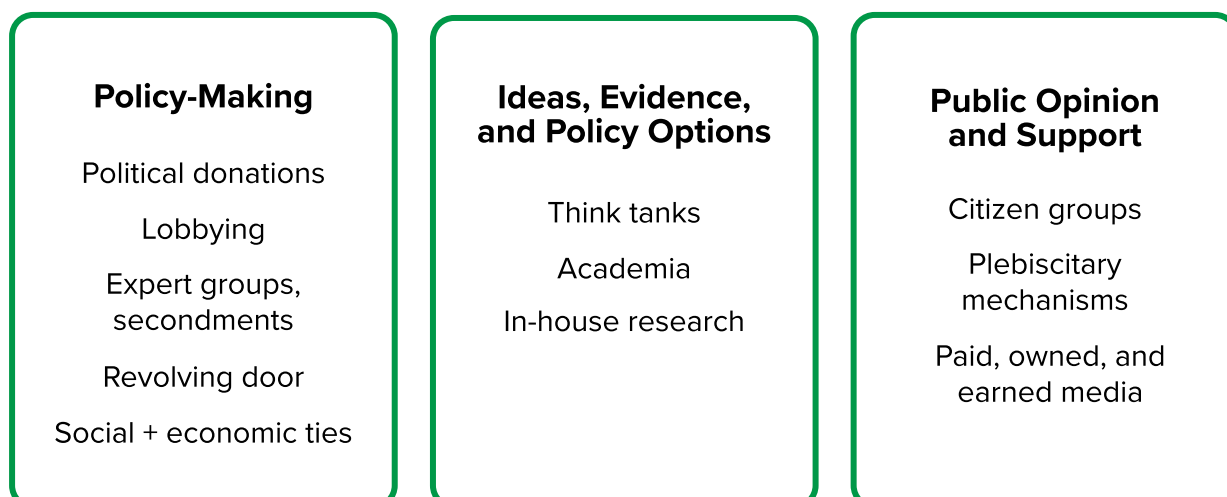
But the political economy of the energy transition also has important positive dynamics. There are early signs that the balance of power is beginning to shift.

- **A growing industry with growing political weight.** Global clean energy investment hit USD 2.3 trillion in 2025. That is double the amount going to fossil fuels (BloombergNEF 2026). The green economy is now valued at nearly USD 8 trillion, or nine percent of listed equity markets.
- **The employment tipping point.** The number of people working in renewables and clean electricity already exceeds fossil fuel employment, having reached parity in 2021 (IEA 2025a). This shifts the direct political constituency in favor of the transition.
- **The cost advantage.** Renewables are now cost-competitive or cheaper almost everywhere. This represents a strong incentive for industrial users to shift from opposition to support, especially as investors demand higher environmental performance (IRENA 2025).
- **The energy security argument.** Renewables are inherently decentralized and reduce dependence on volatile supply chains. In a world focused on strategic sovereignty, this creates a cross-partisan case for transition goals, even in nationalistic political environments.

Three Spheres of Influence

Obstructive influence operates through three interconnected spheres, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Three Spheres of Climate Action Obstruction



The first is **direct influence on the policy process** through political donations, lobbying, expert group participation, revolving doors between government and industry, and informal ties between political and business elites.

- In 2025, the [oil and gas sector](#) spent nearly USD 150 million on federal lobbying in the US, compared to USD 80 million by the [clean energy sector](#) (OpenSecrets).
- Between 2008 and 2018, US trade associations opposed to climate action spent USD 2 billion on political activities, outspending pro-climate industry groups by 27 to 1 (Brulle and Downie 2022).

The second is the **sphere of ideas and evidence**, where think tanks, academic institutions, and corporate research shape what counts as credible and feasible in policy debate.

- Think tanks involved in climate disinformation earned a combined USD 900 million per year between 2003 and 2010, based on US tax records (Lewandowsky 2021).
- Fossil fuel interests have funded economic analyses that inflate the costs of climate policies while ignoring their benefits, helping to delay initiatives like carbon pricing (Franta 2022).
- An analysis of 26 university energy centers found that fossil-funded centers (including at MIT, Columbia, and Stanford) were systematically more favorable toward natural gas than renewables (Almond, Du, and Papp 2022).

The third is **public opinion and media**, where advertising, disinformation, [astroturf](#) campaigns, and direct democratic tools like referenda are used to shift public sentiment and constrain or enable political action.

- In 2020, 25 oil and gas organizations placed over 25,000 ads on Facebook in the US alone, which were seen more than 431 million times (InfluenceMap 2021a).
- An analysis of Exxon's communications between 1977 and 2014 found that 80 percent of internal documents acknowledged the reality of human-caused climate change, whereas only 12 percent of its public-facing "advertorials" did (Supran and Oreskes 2017).
- Climate skeptics receive nearly 50 percent more media visibility than climate scientists, despite having 660 percent fewer scientific citations (Petersen, Vincent, and Westerling 2019).
- Fossil fuel companies sponsor local parks, community centers, and citizen groups to build "[social license](#)," making it harder for communities to oppose industry goals. Some of this sponsorship, or symbolic branding, is covertly carried out by astroturf groups designed to simulate grassroots opposition to climate action (Schneider et al. 2025; Walker 2016; Wood 2023).
- Ballot measures have become a tool of corporate political influence, including efforts to roll back electrification mandates and other climate policies (Fahlenbrach, Ovtchinnikov, and Valta 2023; Reuters 2018).

Traditionally, attention focused on the policy process itself and its outcomes. More recently, however, influence strategies have shifted upstream by targeting the ideas, evidence, and public opinion that shape the terms of debate before formal decisions are made.

Together, these spheres and mechanisms form an interconnected ecosystem of influence that shapes how policy is made, by whom, and in whose interest.

This three-sphere model of obstructive influence is not unique to the energy transition. The same architecture—direct access to policy makers, shaping of the evidence base, and manipulation of public opinion—has been documented in the tobacco industry’s decades-long campaign against public health regulation, in the financial sector’s resistance to post-crisis reform, and in extractive industries’ efforts to weaken environmental safeguards. The energy transition is a particularly high-stakes case because the scale of the threatened private losses is so large, but the underlying dynamics are structural features of policy-making wherever concentrated interests face diffuse public benefits.

Open Government as a Strategic Response

WHY OPEN GOVERNMENT MATTERS

Since the Paris Agreement, outright denial of climate science has largely given way to more sophisticated forms of obstruction. Today’s dominant tactics center on casting doubt on the feasibility and affordability of climate solutions, promoting speculative technological fixes that preserve high-carbon business models, and framing any specific policy as too costly or as threats to freedom and security.

Governments are not merely passive targets. Many are active participants. Fossil fuel-dependent economies routinely protect incumbent industries through subsidies, diplomatic obstruction, and the inclusion of industry representatives in official delegations to international negotiations. The revolving door between industry and government, gaps in beneficial ownership transparency, and weak oversight of public procurement and licensing all compound the problem.

Top-down obstruction succeeds only when it finds social traction (Roberts 2025). Media systems dependent on fossil fuel advertising, academic research with undisclosed industry sponsorship, and platforms with weak safeguards against misinformation all create fertile ground.

So do unmanaged conflicts of interest, such as consultancies that advise governments on policy while serving fossil fuel clients. The weaponization of integrity tools, too, creates problems: fossil fuel interests use requests for government information to generate procedural drag, strategic litigation to intimidate researchers, and the manipulation of anti-harassment protections to target the constituencies they were designed to protect.

The result is a self-reinforcing system in which corporate strategy, political economy, and public discourse interact to slow the energy transition.

For open government practitioners, this diagnosis points to a clear mandate. The tools of open government (lobby register reform, political finance transparency, open contracting, beneficial ownership disclosure, the protection of civic space, and participatory governance of the energy transition) are core to climate action. They address the very governance vulnerabilities that obstruction exploits. Treating climate integrity as an open government priority is essential to closing the gap between countries’ stated ambitions and their policy reality.

Why OGP?

The case for open government is becoming more urgent. Declining trust, rising polarization, and resurgent populism all make transparency and accountability harder to achieve, but more necessary than ever.

Yet reformers have no shortage of platforms competing for their attention. Why OGP specifically? Several features set it apart.

- **High-level political anchoring.** OGP commitments sit at the ministerial or senior government level, giving them visibility and weight inside government.
- **Outside normal political channels.** OGP operates outside domestic policy battlegrounds, which means reform proposals can advance without attracting the same oppositional lobbying they would face in sector-specific arenas.
- **Practical by design.** OGP commitments must be specific, time-bound, and measurable.
- **Collaborative and accountable.** Government and civil society co-create commitments, and a tracking system ensures follow-through.
- **A shared coordinating platform.** The energy transition is drawing new actors and funders into the movement. OGP offers a platform to find shared goals amid the flux.
- **A learning network.** OGP connects peers across countries and creates space to test innovative approaches. This is reflected in the current shift from multi-year action plans to more agile action commitments.
- **Country-specific entry points.** A new government committed to openness can create fresh momentum. A designated OGP role as Co-Chair, Steering Committee member, or Ambassador raises expectations. Adjacent processes like the EITI offer synergies. And the OGP Local platform extends this work to cities and regions.

FOUR TYPES OF OPEN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

An open government response to obstruction can work at multiple levels. The following sections present four complementary approaches alongside examples from OGP members. Where there has been an evaluation by OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), they are noted.

Figure 2. Open Government for the Energy Transition

Reform	Description	Examples
Targeted institutional reforms <i>Precise reform in decision-making organizations</i>	Target captured gatekeepers: Make regulatory commissions, public utilities, permitting councils, and SOEs more transparent, independent, and accountable	Germany Scotland
Upstream integrity safeguards <i>Strengthen the governance system as a whole, with direct effects on energy</i>	Structural reforms that make capture harder system-wide: Lobbying registers, beneficial ownership, media ownership, and conflict-of-interest regimes	Ireland UK France
Targeted disclosures and transparency <i>Shining the light where it matters most</i>	Targeted disclosure on specific information gaps: Methane data, think tank funding, truth in advertising, research sponsorship, and climate disinformation	Netherlands Ghana France Nigeria Paraguay Uruguay
Civic participation and protection for activists <i>Creating an ecosystem for accountability beyond government</i>	Strengthen citizen and civil society capacity: Deliberative assemblies, anti-SLAPP laws, environmental defender protection, and co-creation mechanisms	Scotland France Argentina Indonesia Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas Slovakia

1

Targeted Institutional Reforms

Some institutions are gatekeepers of the energy transition: regulatory commissions, public utilities controlling grid access, permitting bodies, and state-owned enterprises. When these are captured, the effects are far-reaching.

