



Climate Governance

An assessment of the government's ability and readiness to transform Colombia into a zero emissions society

CAT Climate Governance Series

COLOMBIA

March 2023

CAT Climate Governance Series

Under the Paris Agreement, governments have committed to limiting temperature increase to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. Achieving this objective will require halving global emissions by 2030, reaching net zero CO₂ emissions by 2050 and all gases around 2070, with net negative emissions thereafter.

Governments in all countries play a critical role in enabling this transformation, which involves action from all aspects of society and the economy.

The Climate Action Tracker (CAT) tracks the progress of countries towards achieving the climate targets they have set for themselves under the Paris Agreement and what the combined effect of these commitments and policies mean for global temperature levels at the end of this century.

In this series, the CAT expands on its country analysis to evaluate the ability and readiness of national governments to enable the required economy-wide transformation towards a zero emissions society.

Our assessment focuses on national governments and analyses four aspects of governance covering key enabling factors for effective climate action:

- the political commitment of the government to decarbonisation,
- the institutional framework it has put in place to achieve its emission reduction targets,
- the processes it has established to develop, implement and review mitigation policies, and
- its ability and willingness to engage with relevant stakeholders on policy development.

The Climate Governance Series seeks to offer a standardised and replicable approach to assessing a government's ability and readiness to achieve the required transformation, highlighting positive developments and areas for improvement.

Since 2019, we have been expanding the scope of our coverage. All country profiles are available on our [website](http://climateactiontracker.org/publications/climate-governance).

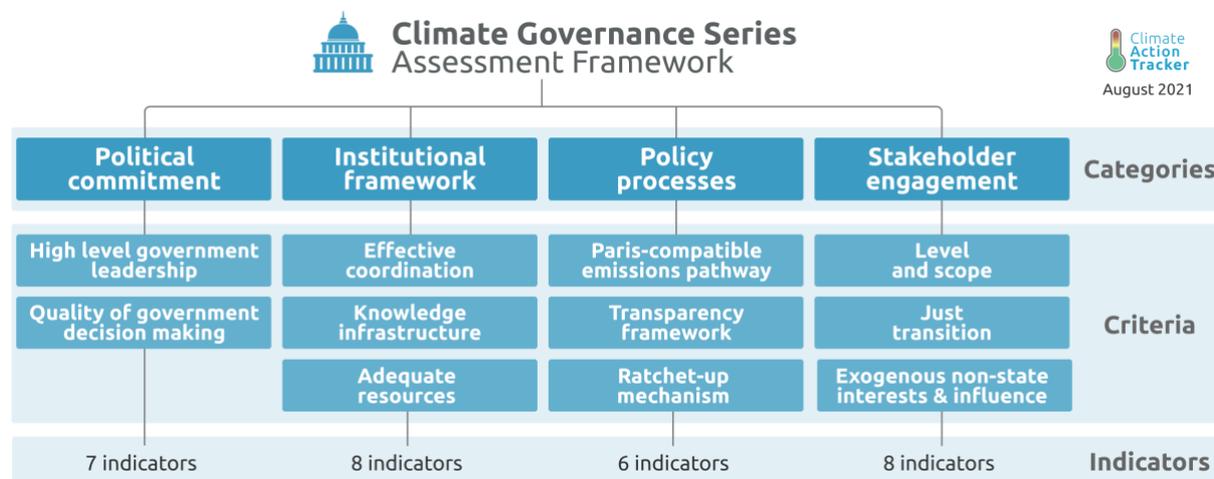


<http://climateactiontracker.org/publications/climate-governance>

Legend

Understanding our indicators

This report series seeks to produce a standardised and replicable approach to assessing a country's readiness to transition to a zero emissions society. To achieve this, we have assessed a number of possible indicators under four broad categories and eleven criteria. **Criteria** are marked in bold text throughout this document.



Notwithstanding the desire for standardisation, our framework is a living document and we occasionally revise the number or make-up of our indicators. For complete details, see our [methodology page](#). This assessment of Colombia is based on our **2021 methodology**.

Understanding our rating system

Our rating system highlights positive developments within countries, identifies areas of improvement, and establishes a basis on which to compare climate governance across countries.

Each individual indicator has been assessed and given a score. The categories and criteria linked to those indicators are then given a rating based on those scores.

Very Poor	<p>≤ 20% of possible score This rating indicates that the government is deficient and improvement is necessary.</p>
Poor	<p>20 – 40% of possible score This rating indicates that the government is showing a limited level of readiness and improvement is still necessary.</p>
Neutral	<p>40 – 60% of possible score This rating indicates that the government is showing some level of readiness, but improvement is still necessary.</p>
Acceptable	<p>60 – 80% of possible score This rating indicates that the government is showing a good level of readiness, although improvement is still possible.</p>
Advanced	<p>≥ 80% of possible score This rating indicates that the government is performing well, although improvement is still possible and beneficial.</p>

Executive summary

President Gustavo Petro is committed to transitioning Colombia away from a fossil fuel-based economy to one centred on renewable energy, and to fight deforestation. He assumed power in early August 2022 and has begun delivering on some of his election promises, though much work remains. Legislation on banning fracking, introduced in the first few days of his tenure, has not yet been adopted.

There is support in his cabinet for the transition, though individual ministers differ on the speed of the transition and whether new fossil gas developments should be pursued. The government also plans to tackle other major issues, like advancing the country's peace process, and land reform. While there is some overlap with climate policy and fighting deforestation, there is still a risk that political attention and capital may be spread thin.

Colombia has been steadily advancing its climate policy in recent years, passing a number of important pieces of climate legislation (e.g. 2018 and 2021 climate laws and the 2019 EV law), updating its NDC target and adopting a net zero goal. While there is broad recognition across political parties of the need for climate action, the specifics on energy policy are particularly contentious. The new Energy Minister, Irene Vélez, who has been adamant that no new oil and gas exploration is needed, has faced significant and consistent criticism from some members in Congress and repeated calls for her to resign.

Colombians generally have low levels of trust in their government and public institutions and believe many to be corrupt. There have been some high-profile cases in relation to the awarding of solar and adaptation projects, which can both undermine public trust and impede implementation.

Coordination occurs through the Intersectoral Commission on Climate Change (CICC) at the national level and through nine regional nodes at the sub-national level. While it is working at the national level, as evidenced by the country's updated NDC and adoption of its long-term strategy, the regional level faces a number of challenges, including resource constraints and low political or sectoral engagement, limiting its effectiveness. Draft regulations under consideration may address some of these issues, but further work is likely needed.

Colombia needs to work on mainstreaming climate considerations across all sectors. While the policy landscape is generally coherent, with the National Development Plan (a four-year plan adopted at the beginning of each new administration) driving broad sectoral objectives, there are many sectoral planning documents and these are not always up to date. Energy is the only sector to have updated its climate plan to align with the country's 2050 strategy, and while the industry sector's plan includes updated NDC measures, the others are based on the first NDC. The transport sector has not yet published its plan.

Colombia does not have an authoritative body with an explicit and clear mandate to provide zero emissions transition-related advice. Some of the technical committees of the Intersectoral Commission may fulfil some of this role. The National Climate Change Council, the permanent consultative body of the Commission, may also provide advice, though it does not yet appear to be operational. The government would benefit from reviewing its knowledge infrastructure to ensure that it is receiving the necessary advice on the transition.

Colombia has a good level of climate finance readiness. Its Financial Management Committee was established in 2016 as a sub-committee of the Intersectoral Commission (CICC) and is run by the National Planning Department. The government has worked with private sector entities to develop sub-sector specific guidelines and regulations and it has experience in a number of financial instruments, from issuing its first sovereign green bonds in 2021 to participating in the Clean Development Mechanism.

Yet, Colombia's public and private financial flows are not yet aligned with a 1.5°C consistent pathway. Historically, government support for the fossil fuel industry has dwarfed the level spent on renewable energy incentives and climate finance more broadly. The new administration's focus on accelerating the energy transition and its 2022 tax reforms, which will increase the effective tax burden for fossil fuel producers, will help to change this picture over time.

