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**Towards a global green recovery:
THE CASES OF DENMARK, THE EU, GERMANY,
THE NETHERLANDS AND THE UK**

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The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into stark reality the need to build resilient and sustainable economic systems that allow countries to cope with and reduce the likelihood of future crises. A global green recovery could address this, as well as accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement targets. This paper provides insights into emerging approaches of Denmark, the European Union (EU), Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK) to support a global green recovery through their foreign policies.

Among other things, the paper highlights that:

- Sector priorities of global green recovery efforts can be informed by existing development cooperation priorities, but also need to take into account challenges and opportunities in certain sectors, including political considerations. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has considerably lowered fossil fuel prices, which opens opportunities for fossil fuel subsidy reform with less disruption.
- Multilateral organisations, in particular multilateral development banks, are considered key in supporting global green recovery efforts. Development partners can seek to influence them in different ways, including through engagement at the management and country levels (such as field offices of banks) and through the provision of earmarked funding.
- Partnerships with different actors and at different levels (the EU's 'Team Europe' approach for instance) are considered vital to promote a global green recovery.
- More efforts can be made to support particular vulnerable groups through green recovery measures, such as women and youth, as well as small and medium enterprises.

The paper provides a basis to inform and further analyse the global efforts to integrate environmental considerations into COVID-19 recovery efforts.

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The views expressed in this study are exclusively those of the authors and should not be attributed to any other person or institution. The authors can be contacted by sending an email to jvs@ecdpm.org (Jeske van Seters) and na@ecdpm.org (Nadia Ashraf).

Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AIV	Advisory Council on International Affairs
AU	African Union
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CDRI	Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
COP	Conference of the Parties
DFI	Development finance institution
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EFSD	European Fund for Sustainable Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
ESMAP	Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
GNI	Gross national income
IFI	International financial institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INTPA	Directorate General of International Partnerships of the European Commission
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium Enterprises
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDCP	Nationally Determined Contributions Partnership
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
UK PACT	United Kingdom Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions Programme
PBL	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
SDG	Sustainable development goal
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises

UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, devastating impacts on economies, health systems and more generally on the lives and livelihoods of people all over the world. Following the initial crisis response policies aimed at mitigating the most immediate and pressing challenges, governments and international organisations are developing policy and investment packages to shape the long-term recovery from this crisis. World leaders and international organisations have called for these packages to stimulate a “green recovery” and contribute to “building back better”. This call refers to tackling global environmental challenges and accelerating progress towards achieving global goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement. It matters not only for countries’ recovery efforts that directly target their own economies, but also their support for a global recovery through foreign policies.

In this context, this paper presents insights into emerging approaches of the EU and a selection of countries to support a global green recovery through their foreign policies. It covers Denmark, the EU, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. These case studies have served as input for a paper of Maas and Lucas (2021) of PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, which examines global green recovery narratives and characteristics more generally. The primary aim of both papers is to support the Netherlands in shaping its global green recovery efforts, while the analysis can be useful for a broader audience beyond the Netherlands.

The paper focuses on the following dimensions, which have guided the structuring of the case study chapters:

Global green recovery logic(s) used: The paper discerns the type of rationale(s) used to integrate environmental considerations in COVID-19 recovery plans. The analysis is based on three green recovery logics, as identified by Maas and Lucas (2021), namely:

- I. Green recovery as a co-benefit: This logic is mainly aimed at restoring the economy as quickly as possible, but states that there are also ways of linking economic recovery to environmental benefits. The focus is primarily on alleviating short-term socio-economic damage through efforts that may also be ‘green’.
- II. Green recovery as a necessary condition: Based on this logic, green considerations are considered necessary for viable long-term economic recovery. As such, short-term economic recovery should not get in the way of achieving long-term sustainability goals.
- III. Green recovery as an opportunity: In this logic, recovery packages offer an opportunity to reduce future damage from environmental degradation and put the world on a sustainable development path.

Thematic priorities: The paper looks at thematic priorities identified in recovery plans and includes concise information on how certain priorities are pursued.

Geographical priorities: This refers to country and/or regional priorities. If evidence of the rationale for the geographical priorities has been found, then this has also been presented. The focus is on analysing if and how environmental considerations were taken into account in deciding which countries/regions to prioritise.

Multilateralism: This relates to the extent to which countries engage with multilateral organisations and fora to support global green recovery efforts. These could include for instance International financial institutions (IFIs) or the external action of the EU.

Partnerships: The paper highlights if and which key partners are mentioned in COVID-19 recovery plans, such as private sector actors and civil society, along with key features of those partnerships.

Inclusiveness: This concerns information on the extent to which inclusiveness is taken into consideration in global green recovery efforts and how. It notes if specific vulnerable groups, such as women and youth, are targeted, and approaches how to do so.