The approach: identify the key bottlenecks, assess where they are vulnerable to undue influence, and apply targeted transparency and accountability measures—publishing meeting logs, requiring conflict-of-interest disclosure, and opening proceedings to expert and public input.

Germany is [introducing](#) the first legally binding transparency guidelines for all federal PPPs (~EUR 12 billion). This reform applies to energy PPPs and grid concessions. OGP’s Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) finds it has substantial potential for results. **Scotland** [built](#) permanent stakeholder participation into climate policy implementation.

Potential actions:

- Transparency requirements for energy regulators
- Conflict-of-interest disclosure for utility boards and permitting officials
- Open data on grid connection queues and approval rates
- Participatory oversight of energy infrastructure permitting

2

Upstream Integrity Safeguards

These are structural reforms, such as lobbying regulation, beneficial ownership transparency, conflict-of-interest rules, and media ownership disclosure, that strengthen the governance system as a whole, with knock-on effects for energy policy. A country with a strong lobbying register and public ownership registry is inherently harder to capture.

Ireland's [lobbying register](#), enacted after the 2008 crisis, has since been [strengthened](#) through OGP. **France** [published](#) lobby data under the Sapin 2 law. The **UK** [pioneered](#) public beneficial ownership via the PSC [register](#), catalyzing over 30 countries to follow.

Potential actions:

- Extend lobbying transparency to energy regulators and grid operators
- Require beneficial ownership disclosure in the energy sector
- Strengthen revolving-door regulations
- Mandate media ownership transparency
- Strengthen political finance transparency

3

Targeted Disclosure

These are targeted transparency measures in specific domains, such as methane disclosure, think tank funding, and research sponsorship, where filling information gaps can shift the terms of debate without wholesale institutional reform.

The **Netherlands** [developed](#) binding rules on digital political advertising and micro-targeting. **Ghana** and **France** [have respectively](#) launched media literacy and public awareness initiatives. **Nigeria** [trained](#) civic monitors to track 60 energy-related procurement projects worth over USD 120 million. **Paraguay** [centralized](#) open climate data, while **Uruguay** [published](#) energy efficiency data with a national project map.

However, OGP members have not yet made commitments targeting think tank funding transparency, research sponsorship disclosure, climate-specific disinformation, or fossil fuel greenwashing. This is a clear frontier for action.

Potential actions:

- Methane emissions disclosure
- Think tank and research funding transparency
- Truth-in-advertising for energy claims
- Digital political advertising transparency for energy and climate topics
- Information integrity strategies addressing climate disinformation

4

Civic Participation and Protection for Activists

Open government can also strengthen the ability of citizens and civil society to participate meaningfully in energy transition decisions, helping to balance a playing field where fossil fuel incumbents have overwhelming advantages. This means creating genuine deliberative processes and protecting those who speak up.

Scotland's Climate Assembly [brought](#) over 100 randomly selected citizens together to deliberate on the climate emergency, producing 81 recommendations the government was legally required to answer. The Climate Assembly influenced the Just Transition Commission and Heat in Buildings Strategy. **France** [engaged](#) 300 participants in six working groups on energy transition and sustainable development, producing 33 thematic notes for the national adaptation plan. **Argentina** [committed](#) to inclusive environmental participation under the Escazú Agreement, while **Indonesia** [committed](#) to offering legal protections for environmental defenders. **Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Ecuador** [won](#) the OGP Accelerator Award for co-creating deforestation policy with excluded communities. **Slovakia** is also [developing](#) an anti-SLAPP implementation plan, drawing on the new EU Anti-SLAPP Directive (in force May 2024). The Directive creates a new baseline, which provides critical protection: three in four SLAPPs target land rights or environmental concerns.

Potential actions:

- Citizens' assemblies for energy transition planning
- Anti-SLAPP legislation protecting climate activists
- Legal protections for energy sector whistleblowers
- Co-creation mechanisms for just transition planning

These four approaches are complementary. The most effective strategies combine institutional interventions, integrity reforms, targeted transparency, and the protection of civic voices. The open government toolkit is richer than climate policy circles often recognize—the challenge is to deploy it with strategic imagination that matches the sophistication of the obstruction it confronts.

No single tool will suffice. The most promising strategies blend institutional safeguards, transparency mechanisms, and civic protections into packages tailored to each country's obstruction risks, transition challenges, and integrity gaps. Getting this mix right is both the opportunity and the imperative.

Strategic Implications

The country convenings in this research and broader evidence base point to a rapidly evolving landscape of obstruction. This landscape demands sharper strategic thinking, not just better tools. There are five considerations for how reform efforts should be framed, sequenced, and defended.

Protect the rise of renewables, in addition to challenging fossil fuels. The most consequential obstruction may not be doubling down on fossil fuels but undermining renewables. On a level playing field, renewables already win economically. Demand reduction and investment shifts remain essential. But equal focus is needed on shielding renewables from being derailed by incumbents that stand to lose from their success.

Focus on systemic reforms, not individual scandals. There are signs of outrage fatigue and indications that parts of the accountability community are playing an inside game by generating outrage among the already converted. The more effective approach is the long game: pivotal governance processes, persuadable audiences, and cross-partisan storylines.

Watch for ineffective policies that serve incumbent interests. The policy toolbox for the energy transition is vast: the IPCC catalogues close to 300 potent instruments. Yet an empirical stock take of more than 1,500 climate policy interventions finds only 63 that have demonstrably reduced emissions, each requiring careful calibration to context (Stechemesser et al. 2024). This creates a real risk that obstructive actors steer transition efforts toward solutions that are either lucrative for special interests or sufficiently ineffective to leave fossil fuel business models intact. Or both.

Guard against democratic tools being turned against climate action. Fossil fuel-aligned actors increasingly co-opt the language of freedom and autonomy to reframe obstruction as rights protection. They deploy ballot initiatives to roll back electrification mandates, orchestrate astroturf movements, file anti-climate strategic litigation (now roughly a quarter of all climate lawsuits globally, according to Arvan 2026), and exploit requests for government information to generate procedural drag that slows regulators and intimidates researchers.

Prepare for more aggressive obstruction. The US experience may be a harbinger, not an outlier. Climate action obstruction tactics are being used in the United States. By the end of 2024, the US had 459 local-level and 20 state-level restrictions on renewable build-out (Theis, Sikirica, and Betancourt 2026). Anticipating renewable rollbacks and exclusion zones should be a strategic priority, not a contingency.

Finally, it is worth stepping back from the energy transition to note what this analysis reveals about the OGP agenda more broadly. The pattern documented here—where well-resourced incumbents use lobbying access, narrative control, information asymmetries, and intimidation to block reforms that serve the wider public interest—is not a climate phenomenon. It is a governance phenomenon.

OGP members working on political finance transparency, open contracting, media freedom, civic space protection, or public health governance will recognize every element of the obstruction playbook described in this report. The four-part response framework offered here—institutional reforms, integrity safeguards, targeted disclosure, and civic participation—provides a replicable template. The energy transition is where the stakes are highest and the evidence is richest, but the strategic logic applies wherever open government meets organized resistance.

The Country Files



The following sections explore in more detail the situation in four countries and how open government can be used in concrete ways to tackle obstruction of the energy transition. The four countries were selected due to their distinctive relevance for the energy transition, diversity of obstruction risk profiles, difference in geographic setting and political/economic contexts, and the presence of an existing network of reformers around open government.

For each country, the profile covers:

- The overall risk of obstruction via an extended country dashboard along four central vectors that shape the obstruction profile, and
- A summary of concrete ideas and opportunities for harnessing open government to tackle political capture, as collected in country-level convenings of key stakeholders and practitioners.

Introducing the Country Obstruction Risk Dashboard

The obstruction risk dashboard aims to present a big picture overview of the main dynamics that shape the interest matrix and overall risks of policy obstruction in a specific country context. It examines the following vectors:

- **Scale of the policy challenge:** A marker of how big a policy task lies ahead for the country to achieve a successful transition, based on the existing policy gap and public sentiment.
- **Integrity safeguards:** A set of indicators that maps the protective strength of key integrity measures, namely the risk of country capture, political transparency, and media health. Annex 1 presents a breakdown of the indicators and data sources.
- **Obstructive forces:** A gauge of the overall influencing power of opposing interests, such as fossil fuel interests (rents, jobs, and exports), business interests (fossil fuel dependence), and direct lobbying efforts.

Each profile also includes an assessment of the current transition opportunities.

Brazil

Brazil relies heavily on oil exports for foreign exchange, despite leading much of the world in renewable domestic energy production. Yet the country also stands to gain significantly from the energy transition.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Brazil stands to gain significantly from the energy transition, due to high renewable energy potential and major critical mineral reserves.
- The majority of the domestic economy runs on renewable energy (roughly 90 percent).
- However, current policies fall significantly short. Safeguards against undue influence are significantly weaker in practice than on paper. The media sector is tightly controlled by a small set of private actors.
- State-owned oil company Petrobras is a major public revenue source and export earner, with deep ties to the political establishment and a documented history of illegal dealings to advance its interests.
- Large agricultural companies are a powerful force in politics and public debate.
- The fossil fuel sector is a top export earner but a modest employer, with limited relevance for domestic energy security.

Capture Risks at a Glance	
Policy challenge	Significant
Integrity safeguards	Mixed
Obstructive force	High

THE TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY

- **G20 powerhouse:** Brazil leads the G20 in the energy transition, with approximately 88 percent of its electricity derived from renewables in 2024 (Ember 2025a).
- **Global capacity leader:** As of 2024, Brazil ranked third globally in installed renewable capacity (about 214 GW), behind China and the United States. India's rapid expansion likely pushed Brazil to fourth by early 2026 (IRENA 2025b).
- **Green job hub:** Brazil is the third largest creator of solar jobs globally (323,800 in 2024), ahead of the United States (IRENA/ILO 2026).
- **Cost-efficiency of renewables:** Brazil offers highly competitive renewable costs. Onshore wind stands at USD 30/MWh, comparable to China (USD 29/MWh) and is among the world's lowest (IRENA 2025a).
- **Strategic minerals:** Brazil holds major reserves of critical transition minerals, ranking second globally in graphite (about 25.5 percent of global reserves) and rare earths (about 22.8 percent), third in nickel (about 12.3 percent), and fourth in manganese (about 15.9 percent) (US Geological Survey 2025).