Colombia has a 2050 net zero GHG emissions target, enshrined in domestic law, and has outlined a roadmap to reach this target in its long-term strategy. Colombia needs to work on ensuring net zero considerations are incorporated into near-term policy development. As noted above, only the energy sector climate plan has been updated to incorporate the 2050 strategy. Colombia did release a net zero building sector roadmap in June 2022; however, this has not been integrated into the housing sector climate plan.

Colombia has a functioning transparency framework, though there is room for improvement. It can be difficult to access material, which may be spread across websites or reports. Nor is the information easily understandable to a non-technical audience. Progress at the sectoral level is uneven. The energy ministry is the only ministry to have released a MRV progress report.

Colombia submitted its first NDC update in 2020, but did not submit a further update in line with the 2021 Glasgow Climate Pact to ‘revisit and strengthen’ NDCs in 2022. It has also not released its first implementation and monitoring plan, assessing progress towards the current target.

Polling data suggests Colombians are worried about climate change and want more government action, though few rank climate change among their top concerns and do not see it as affecting their everyday lives. Colombia has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most dangerous places in the world for environmental defenders, with many losing their lives each year. While consultations are held regularly, some view these as pro forma and unlikely to result in meaningful engagement.

The new government ratified the Escazú Agreement, an international treaty focused on protecting environmental defenders and enhancing public participation in environmental decision-making, as one of its first acts. Swift implementation of the Agreement is needed in order to ensure meaningful stakeholder buy-in.

Colombia’s new government is committed to ensuring a Just Transition. It is continuing with a number of processes related to the workforce and energy sectors, launched under the previous government. We are encouraged by the level of action we have seen so far, which we have rated as acceptable; however, the government will need to deliver on these processes, and not undermine the transition by approving new fossil gas developments, to maintain this score.

The fossil fuel industry and actors involved in deforestation have adversely influenced climate policy in the past. Industry influence has been diminished with the election of the new government, but it is too early to judge the extent.

This report is focused on Colombia’s national climate governance. It does not cover governance matters related to fighting deforestation, though this will be a core element of Colombia’s climate action.

Category	Criteria	Recommendations
Political commitment	High-level government leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver on election promises on the energy transition and stopping deforestation Continue to implement measures to reduce corruption, with a focus on climate action
	Quality of government decision making	
Institutional framework	Effective coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the transparency of the Intersectoral Commission (by e.g. publishing meeting minutes) Address constraints faced by regional nodes, including adopting the draft regulations under consideration Get the National Climate Change Council up and running Review its knowledge infrastructure to ensure it is receiving the necessary advice on the transition Continue to redirect financial flows from the fossil fuel sector to renewable energy and address the capacity and resource constraints of line ministries and regional entities
	Knowledge infrastructure	
	Adequate resources	

Category	Criteria	Recommendations
Policy processes	Paris-compatible emissions pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align sectoral plans to the net zero target Improve the understandability and access of MRV reports Ensure all sectors publish their MRV reports Make public the implementation and monitoring plan for the updated NDC Strengthen the NDC target to be 1.5°C compatible, in line with the Glasgow Climate Pact
	Transparency framework	
	Ratchet-up mechanism	
Stakeholder engagement	Level and scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swift and comprehensive implementation of the Escazú Agreement Deliver on the Just Transition processes currently underway
	Just transition	
	Management of non-state actor interests	

Contents

Executive summary	3
Contents	6
1 Introduction	7
1.1 Domestic context	7
1.2 Climate governance snapshot.....	8
2 National assessment	11
2.1 Political commitment.....	11
2.2 Institutional framework.....	14
2.3 Process for policy development, implementation and review	18
2.4 Stakeholder engagement.....	20
Authors	24
References	25

1 Introduction

1.1 Domestic context

Colombia is an upper middle income country, with one of the largest economies in Latin American and has been a member of the OECD since 2020 (OECD, 2020; World Bank, n.d., 2022b). It is one of the most unequal countries in the world (Pardo, 2022; World Bank, 2022a). The pandemic erased a decade of poverty reduction achievements. While the situation has improved as the economy recovers, not all vulnerable groups have benefited equally, and adverse economic headwinds have put downward pressure on further poverty reduction. There were widespread national protests in 2021 in relation to a number of social and economic grievances (Freedom House, 2022; Infobae, 2022b).

Colombia's economy faces a number of challenges, the pandemic recovery notwithstanding: double digit inflation, devaluation of the Colombian peso, high debt levels and slow economic growth (Banco de la República, 2022, 2023; Lewin, 2022a; Minhacienda, n.d.; Solórzano Cárdenas, 2022).

Fossil fuel extraction currently forms a significant part of the economy. Half of the country's exports in terms of value are oil and coal (DANE, 2023). In 2022, the hydrocarbon sector represented 8% of the tax basis (Infobae, 2023c).

President Gustavo Petro, who assumed office in August 2022, has promised to transition the energy mix away from fossil fuels and diversify the economy (Moloney, 2022; NPR Associated Press, 2022; Petro, 2022). He has also pledged to slow deforestation, stop granting new licences for oil and gas exploration and ban fracking (NPR Associated Press, 2022). He will have four years to implement his vision, as Colombian Presidents are limited to one term in office.

Legislative power is vested in both the government and the bicameral congress, composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives (Freedom House, 2022). The President and his party govern as part of a coalition and must work with a number of other parties to get legislation passed (Duarte Sandoval, 2022). Petro's own party holds the presidencies of both houses of congress, which is not common, and so is able to control the legislative agenda and priorities (Lewin, 2022b).

Securing 'total peace' with Colombia's various guerrilla forces is another major focus for the President (McColl, 2022). The November 2016 peace deal between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) started the demobilisation of the country's largest rebel group, but progress stalled under the former president, who did not support the agreement and pursued a militarised approach to peace making (Freedom House, 2022; McColl, 2022). Petro's plan seeks to address the related issues of the armed groups, drug trade, land reform and environmental degradation.

Colombia touts itself as the second most biodiverse country in the world (MinAmbiente, 2019a). Over half of the country is covered by forest, about two thirds of which is the Colombian Amazon, which itself comprises around 8% of the total Amazon tree cover (Butler, 2020; IDEAM, 2022). While deforestation has not reached the levels seen in the immediate aftermath of the peace agreement, it has been on the rise, increasing 1.5% in 2021 and is set to continue in 2022 (IDEAM, 2022; Parkin Daniels & Long, 2022). The Colombian Amazon is projected to see an 11% increase in deforestation rates in 2022 (MinAmbiente, 2022d). Land grabbing, cattle ranching, illicit crops and other illegal or unplanned activities are some of the main drivers of deforestation.

In November 2022, President Petro announced that Colombia would set aside USD 200m a year over the next two decades to protect the Amazon (Villalobos, 2022). The government will reform the country's National Council to Fight Deforestation as part of its National Development Plan (El Congreso de Colombia, 2023). Colombia is also spearheading similar efforts within the region (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2023; Villalobos, 2022). It is organising a presidential Amazon Summit in May 2022 to establish a strategic plan for Amazon protection and reinvigorate the **Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization**, whose political relevance has waned since it was first formed in 1978 (Infobae, 2023a).

Deforestation accounts for around a third of the country's emissions (IDEAM et al., 2021). The energy sector is responsible for another third of which 40% comes from transport sector. Agricultural emissions are about a fifth.

Colombia's power production is relatively clean, given its reliance on hydropower, which is responsible for over 70% (IEA, 2022). However, this reliance makes Colombia's power sector vulnerable to climate conditions like El Niño, which will be exacerbated by climate change (IEA, 2021). To combat this energy insecurity, Colombia is seeking to diversify its energy mix by increasing the percentage of non-hydro renewables. It held two successful renewable energy auctions, adding 2170 MW of new wind and solar power (Black & Gutierrez, 2022). Some of these projects have been delayed due, in part, to concerns expressed by indigenous communities, highlighting the importance of securing a social license for these developments (Corredor Rodríguez, 2023; López Suárez, 2023).

Colombia's population and economy are extremely vulnerable to climate impacts (Reuters Staff, 2018; The World Bank Group, n.d., 2021).