Use of the term ‘resilience’: Given that resilience has a number of different uses, the paper notes if and how the term is used in the EU’s and case study countries’ global green recovery discourse. In particular, the paper looks at whether the term refers to environmental considerations, for instance a reference to countries becoming more resilient to the effects of climate change.

Transboundary effects of domestic policies: This explains whether and how transboundary effects of domestic recovery policies are considered. It is important to note that the analysis is limited to documents that relate to global recovery efforts, while domestic recovery plans which may mention transboundary effects of national measures have not been considered.

Trade-offs: The paper notes whether evidence has been found that trade-offs between the social, environmental and economic goals of COVID-19 recovery efforts are considered.

Data for the paper has been collected through a desk review of key policy documents, complemented by a limited set of semi-structured interviews. The full list of interviewees is presented in the annex. As such, it is a scoping study, conducted in a limited timeframe, and presenting key features of global green recovery efforts in a concise manner without going into detail. Sections 2 till 6 present the different case studies, followed by a concluding section.

2. Denmark

Global green recovery logic(s) used

Various rationales are deployed to integrate greening in Denmark’s global recovery efforts. The predominant focus appears to be on the opportunity that economic recovery provides to move towards greener and more sustainable development. This is manifested in the build back better and greener narrative, which calls to rebuild countries in a “better” and a “greener” way, as put by the Danish Minister for development cooperation in his speech on green reconstruction in Africa.¹ This is reflected in the recovery package announced in October 2020, which calls for taking advantage of economic recovery efforts to build more sustainable and greener economies (Government of Denmark 2020a).

To some extent, greening is also viewed as a necessary condition for economic recovery, as well as a co-benefit. As such, the global climate action strategy mentions the role of a green transition for creating jobs (short-term) as well as steering long-term economic recovery (Government of Denmark 2020b).

¹ [Speech](#) by Danish minister for development cooperation: Denmark at the forefront of green reconstruction in Africa after COVID-19 (August 2020).

Thematic priorities

The government of Denmark has adopted three global recovery support packages (in April, June and October 2020), which mention various sectors related to green recovery, with most detail provided in the last package announced in October.² One key area of focus for Denmark's green recovery efforts is energy. The October package has a particular sub-sector priority on electricity in the health sector, focusing more on short-term needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic (Government of Denmark 2020a). Support is provided through the multi-donor trust fund Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). More broadly, renewable energy is an important priority area, in particular with respect to influencing global financial flows. This may partly be explained by Denmark's competitive advantage when it comes to green energy technologies.³ Another thematic area that receives attention in the aid packages is agriculture and rural development. This relates to support provided to farmers to protect them against climate shocks, as well as support for climate-proof economic activities such as renewable energy, efficient use of water and sustainable agricultural production, preservation, and processing (Government of Denmark 2020c & 2020d).

In addition to these sectors, the three aid packages have a cross-cutting focus on promoting green jobs. To promote investments in sustainable production specific support is provided to businesses through loans, technical assistance, and guarantee funds (Government of Denmark 2020a). While the term "green jobs" has not been defined, it seems to refer to jobs that arise through "sustainable production" methods such as the use of renewable energy and more circular business models (e.g. better waste management and recycling). There is also mention of supporting work that improves the local environment, including through more "sustainable and climate-friendly" solutions. In addition, there is a focus on delivering urban social safety nets which can support communities to acquire green jobs. The intervention supports beneficiaries through cash-for-work as well as work counselling on, among other things, sustainable and climate-friendly solutions.

Geographical priorities

For Denmark, there is a clear priority to support African countries in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the transition towards greener economies. The aid package announced in June focuses on the Sahel as it is one of the regions hit hardest by climate change (Government of Denmark 2020c). One of the intervention areas specifically talk of the long-term consequences of climate change, which reinforce the need for social safety nets. As such, the logic here is that threats from climate change render economic recovery more difficult and hence require more support. Within the Sahel region, Burkina Faso, Niger, Kenya and Mali are focused on, although details of how climate considerations are integrated in each country are not provided. The following aid package in October also prioritises Africa within the 'build back better and greener' intervention area (Government of Denmark 2020a). Unlike its predecessor, this package does not specifically mention a focus on countries that are more vulnerable to climate change. At the same time, the programmes within the build back better and greener intervention area specifically target green recovery, for instance green jobs in Ethiopia and Somalia.

In addition, Denmark will continue to work with and influence countries that produce high greenhouse gas emissions. The global climate action strategy underscores the importance of directing climate diplomacy efforts towards big emitters, including emerging economies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). Denmark has signed

² In addition to these aid packages, documents reviewed for this paper include the Danish global climate action strategy (2020), speech by the Danish minister for development cooperation on green reconstruction in Africa (August 2020) and an article written by a group of European ministers and a European commissioner on the role of the World Bank and IMF in global green recovery (October 2020).