THE POLICY CHALLENGE

Indicator	Description	Assessment/Value
Climate policy adequacy (Climate Action Tracker 2024)	Alignment of existing climate policies with fair share contribution to Paris Agreement ambition	Insufficient
Public sentiment (Yale Program on Climate Change Communication 2023)	Share of population alarmed/concerned vs. doubtful/dismissive of climate change	76% alarmed or concerned 5% doubtful or dismissive (Global average 67% and 8% respectively) ¹

- **Paris Agreement ambition.** Improvements are needed to make Brazil's climate policy performance consistent with its Paris Agreement ambition to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. Non-land-use emissions have broadly stagnated rather than begun a clear structural decline. The gap between climate leadership rhetoric and actual policy trajectory, defined by massive fossil fuel expansion and OPEC+ accession, is widening.
- **Climate policy progress.** Amazon deforestation is at an 11-year low, a comprehensive national climate plan has been approved, there is a new carbon market law, and the country draws on renewable energy for over 90 percent of its domestic needs.
- **Urgent priorities for reform.** Urgent priorities include a binding fossil fuel phase-out roadmap (without which Brazil's climate commitments face serious credibility challenges), a broadened deforestation framework covering fire and degradation alongside clear-cutting, and conversion of the new climate plan into enforceable implementation through binding sectoral targets and a long-term strategy.
- **Public sentiment.** Despite increasing polarization, public sentiment on climate change remains conducive to reform. More people are concerned, and fewer are dismissive, than in most other countries.

¹ Average for sample of low per capita income countries.

INTEGRITY SAFEGUARDS AND GAPS

Indicator	Description	Assessment/Value
Captured political access and policy (Kaufmann 2024)	Expert assessment of political power and access inequalities	High Rank: 150 out of 172 countries
Press freedom (Reporters Without Borders 2025)	Media pluralism, freedom, and control by private interests	Problematic Overall rank: 63 out of 180 countries Economic context: 66 out of 180 countries
Political integrity data (Global Data Barometer 2025)	Lobbying, political finance, asset declarations, and RTI governance	Mixed 60 out of 100 points (Regional average = 37)
News avoidance (Reuters Institute 2025)	Share of population actively avoiding news	High 46% of citizens (Global average = 40%)

Political integrity infrastructure

- **Robust regulatory framework, significant implementation deficit.** Brazil has one of the region's strongest formal integrity architectures—conflict-of-interest regulations meet all OECD criteria, asset declarations for electoral candidates are API accessible, and political finance transparency is cited as a regional benchmark—but practice lags severely. For example, Brazil's conflict-of-interest practice score is 0 percent, and it lacks cooling-off periods for officials moving into lobbying (OECD 2026; Transparency International 2025).
- **Lobbying transparency remains underdeveloped.** Brazil's lobbying framework remains limited to an executive branch decree. It requires disclosure of little beyond the lobbyist's name. Neither the policy issues targeted nor expenditures must be reported, providing minimal visibility into who is seeking to shape which decisions (OECD 2026).

Media as an accountability mechanism

- **Ownership concentration and financial pressures constrain media's role as watchdogs.** Ownership concentration and financial pressures constrain media accountability. Ten family-owned conglomerates dominate the market, with growing non-media investments increasing conflicts of interest. Local and independent outlets face revenue erosion, while regional media depend on government advertising, weakening editorial independence.

- **Moderate public trust coexists with a compromised information environment.** News trust stands at 42 percent (above the global average), but news avoidance is high. Furthermore, 54 percent of the population gets news primarily through social media, where disinformation campaigns have disrupted policy processes. Legacy media retain credibility but are losing reach. The channels with the widest audience are the most susceptible to manipulation.

OBSTRUCTIVE FORCES²

Indicator	Description	Assessment/ Value	Comparator
Fossil fuel rents (% GDP) (World Bank)	Direct economic importance of fossil fuel extraction to national economy	3.4%	G20 average: 2.2% World average: 2.5%
Export concentration (UNCTAD)	Fossil fuels as share of total exports	~18%	G20 average: 11% World average: 14%
Fossil fuel sector employment (IEA/ILO)	Fossil fuel sector employment as share of total workforce	~0.6%	G20 average: 0.8% World average: 1.0%
GHG intensity (EDGAR)	kg CO ₂ e per \$1k GDP PPP — fossil fuel dependency of national economy	~310 to 345	World average: 380
Corporate lobbying alignment with Paris Agreement (InfluenceMap)	Lobbying of top national companies	C- A mix of supportive, neutral, and obstructive behavior, often with inconsistencies between public statements and actual lobbying	G20 average: C-

² Ember 2025a; IEA 2025b; IMF 2024; SEEG Brazil 2024; UNCTAD 2024

- **Brazil is the new oil powerhouse.** Crude oil is now among Brazil's top two exports and a major revenue source.
- **Brazil has a unique economic profile.** A high-renewables grid usually means low carbon intensity, but Brazil's GDP is heavily tied to agribusiness, a sector with high emissions from methane and land clearing. This makes the economy relatively "carbon-expensive" per dollar earned.
- **High capital-intensity of off-shore drilling** means that the workforce in the fossil fuel sector is relatively small.

HOW OBSTRUCTION OPERATES³

Policy capture risks. Brazil's energy transition faces policy capture risks across several interconnected sectors. For one, the agribusiness lobby, represented in Congress through the "Bancada Ruralista," has framed biofuels as a cornerstone of the transition, securing passage of the "Combustível do Futuro" law in October 2024. But the associated expansion of ethanol and biodiesel feedstock has been linked to deforestation of the Cerrado savanna and, in some cases, to labor abuses at facilities receiving public climate finance. The largest meat producer, JBS, has been convicted of large-scale bribery. One representative alluded to bribing more than 1,800 politicians with USD 150 million. This is a case where obstruction was actually illegal.

The influence of Petrobras. Petrobras also continues to exert substantial influence over energy policy. Despite Brazil's clean electricity grid, policy remains oriented toward expanding pre-salt oil and gas production to protect state revenues. Large allocations from the national development bank BNDES support this trajectory. The Lava Jato corruption scandal underscores the governance risks of Petrobras's deep political ties. Hydropower. Meanwhile, the hydropower sector has repositioned itself as essential to grid flexibility, securing continued public investment, including a planned 2025 auction for nearly 3 GW of new capacity, which may crowd out alternative storage technologies.

Hydropower. Meanwhile, the hydropower sector has repositioned itself as essential to grid flexibility, securing continued public investment, including a planned 2025 auction for nearly 3 GW of new capacity, which may crowd out alternative storage technologies.

Regulatory weaknesses. Systemic institutional weaknesses worsen these dynamics, suggesting that a coordinated governance response is needed. For example:

- Revolving doors between regulatory agencies and industry remain inadequately regulated.
- Energy planning documents address climate commitments in renewable energy chapters while omitting climate entirely from oil and gas projections.
- Affected communities, including indigenous groups, report inadequate consultation on large-scale energy projects.

³ Ross 2025; Edwards et al. 2025; Climate Action Tracker 2025; Sorvino 2025; BBC News 2017

COUNTRY CONVENING

Transparency International Brasil and OGP held two online brainstorming workshops on February 10 and 12, 2026 under the Chatham House Rule. Participants included investigative journalists, independent sustainability governance experts, climate scientists, a climate communication specialist, and representatives of NGOs working on mining, corporate responsibility, environment, and climate issues. The sessions covered three interconnected sectors relevant to Brazil's climate policy: oil and gas, agribusiness, and mining.

Further information on convening participants as well as a more detailed convening summary can be shared on request for collaboration purposes. The views and insights presented in this section reflect the perspectives shared by participants during the convenings, which were aimed at surfacing common areas of concern and ideas for potential action among non-governmental actors working on topics related to the energy transition. Their inputs are intended to inform strategies and future multistakeholder dialogue on advancing a just, inclusive, and transparent energy transition.

Five Major Obstruction Risks

Participants identified the following five major risks of obstructive influence over Brazil's climate and energy transition policy.

- **Institutional and legislative capture.** Corporate influence can penetrate the state through multi-layered funding chains (from companies to associations to policy institutes to parliamentary fronts), pervasive revolving doors with inadequate cooling-off periods, and an estimated ratio of corporate government-relations professionals to parliamentarians that favors industry. Regulatory agencies' dependence on private-sector support further compounds this vulnerability.
- **Narrative control and greenwashing.** Extractive and agribusiness sectors invest heavily in rebranding as climate-friendly, deploying simplified, emotionally resonant messaging, corporate-funded media, scientific influencers, and parallel spaces at international fora. Civil society's more technically complex communication struggles to compete.
- **Intimidation and suppression of civic space.** Environmental defenders, journalists, and indigenous leaders face death threats, legal harassment, and organized delegitimization campaigns. Parliamentary inquiries have sought to curtail NGO funding on sovereignty grounds, creating a chilling effect on advocacy.
- **Structural power asymmetries.** Massive funding imbalances between corporate lobbies and project-dependent civil society, opaque subsidy regimes amounting to hundreds of billions of reais, and post-pandemic procedural changes in Congress that have weakened minority-party rights and legislative oversight collectively entrench the status quo.
- **Disconnect between public concern and collective action.** While survey data suggest that the vast majority of Brazilians are concerned about climate change, most believe they are in the minority and feel powerless—a perception gap that prevents private concern from translating into effective political demand.

Practical Responses

Participants proposed a comprehensive set of open-government measures, grouped below by intervention sphere.

Regulation and legal reform

- Adopt comprehensive lobby regulation with mandatory registration, agenda disclosure, and meaningful cooling-off periods.
- Reform congressional procedural rules to restore committee scrutiny and minority-party rights.
- Ratify the Escazú Agreement.
- Update the National Climate Change Policy to safeguard climate governance against future reversals.

Transparency of money flows

- Require full disclosure of electoral-campaign financing chains, parliamentary-front funding, corporate lobbying expenditure, and (critically) the subsidy and tax-break regimes that underpin extractive and agribusiness sectors, with clear criteria for efficiency, effectiveness, and time-limitation.

Participation and rights

- Strengthen [Free, Prior, and Informed Consent \(FPIC\)](#) processes beyond bureaucratic formalities and carry it out systematically, ensuring genuine decision-making power for affected communities.
- Guarantee ethnic, regional, and gender representativeness.
- Channel international climate finance directly to grassroots organizations rather than solely through government agencies or large intermediaries.

Accountability mechanisms

- Link environmental licensing and public incentives to verified human-rights due diligence.
- Strengthen enforcement of transparency and consultation rules.
- Use verifiable indicators to expose discrepancies between corporate sustainability commitments and actual performance.

Strategic communication and education

- Invest in simplified, emotionally resonant environmental messaging that can compete with industry narratives.
- Produce high-quality, data-driven research designed to set the media agenda.
- Develop climate-education programs for young people focused on mitigation, adaptation, and cultural change.

