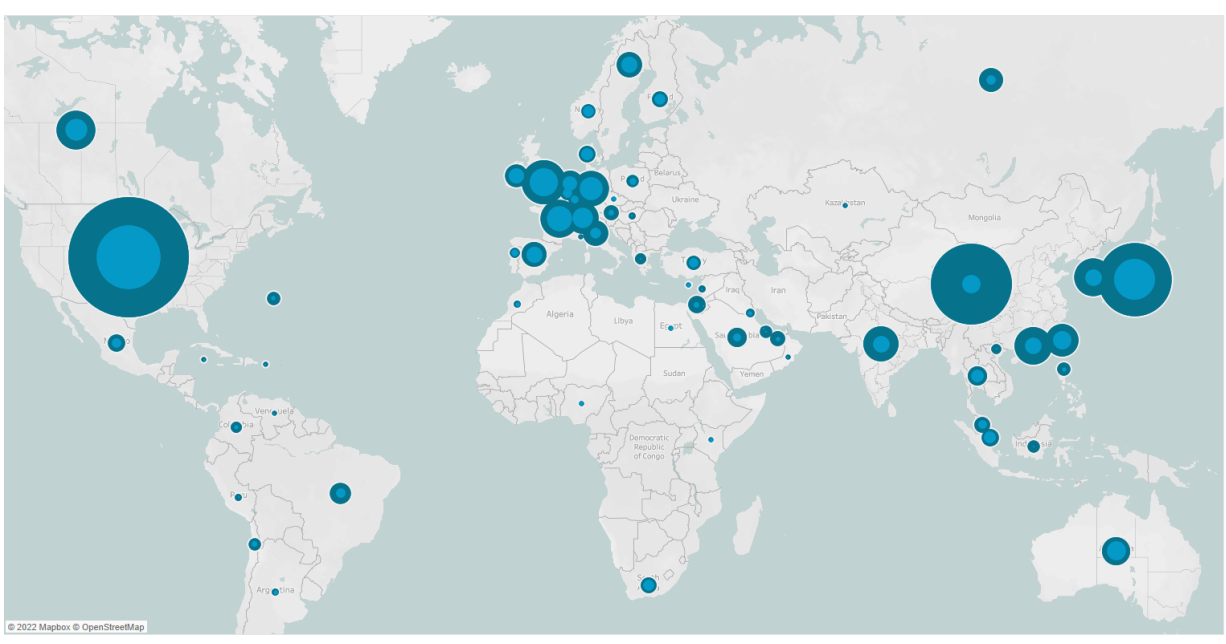# Out of site out of mind; net zero is bigger than just the back yard

Different strategies for different geographies

Many corporations have declared net zero targets but remain operating and expanding in countries or areas where emissions are projected to rise. There may be economic reasons for expanding in these areas, such as cheaper labour or reduced operating costs, but it does raise a question of integrity of these corporations and their true dedication to decarbonisation and sustainable growth. Similarly in the UK, each local authority has different levels of ambition and different net zero targets. Moving to net zero will require individuals, companies, and governments, to look beyond the boundaries of their jurisdiction to recognise these different priorities and pathways.

The map below shows the number of Forbes Global 2000 companies by location and shows the proportion of these companies that have declared a net zero target. It shows the disconnect for companies that have based themselves in countries that have projected emissions increases, e.g. India, and yet have declared a net zero target.

● Total number of Forbes Global 2000 companies   ● Number of Forbes Global 2000 companies with a net zero target

Conflicting priorities

It is important to recognise that every country has different development and decarbonisation pathways. For some countries, achieving net zero is not a top priority as there are other, more pressing issues, such as food and fuel poverty, access to clean water and health care, and disaster risk management. Choices must be made in a way that best meets these needs and this doesn't always align with a net zero pathway. The global conversation around net zero needs to recognise this, with developed countries providing support to developing countries through technology and knowledge sharing, or by demonstrating a deeper commitment to climate actions.
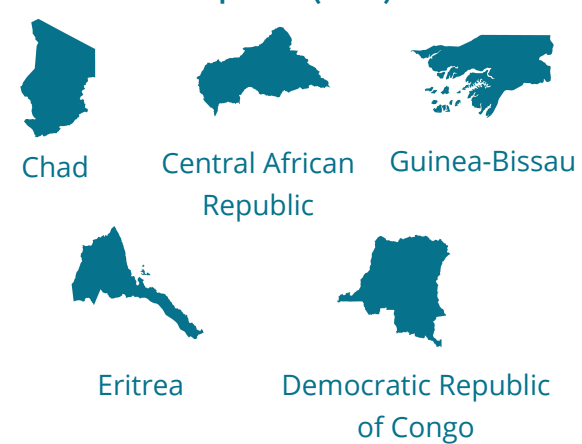
Cause and effect

There is often a disconnect between countries contributing the most to climate change in terms of emissions and countries that are feeling the biggest impacts of climate change. This inevitably leads to differences in the relative importance of mitigation and adaptation. The lack of a tangible, realised cause and effect can make climate change a hard issue to understand. As individuals and organisations cannot directly correlate their actions to a consequence, there is a reluctance to internalise the issue and take ownership of it.

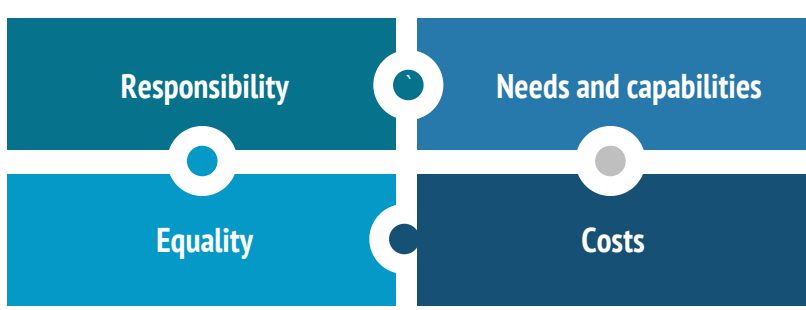**Countries with the largest emissions in 2021[1]**

China   United States of America   EU-27

Russia   India

Countries with the lowest ND-GAIN ranking for adaptation (2020)[2]

Chad   Central African Republic   Guinea-Bissau

Eritrea   Democratic Republic of Congo

Equity and fairness

Net zero cannot be achieved globally without the inclusion of all countries and regions. However, it is crucial to remember the importance of equity and fairness; common but differentiated responsibilities. In their development, many of the biggest economies relied on the use of fossil fuels and other natural resources. It would be short-sighted to expect that developing nations follow a development pathway that is aligned with a net zero target, especially without a significant amount of technology and knowledge sharing. It is important for countries and organisations to recognise that they have benefitted from the use of fossil fuels and other resources and show a serious commitment to action going forwards. This links back to the points made above about recognising different development pathways and different priorities.

Responsibility	Needs and capabilities
Equality	Costs

Achieving net zero will need a serious commitment to meaningful actions with a consideration of the wider geographical context that reflects the importance of equity and individual priorities.

[1] https://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/report_2021
[2]ND-GAIN index, scores for 2020 – combination of vulnerability to climate change and readiness to improve resilience
Net Zero Stocktake 2022 https://ca1-nzt.edcdn.com/Net-Zero-Tracker/Net-Zero-Stocktake-Report-2022.pdf?v=1655074300
Net Zero and Climate Change: A Conversation with African Experts, Webinar hosted by Oxford Net Zero
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7COvYIab5o
'Fair share' Climate Action Tracker https://climateactiontracker.org/methodology/cat-rating-methodology/fair-share/
Chad, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo maps from Vemaps.com

Aether