³ See for example: <https://investindk.com/insights/denmark-makes-energy-efficiency-a-competitive-advantage>

strategic partnership agreements with major emitters, including a recently concluded green strategic partnership with India in October 2020.⁴

Multilateralism

With respect to multilateralism, Denmark in particular focuses on working with the UN, and engaging with other multilateral organisations to influence green recovery financing. In addition to partnering with different UN agencies to deliver support in developing countries, an example of Denmark's engagement with the UN is the organisation of a meeting between UN leaders and key African and Nordic partners on Africa's green transition.⁵ Denmark organised the virtual high-level meeting with the aim of providing African partners the opportunity to share the challenges that they are facing locally. In his speech on the event, the Danish Minister for development cooperation has stated that the role of Nordic countries is to mobilise support and work towards a coordinated response to the crisis, including efforts towards a green and sustainable recovery. Moreover, with regards to greening global financial flows, the climate action strategy stresses the need to improve framework conditions for investments contributing to a green transition, particularly in the area of renewable energy. (Government of Denmark 2020b). For instance, it is emphasised that the energy market needs to be designed to support green investment by private and institutional investors and funds. This is done bilaterally, as well as through multilateral organisations such as the UN, OECD, and the World Bank. An example of such efforts is an op-ed in the Guardian written by a group of European ministers, including the Danish Minister for development cooperation, and a European Commissioner on the role of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in spearheading green and inclusive recovery.⁶

Furthermore, it is relevant to mention that in delivering recovery support in partner countries, there appears to be a strong focus on partnering with multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank, Nordic Development Fund and African Development Bank (AfDB). One particular instrument is the African Guarantee Fund, a pre-covid joint initiative between the AfDB, the Danish and Spanish Governments, which is used to support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and green job creation as part of Denmark's recovery efforts in Africa.⁷

Partnerships

Collaboration and coordination with other Nordic countries is an essential component of Denmark's global green recovery efforts. As mentioned earlier, Denmark led the meeting between Nordic, African and UN leaders to steer the debate on green reconstruction in Africa. The dialogue format was considered important to develop a joint and coordinated response towards the build back better and greener agenda. More generally, Denmark coordinates its position with other Nordic countries in multilateral fora, such as in the Green Climate Fund and the World Bank.

Beyond Nordic cooperation, Denmark is seeking enhanced collaboration with other EU member states and EU institutions in the context of the Team Europe approach (Interviews 2020). This is an approach to strengthen collaboration between the EU, its Member States and financial institutions, in particular the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to support partner countries in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences.⁸ In this context, the Danish government is interested

⁴ [Green strategic partnership between Denmark and India](#) (September 2020).

⁵ See footnote 1.

⁶ [Guardian op-ed: World Bank and IMF must spearhead a green and inclusive recovery](#), by a group of European ministers (from Netherlands, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden) and a European Commissioner (October 2020).

⁷ [African Guarantee Fund](#)

⁸ See for more information on the Team Europe approach: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/77326/coronavirus-european-union-launches-%E2%80%9Cteam-europe%E2%80%9D-package-support-partner-countries-more-%E2%82%AC20_en; and (Jones & Teevan 2021).

in strengthening joint programming, for instance in efforts to provide support for a green economy transition in major emitting countries.

Inclusiveness

Denmark's green recovery efforts take into account the needs of specific groups, namely MSMEs, women, and to some extent youth. For example, MSMEs in the rural sector are particularly supported, with a specific focus on promoting green activities (Government of Denmark 2020c). In a similar vein, the aid package from October offers MSMEs support in accessing finance, integrating climate considerations when deciding which type of investment to support (Government of Denmark 2020a). Support for MSMEs also incorporates gender considerations. For instance, in Nigeria a number of value chains were chosen because of the important role that women play in them, including the previously mentioned areas in sustainable agriculture. More broadly, support is provided to women's climate-proof economic activities, which is intended to also generate green jobs for women. Similarly, there is a mention of youth when providing support (skills development/training) to catalyse green jobs. This also came out as a key area of focus in the earlier mentioned UN-Nordic-African meeting.

Use of the term 'resilience'

In the documents analysed for this study, the term 'resilience' is rarely used. In most cases the term is used in a socio-economic sense, which can refer to the ability of people to make a living and have access to basic infrastructure and facilities in the aftermath of the crisis, and for economies and societies to be more prepared in the event of future shocks. This includes for instance references to "resilient education systems", "resilient and independent civil societies". In addition, "increasing resilience" is mentioned more generally without it being clear what exactly this refers to.