1.2 Climate governance snapshot

The Intersectoral Commission on Climate Change (*Comisión Intersectorial de Cambio Climático - CICC*¹) and nine regional climate nodes (*Nodos Regionales de Cambio Climático*) are the institutional backbone of Colombia's National Climate Change System (*Sistema Nacional de Cambio Climático - SISCLIMA*). The System refers to all policies, plans and strategies related to climate mitigation and adaptation, and associated actors and institutions.

The Intersectoral Commission is involved in policy development and prioritisation, target setting, including NDC updates, and coordinating the country's MRV system. It is comprised of key line ministries and is led by the environment ministry and the national planning department, who alternate the position in an annual rotation. It is supported by four committees on finance, international affairs, scientific information and technical matters.

The composition of the nodes varies across the regions and can be a mixture of government departments (the first sub-national administrative level of government), academia, civil society and the private sector. Each is responsible for supporting the implementation of climate action at the sub-national level.

Colombia updated its NDC in December 2020 and adopted a long-term strategy in 2021. Sectoral and sub-national climate plans are outlined in the Sectoral Climate Change Management Plans (*PIGCCS - Planes Integrales de Gestión del Cambio Climático Sectoriales*) and Territorial Climate Change Mitigation Plans (*PIGCCT - Planes Integrales de Gestión del Cambio Climático Territoriales*), respectively.

¹ We use the Spanish acronyms throughout this report.



Key Institutions

National Level

Intersectoral Commission of the Presidential Cabinet for Climate Action

The Commission was established by decree in February 2022 by former President Iván Duque (El Presidente de la República de Colombia, 2022). Its purpose is to provide oversight and coordination of climate action in the country at the highest level of government and includes the relevant line ministries. It is not clear what role, if any, the Commission will play under the new president.

Intersectoral Commission on Climate Change (*Comisión Intersectorial de Cambio Climático (CICC)*)

The Intersectoral Commission was established by decree in 2016 (Presidencia de la República, 2016). Its purpose is to coordinate the implementation of climate policy at the national level. It is comprised of key line ministries and is led by the environment ministry and the national planning department, who alternate the position in an annual rotation.

Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS)

MADS co-leads the CICC alongside the National Planning Department. It is also responsible for guiding environmental protection regulations and for the development of Colombian policies for forests and ecosystems.

Sub-National Level

Regional Nodes (*Nodos Regionales de Cambio Climático*)

There are nine regional nodes. Each is responsible for supporting the implementation of climate action at the sub-national level. Node membership is heterogenous.



Key Plans & Strategies

National Level

Long-Term Strategy 2050 (E2050)

E2050 is Colombia's long-term strategy through 2050, setting a roadmap for the country's net zero target. It is an extension of the mitigation ambition already established in Colombia's 2020 updated NDC.

Sectoral Level

Sectoral Climate Change Management Plans (*Planes Integrales de Gestión del Cambio Climático Sectoriales - PIGCCS*)

PIGCCSs outline the mitigation and adaptation measures that will be implemented for each relevant sector.

Sub-National Level

Territorial Climate Change Mitigation Plans (*Planes Integrales de Gestión del Cambio Climático Territoriales - PIGCCT*)

PIGCCTs outline the mitigation and adaptation measures that will be implemented for each of the country's 32 Departments.



Targets

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)

Colombia updated its NDC in December 2020. It set an emissions limit of 169.4 MtCO_{2e} in 2030 (incl. LULUCF),² which is equivalent to a 51% reduction below business-as-usual (BAU). Excluding the land sector (LULUCF), the NDC target is 161 MtCO_{2e}.³ The target covers all sectors. Colombia has promised to peak emissions by 2027 and will develop a carbon budget for the period to 2030 in 2023.

Net Zero Target

Colombia has a legally binding 2050 net zero GHG emissions target. It aims to reduce GHG emissions by 90% below 2015 levels by 2050 and address the remaining 10% of emissions through carbon capture and storage or land-based CO₂ sequestration according to its long-term strategy.



Key Laws & Regulations

Climate Action Law (Law 2169, 2021)

In December 2021, Colombia passed its Climate Action Law which enshrined its 2030 and 2050 targets into law and set out its climate objectives for the rest of the decade.

General Law on Climate Change (Law 1931, 2018)

The law codified the country's climate governance structure.

² Colombia uses global warming potential (GWP) values from the IPCC's fifth assessment report (AR5).

³ The figure is based on AR4 GWP values (which is the standard used by the Climate Action Tracker).

2 National assessment

2.1 Political commitment

Political commitment

High level government leadership

Quality of government decision making

President Petro is committed to transitioning Colombia away from a fossil fuel-based economy to one centred on renewable energy, and to fight deforestation. He assumed power in early August 2022 and has begun delivering on some of his election promises, though much work remains. Legislation on banning fracking, introduced in the first few days of his tenure, has not yet been adopted.

There is support in his cabinet for the transition, though individual ministers differ on the speed of the transition and whether new fossil gas developments should be pursued. The government also plans to tackle other major issues, like advancing the country's peace process and land reform. While there is some overlap with climate policy and fighting deforestation, there is still a risk that political attention and capital may be spread thin.

Colombia has been steadily advancing its climate policy in recent years, passing a number of important pieces of climate legislation (e.g. 2018 and 2021 climate laws and the 2019 EV law), updating its NDC target and adopting a net zero goal. While there is broad recognition across political parties of the need for climate action, the specifics on energy policy are particularly contentious. The new Energy Minister, Irene Vélez, who has been adamant that no new oil and gas exploration is needed, has faced significant and consistent criticism from some members in Congress and repeated calls for her to resign.

Colombians generally have low levels of trust in their government and public institutions and believe many to be corrupt. There have been some high-profile cases in relation to the awarding of solar and adaptation projects, which can both undermine public trust and impede implementation.

High-level government leadership can be a driving force for stimulating economy-wide transformational changes and increasing climate mitigation ambition through top-down strategy setting and sending effective policy signals.

President Petro is committed to transitioning Colombia away from a fossil fuel-based economy to one centred on renewable energy (Petro, 2022). He assumed power in August 2022 and will have four years to implement his vision, as Presidents are limited to one term in Colombia. In his first 100 days in office, he began delivering on some of his election promises, including announcing a new strategy and financing for stopping deforestation, and introducing the legislation needed to ban fracking (MinAmbiente, 2022e). His government also passed tax reforms that will increase the effective tax rate for oil and coal producers and banned new open-pit coal mining developments (El Colombiano, 2022c; Vargas, 2022).

During his election campaign, the President also promised to put a price on carbon, decarbonise the transport sector, establish a National Institute for Clean Energy, and accelerate the uptake of wind, solar and battery storage (Petro, 2022). A key target area for solar projects will be in current coal mining areas. He will seek to address some of the adverse impacts Colombia's hydropower has had on local commitments and promised not to build any new reservoir hydro dams.

There is definitely support in his cabinet for the transition, though there may not be agreement on all policies. The Energy and Environment Ministers are committed to the transition (Abu Shihab Vergara, 2022; Ramírez Ramos, 2022). Both have backgrounds in environmental issues: the Environment

Minister, Susana Muhamad, helped found Colombia's alliance against fracking and the Energy Minister, Irene Vélez, a former tenured professor, researched adverse social and environmental impacts caused by the mining sector. The Vice-President, an award-winning environmental activist, and the Agriculture Minister have both spoken about the need for the energy transition and fighting deforestation (Cambio, 2022a; Democracy Now, 2022; López Montaña, n.d., 2021, 2022; Márquez Mina, 2021, 2022; The Goldman Environmental Prize, 2018). The Finance Minister, renowned economist, José Antonio Ocampo, has stated that the country must transition away from both fiscal and export reliance on oil revenue and diversify the economy (Quesada, 2022). On the energy front, he says Colombia should continue to explore green hydrogen, in addition to wind and solar.

