



### Energy and Our Planet

We all use energy – from heating, cooking and lighting to transport, as well as manufacturing products and gadgets. In less than 40 years our total energy consumption has doubled. With our population rising and energy reliant modern living standards, we are demanding more energy than ever before.

The constant, steady availability of energy underpins our modern lives. However, one of the biggest challenges for society, which is being considered at international, national and local levels, is how our increasing demand for energy can be met, at an acceptable cost to the environment and the economy. This is often referred to as the energy trilemma.

In the recent past, we have been heavily dependent on fossil fuels to fuel our lifestyles. However, releasing energy from fossil fuels involves burning them. This process leads to the emission of gases called greenhouse gases into our atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). These gases have become concentrated in our atmosphere, and as a result our planet is getting warmer. This is known as global warming. The increase in global temperatures is having a devastating effect on our planet, and everything that calls it home.

To stop our planet getting warmer, we need to reduce the levels of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. Many nations have set 'net-zero' targets – where countries will not add more greenhouse gasses to the environment than they remove. Reducing our consumption of fossil fuels is a vital part of this – but achieving this will have a huge impact on our lives.

Find out more: [Geobus Climate Science in a Minute - What is the Greenhouse Effect?](#)

### Just Transition

To describe something or some action as "just", is to say that it is morally right or fair. In the context of climate change and societies transition to net-zero, it means that everyone is able to benefit from this new, more sustainable system and no one is left behind. There is no single change that can be made to achieve a 'just transition'. It will involve many changes, but also many opportunities. Importantly, history tells us that moving away from an industry without providing support for those it affects leads to major areas of deprivation, depression, social injustice and crime

To help save our planet we need to move to net-zero emissions, and we have an opportunity to do so in a way that benefits everyone. The many 'just transitions' that will need to happen will take place in all areas of our society. This can be achieved by ending our reliance on fossil fuels, making the most of the resources we have, adopting new technologies and developing more planet-friendly infrastructures. This is why COP26 is so important. World leaders and governments will have the chance to make clear plans and bold moves towards these ambitious goals.



A recent publication from the Scottish Government Just Transition Commission set out the following aims:

- Pursue an orderly, managed transition to net-zero that creates benefits and opportunities for people across Scotland. Delivery of this must be a national mission
- Equip people with the skills and education they need to benefit from the transition
- Empower and invigorate our communities and strengthen local economies
- Share benefits widely and ensure burdens are distributed on the basis of ability to pay.

The just transition to net-zero emissions will particularly impact Scotland's oil and gas industry. Oil and Gas UK have worked closely with the UK Government to set out the North Sea Transition Deal. Within this deal, the oil and gas sector and the UK Government have committed £14-16 billion to invest in new technologies and support the reskilling of workers by 2030. This deal also allows for the support and creation of approximately 40,000 direct and indirect supply chain jobs. This is just one example of an industry taking steps towards a more sustainable future.

**Information Source - Scottish Government Just Transition Commission**

<https://gov.scot/publications/transition-commission-national-mission-fairer-greener-scotland/>

## **COP26**

In November 2021, Glasgow will host the 26th Conference of the Parties, COP26. This is an international conference on climate change in which world leaders meet and discuss their strategies to stop the ongoing damage to our planet. This will be the biggest international conference the UK has ever hosted, so all eyes will be on Glasgow.

COP26 is a particularly important conference as it will be the first COP to take place after the landmark Paris Agreement's measures take effect. Almost all countries signed the Paris Agreement at COP21 in Paris in 2015. It aims to restrict global temperature rise this century to 'well below' 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. COP26 opportunity since then for nations to come together to review these commitments.

The Scottish Government has committed to ending our contribution to climate change by 2045. This goal was set within the Climate Change Bill which was introduced to the Scottish Parliament as a direct response to The Paris Agreement.

**Information Sources: COP26 Official Website - <http://ukcop26.org>**

**and the Energy and Climate Change Intelligence Unit website - <http://eciu.net>**