Proactive coalition-building

- Move civil society from reactive defense to a coordinated, shared-priority agenda across environmental, human-rights, and social justice organizations.
- Expand systematic engagement in legislative spaces.
- Develop citizen-funding mechanisms to reduce dependence on project-based international support.

Mexico

Mexico has enormous untapped renewable energy potential.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX), the state-owned oil giant, is a major obstructive force in the energy transition, even if reforms in 2025 allow it to engage more in green business opportunities.
- PEMEX is firmly embedded in politics from the national to the local level, with leverage through fiscal importance, an organized workforce, and close links to national sovereignty rhetoric.
- Yet PEMEX's heavy debt load, aging production facilities, and shrinking export relevance raise questions about the durability of its political power.
- Mexico's vast, underutilized renewable potential, critical minerals, and emerging clean manufacturing base suggest a growing pro-transition constituency.
- Persistent loopholes in conflict-of-interest protections, media dominated by few owners, and contradictory energy and climate policies create fertile ground for obstruction and capture.

Capture Risks at a Glance	
Policy challenge	Very Significant
Integrity safeguards	Mixed
Obstructive force	High

THE TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY

- **Renewables potential:** Mexico ranks in the top 20 globally for practical solar potential and has wind capacity fifteen times the current electricity demand. Yet renewables account for only 22 percent of electricity production, well below the regional and global averages (Ember 2025b; World Bank n.d.).
- **Prime near-shoring destination:** Companies relocating supply chains to North America increasingly require renewable power to meet corporate sustainability goals (Baker Institute 2024).
- **Cost savings from lower imports:** More than half of Mexico's 2024 electricity came from U.S. natural gas. Reaching 45 percent renewable penetration by 2030 would save approximately USD 1.6 billion annually in gas imports, which is equivalent to two-thirds of the 2025 federal environment and natural resources budget (Energy Monitor/Ember 2025).
- **Critical minerals powerhouse:** Mexico is among the world's leading producers of copper, silver, and zinc, which are vital for renewable energy and electric vehicle (EV) components, and holds substantial lithium reserves. (USGS/ITA 2025)
- **Employment opportunity:** Reaching 45 percent clean energy could create over 434,000 direct jobs in solar and wind construction and operation (Energy Monitor/Ember 2025).

THE POLICY CHALLENGE

Indicator	Description	Assessment/Value
Climate policy adequacy (Climate Action Tracker 2026)	Alignment of existing climate policies with fair share contribution to Paris Agreement ambition	Highly insufficient
Public sentiment (Yale Program on Climate Change Communication 2023)	Share of population alarmed/concerned vs. doubtful/dismissive of climate change	Conductive 84% alarmed or concerned 3% doubtful or dismissive (Global average 67% and 8% respectively) ⁴

- **Highly insufficient climate policies.** The Climate Action Tracker (2026) [rates](#) Mexico's climate policies as highly insufficient. Taken together, they are projected to lead to rising emissions and are not at all consistent with Paris Agreement ambitions.
- **Fossil fuel takes priority.** Fossil fuel use is prioritized and related plans contradict climate-relevant ambitions. Mexico missed its 35 percent clean energy target despite its high renewable potential.
- **Unclear implementation of net zero target.** A new government announced a net zero 2050 target, acknowledging that emissions must peak and decline. However, implementation credibility remains unclear. Yet the new plans lack full transparency. They disguise weak ambition by using different forest accounting in baseline and target years.
- **Public sentiment.** The overwhelming majority of the population is concerned about climate change. Only three percent are doubtful or dismissive, thereby providing a much more conducive environment for green policies than in most other countries.

⁴ Average for sample of low per capita income countries.

INTEGRITY SAFEGUARDS AND GAPS

Indicator	Description	Assessment/Value
Captured political access and policy (Kaufmann 2024)	Expert assessment of political power and access inequalities	Very significant Rank: 108 out of 172 countries
Press freedom (Reporters Without Borders 2025)	Media pluralism, freedom, and control by private interests	Difficult Overall rank: 124 out of 180 countries Economic context: 113 out of 180 countries
Political integrity data (Global Data Barometer 2025)	Lobbying, political finance, asset declarations, and RTI governance	Mixed 57 out of 100 points (Regional average = 37)
News avoidance (Reuters Institute 2025)	Share of population actively avoiding news	High 44% of citizens (Global average = 40%)

Political integrity infrastructure

- **Mexico built a comparatively advanced political finance oversight architecture.** It ranks among the top regional performers, with qualified administrators auditing party accounts. Since 2022, it has narrowed the regulation-enforcement gap by improving declaration monitoring. Further reforms in 2025 may put the efficacy and enforcement of these integrity protections at risk (Baker Institute 2026; OECD 2024; OECD 2026).
- **Significant structural gaps remain in lobbying transparency, beneficial ownership disclosure, and revolving-door safeguards.** These limit the integrity framework's ability to address capture risks. The lobbying register covers only parliamentary access and discloses little beyond lobbyist names, with no designated supervisory function or systematic verification. Beneficial ownership data collection exists, but lacks a robust legal framework for publication. The absence of cooling-off periods and post-employment tracking for senior officials leaves a notable vulnerability in the system (Casis 2026; OECD 2026).

Media as an accountability mechanism

- **A few family-owned conglomerates dominate television, print, and telecom.** This constrains independent reporting on energy and governance. Severe intimidation risks for journalists further narrow public perspectives on complex policy questions, including the energy transition.

- **Social media has become Mexico's primary news source.** Sixty-four percent of the online population uses it, with TikTok growing fastest. This creates opportunities and risks. Independent journalists bypass traditional gatekeepers, but only 36 percent of Mexicans trust most news, potentially weakening the public scrutiny that effective energy sector oversight requires.

OBSTRUCTIVE FORCES

Indicator	Description	Assessment/ Value	Comparator
Fossil fuel rents (% GDP) (World Bank)	Direct economic importance of fossil fuel extraction to national economy	2.2%	G20 average: 2.2% World average: 2.5%
Export concentration (UNCTAD)	Fossil fuels as share of total exports	~6%	G20 average: 11% World average: 14%
Fossil fuel sector employment (IEA/ILO)	Fossil fuel sector employment as share of total workforce	~0.4%	G20 average: 0.8% World average: 1.0%
GHG intensity (EDGAR)	kg CO ₂ e per \$1k GDP PPP — fossil fuel dependency of national economy	~240	World average: 380
Corporate lobbying alignment with Paris Agreement (InfluenceMap)	Lobbying of top national companies	D+ (PEMEX D-) Actively opposing or hindering the adoption of ambitious climate policies	G20 average: C-

- **Mexico has diversified beyond oil.** Fossil fuels now represent only about six percent of exports, far below automobiles and electronics.
- **While fossil fuel exports are modest, PEMEX remains critical to government revenue.** Its fiscal importance exceeds its GDP share, particularly in regions where PEMEX operations, its workforce, and local infrastructure are deeply embedded in politics (NRGI 2024; World Bank 2024).
- **Mexico's economy is "physically" heavy:** it produces cars, electronics, and appliances for global markets, unlike the UK's service economy. It must decarbonize actual factory heat and power, not just shift sectors. This creates near-term industry support for fossil fuel access. Yet the prospect of attracting clean manufacturing and EV production may diminish long-term obstruction incentives (Martínez 2024).

HOW OBSTRUCTION OPERATES

Mexico's energy, environmental, and governance landscapes are all undergoing fundamental changes, which risk entrenching obstruction and capture rather than addressing them.

Institutionalized market dominance. The constitution requires the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) to hold at least 54 percent of electricity generation. This creates "structural capture," where the utility's operational interests override market efficiency, discouraging private sector innovation and distorting dispatch decisions.

Consolidation of regulatory oversight. Merging two independent agencies under the Energy Ministry (SENER) reduces regulatory autonomy. This increases capture risk by aligning regulations with immediate political objectives rather than long-term technical and environmental standards.

Strategic reallocation of climate capital. Public climate funds increasingly go to natural gas and traditional energy, framed as a "transition fuel" strategy. This entrenches fossil fuel interests within the climate framework and narrows the renewable energy pathway.

Governance weaknesses in state energy enterprises. PEMEX and CFE lack transparency in contracting and competitive bidding. In 2025, Norway's sovereign wealth fund excluded PEMEX from its portfolio, citing an unacceptable risk of gross corruption. The fund's ethics council pointed to bribery allegations and investigations from 2004 to 2023 (Council on Ethics 2024; Norges Bank Investment Management 2025). PEMEX's national symbolic status has insulated it from the scrutiny it warrants.

PEMEX and its fossil-fuel model. PEMEX is also framed as a symbol of national sovereignty. Media coverage largely amplifies state and political voices, reinforcing PEMEX's role as an economic engine, while the energy transition is treated in abstract terms and as secondary to energy security and economic growth.

Just transition risks and local capture. "Energy sovereignty" framed as national security has streamlined large project approvals, bypassing comprehensive [Free, Prior, and Informed Consent \(FPIC\)](#) processes. This marginalizes indigenous and local interests, creating legal and reputational risks for projects that prioritize state development over local environmental and social safeguards.

COUNTRY CONVENING

On March 10, 2026, the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) Mexico and OGP convened an online workshop under the Chatham House Rule, with roughly 15 participants from Mexican civil society, research institutes, international governance bodies, and independent analysts. Using collaborative digital boards and English–Spanish interpretation, participants explored how open government and OGP action plan commitments can counter obstruction and capture in Mexico's energy transition, with a focus on PEMEX.

Further information on convening participants, as well as a more detailed convening summary can be shared on request for collaboration purposes. The views and insights presented in this section reflect the perspectives shared by participants during the convening, which was aimed at surfacing common areas of concern and ideas for potential action among non-governmental actors working on topics related to the energy transition. Their inputs are intended to inform strategies and future multi-stakeholder dialogue on advancing a just, inclusive, and transparent energy transition.

Five Major Obstruction Risks

Participants identified five principal obstruction risks.