Where the potential for disagreement, whether real or manufactured, lies is in the speed of the transition and the extent to which Colombia needs - or should continue - to develop its oil and gas reserves. Ocampo is often presented in the media as the counterweight to the President and the Energy Minister, as the 'responsible' one, who puts out fires caused by the comments of others within the administration (El Colombiano, 2022a; López Bejarano, 2022; Parkin Daniels, 2022). Although Ocampo generally agrees with the need to undertake an energy transition and diversify energy resources, he has stated that the process must be a gradual one, with the country first transitioning away from fiscal and export dependence on oil revenues and diversify the economy before putting a moratorium on new oil and gas exploration projects (L. Franco, 2022; Laya, 2023; Parkin Daniels, 2022; Torrado & Lewin, 2023).

While the President and the Energy Minister have repeatedly said that the government will not sign any further contracts for new oil and gas development, it will continue to support the development of existing contracts, including recent offshore fossil gas discoveries, and bring that production online (Cambio, 2023; Infobae, 2023b). Based on existing contracts, the government believes it has sufficient supply until at least 2037, though some commentators dispute this estimate (El Colombiano, 2022b; MinEnergía & ANH, 2022). Yet, Ocampo is often reported as saying that he is open to new contracts and that the government has not taken a final decision on the matter, with Treasury officials making similar remarks (Vargas Cuellar, 2022). The Agriculture Minister has also noted that the country cannot ignore its fossil resources, and while the transition is needed, it will not be immediate (Cambio, 2022a).

While it is clear that ensuring a just energy transition and addressing deforestation are top priorities for the government, it does have a number of other priorities that will require significant political attention, including advancing the 2016 peace agreement with the country's FARC guerrillas and agrarian land reform (Santaeulalia, 2022). Advancing on land reform may assist in fighting deforestation, as the two are not unrelated. However, the enormity of the land reform challenge should not be underestimated (Pardo, 2022).

There will also be other demands on the government to rein in inflation and address the cost-of-living crisis. It has started to work on the transition in earnest, as evidenced by the action taken in its first 100 days. It is also a core pillar of their 2022-2026 national development plan: the plan each incoming administration prepares, which will guide its work over its tenure (Gobierno de Colombia, 2023). Maintaining this momentum will be critical to achieving their climate objectives.

The Environment Ministry is the lead agency responsible for climate mitigation, though the Energy Ministry and the National Planning Department, which alternates chairing the country's climate coordination body with the Environment Ministry, are also heavily involved in transition related action. While it is difficult to gauge the power the Environment Ministry has to set and achieve the policy agenda, we do think the Ministry is driving action. It is often involved in many of the plans developed by line ministries and often has bilateral arrangements with them to work towards implementing sectoral mitigation activities (MinAgricultura, 2021; MinVivienda, 2020b; Pinto Duitama, 2022). The Environment Minister, Susana Muhamad, also worked as the President's Environment Secretary when he was the mayor of Bogota, implementing a number of climate initiatives (Noticias RCN, 2022), from which we infer she will have his support to advance climate action at the national level.

The **quality of government decision making** at the highest levels is a key factor in implementing ambitious climate policies as national governments provide resources and direction for lower levels of government and can stimulate horizontal dynamics through mainstreaming, lesson-drawing, and cooperation (Jänicke, Schreurs, & Töpfer, 2015). The continuity of climate policy and the trustworthiness of the government are important elements.

Colombia has been continuously developing and advancing its climate policies in recent years, though these are not yet sufficient to be 1.5°C compatible. Colombia passed a number of important pieces of climate legislation (e.g. 2018 and 2021 climate laws and the 2019 EV law), increased its renewable energy capacity, **strengthened its 2030 target** and adopted a 2050 net zero goal during former President Duque's term. However, the previous government also supported fossil gas expansion, approved controversial fracking projects (breaking a campaign promise in the process), failed to rein in deforestation and pass legislation (later reversed) that undermined its own transport policies (Berrío Gil, 2021; Carranza Jiménez, 2020; CAT, 2021; Gobierno de Colombia, 2021; MinEnergía, 2021b; Noticias Caracol, 2018; República de Colombia, 2021a; Tarazona, 2022b).

Since assuming office in August 2022, President Petro's administration has sought to accelerate the energy transition. As noted above, the government has introduced legislation to ban fracking and committed to no new oil and gas exploration contracts. How much faster the transition occurs remains to be seen, as the government has said it will develop some of the oil and gas projects which were already in the pipeline, bringing this supply online later this decade. It is also too soon to assess whether the shift in deforestation strategy will be effective.

There is broad recognition across parties of the need for climate action. For example, the main contenders in the 2022 presidential election all made commitments related to deforestation, the energy transition or climate action in general and no party voted against passing of the climate law in 2021 (Austria & Gonzalez, 2022; MinAmbiente, 2021). The differences lie in how to achieve the transition, such as the role of fossil gas and fracking. Efforts to ban fracking pre-date the current Congress (Cobb, 2019). Former President Duque's Democratic Centre party, now the main opposition, continues to oppose the legislation (Escobar Rengifo, 2022). It also spearheaded a no confidence vote against the energy minister in December 2022. The vote was unsuccessful, yet the fact that the vote itself took place was meant to send a signal to the government to scale back, or at least tone down, its efforts to ban fossil fuels and accelerate the energy transition (Cambio, 2022b). Opposition parties have also repeatedly called for the minister to resign (Carrasquilla León, 2022; El Espectador, 2023).

The President and his party govern as part of a coalition and must work with a number of other parties to get legislation passed (Duarte Sandoval, 2022). Unusually for Colombian politics, Petro's own party holds the presidencies of both houses of congress, and is therefore able to control the legislative agenda and priorities (Lewin, 2022b). The government did manage to pass a number of major pieces of legislation in its first few months, but will need to nurture the coalition so that this can continue in 2023 (Duarte Sandoval, 2022). While the government does have the support of other parties for the fracking ban, there is a greater diversity of support around the role of fossil gas in the transition and the extent to which Colombia continues to develop its own resources vs, say, importing fossil gas from Venezuela as a stop-gap measure (Escobar Rengifo, 2022).

Corruption can undermine the public trust in a government's ability to deliver on its promises. Colombians generally have low levels of trust in their government and public institutions and believe many to be corrupt (DANE, 2022; Freedom House, 2022; OECD, 2021; Pring & Vrushni, 2019).

The energy transition, reducing deforestation and manage climate finance flows are all open to corruption and there are documented instances where this has occurred globally (Resimić, 2022; Transparency International, n.d.). Systematic data related to Colombia specifically is sparse, but there is anecdotal evidence of it occurring, such as in the awarding of solar and adaptation projects (Contraloría General de la República, 2022a; Moloney, 2020; Parada Lugo, 2022). There is also a concern that because of capacity constraints at the local level, where much of the implementation will take place, especially regarding adaptation and deforestation measures, the potential for corruption is heightened (Ceballos Oviedo, 2022). More broadly, corruption is considered high in the regional entities in charge of environmental matters (Tarazona, 2022a).

Former President Duque's administration and Congress (2018-2022) made some progress on adopting anti-corruption measures, but much work remains, particularly to address the root causes and needed structural reforms (Rosas, Galeano, & Salazar, 2022; Rosas & Manchola, 2022). Corruption watchdogs have been disappointed with the Petro government's actions so far (Transparencia por Colombia, 2022).

2.2 Institutional framework



Coordination occurs through the Intersectoral Commission on Climate Change (CICC) at the national level and through nine regional nodes at the sub-national level. While it is working at the national level, as evidenced by the country's updated NDC and adoption of its long-term strategy, the regional level faces a number of challenges, including resource constraints and low political or sectoral engagement, limiting its effectiveness. Draft regulations under consideration may address some of these issues, but further work is likely needed.

Colombia needs to work on mainstreaming climate considerations across all sectors. While the policy landscape is generally coherent, with the National Development Plan (a four-year plan adopted at the beginning of each new administration) driving broad sectoral objectives, there are many sectoral planning documents and these are not always up to date. Energy is the only sector to have updated its climate plan to align with the country's 2050 strategy, while the industry sector's plan includes updated NDC measures, the others are based on the first NDC. The transport sector has not yet published its plan.

