

COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in a Just, Orderly and Equitable Manner

Dear COP30 Presidency,

Hereby we submit our suggestions for the roadmap for transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner.

We will describe a policy instrument that phases out demand, *and* has a trickle-down effect on the supply-side. This policy instrument has been tested and proven in other policy fields, and is more and more being applied to phase out fossil fuels and protect human rights and public health: a fossil fuel advertising ban.

The fossil ad ban comprises a ban on ads and sponsorships from the fossil fuel industry, the airline industry and ads for the following products: fossil fuels, holiday air travel, holiday cruises, vehicles with an internal combustion engine and home energy contracts that run on fossil fuels.

(a) What are the most critical barriers — whether physical, economic, financial, institutional, technological or social— preventing a transition away from fossil fuels? One barrier that is often overlooked in transitioning away from fossil fuels, is norms. Social norms can either stall or propel change exponentially towards a social tipping point.¹

Social norms are implicitly and silently agreed upon by the majority of society. Once a product is considered normal, business as usual, or even desirable or a status symbol, it is hard to get a majority that supports a phase-out for that product. To phase out fossil fuels, we should change the social norms that drive their demand: from something 'convenient' and 'logical' to 'harmful' and 'immoral'.

Some parts of fossil fuel consumption are interwoven into the fabric of society. They are harder to phase out. But there's also the use of fossil fuels that is relatively painless to live without, once we've changed the habit. We're talking about luxury travel for holidays by airplane and cruises, and energy & resource intensive cars. These non-essential luxury products drive demand for fossil fuels, which could easily have been avoided both from a climate perspective and in light of the current energy crisis.

IPCC (2022) writes about this: "It [status seeking] can also work to increase emissions through visible and high-carbon intensive consumption items such as larger homes, fuel-inefficient SUVs cars, and long-distance vacations (...). This can lead to the formation of new habits and needs, where products and services become normalized and are quickly

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332224002550>

perceived as needed, reinforced through social networks and advertisement, making it psychologically easy to convert a luxury item to a perceived necessity.”²

Globally, greenhouse gas emissions from tourism are still rising. Scientists state that between 2010 and 2020, greenhouse gas emissions from global tourism grew more than twice as fast as those of the global economy, accounting for nearly 9% of global emissions. “At this rate, those emissions will double over the next twenty years, whilst global emissions should have reached ‘net zero’ by then in order to remain within the limits of the Paris Climate Agreement.”³

These products are largely consumed in the global north⁴, only benefitting the often privileged individual consumer, whilst the (climate) damage is for all of life on earth to bear, foremost in the global south.

The social norms that keep these products normal and desirable, are being formed and sustained by multiple factors in our social lives and in our information environment. One very potent factor is advertising, bombarding people day in, day out, at their street corners, on social media, in the newspaper, on television, on the radio, on streaming platforms and even in football stadiums, schools and museums. Fossil ads have a discursive, normalising and undermining effect, thereby maintaining the polluting status quo.

Fossil advertising promotes a product that is detrimental to health, safety and environment, it promotes a norm that will threaten the existence of humanity and other forms of life.

(b) What potential levers, whether economic, financial, institutional, social or technological, exist for accelerating the implementation of the transitioning away commitment?

A ban on fossil fuel advertising, inspired by the ban on tobacco advertising, is a lever to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels, according to the IPCC (2022)⁵. A fossil ad ban is inspired by the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and other ad bans that have proven to protect our health and mental wellbeing.

A team of scientists that conducted a study for the Dutch government, concluded a fossil ad ban is *essential* as part of climate policy, because climate policy without a ban on fossil ads would be in vain.⁶ It is like telling a smoker to stop, while offering him a cigarette.

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³ <https://www.wbs.nl/publicaties/alleen-met-fossielvrij-toerisme-rechtvaardig-klimaatbeleid-mogelijk>

⁴ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-024-54582-7>

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<https://www.worldwithoutfossilads.org/listing/ipcc-sixth-assessment-report-mitigation-of-climate-change/>

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<https://www.worldwithoutfossilads.org/listing/scientific-report-a-ban-on-fossil-ads-is-essential-but-more-measures-are-needed/>

Multiple scientists⁷ state that a fossil ad ban is necessary for the transition because it shifts norms and behaviour in society. This results in less demand for fossil fuels, and - as a bonus - by denormalising luxury fossil fuel products and services, it also opens up social support for other climate policies. [Fossil ad] “bans could be introduced early in a policy sequencing strategy”, says the EU CAPABLE study⁸, “reshaping the public information environment and paving the way for more robust and directly impactful measures later. By de-normalizing the fossil fuel consumption, these initial steps could help build public acceptance for policies with greater economic or behavioural impacts.”