- **Executive centralization and sovereignty narratives.** Energy policy decisions are concentrated in the presidency, with fossil fuel production treated as a strategic priority and a symbol of national sovereignty. This nationalist framing narrows public debate and insulates the state oil company from accountability pressures across successive administrations.
- **Institutional inertia and the bureaucratic filter.** Mid-level managers and technical staff with decades of tenure consistently prioritize operational continuity over transformation. Even when top-level political signals shift, the institutional machinery tends to reproduce fossil fuel dependence. Labor unions that could play an important role due to their organizing power are not fully on board for a transition, as they face conflicting interests and are only prepared to embrace change if this is perceived to benefit them.
- **Financial fragility and perpetual rescue logic.** Extreme indebtedness and declining production create a paradoxical dynamic: rather than strengthening the economic case for transition, financial distress triggers a cycle of bailouts and debt restructuring that sustains the current model and removes urgency for change. The scale of public resources committed (estimated in the session at approximately USD 100 billion) without commensurate results underlines the depth of this dynamic.
- **Opacity and information control.** Severe information deficits persist across the energy sector relative to international peers. Access to data on emissions, fracking activities, procurement, and environmental impacts is actively restricted. Participants reported that they need legal proceedings to obtain basic data that comparable companies elsewhere publish proactively. A significant regression in public data availability was identified as a core governance concern.
- **Elite and corporate interests in fossil fuel continuity.** Economic elites with fossil fuel-linked wealth, private investors with major stakes in oil infrastructure, and domestic and foreign oil service companies maintain pressure to preserve existing investments. Political influence is exercised through campaign financing, workforce mobilization, bloc advocacy via industry chambers, and the localized economic significance of oil operations in key regions.

Practical Responses

Participants proposed concrete open government interventions, grouped by thematic focus.

Emissions transparency

- Publish disaggregated CO₂, methane, and SO₂ data by facility (refineries, rigs, and fields), moving beyond national aggregates.
- Enforce existing methane regulations and adopt international reporting standards like the Oil and Gas Methane Partnership.

Fiscal and procurement openness

- Publish federal budget allocations, tax revenues, tax expenditures, and subsidies related to fossil fuels and the energy transition.
- Disclose infrastructure investments, plant useful life, and procurement contracts proactively, not on request only.

Reverse transparency setbacks

- Recover and expand access to oil and gas sectoral data, a foundational priority given recent regressions in public availability.

Independent monitoring and tech-enabled accountability

- Use satellite-based methane monitoring and other independent (non-government owned) data tools to bypass information bottlenecks. The Mexican methane observatory exemplifies a replicable model for generating evidence when formal disclosure fails.

Stakeholder and influence mapping

- Map actors benefiting from fossil fuel continuity and potential transition champions, including legislators who could support reforms such as fracking regulation and renewable energy promotion.

Civil society capacity and coalition development

- Strengthen advocacy capacity among NGOs and communities in oil territories.
- Support independent academic and journalistic investigation.
- Build a broader civil society coalition around open government and climate governance, aligned with the Escazú Agreement.

Philippines

The energy transition presents particularly compelling opportunities for the Philippines.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Fossil fuels play a negligible role for employment and public revenue generation in the Philippines, and the overall GHG intensity of the domestic economy is also relatively low. Fossil fuel production is therefore not deeply rooted in the domestic interest matrix.
- However, a concentrated band of politically influential conglomerates benefit significantly from (mostly imported) coal and increasingly gas (domestic as well as imported) as the dominant sources for electricity generation. They are aided by and have helped shape a regulatory system that favors fossil fuels while undermining the cost-competitiveness and deployment of renewables.
- Filipinos broadly recognize the Philippines' extreme climate exposure, yet a concentrated, politically connected conventional news media dominates over dynamic online outlets. Prevalent intimidation and harassment of journalists, as well as high levels of disinformation and media skepticism, present additional challenges.

Capture Risks at a Glance	
Policy challenge	Manageable
Integrity safeguards	Poor
Obstructive force	Significant

THE TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY

- **Macroeconomic imperative, not just climate ambition.** The Philippines imports about 90 percent of petroleum and spends around USD 15 billion annually on oil imports. Electricity prices rank among Southeast Asia's highest (Navarro et al. 2024). The green transition is fundamentally a cost and energy-security strategy for 117 million citizens (United Nations 2024; BloombergNEF 2025).
- **Surging investor confidence.** BloombergNEF Climatescope 2025 ranks the Philippines fourth globally for energy transition investment among emerging markets and second in Asia-Pacific (BloombergNEF 2025).
- **A world-scale renewable pipeline.** The country's prospective utility-scale wind and solar pipeline stands at approximately 146 GW (Global Energy Monitor 2026), placing it among the top seven countries worldwide. This is only modestly behind Spain's 165 GW. Both wind and solar are estimated to have become cheaper than fossil fuels (Global Energy Monitor 2026).
- **Extreme climate vulnerability as a structural driver.** The Philippines ranks first on the WorldRiskIndex 2025, making transition investment an adaptation necessity (IFHV 2025).
- **Convergence of risk and opportunity.** Acute import dependence, high energy costs, world-leading climate exposure, and a rapidly expanding renewables pipeline create one of the most compelling transition investment cases among emerging economies.

THE POLICY CHALLENGE

Indicator	Description	Assessment/Value
Climate policy adequacy (Climate Action Tracker 2026)	Alignment of existing climate policies with fair share contribution to Paris Agreement ambition	Almost sufficient
Public sentiment (Yale Program on Climate Change Communication 2023)	Share of population alarmed/concerned vs. doubtful/dismissive of climate change	Somewhat conducive 76% alarmed or concerned 5% doubtful or dismissive (Global average 67% and 8% respectively) ⁵

- **“Almost sufficient” rating.** The Philippines' “almost sufficient” rating from the Climate Action Tracker (2025 update) reflects methodological revision rather than improved policy performance (upgraded from “Insufficient” in 2023).
- **2030 NDC.** The conditional 2030 NDC is 1.5°C-compatible but depends on international finance. The unconditional target covers just three percent of stated reductions and is rated “Insufficient.” The Philippines has not submitted a 2035 NDC, net zero target, or long-term strategy (Climate Action Tracker 2025a; Enerdata 2025).
- **Coal-generated electricity and liquefied natural gas.** As of 2024, coal generated over 60 percent of electricity with no phase-out timeline marking the culmination of fifteen years of expansion. The energy plan pivots to imported LNG as a “transition fuel,” raising energy security, cost, and stranded-asset concerns.
- **Decline in the generation of power from renewables.** Recent reforms (such as lifted foreign ownership caps and auction-based procurement) generated a 120 GW solar and wind pipeline, making it the largest in ASEAN. Yet renewables' actual generation share has declined since 2015, constrained by grid infrastructure, permitting, and governance bottlenecks (Ember 2024).
- **Priority actions.** Priority actions include a coal phase-out timeline, strengthened unconditional targets, an ambitious 2035 NDC, a whole-of-economy net zero strategy, and accelerated renewable deployment with permitting reforms.

⁵ Average for sample of low per capita income countries.

INTEGRITY SAFEGUARDS AND GAPS

Indicator	Description	Assessment/Value
Captured political access and policy (Kaufmann 2024)	Expert assessment of political power and access inequalities	Very significant Rank: 109 out of 172 countries
Press freedom (Reporters Without Borders 2025)	Media pluralism, freedom, and control by private interests	Difficult Overall rank: 116 out of 180 countries
Political integrity data (Global Data Barometer 2025)	Lobbying, political finance, asset declarations, and RTI governance	Poor 18 out of 100 points (Global average = 24)
News avoidance (Reuters Institute 2025)	Share of population actively avoiding news	Very high 48% of citizens (Global average = 40%)

Political integrity infrastructure

A number of core elements of the Philippine political integrity infrastructure lack effective implementation.

- **Asset declarations.** The new ombudsman reopened public access to the main registry in October 2025 after years of restriction, but access remains request-based with conditions and the data is not provided in open format (Office of the Ombudsman 2025; Inquirer.net 2025b).
- **Campaign finance.** Election authorities began digitizing filings in 2025, but structured, searchable campaign finance data remains unavailable to the public (Transparency International 2025; Philippine News Agency 2025b).
- **Lobby registry.** No functioning registry exists. The 1957 lobbying law is unenforced, and repeated reform attempts have failed to pass Congress (Office of the Ombudsman 2013).

Media as an accountability mechanism

The media ecosystem also faces significant structural problems.

- **Disinformation surge amid political polarization.** The rift between President Marcos Jr. and Vice President Sara Duterte has fueled a sharp increase in disinformation and harmful content. Social media, which 66 percent use as a news source, is the primary vector, even as legacy media decline stabilizes (Reuters Institute 2025).

- **Extreme media ownership concentration with political entanglement.** A few family conglomerates dominate the Philippines media landscape, blurring the line between media ownership and political power (Reporters Without Borders 2025).
- **Vibrant but dangerous press environment.** Media in the Philippines remain dynamic and pluralistic despite systematic government harassment and targeted attacks on critical outlets, making it one of the world's most dangerous places for reporters (Reporters Without Borders 2025).
- **Low trust, fragile independence.** Only 38 percent of Filipinos trust most news. The internet offers space for independent journalism, but economic viability remains precarious, leaving the ecosystem vulnerable to capture by politically connected owners (Reuters Institute 2025).

OBSTRUCTIVE FORCES

Indicator	Description	Assessment/ Value	Comparator
Fossil fuel rents (% GDP) (World Bank)	Direct economic importance of fossil fuel extraction to national economy	< 0.1%	G20 average: 2.2% World average: 2.5%
Export concentration (UNCTAD)	Fossil fuels as share of total exports	~1%	G20 average: 11% World average: 14%
Fossil fuel sector employment (IEA/ILO)	Fossil fuel sector employment as share of total workforce	~0.1%	G20 average: 0.8% World average: 1.0%
GHG intensity (EDGAR)	kg CO ₂ e per \$1k GDP PPP — fossil fuel dependency of national economy	~165	World average: 380
Corporate lobbying alignment with Paris Agreement (InfluenceMap)	Lobbying of top national companies	No assessment available	G20 average: C-

- **The fossil fuel industry contributes negligibly to GDP, exports, or employment.** However, coal generates over 60 percent of electricity, mostly imported, as of 2024. Concentrated ownership of the coal supply chain, combined with lucrative regulatory provisions and preferential market access, creates a small but politically influential constituency obstructing the transition (Philippine Center of Investigative Journalism 2025a, 2025b; Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis & Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities 2017).
- **Low greenhouse gas intensity reflects the economy's structure.** Services (especially Business Processing Outsourcing or “BPO”) and agriculture dominate, not heavy industry. Unlike China or Mexico, the Philippines hasn't shifted to carbon-intensive manufacturing at scale (Philippine Statistics Authority 2025).

HOW OBSTRUCTION OPERATES

Several patterns of unequal influence favor fossil fuels, particularly coal, over renewables.

Market dominance closely tied to coal. Eleven conglomerates control three-quarters of generation. The two largest of these hold roughly 44 percent of the grid and fossil fuels comprise more than three-quarters of both portfolios. One conglomerate alone accounted for over 60 percent of all coal capacity under development nationally (Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis 2023).