Colombia does not have an authoritative body with an explicit and clear mandate to provide zero emissions transition-related advice. Some of the technical committees of the Intersectoral Commission may fulfil some of this role. The National Climate Change Council, the permanent consultative body of the Commission, may also provide advice, though it does not yet appear to be operational. The government would benefit from reviewing its knowledge infrastructure to ensure it is receiving the necessary advice on the transition.

Colombia has a good level of climate finance readiness. Its Financial Management Committee was established in 2016 as a sub-committee of the Intersectoral Commission (CICC) and is run by the National Planning Department. The government has worked with private sector entities to develop sub-sector specific guidelines and regulations and it has experience in a number of financial instruments, from issuing its first sovereign green bonds in 2021 to participating in the Clean Development Mechanism.

Yet, Colombia's public and private financial flows are not yet aligned with a 1.5°C consistent pathway. Historically, government support for the fossil fuel industry has dwarfed the level spent on renewable energy incentives and climate finance more broadly. The new administration's focus on accelerating the energy transition and its 2022 tax reforms, which will increase the effective tax burden for fossil fuel producers, will help to change this picture over time.

Effective coordination across ministries and agencies as well as with sub-national governments affects the ability of actors to align overarching climate policy targets efficiently and consistently. While Colombia has established coordination mechanisms at the national and sub-national level, there is room to improve the effective operation of these mechanisms, especially at the sub-national level.

Coordination occurs through the Intersectoral Commission on Climate Change (CICC) at the national level and through nine regional nodes at the sub-national level (MinAmbiente, 2017). The Intersectoral Commission was established in 2016. All relevant line ministries are part of the Commission and its membership has expanded over time to reflect climate policy needs (MinAmbiente, 2022b; Presidencia de la República, 2016; República de Colombia, 2018).⁴ The CICC meets regularly, but there is no central record of its meetings, which limits our ability to evaluate the effectiveness of its work (Comisión Intersectorial de Cambio Climático, 2020; MinAmbiente, 2019b; MinTransporte, 2018). A 2019 audit by

⁴ In February 2022, former President Duque established the Intersectoral Commission of the Presidential Cabinet for Climate Action to oversee the coordination of climate action at the highest levels of government and to track progress towards achieving the country's targets (El Presidente de la República de Colombia, 2022). The Commission met a number of times throughout 2022, with some of its sessions broadcast online (see e.g. Presidencia de la República, 2022a), although its relationship with CICC is not clear. It does not appear to have met since the transfer of power to the new administration. It will be important for the new administration to maintain high-level political leadership and guidance for the transition; however, that forum through which that may be done can vary.

Colombia's Comptroller General found the effectiveness of intersectoral and sub-national coordination was dependent on the level of priority that the various institutions assigned to climate action, including budget allocation (Contraloría General de la República, 2019), suggesting that there was room for improvement. We infer from the fact that Colombia updated its NDC in a detailed and timely manner in 2020, and developed a long-term strategy, that the Commission is active and accomplishing some of its tasks. Greater transparency in the deliberations of the Commission would be beneficial and would assist future evaluations of its effectiveness.

Regional nodes coordinate climate action at the sub-national level. Nodes face a number of challenges that limit their effectiveness (MinAmbiente, 2022f; Rodríguez Granados, Adriázola, Landesman, Devis Posada, & Calderón Peña, 2020). The level of their effectiveness also varies as a result of their heterogeneous structure and history. The first regional node (the *Eje Cafetero* node) was established in 2008 in Colombia's 'Coffee Triangle' region by civil society members, academia and regional authorities (UFU & Universidad del Rosario, 2020). More followed and the structure was formalised by the environment ministry in a 2016 decree.

The *Eje Cafetero* Node is considered to be the strongest (Rodríguez Granados et al., 2020). It began as a bottom-up initiative, and thus benefits from a high level of stakeholder buy-in and political support. It also has a strong technical team to support its work. These elements have enabled it to overcome some of the challenges faced by the node structure. Some other nodes, by contrast, have even struggled to hold meetings on a regular basis.

Colombia is a unitary state, divided at the sub-national level into 32 regional Departments, themselves subdivided into over one thousand municipalities. The Node structure sits between the central and regional governments, with some nodes comprised of one department and others several.

Nodes are not legal entities in their own right and so must work through their member institutions. They cannot receive or manage funds directly or hire staff and so must rely on their member institutions. The geographic composition and different institutional priorities of members can also limit the ability of the Node to form a cohesive vision for climate action. Staff are rarely assigned to work exclusively on node activities (Rodríguez Granados et al., 2020). There is also a lack of political support and engagement from high-level decision-makers at the regional and local levels, which inhibits decision-making (Rodríguez Granados et al., 2020).

While nodes work directly with the environment ministry, coordination with other relevant sectoral ministries has been limited (Rodríguez Granados et al., 2020). Sectors may also have their own coordination structures with sub-national entities. For example, the agricultural sector coordinates more through departmental and municipal entities and processes in which nodes have no direct representation (MinAgricultura, 2021). While more engagement between the sector and the nodes would be beneficial (MinAgricultura, 2021), it is unlikely to replace these existing structures.

The environment ministry has been working on draft regulations for a couple of years now to address some of the issues faced by regional nodes (MinAmbiente, 2022b). The draft regulations would formalise the functions and duties of the nodes, strengthen the interaction between the CICC, sectoral ministries and the nodes, and enhance transparency by making meeting minutes public. However, the draft regulations do not address financial and staffing issues. The question of political will at the sub-national level, which cannot be addressed through regulation, also remains. While Nodes face some challenges, other subnational structures, like the climate change working groups within the Departments (*Mesas Departamentales de Cambio Climático*), are working well (Rodríguez Granados et al., 2020). Some of Colombia's cities are also taking strong climate action (Alcaldía de Medellín, n.d.; WWF, 2022).

At a broad level, there is coherence and alignment of Colombia's climate policy across sectors. Yet, work remains to ensure that the transition is considered and incorporated into all relevant policy processes and planning documents, especially at the municipal level (Contraloría General de la República, 2019; Rodríguez Granados et al., 2020).

Each incoming administration prepares a National Development Plan and corresponding budget for its term in office. Colombia's climate objectives have been included in the last few plans and are a central pillar of the 2022-2026 plan (DNP, n.d.; Gobierno de Colombia, 2023). These objectives and measures are then reflected in sectoral plans. Under Colombia's 2018 climate law, relevant line ministries and each of Colombia's 32 Departments are supposed to develop climate change plans out to 2030, the *Planes Integrales de Gestión del Cambio Climático Sectoriales (PIGCCS)* and *Planes*

Integrales de Gestión del Cambio Climático Territoriales (PIGCCT), respectively, but these plans are not always up to date.

Energy is the only sector to have updated its plan to align with the country's 2050 strategy, while the industry sector's plan includes updated NDC measures (MinCIT, 2021; MinEnergía, 2021a). The agriculture and city plans are based on the first NDC (MinAgricultura, 2021; MinVivienda, 2020a). Transport has not yet released its plan publicly. The 2021 climate law requires that all plans be ready by 2025, which is rather late to help achieve a 2030 target.

The plans focus on individual mitigation measures rather than what is needed for the transition to a 1.5°C society. Even the energy sector, which has considered scenarios out to 2050, would only reduce power sector emissions by 79% from its baseline, with significant reliance on CCS (MinEnergía, 2021a). Of course, the new government may alter these plans. By way of reference, Colombia needs to **decarbonise its power sector** between 2027-2035 to be 1.5°C compatible (Climate Analytics, 2021).

Another important criterion is the existence and utilisation of **knowledge infrastructure capable of supporting strategic planning and policy development**, as this aids in the elaboration and application of decarbonisation analyses in climate policy development.

Colombia does not have an authoritative body with an explicit and clear mandate to provide transition-related advice to the government, though it does have some structure to provide advice and support decision-making. The government does consider this information as part of its policy-making process.