Other scientists show that a fossil ad ban stimulates product innovation when producers are not allowed to advertise their harmful products.⁹

The fossil ad ban is legally possible, according to a Dutch court¹⁰ and several legal scholars that wrote about the legal possibility in several jurisdictions.¹¹ A fossil ad ban is perfectly compatible with human rights, and one could even argue it is required because of human rights. The International Court of Justice (2025)¹² confirms that governments have a legally binding obligation to protect the climate, also by limiting fossil fuel consumption.

A fossil ad ban is widely supported in society, according to science published in Nature. Also, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres¹³, called for a worldwide fossil ad ban. His call was repeated by high officials of the UN¹⁴. Also (planetary) health professionals¹⁵ have been calling for a fossil ad ban, stressing that fossil fuels pose a harm to health because of climate effects and air, soil and water pollution.

Concluding, scientists from the CAPABLE study state: “Unlike measures that impose new taxes or mandate behavioural or production changes, advertising bans primarily target the consumer information environment. They are relatively easy to implement and entail limited direct costs for governments or consumers, making them an attractive policy option. Given

⁷ <https://www.worldwithoutfossilads.org/factsheet-legal-science-societal-support-for-the-fossil-ad-ban/>

⁸ <https://capableclimate.eu/fossil-fuel-ad-ban-support/>

⁹

<https://www.worldwithoutfossilads.org/listing/advertising-restrictions-and-sustainability-transitions-does-banning-advertising-of-harmful-products-induce-innovation-in-benign-alternatives/>

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<https://www.clientearth.org/latest/press-office/world-first-law-banning-fossil-fuel-ads-survives-dutch-legal-challenge/>

¹¹

<https://www.worldwithoutfossilads.org/factsheet-legal-science-societal-support-for-the-fossil-ad-ban/#legal>

¹² <https://enb.iisd.org/international-court-justice-advisory-opinion-climate-change-23Jul2025>

¹³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cv22v199vwro>

¹⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/climatechange/24-11-06-HC-letter.pdf>

and

<https://www.worldwithoutfossilads.org/listing/the-imperative-of-defossilizing-our-economies-report-of-the-special-rapporteur-on-the-promotion-and-protection-of-human-rights-in-the-context-of-climate-change/> and

<https://www.worldwithoutfossilads.org/listing/impact-of-disinformation-on-the-enjoyment-and-realization-of-human-rights/>

¹⁵ For example

<https://climateandhealthalliance.org/uncategorized/cradle-to-grave-the-health-toll-of-fossil-fuels-and-the-imperative-for-a-just-transition-2nd-edition-2/> and <https://www.cmaj.ca/content/198/5/E176>.

these findings, fossil fuel advertising bans could serve as a “low-hanging fruit” in climate policy.”¹⁶

(c) What country, regional or sector roadmap experiences, best practices, and lessons learned can be shared?

A fossil ad ban is implemented in around 60 governments all over the world from Australia to the EU, mostly in (big) municipalities.¹⁷

In the case a municipal council votes *against* a local fossil ad ban, it is often because they prefer the ban being implemented on a national level instead of on a local level as they want the ban to comprise not only outdoor advertising, but also ads online, in the media and sponsorships. There have also been discussions at a national level. In France a law to ban fossil ads was adopted. In Spain and Ireland, law proposals for a national fossil ad ban are being discussed.

The Hague, the Netherlands, became the first city in the world with a fossil ad ban by law. This example has been celebrated as a best practice in the international press¹⁸ and in the Nature article “Local Fossil Ad Ban as Catalyst for Global Change.”¹⁹ The fossil ad ban in The Hague has been tested in court and stood its grounds on all points.²⁰

(d) How can a just, orderly and equitable transition best reflect the diverse realities of countries at different degrees of dependence on fossil fuels?

A fossil ad ban makes most sense in Global North countries, as they are responsible for most of the luxury emissions related to tourism and vehicle use. Just like tobacco prevention measures, apart from an advertising ban, other policies are necessary to bring down demand for harmful fossil fuel and luxury products and services, like a ban on discounts for polluting travel and vehicles and promoting sustainable alternatives.

¹⁶ <https://capableclimate.eu/fossil-fuel-ad-ban-support/>

¹⁷ <https://www.worldwithoutfossilads.org/frequently-asked-questions-2/>

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20260217-the-cities-banning-fossil-fuel-adverts>

¹⁹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-025-02267-4>

²⁰

<https://www.clientearth.org/latest/press-office/world-first-law-banning-fossil-fuel-ads-survives-dutch-legal-challenge/>