Weakened coal moratorium. The 2020 greenfield moratorium has been weakened through exemptions for “committed” projects, “own-use” facilities, and critical mineral processing, raising concerns among stakeholders regarding transparency and accountability over some exemptions (Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development 2025).

Revolving door policies linked to a single conglomerate. From 2022 to 2025, both the energy secretary and electricity regulator chair were former officers of the same major power producer as independent director and chief legal counsel/compliance officer, respectively. The company's CEO leads the president's private sector advisory council. This is a textbook revolving-door configuration that creates acute structural capture risks (Inquirer 2025b; Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities 2022b; Philippine News Agency 2022).

Asymmetric risk allocation favors fossil fuels. “Pass-through mechanisms” let utilities transfer fuel price volatility to consumers, removing any market penalty for carbon-intensive portfolios. By contrast, renewable developers operate under fixed-price contracts with no equivalent risk protection (Manych & Jakob 2021).

Grid underinvestment to erase renewables' cost advantage. Only 75 of 258 planned electricity transmission projects were completed by 2024. The grid operator uses 10 percent of allocated capital yet collects full revenue under “as-spent” recovery guarantees. (National Grid Corporation of the Philippines 2025; Philippine News Agency 2025).

Vertically integrated supply agreements to foreclose renewable market entry. The dominant distribution utility signs 15-year power supply agreements with generation companies in which it holds equity stakes, notably gas-fired operators with joint ventures involving the country's two largest conglomerates. These circular arrangements risk decades of fossil fuel lock-in and face legal and regulatory challenges (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism 2025a; Philippine Competition Commission 2024).

COUNTRY CONVENING

On March 6, 2026, Bantay Kita and OGP convened two online workshops with approximately 28 participants from Philippine civil society, advocacy networks, consumer rights organizations, academic institutions, and international bodies. Sessions combined presentations with structured brainstorming on collaborative digital boards under Chatham House Rule. The convening was timed to the midpoint refresh of the Philippines' sixth OGP national action plan (2023–2027), offering a concrete entry point for energy transition safeguards in the reform agenda.

Further information on convening participants, as well as a more detailed convening summary, can be shared on request for collaboration purposes. The views and insights presented in this section reflect the perspectives shared by participants during the convenings, which were aimed at surfacing common areas of concern and ideas for potential action among non-governmental actors working on topics related to the energy transition. Their inputs are intended to inform strategies and future multi-stakeholder dialogue on advancing a just, inclusive, and transparent energy transition.

Five Major Obstruction Risks

- **Political dynasties, conflicts of interest, and beneficial ownership opacity.** Local and national politicians hold stakes in mining and energy operations, leveraging positions to fast-track approvals and suppress opposition. Research found politically exposed persons linked to a significant share of active nickel mining. The absence of a national anti-political dynasty law and secrecy-jurisdiction registration compounds the problem.
- **Manipulation of community consent processes.** [Free, prior and informed consent \(FPIC\)](#) is systematically undermined through bribery of community leaders, coerced formation of indigenous mining companies, information withholding, and structural conflicts of interest where proponents fund the consent process. Communities become dependent, trading company-provided welfare for land rights.
- **Regulatory capture and weak institutional monitoring.** Key regulatory agencies are under-resourced and fragmented, with oversight reduced to compliance exercises. Monitoring visits have been cut, audit capacity is absent, and the extractive industry holds a routine legislative seat while civil society is actively discouraged. Civil society performing governance functions faces inadequate funding, safety risks, and red-tagging.
- **Policy incoherence as a distinct mechanism of capture.** Despite a national ban on new coal plants, exemptions allow extractive industry captive coal power. The critical minerals policy framework contains safeguard language but lacks hard commitments, while proposed fast-tracking risks bypassing indigenous rights and environmental protections. Contradictions create structural openings for incumbent interests.
- **Campaign financing and corporate-political linkages.** Mining companies fund election campaigns at national and local levels, with cash payments at public consultations and corporate workforce mobilization for political support. Social development expenditures by companies spiked during election years, and the link between donations and regulatory outcomes remains largely undisclosed.

Practical Responses

Participants suggested a wide array of practical measures to be considered.

Transparency and disclosure

- Mandate open publication of mining contracts, monitoring reports, and social development funds.
- Expand beneficial ownership disclosure to cover the full licensing and export chain.
- Require lobbying and political finance transparency from the energy sector.
- Reverse documented regressions in public data availability across extractive and energy sectors.

Institutional reform and regulatory strengthening

- Safeguard the transition of PH-EITI into the new Transparency Office for the Extractives.
- Enforce merit-based appointments and fixed terms at key agencies.
- Close policy loopholes, such as coal ban exemptions.
- Update subcontracting guidelines.
- Introduce enforceable conflict-of-interest prohibitions for politicians with stakes in extractive or large-scale energy businesses.

Community participation and protection

- Invest in capacity building such as legal aid, digital tools, documentation and citizen journalism training for affected communities, indigenous groups, women, and youth across the value chain.
- Institutionalize consumer participation in energy regulation through legislative amendment.
- Protect civic space by ending red-tagging and advancing the Environmental and Human Rights Defenders bill.

Subnational and multi-stakeholder governance

- Localize PH-EITI and OGP transparency frameworks to the local government level.
- Establish community-based, multi-stakeholder mechanisms for monitoring royalties and company commitments.
- Capacitate local governments that host mining and renewable energy on natural resource governance and anti-corruption.

Legislative and international leverage

- Advance the transition minerals export moratorium bill, the anti-political dynasty bill at national level, and EPIRA consumer protection amendments through coalition work in the House of Representatives.
- Use multilateral development bank safeguard policies and the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive as complementary external accountability tools, while acknowledging their limitations in delivering community-level outcomes.

Narrative and coalition building

- Develop communications strategies that reframe the energy transition around justice, equity, and community rights.
- Break knowledge silos between the transition minerals, fossil fuels, renewable energy, deep sea mining, and consumer rights communities.
- Address the co-optation of civil society expertise by extractive companies through stronger professional ethics frameworks and advocacy career support.

United Kingdom

The UK has already reached some notable achievements in the energy transition but still has a large, untapped potential.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The UK ranks fifth globally in the 2026 Climate Change Performance Index and was the first G7 nation to eliminate coal-fired power. Yet current policies are rated "Insufficient" by the Climate Action Tracker (2025). Only 38 percent of needed emissions cuts have credible policy coverage. Taking into account policies with delivery or funding risks, coverage rises to 61 percent—leaving 39 percent uncovered.
- On paper, the UK's integrity framework meets roughly 80 percent of OECD criteria. The practical implementation score for conflict-of-interest management is among the lowest in the dataset, at 5 to 10 percent. A major structural gap is the lobbying register, which exempts an estimated 85 percent of lobbyists. A review of the lobbying regulation was announced in March 2026.
- Fossil fuel interests have intensive access to the government. In 2023, under the previous government, ministry-level meetings with fossil fuel companies occurred twice daily on average, and the number of meetings increased in the new government's first year. Over 120 former fossil fuel employees now hold senior government or advisory roles. Fossil fuel interests have channeled at least GBP 240,000 to informal parliamentary groups to shape policy on Carbon Capture and Storage and North Sea licensing.
- The national newspaper market is dominated by just three companies. This polarized environment has contributed to a high news avoidance rate of 46 percent and a public trust level in news of only 35 percent.
- Influence has shifted toward "upstream" activities, such as industry-sponsored research centers where less than one percent of publications are focused on renewables. Additionally, fossil-funded think tanks are used to politicize climate policies and make it into a "culture war" issue.

Capture Risks at a Glance	
Policy challenge	Manageable
Integrity safeguards	Poor
Obstructive force	Significant

THE TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY

- **High ranking in the Climate Change Performance Index.** The UK ranks fifth globally in the 2026 Climate Change Performance Index and is the only G20 nation to receive a "High" overall rating (Germanwatch et al. 2025).
- **First G7 country to eliminate coal-powered electricity.** The country became the first G7 nation to fully eliminate coal-fired electricity generation, reaching zero percent coal in September 2024. This is a significant structural milestone (CarbonBrief 2024).
- **High level of wind-generated power.** With approximately 32 GW of installed wind capacity (split evenly between onshore and offshore), the UK ranks sixth globally and is the world's second-largest offshore wind producer after China. On November 11, 2025, wind generation hit a record 22.7 GW, supplying 80 percent of British homes (Global Wind Energy Council 2025; REN21 2025).

- **Battery energy storage investments.** The UK consistently ranks among the top countries in the world for battery energy storage investment attractiveness, in some rankings behind only the US and China. This signals strong positioning in a critical enabling technology for the transition (EY 2024; Solar Power Portal 2025).
- **The transition carries a substantial employment dividend.** The government's Clean Energy Jobs Plan projects the clean energy workforce to nearly double from approximately 440,000 to 860,000 by 2030, creating over 400,000 new roles (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero 2025).

THE POLICY CHALLENGE

Indicator	Description	Assessment/Value
Climate policy adequacy (Climate Action Tracker 2026)	Alignment of existing climate policies with fair share contribution to Paris Agreement ambition	Insufficient
Public sentiment (Yale Program on Climate Change Communication 2023)	Share of population alarmed/concerned vs. doubtful/dismissive of climate change	Poorly conducive 54% alarmed or concerned 18% doubtful or dismissive (Global average 67% and 8% respectively) ⁶

The UK is moving in the right direction but too slowly. Years of stalled progress created an implementation gap that the current government has only partially closed. Without a step-change in ambition, the UK cannot credibly claim global climate leadership.

- **Insufficient climate policies.** The UK's climate policies are rated "Insufficient" by the Climate Action Tracker (2025). The Labour government (which has been in office since July 2024) has shifted policy closer to 2°C, but the change is not deep enough to improve the rating. Thirty-eight percent of needed emissions cuts have credible policy coverage. Taking into account policies with delivery or funding risks, coverage rises to 61 percent—leaving 39 percent uncovered (Climate Action Tracker 2025b; Climate Change Committee 2025a).
- **Current trajectory.** The UK's current trajectory would, if replicated globally, result in warming of 2 to 3°C, well above the 1.5°C goal. The High Court ruled in 2024 on procedural grounds that existing policies are incompatible with the UK's own carbon budgets. A revised plan, considered somewhat improved but not sufficient, was published in October 2025 (Carbon Brief 2025; ClientEarth 2025).
- **Policy shortcomings.** There are three key policy shortcomings in the UK:
 - Aviation policy risks blowing the carbon budget and undermining overall targets unless offset by deeper cuts elsewhere (Climate Change Committee 2025a; Climate Change Committee 2025b).