The work of the Intersectoral Commission on Climate Change (CICC) is supported by two committees for technical matters and scientific information, led by the Climate Change Directorate of the Environment Ministry and IDEAM, respectively. The exact scope and nature of these committees is not clear. They were formed after Decree 298/2016 was issued. Draft regulations, prepared in 2022, would formalise their existence, but provide little insight into their roles and functions (MinAmbiente, 2022b). The CICC operating regulations are not publicly available. Despite this opacity, it is clear that the Commission does receive and consider advice on mitigation actions. For example, it considered external modelling and analysis of sectoral mitigation potential as part of its NDC update process (MinAmbiente, 2022c). Numerous background studies were also prepared as part of the development of the country's long-term strategy (Gobierno de Colombia, n.d.).

In 2018, a National Climate Change Council ("the Council") was established by law to serve as the permanent consultative body for the CICC (República de Colombia, 2018), however it does not yet appear to be operational. The Council is tasked with providing advice and recommendations to the CICC and will be comprised of representatives from unions, NGOs, academia, international development, and from both houses of the Colombian Congress. The Council will be free to determine its own work plan and governance framework according to draft regulations (MinAmbiente, 2022b). The CICC is also required to consider any analysis or recommendations the Council puts forward.

While both the committees and Council can play a role in providing analysis and advice to the government on transition-related matters, both would benefit from clearer mandates in this regard.

Capital and resource constraints are significant barriers to effective climate governance and have been an impediment for developing countries in the past (Bhave, Conway, Dessai, & Stainforth, 2016). **Adequate resources and capacity** need to be made available to implementers, and efficiently used by them, in climate policy processes.

Colombia has an established institutional framework to coordinate on matters of climate finance. Overall, its level of climate finance readiness is good.

The Financial Management Committee was established in 2016 as a sub-committee of the CICC and is run by the National Planning Department (DNP, 2018). It comprises the relevant ministries and government agencies. The committee has also held an annual high-level climate finance event, bringing together key sector stakeholders, since 2015 (DNP, 2022b).

On the policy side, Colombia first prepared a climate finance strategy in 2017 and updated it in 2022 (DNP & Fedesarrollo, 2022). The government has worked with private sector entities to develop sub-sector specific guidelines and regulations (see e.g. Asobancaria, 2022; Superintendencia Financiera de Colombia, 2020).

Private sector entities have also developed their own climate finance resources. For example, Asobancaria, Colombia's finance sector association, has developed guidelines for implementing recommendations from the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) in the Colombian context (Asobancaria, 2021). The 2021 climate law includes a number of targets for the finance sector including further developing its finance strategy and fully implement it, along with a green taxonomy system.

Colombia has experience with a number of financial instruments. It participated in the Clean Development Mechanism, a market mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol, and is currently working on establishing its own emissions trading system (República de Colombia, 2021a; UNFCCC, n.d.). In 2021, it issued its first sovereign green bond, while the private sector has been issuing this type of bond since 2016 (IRC, 2021; Lopez Carbajal, Rojas Squella, & Watson, 2021). Colombia has had a carbon tax in place since 2016. While the tax rate is low, collection is poor and the amount earmarked for environmental activities has historically been low, the extent earmarked for climate change activities will be 50% from 2023 onwards (Salgar, Lleras, Vásquez, & Giraldo, 2022).

In terms of the flows themselves, analysis suggests that Colombia is only in the early stages of aligning its public and private financial flows with a 1.5°C consistent pathway (Lopez Carbajal et al., 2021). Historically, government support of the fossil fuel industry has dwarfed the level spent on renewable energy incentives and climate finance more broadly (Lopez Carbajal et al., 2021). The new administration's focus on accelerating the energy transition and its 2022 tax reforms, which will increase the costs for fossil fuel producers, will help to change this picture over time.

While it is clear that much is happening within the climate finance space across the government, the Financial Management Committee could be more transparent. The committee's website is outdated and it is difficult to find information about its meetings and deliberations (DNP, 2022a).

On the question of adequate resources, it is clear that Colombia faces a number of resource and capacity constraints amongst key ministries and entities involved in the transition.

Historically, the amount Colombia has allocated to its environment sector (i.e. its environment ministry, research and conservation institutes and regional entities) has been low and is less than the Latin American average (Tarazona, 2022a). IDEAM, a key agency for addressing deforestation, is heavily reliant on international financial support. There is also unequal distribution at the regional level, which means some areas with greater environmental issues have less resources.

While the new government has highlighted the importance of the energy transition and fighting deforestation, ensuring adequate budgets for achieving these tasks will take time. The Environment Ministry's 2023 budget is less than in 2022, when adjusted for inflation, though it is higher than the original allocation proposed by the outgoing President (El Tiempo, 2022a). The Environment Minister has said that it is not enough, but noted that some environmental initiatives will be funded through other departments (El Tiempo, 2022b). Additional allocations in 2023 are also likely now that the tax reform measures have been passed.

Colombia's public service experiences significant staff turnover as administrations change every four years. These changes, coupled with financial constraints and the reliance on consultants, can inhibit the ability of institutions to build and retain institutional memory (Rodríguez Granados et al., 2020). The need to guarantee permanent staff dedicated to climate action has been noted in some sectoral plans (see e.g. (MinVivienda, 2020a)). Staff may lack the requisite technical expertise to implement policies and measures, especially at the regional level (UFU & Universidad del Rosario, 2020).

The new Environment Minister has extensive experience working on climate action. She has been the Environment Secretary for the capital city, Bogota, and oversaw the development of the city's climate change plan and advanced sustainable transport initiatives (Noticias RCN, 2022). However, staffing all relevant ministries has not been a smooth process. In early January 2023, a Vice Minister responsible for renewable energy resigned from MinEnergia in a move widely reported and speculated on in the press (El Colombiano, 2023; Quiroga Rubio, 2023). While the full context behind the resignation is not known, this does indicate that the ministry is still undergoing staff changes and does not have a complete team in place ready to move forward on its agenda.

2.3 Process for policy development, implementation and review



Colombia has a 2050 net zero GHG emissions target, enshrined in domestic law, and has outlined a roadmap to reach this target in its long-term strategy. Colombia needs to work on ensuring net zero considerations are incorporated into near-term policy development. To date, only the energy sector climate plan has been updated to incorporate the 2050 strategy. Colombia did release a net zero building sector roadmap in June 2022; however, this has not been integrated into the housing sector climate plan.

Colombia has a functioning transparency framework, though there is room for improvement. It can be difficult to access material, which may be spread across websites or reports. Nor is the information easily understandable to a non-technical audience. Progress at the sectoral level is uneven. The energy ministry is the only ministry to have released a MRV progress report.

Colombia submitted its first NDC update in 2020, but did not submit a further update in line with the 2021 Glasgow Climate Pact to 'revisit and strengthen' NDCs further in 2022. It has also not released its first implementation and monitoring plan, assessing progress towards the current target.

A **defined Paris-compatible decarbonisation pathway** is an important component to aid the long-term planning for, and alignment with, the Paris Agreement's overall objectives.

Colombia has a 2050 net zero GHG emissions target, which has been enshrined in domestic law (República de Colombia, 2021a). In November 2021, Colombia submitted its long-term strategy to the UNFCCC. The strategy includes a pathway to reach the 2050 target, and outlines nine strategic initiatives with 48 transformation options for decision makers to consider (Government of Colombia, 2021).

The strategy describes the need to carry out mitigation actions in all sectors, intending to reduce GHG emissions by 90% compared to 2015. The remaining 10% of emissions will be either covered by carbon capture and storage or compensated through land-based CO₂ sequestration in order to reach net zero. The strategy, prepared by the previous administration, envisages a continued role for fossil fuels in the Colombian energy matrix. The new administration has not yet released detailed long-term energy plans, but says it will transition the country away from fossil fuels.

Colombia needs to work on ensuring net zero considerations are incorporated into near-term policy development. To date, only the energy sector climate plan (PIGCCS) has been updated to incorporate the 2050 strategy (MinEnergía, 2021a). Colombia did release a net zero building sector roadmap in June 2022 (Consejo Colombiano de Construcción Sostenible, 2022), but this has not been integrated into the housing sector's climate plan.