⁶ Average for sample of low per capita income countries.

- Bipartisan consensus is fracturing. A hardening core of climate skeptics is gaining political voice, slowing the transition. This can be explained, in part, by fossil fuel industry lobbying and weak transparency (InfluenceMap 2025a).
- Just transition failures, like the Port Talbot steelworks, risk leaving affected communities behind and eroding public support (Associated Press 2024).
- **Momentum needs to be sustained.** The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan aims to raise low-carbon electricity from 65 percent to over 95 percent by 2030. The Warm Homes Plan commits GBP 13.2 billion to heat pump rollout, retrofitting, and domestic supply chains. Transport electrification is broadly tracking the CCC's recommended pathway, though momentum must be sustained (Climate Action Tracker 2025b; UK Government 2024a; UK Government 2025).

INTEGRITY SAFEGUARDS AND GAPS

Indicator	Description	Assessment/Value
Captured political access and policy (Kaufmann 2024)	Expert assessment of political power and access inequalities	Medium Rank: 55 out of 172 countries
Press freedom (Reporters Without Borders 2025)	Media pluralism, freedom, and control by private interests	Satisfactory Overall rank: 20 out of 180 countries
Political integrity data (Global Data Barometer 2025)	Lobbying, political finance, asset declarations, and RTI governance	Mixed 60 out of 100 points (Global average = 24)
News avoidance (Reuters Institute 2025)	Share of population actively avoiding news	Very high 46% of citizens (Global average = 40%)

Political integrity infrastructure

The UK's political integrity system shows mixed strengths and weaknesses.

- **Lobbying disclosure has significant structural gaps.** The UK's lobbying register exempts approximately 85 percent of lobbyists through an “in-house” exemption, in contrast to consultant lobbyists. Ministerial meeting records are often incomplete and delayed. Unlike EU and US practice, government consultation responses are not published as standard, leaving Freedom of Information (FOI) requests as the primary transparency mechanism. InfluenceMap's research found significant gaps between disclosed and actual lobbying activity across hydrogen, oil and gas licensing, and aviation fuel policy (InfluenceMap2025a; Spotlight on Corruption 2025).

- **Conflict of interest regulation lags behind OECD's average.** The UK's regulatory framework meets just over half of OECD criteria on paper and this drops to 22 percent in implementation. Implementation is among the lowest at 5 to 10 percent. Sources of weakness include the lack of centrally defined sanctions, the lack of a centralized register for top civil servants, and the fact that some declarations are still not submitted electronically (OECD 2026; Spotlight on Corruption 2024).
- **Revolving door oversight is a relative but partial strength.** The UK has established cooling-off periods and tracks minister and official movement into the private sector. Yet implementation is inconsistent and there are no cooling-off periods for lobbyists entering the public service (OECD 2026; Transparency International UK 2024).

Media as an accountability mechanism

- **The news ecosystem faces compounding pressures on pluralism and investigative capacity.** Three companies dominate the national newspaper market. Costly libel threats and precarious freelancing deter investigations. Anti-SLAPP legislation has stalled. Public trust in news stands at only 35 percent and almost half (46 percent) of all respondents indicated that they avoid news (Media Reform Coalition 2025 and 2023; Law Gazette 2024; Reuters Institute 2025).

OBSTRUCTIVE FORCES

Indicator	Description	Assessment/ Value	Comparator
Fossil fuel rents (% GDP) (World Bank)	Direct economic importance of fossil fuel extraction to national economy	0.5%	G20 average: 2.2% World average: 2.5%
Export concentration (UNCTAD)	Fossil fuels as share of total exports	~9%	G20 average: 11% World average: 14%
Fossil fuel sector employment (IEA/ILO)	Fossil fuel sector employment as share of total workforce	~0.1 to 0.4%	G20 average: 0.8% World average: 1.0%
GHG intensity (EDGAR)	kg CO ₂ e per \$1k GDP PPP — fossil fuel dependency of national economy	~110	World average: 380
Corporate lobbying alignment with Paris Agreement (InfluenceMap)	Lobbying of top national companies	C (C- for oil and gas companies) Inconsistencies between public statements and actual lobbying	G20 average: C-

- **Low direct economic dependence on fossil fuels.** The UK's fossil fuel rents amount to roughly 0.5 percent of GDP, well below the G20 average (about 2.2 percent) and the global average (about 2.5 percent). This suggests that the economic stake underpinning resistance to transition is structurally modest compared to peer economies.
- **Limited employment exposure is often overstated.** Headline figures show fossil fuel employment at about 0.4 percent of the workforce (about 120,000 to 150,000 jobs, mostly in Scotland and the North Sea). Direct employment is lower, at approximately 27,600 workers (about 0.1 percent). The larger figure includes indirect and induced employment, overstating the sector's political weight.
- **Export profile shaped by refining, not extraction.** The UK's fossil fuel export share (at about nine percent, below the G20 average of about 11 percent) reflects refined petroleum trade, not raw extraction. The UK operates more as an energy trading hub than a resource-dependent economy.
- **Mixed signals in corporate lobbying.** Top 20 UK companies show a “C” rating for climate lobbying (and C- for oil and gas), indicating mixed behavior with frequent gaps between public statements and actual practice. This aligns with the G20 average.
- **Decoupling GHG from GDP growth.** The UK has achieved absolute decoupling: GHG emissions fell roughly 54 percent since 1990 while GDP grew. GHG intensity is about 110 kg CO₂e per \$1,000 GDP—less than one-third the global average (which is 386 kg CO₂e per \$1,000 GDP). The near-total phase-out of coal from the power grid and the dominance of the service economy have substantially eroded the structural foundations for fossil fuel lock-in, although consumer-side measures of carbon footprint show a continued dependence on imported emissions via imports of high-carbon products.

HOW OBSTRUCTION OPERATES

The UK's political integrity infrastructure system checks many boxes with regard to the existence of essential elements, yet large regulatory loopholes remain, implementation is mixed and fossil fuel interests avail themselves of a range of obstructive strategies.

Taken together, these mechanisms converge in one outcome: the government's GBP 22 billion pledge for CCUS and blue hydrogen. These technologies extend gas infrastructure life despite a poor global track record and unclear costs. Critics frame this as a textbook case of transition finance being redirected to subsidize continued fossil fuel extraction rather than proven renewable alternatives (InfluenceMap 2025b; UK Government 2024b).

Broad efforts to shape public discourse and slow the transition. Fossil fuel interests deploy multiple tools to advance pro-fossil narratives on affordability and security. Targeted issue advertising, brand enhancement, and greenwashing operate across billboards, traditional media, and podcasts (Daley et al. 2024; InfluenceMap 2025a).

Polarized media landscape. Polarized media seeking clicks from outrage provides fertile ground for climate misinformation and obstruction. In 2025, UK newspapers featured more editorials opposing climate action than supporting it, driven almost entirely by right-wing outlets that have a long history of seeding climate skepticism (Carbon Brief 2026, Painter et al. 2026, Daley et al. 2024).

Influence through research and ideas. Fossil fuel sponsorship shapes academic and think tank agendas. At an industry-sponsored research center at a prestigious university, 90 percent of publications cover financial markets and security, while less than one percent address renewables. Fossil-funded think tanks frame climate policy as ideological division. This messaging is amplified by media outlets that profit from polarization (Hiltner et al. 2024; InfluenceMap 2025a).

Fossil fuel lobbying. Between 2019 and 2021, Department for Business, Energy, & Industrial Strategy ministers met fossil fuel companies at a 5 to 1 ratio over renewables (InfluenceMap 2021b). In 2023, ministry-level fossil fuel meetings totaled 343 (Global Witness 2024), rising to 506 in the government's first year (2024 to 2025) (Fossil Free Parliament 2025).

A fast-spinning revolving door. Since 2011, over 120 former oil and gas workers have taken senior government or advisory roles, including 31 board seats. Eight simultaneously hold board positions at oil companies while advising ministers (InfluenceMap 2025b).

Leverage through parliamentary infrastructure. Fossil fuel interests have channeled at least GBP 240,000 to informal parliamentary groups—specifically Hydrogen, CCUS, and Offshore Oil & Gas. They provide secretariat services through trade bodies and PR firms, effectively turning these groups into low-transparency lobbying platforms (Barnett 2023; InfluenceMap 2025a).

COUNTRY CONVENING

OGP and the UK Open Government Network held an invitation-only workshop on March 12, 2026 with researchers, civil society, journalists, think tanks, and open government practitioners. The session followed the Chatham House Rule and focused on three areas: mapping vulnerabilities to obstructive influence in net zero policy, identifying practical responses, and exploring OGP commitments. Timing matters: the UK is currently preparing its next OGP action plan and will co-chair OGP globally from October 2026, creating both a platform and an obligation to demonstrate domestic leadership on open governance.

Further information on convening participants, as well as a more detailed convening summary, can be shared on request for collaboration purposes. The views and insights presented in this section reflect the perspectives shared by participants during the convening, which was aimed at surfacing common areas of concern and ideas for potential action among non-governmental actors working on topics related to the energy transition. Their inputs are intended to inform strategies and future multi-stakeholder dialogue on advancing a just, inclusive, and transparent energy transition.

Five Major Obstruction Risks

Participants identified multiple vulnerabilities to obstructive influence in UK net zero policy. These operate as interlocking systemic, connected features, from opaque lobbying to structural dependence on incumbent energy.

- **Opacity of lobbying and influence channels.** UK lobbying transparency covers only direct lobbying, missing informal access, advisory relationships, and third-party intermediaries. Ministerial records show that meetings occurred but not what positions were advanced, leaving civil society unable to assess whose interests shaped policy.

- **Consultation processes as a black box.** Unlike 82 percent of OECD countries, the UK does not publish consultation responses. Researchers must use Freedom of Information requests, which are also slow, redacted, and often blocked. Expert advisory minutes were once accessible, but now 50 to 60 percent of carbon capture and storage content is withheld. This opacity has worsened over a decade.
- **Conflicts of interest in advisory relationships and trade associations.** Management consultancies advise the government on policy while serving fossil fuel clients, with internal separation rarely verified. Trade associations channel opaque influence and misrepresent membership views, a pattern seen in European cases, where associations claimed to speak for over 1,000 companies, often without authorization from members. New representative bodies and compliance marks have proliferated to provide legitimacy to positions that established standards bodies would not endorse.
- **Narrative capture and the culture war dynamic.** Climate action has been encoded into culture war narratives, making local initiatives politically toxic and limiting local authority capacity to implement transition. Fossil-fuel narratives amplified through media, donations, and think tanks emphasize climate action costs over inaction costs. Think tanks operate as nodes in larger influence networks linking foundations, extractive industries, PR firms, and business lobbies.
- **Structural dependencies and path dependency.** Policy capture cannot be understood through lobbying alone. Decision makers face structural dependencies on incumbent energy systems, the existing electricity grid infrastructure, supply chains, and geopolitics that shape energy policy. What appears to be undue influence may reflect institutional arrangements that constrain decision-making before any direct lobbying occurs.

Practical Responses

Participants generated concrete proposals suited to the OGP commitment framework: measurable, time-bound reforms co-created by government and civil society.

Consultation and information transparency

- Amend the UK Consultation Principles to require publication of all consultation responses as standard, aligning with Scotland, the EU, and the United States. This is the most actionable proposal because it is concrete, measurable, and low-cost.

Lobbying and influence disclosure

- Extend lobbying disclosure beyond ministerial meetings to cover more officials and interactions, with disclosure of positions advanced (not just meetings). The UK's ongoing lobbying rule review offers a timely entry point for piloting enhanced disclosure in energy policy, perhaps as an OGP commitment.
- Require trade associations to disclose membership, funding, and position formation, with consequences for misrepresentation.

Conflict of interest and foreign influence regulation

- Mandate that advisory firms disclose concurrent and recent clients in the relevant sector—a widely recognized but unregulated channel.
- Strengthen the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme to capture lobbying by PR and consultancy firms on behalf of fossil fuel governments.

Countervailing participation and civic space protection

- Strengthen anti-SLAPP legislation to protect journalists and civil society.
- Create mechanisms for underrepresented groups, such as affected communities and future generations, to participate in energy governance.
- Invest in public communication on transition benefits.

Strategic communications on net zero

- Convene communicators, researchers, educators, and civil society to develop a coordinated public engagement strategy on energy transition that counters misinformation and builds support for net zero policy. This could be done through an OGP commitment.

Annex 1



Country Dashboard: Indicators and Data Sources

TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY

Description

Selective prospects with regard to renewable energy potential, critical mineral supply etc.

Rationale

Indicators for a pro-transition policy pull momentum

Source

Various authoritative stock-takes and projections (BloombergNEF, Ember, IEA, IRENA)

SCALE OF POLICY CHALLENGE

Climate policy sufficiency

Description

How do existing climate policy efforts align with the Paris Agreement?

Rationale

A marker of the required policy effort

Source

Climate Action Tracker 2024-2026 (latest available country update)

Public sentiment

Description

Share of population that are alarmed/concerned vs. doubtful/dismissive of climate change

Rationale

A gauge for the general public readiness to tackle climate change

Source

Public Opinion on Climate Change (Yale Program on Climate Change Communication 2023)

INTEGRITY SAFEGUARDS AND WEAKNESSES

Captured political access and policy 2020–2022

Description

Expert assessment on political power and political access inequalities

Rationale

The big picture view on political access

Source

State Capture Index 2024 based on V-Dem Data (Kaufmann 2024)

Press freedom 2025

Description

Expert assessment on media pluralism and freedom including control by private interests

Rationale

A health check of the media and its watchdog function

Source

World Press Freedom Index 2025 (Reporters Without Borders 2025)

Political integrity data

Description

Expert assessment of key data availability and governance: lobbying, political finance, asset declarations, and the right to information

Rationale

Covers central pillars to protect against undue influence

Source

Global Data Barometer 2021 (UK, Philippines) and 2025 (Brazil, Mexico)

News avoidance

Description

Representative survey

Rationale

Covers the demand side and audience response to news

Source

Digital News Report 2025 (Reuters Institute 2025)

OBSTRUCTIVE FORCES

Direct fossil fuel interests and importance

Description

- Fossil fuel rents (percent of GDP); export concentration (percent of total exports); and fossil fuel sector employment (percent of total workforce)

Rationale

- Importance for the overall economy
- Relevance of fossil fuels as a foreign exchange revenue source
- How the fossil fuel labor and industry are closely intertwined, and how these constituencies exert direct pressure on elected representative (Mildenberger 2020)

Source

- World Bank Open Data 2021
- Export Concentration (Product Share) (UNCTADstat — Merchandise trade matrix)
- International Energy Agency (IEA): World Energy Employment
- ILOSTAT Database: Employment by Sector

Business dependence on fossil fuels

Description

GHG Intensity (kg CO₂e / \$1k GDP PPP)

Rationale

Common metrics to describe fossil fuel dependency of a national economy

Source

Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR 2022)

Direct lobbying (pro or contra climate)

Description

Average Paris (non)alignment of top national companies

Rationale

Widely referenced assessment exercise of corporate political engagement

Source

InfluenceMap 2026 disaggregated data provided to author

Annex 2



Obstruction Narratives

Lamb et al. (2020) have created a typology of obstruction narratives used to delay the energy transition. Recognizing these narratives can help reformers understand typical patterns of delay.

REDIRECT RESPONSIBILITY

“Someone else should act first”

- **Individualism:** Individuals and consumers are ultimately responsible for taking actions to address climate change.
- **Whataboutism:** Our carbon footprint is trivial compared to [...]. Therefore it makes no sense for us to take action, at least until [...] does so.
- **The “free rider” excuse:** Reducing emissions is going to weaken us. Others have no real intention of reducing theirs and will take advantage of that.

PUSH NON-TRANSFORMATIVE SOLUTIONS

“Big changes are not necessary”

- **Technological optimism:** We should focus our efforts on current and future technologies, which will unlock great possibilities for addressing climate change.
- **All talk, little action:** We are world leaders in addressing climate change. We have approved an ambitious target and have declared a climate emergency.
- **Fossil fuel solutionism:** Fossil fuels are part of the solution. Our fuels are becoming more efficient and are the bridge towards a low-carbon future.
- **No sticks, just carrots:** Society will only respond to supportive and voluntary policies, restrictive measures will fail and should be abandoned.

EMPHASIZE THE DOWNSIDES

“Change will be disruptive”

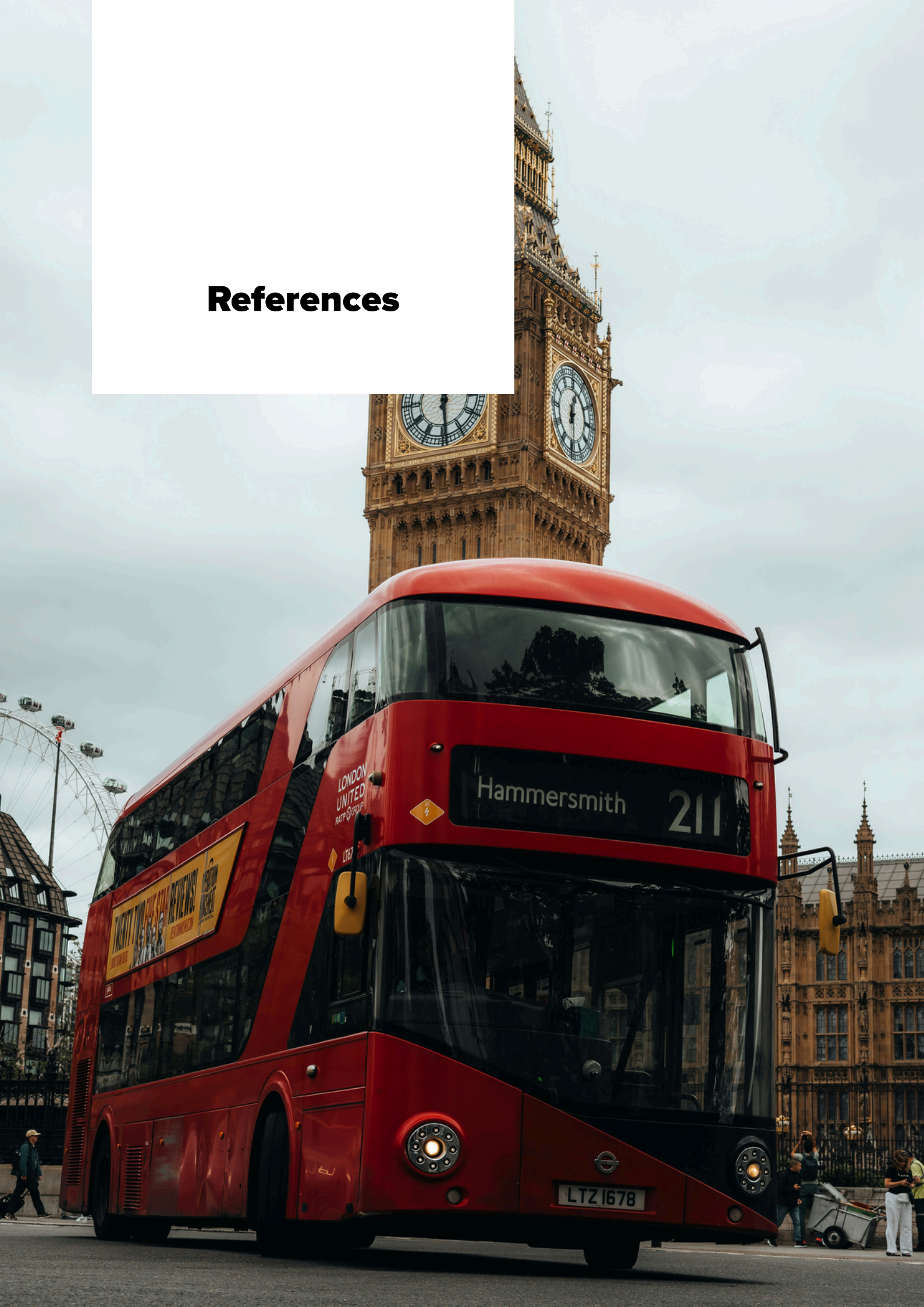
- **Policy perfectionism:** We should seek only perfectly-crafted solutions that are supported by all affected parties; otherwise we will waste limited opportunities for adoption.
- **Appeal to well-being:** Fossil fuels are required for development. Abandoning them will condemn the global poor to hardship and their right to modern livelihoods.
- **Appeal to social justice:** Climate actions will generate large costs. Vulnerable members of our society will be burdened; hard-working people cannot enjoy their holidays.

SURRENDER

“We can’t mitigate climate change”

- **Change is impossible:** Any measure to reduce emissions effectively would run against current ways of life or human nature and is thus impossible to implement in a democratic society.
- **Doomism:** Any mitigation actions we take are too little, too late. Catastrophic climate change is already locked-in. We should adapt, or accept our fate in the hands of God or nature.

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