Colombia has passed a number of climate-specific laws focused at the national or sectoral levels. It codified its climate governance framework in the 2018 climate change law (República de Colombia, 2018). Its 2021 climate action law built on this governance framework, codifying its 2030 and 2050 targets, and outlined a number of mitigation and planning measures (República de Colombia, 2021a). Both pieces of legislation also include provisions to develop its emissions trading system. Colombia also has sector-specific pieces of legislation like the 2019 EV law and its 2021 law on the energy transition (República de Colombia, 2019, 2021b). It is beyond the scope of this report to do a comprehensive assessment of all Colombia laws or to assess whether regulatory gaps exist; however, we do consider the country's legal framework to be robust.

An **enhanced transparency framework mechanism** is necessary in order to track progress towards achieving emission reduction targets in line with the Paris Agreement, as well as providing checks and balances for the government's climate commitments. Colombia has a functioning transparency framework, although there is room for improvement.

Colombia has been working on developing its transparency system since 2014 (J. F. Franco, 2019). The Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM) is in charge of Colombia's GHG inventory (MinAmbiente, 2018). The Institute also manages the country's mitigation action registry, RENARE. The National Planning Department is in charge of the monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of the country's climate finance.⁵ Each of the country's sectoral climate plans (PIGCCS) is required to include a section on how MRV will be measured at the sectoral level.

On a broader level, Colombia's Comptroller General issues an annual report on the state of the environment, which tracks progress against measures in the National Development Plan and key thematic issues for that year (Contraloría General de la República, 2021, 2022b). Given its scope, climate action is often considered in some fashion in these reports. The Comptroller will also occasionally review the country's governance framework and level of climate action in bespoke reports (Contraloría General de la República, 2019).

While operational, accessing clear and up-to-date information about the extent of Colombia's activities can be difficult. Information is spread across multiple websites, which are not always online.⁶ The Environment Ministry is developing an online climate action tool that will allow users to track mitigation action and provide other resources related to sectoral and territorial action (MinAmbiente, n.d.-b).⁷ It is not fully operational, nor is it clear how this tool interacts with RENARE.

Progress with sectoral MRV implement is also uneven (Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad, 2022; J. F. Franco, 2019). The energy ministry is the only ministry to have released a progress report on its activities and established a dedicated website to monitor the implementation of its sectoral plan (MinEnergía, n.d.-b, 2022c). While, the progress report is lengthy and includes dozens of indicators, it has been criticised by civil society for failing to provide up to date information on progress towards each of the strategic lines of action the ministry is pursuing to achieve its NDC target in a format that can be understood by a lay person (Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad, 2022). Information on the level of progress in the transport sector is completely lacking (Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad, 2022).

Colombia continues to receive support to develop its MRV system further (MinAmbiente, 2022a; UK PACT, 2021). It also included a number of MRV milestones in its 2021 climate law (República de Colombia, 2021a).

Shifting from monitoring and reporting to assessing progress, the system is operational here too, but could also be improved. The provisions for reviewing Colombia's progress towards its targets are set out in its 2021 Climate Action Law (articles 23-25) (República de Colombia, 2021a). An implementation and monitoring plan must be prepared six months after the adoption of the Law (i.e. by mid-2022) and approved by the CICC. The National Planning Department is responsible for tracking progress against the plan. From 2023, and every two years thereafter, the CICC will review the results of this monitoring effort and may make adjustments to the implementation of policies or adopt new measures as needed. The Environment Ministry will communicate the results of the monitoring and review progress in the Biennial Transparency Reports to the UNFCCC and make these publicly available.⁸ According to media reports, the implementation and monitoring plan was approved by the CICC in June 2022; however, we could not find a publicly available copy (Portafolio, 2022).

The Paris Agreement requires that countries update their NDC targets every five years (its **ratchet up mechanism**). Colombia has enshrined this requirement into law (Art. 15 of Law 1931/2018) (República de Colombia, 2018). Colombia submitted its first update in 2020, including a **stronger mitigation target**. It did not, however, submit a further update in line with the 2021 Glasgow Climate Pact to 'revisit and strengthen' NDCs further in 2022.

⁵ Colombia also has systems to monitor adaptation and forestry measures; however, those are not considered here. See (J. F. Franco, 2019) for details.

⁶ The RENARE website says it is undergoing maintenance <http://renare.siac.gov.co/GPY-web/#/ingresar>. The Finance MRV site, https://mrv.dnp.gov.co/Financiamiento_en_cifras/Paginas/default.aspx, was offline during part of our research window, but was online as of 16 February 2023.

⁷ Note: The tool is online, but not all elements were fully operational as of early January 2023. See <https://accionclimatica.minambiente.gov.co/mitigacion-de-gei/>

⁸ The Presidential Commission also has the power to assess progress towards targets and to provide further guidelines for the implementation and monitoring plan (El Presidente de la República de Colombia, 2022). Though, as noted above, it is unclear whether the new administration intends to continue with the Presidential Commission.

2.4 Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement		
Level and scope	Just transition	Exogenous non-state interests and influence

Polling data suggests Colombians are worried about and want more government action, though few rank climate change as among their top concerns and do not see it as affecting their everyday lives. Colombia has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most dangerous places in the world for environmental defenders, with many losing their lives each year. While consultations are regularly held, there is the concern these are pro forma and do not lead to meaningful engagement.

The new government ratified the Escazú Agreement, an international treaty focused on protecting environmental defenders and enhancing public participation in environmental decision-making, as one of its first acts. Swift implementation of the Agreement is needed in order to ensure meaningful stakeholder buy-in.

Colombia’s new government is committed to ensuring a Just Transition. It is continuing with a number of processes related to the workforce and energy sectors, launched under the previous government. We are encouraged by the level of action we have seen so far, which we have rated as acceptable; however, the government will need to deliver on these processes, and not undermine the transition by approving new fossil gas developments, to maintain the score.

The fossil fuel industry and actors involved in deforestation have adversely influenced climate policy in the past. Industry influence has been diminished with the election of the new government; however, it is too early to judge the extent.

The government’s **level and scope of engagement** with stakeholders reflects how well it is aware of external knowledge and the expectations of its constituents, which, in turn, affects the ability for sound government decision-making.

Colombia has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most dangerous places in the world for environmental defenders, with many losing their lives each year (Global Witness, 2022). It is rated by civil society watchdog, Civicus, as ‘repressed’ (CIVICUS, 2022). While the government and line ministries regularly hold public consultations on regulatory developments, these are often not seen as meaningful opportunities to engage (ANLA, 2023; Foro Nacional Por Colombia, 2021; MinAmbiente, n.d.-a; MinEnergía, n.d.-a; UfU & Universidad del Rosario, 2020).

For example, while civil society groups were invited to participate in the development of Colombia’s first NDC, and numerous consultation sessions were held, this engagement took place very late in the process once the NDC had largely been completed, suggesting that it was more a pro forma exercise than seeking meaningful engagement. Some renewable energy projects have been delayed due, in part, to concerns expressed by indigenous communities, highlighting the importance of securing a social license for these developments (Corredor Rodríguez, 2023; López Suárez, 2023).

The new government says it is committed to engaging the public in environmental decision-making, protecting environmental defenders, and ensuring a social license is secured for all developments (Abu Shihab Vergara, 2022; Infobae, 2022a). In November 2022, it adopted the necessary domestic legislation to implement the Escazú Agreement (Congreso de la República de Colombia, 2022; Presidencia de la República, 2022b).

The objective of Escazú is to protect environmental defenders, ensure full implementation of access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making rights, and provide legal recourse to ensure those rights are enforced (UN ECLAC, 2018). The new administration has also been holding consultations throughout the country on its National Development Plan, on a scale unmatched by previous governments. During the election, Petro promised to pursue new ownership structures for renewable energy to ensure that local communities and workers benefitted in the transition (Petro, 2022).

Colombia does not appear to have operational structures to ensure regular consultation with stakeholders at the national or sub-national level. In 2018, a National Climate Change Council (“the Council”) was established by law to serve as the permanent consultative body for the Intersectoral Commission (CICC), however it does not appear to be operational. The Council is tasked with providing advice and recommendations to the CICC and will be comprised of representatives from unions, NGOs, academia, international development, and from both houses of the Colombian Congress (República de Colombia, 2018).

Draft regulations on the Council’s election procedures and other modalities have not yet been adopted (MinAmbiente, 2022b). At the time the 2018 law was adopted, the composition of the Council was criticised for excluding representatives from important stakeholder groups within the country, such as indigenous groups or representatives for rural farmers and landholders (Bernal Rubio, 2018). It is not known whether the new government intends to alter its composition. In November 2022, one of the Congressional representatives to the Council was elected, so it may commence operations soon (Escobar, 2022).

At the sub-national level, draft regulations have been prepared that would require each regional node to have representation from non-profits, unions and/or the private sector, and academia (MinAmbiente, 2022b). It is important that the new government operationalise these or other bodies that ensure that there are permanent, inclusive and meaningful mechanisms to engage stakeholders in climate action decision-making.

Colombia’s efforts to incorporate climate action into its education system and enhance public knowledge are uneven (UNESCO, 2022). While widely recognised as important, reference to climate change can be found in some policies and plans but is missing from some of the core documents related to curriculum. Under its 2021 climate law, Colombia has committed to updating its National Environmental Education Policy to include climate change and ensure that it is incorporated into the curriculum at all levels by 2030 (República de Colombia, 2021a).

The environment ministry has also been involved in developing some online resources. For example, it is in the process of developing an online climate action tool that will allow users to track mitigation action and provide other resources related to sectoral and territorial action (MinAmbiente, n.d.-b).⁹ The level of climate knowledge in Colombia is low (over 60% say they know little to nothing about climate change), one of the lowest levels in South America (Leiserowitz et al., 2022), highlighting the importance of these efforts and the need for additional action.

During his election campaign, the President promised to strengthen tertiary and technical training programs to support the energy transition (Petro, 2022). Climate considerations have already been incorporated into some programmes at tertiary institutions and other training centres (UNESCO, 2022). Colombia, with assistance from the German government, is also in the process of establishing a regional training centre to assist industry actors in training personnel in the renewable energy and green hydrogen fields (Centro Regional de Formación en Energías Renovables, n.d.). While existing initiatives are positive, the level of engagement is far from comprehensive across the sector and it will be imperative that the President keep his election promise.

It is important that the transition towards net zero emissions is planned and implemented as a **Just Transition**, enabling wider benefits for the population as a whole and ensuring that no one is left behind. This applies to both the impact of policies that governments will implement to cut emissions, and the transition away from fossil fuel related industries.

Colombia’s new government is committed to ensuring a Just Transition. It is continuing with a number of processes launched under the previous government. We are encouraged by the level of action we have seen so far, which we have rated as acceptable; however, the government will need to deliver on these processes, and not undermine the transition by approving new fossil gas developments, to maintain the score.

The need for a Just Transition is acknowledged as one of the pillars of the transition to net zero in Colombia’s Climate Action Law (República de Colombia, 2021a). The Law tasks the Ministry of Labor with developing a just transition strategy for the labour force by 2023. The Ministry of Mines and

⁹ Note: The tool is online, but not all elements were fully operational as of early January 2023. See <https://accionclimatica.minambiente.gov.co/mitigacion-de-gei/>

Energy has also started a six-month process to develop, through extensive community engagement, a Just Energy Transition Roadmap for Colombia, which will be launched in May 2023 (MinEnergía, 2022b, 2022a).

The **management of non-state actor interests** is another important consideration, as it depicts whether governments have succeeded in addressing resistance created by vested interests as well as communicating the fairness of their policies to the public. An assessment of the ability to manage non-state actor interests reveals how much public support or opposition policies receive.

Polling data suggests Colombians are worried about climate change and want more government action (Leiserowitz et al., 2022). In a recent survey, 84% said it should be a government priority, one of the highest levels in South America (Leiserowitz et al., 2022), a result seemingly confirmed by the 2022 Presidential election, where climate change featured prominently.

While there is support for policies to accelerate the transition, like increased renewable energy use, that level drops when one shifts to cutting fossil fuel use. There is also confusion among the population as to which measures contribute the most to emission reductions, a trend seen globally, but there is some willingness to take action (Ipsos Global Advisor, 2022). Notwithstanding this concern, economic and social issues, like unemployment and poverty, are still the top concerns for Colombians. Few rank climate change as amongst their top three concerns and it is not seen as something that affects people's everyday lives (DANE, 2022; Ipsos, 2023).

Colombia has an active civil society. Environmental groups have long focused on fighting deforestation and addressing environmental harms, but engaging in the advancement of national climate policy is a relatively new development (UFU & Universidad del Rosario, 2020). Some smaller organisations are limited in their ability to engage in technical discussions. A fair amount of research exists on net zero or 1.5°C compatible pathways or implementation needs (see e.g. Climate Analytics, 2021; Consejo Colombiano de Construcción Sostenible, 2022; Dyner et al., 2022; ICCT, 2022; Transforma, 2022). External modelling and sectoral analysis was also prepared as part of the country's target setting efforts (Gobierno de Colombia, n.d.; MinAmbiente, 2022c). Stakeholders have a good amount of material to draw from to support their transition-related advocacy work, though capacity constraints remain.

Gauging the relative power and influence of industry groups is difficult. The new renewable energy industry (excluding large hydro) is relatively nascent. It is only in the last few years that the sector has really started to take off, due to the policies of the Duque administration (BloombergNEF, 2022). Yet a number of technical and regulatory challenges remain. While the industry is keen to work with the government (Ini, 2023), we think the government will be driving the policy agenda.

Industry actors who are at risk from the energy transition or addressing deforestation have traditionally had a significant influence on the government. For example, the coal industry lobbied against the carbon tax being applied to that sector (Ceballos Oviedo, 2022). Generally, mining interests are considered to have significant sway over the government (Corral-Montoya, Telias, & Malz, 2022; Foro Nacional Por Colombia, 2021). The previous government's deforestation strategy has been criticised as it failed to pursue the deforestation activities of those with political connections and instead focused on smaller players who were responsible for less deforestation (Ceballos Oviedo, 2022; Tarazona, 2022b). Industry groups are also well organised to engage on policy and regulatory developments (see e.g. Asociación Colombiana de Minería, n.d.).

Industry influence has been diminished with the election of the new government but it is too early to judge the extent. Positive developments include tax reforms and the efforts to ban fracking, where questions remain is around the speed of the energy transition and the extent to which the country continues to rely on fossil gas.

The government passed tax reforms in late 2022 that increased taxes on oil and coal production, when prices are high, as well as eliminated the ability to deduct royalty payments for the entire sector (including fossil gas), which has the effect of increasing the overall rate of tax paid (Presidencia de la República, 2022c). These reforms were heavily criticised by industry. Critics argued that it will put a damper on development of the sector (bnamericas, 2022). Yet, the state-owned oil producer, Ecopetrol, has said the tax increases will have 'minimal' impact on its long-term plans (bnamericas, 2022). Despite industry push back, the adopted reforms changed little from the original proposal (El Espectador, 2022; González Olarte & Galvis, 2022).

The government introduced legislation to ban fracking as one of its first acts. As discussed above, the fracking debate is not new to Colombia. In the latest round, industry groups have been arguing that any ban, if passed, should have a sunset clause of August 2026, when the current government's term ends (Gómez, 2022a).

Industry groups have also stressed the need for a gradual energy transition and have stressed the importance of fossil gas during this period (Enel, 2022; Gómez, 2022b). The government's timeline and the extent to which it intends to pursue fossil fuel development as well as whether these intentions have changed over time is not entirely clear. The Energy Ministry insists that no new contracts for oil and gas exploration will be signed, while the Finance Minister insists a final decision has not been taken (Reynoso, 2023). The next few years will be critical for Colombia's energy policy to ensure that it does not risk locking in stranded assets.

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The Climate Action Tracker (CAT) is an independent scientific project that has been tracking climate action since 2009. We track progress towards the globally agreed aim of holding warming well below 2°C, and pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

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NewClimate Institute is a non-profit institute established in 2014. NewClimate Institute supports research and implementation of action against climate change around the globe, covering the topics international climate negotiations, tracking climate action, climate and development, climate finance and carbon market mechanisms. NewClimate Institute aims at connecting up-to-date research with the real world decision making processes.

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