Transboundary effects of domestic policies

The documents studied for this paper do not provide evidence of the consideration of transboundary environmental effects of domestic recovery packages.

Trade-offs

The documents analysed for this paper do not provide evidence of trade-offs being considered.

3. European Union

Global green recovery logic(s) used

The joint communication on the Global EU response to COVID-19 outlines the key priorities of the EU with regard to external action towards COVID-19 recovery.⁹ The response is based on a Team Europe Approach drawing on contributions from different EU institutions and combining resources from member states and financial institutions.

⁹ This draft is based primarily on the joint communication and the [Council conclusions on Team Europe Global Response to COVID-19](#) (June 2020). Other sources include: [Statement by Jutta Urpilainen at the 102nd Meeting of the Development Committee](#) (October 2020) and the [Joint Communiqué: EU27 - Latin America and Caribbean Informal Ministerial Meeting](#) (December 2020).

The joint communication can be considered a short-term response to the COVID-19 crisis, focusing on immediate challenges. At the same time, the EU does commit to integrating the strategic objectives of the EU with respect to environment and climate as laid down in the European Green Deal in its approach to global recovery (European Commission 2020). As such, the “Green Deal is the blue blueprint of the recovery path” in the longer term (Interviews 2020). The joint communication notes that the COVID-19 crisis is a reminder of how the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement “remain crucial” to help “better equip” the world for future crises. In addition, it mentions the importance of recovery efforts to avoid exacerbating existing crises such as biodiversity loss and climate emergencies. Here, the focus appears to be on the necessity of climate action to better prepare societies against future shocks. This is also reflected in Commissioner Urpilainen’s statement at the October meeting of the Development Committee of the World Bank Group. She talked about a resilient recovery that is green, in addition to being inclusive and making use of digital opportunities. She considers “sustainability (building in resilience considerations from the outset)”, together with coordination and shared ambition, the “the only way to put the world on track to achieve SDGs”.¹⁰

The global recovery response is not only considered a necessity, but also an opportunity to further climate action and greening efforts. The Council conclusions on Team Europe Global Response to COVID-19 note for example that recovery efforts are a “real opportunity to build back better and greener”, stressing the importance of promoting inclusive sustainable recovery processes that are aligned to the EU’s Green Deal (Council of the European Union 2020).

Thematic priorities

The priorities outlined in the EU’s global recovery plan in April 2020 do not pay significant attention to green considerations, which may be explained by the fact that the joint communication focuses on addressing immediate challenges, as noted above. The three main areas of focus are i) emergency response to humanitarian needs; ii) strengthening health, water and sanitation; and iii) addressing the social and economic consequences of the crisis. Within the priority to address the immediate social and economic consequences, there is reference to the need to ensure that companies are able to finance long-term investments, which would allow economies to recover in a green and inclusive manner (European Commission 2020). The EU commits to working with the private sector, international organisations, and partner countries to support strong and resilient value chains, ensuring that labour rights and corporate social responsibility are upheld despite the economic crises. This may indirectly also include green considerations.

In addition, the recovery plan pays attention to waste management within its priority on emergency response to the immediate health crisis and the resulting humanitarian needs. It highlights the issue of deficiencies in the management of biomedical waste and commits to supporting partner countries in the effective management of medical waste, focusing on corona-related waste streams. While the communication does not go into detail on the effects of waste and the need for a circular economy, such considerations may still be recognised as ways to integrate greening in global recovery plans.

Apart from the EU global recovery plan, recent and upcoming initiatives under the Team Europe banner may also give some indication of the priority focus areas for the EU’s global green recovery efforts. For instance, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) met in December 2020 for an informal ministerial meeting, hosted by the Foreign Minister of Germany, and chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.¹¹ The aim of the event was to enhance the partnership

¹⁰ [Statement](#) by Jutta Urpilainen at the 102nd Meeting of the Development Committee (October 2020).

¹¹ See [Joint Communiqué: EU27 - Latin America and Caribbean Informal Ministerial Meeting](#) (December 2020).

between the EU and LAC to support a greener and fairer post-COVID-19 recovery. A joint communique from the ministers following the event highlights some of the areas focused on. This includes the European Commission's waste management programme under the regional programme for the Caribbean. This programme was adopted recently and will promote climate action and resilience within the framework of the post-Cotonou Agreement. In addition, in the joint communique, the ministers recognise the importance of combining energy security with a transition towards renewable energy sources. In particular, the ministers welcome the Team Europe Initiative on hydrogen partnerships and bilateral hydrogen projects currently implemented in Chile by companies from Chile, Germany and Italy. The European Commission also launched LAGREEN, the first green bonds fund in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the goal to finance climate- and resource-friendly investments, as well as to mobilise local and international private capital across Latin America.¹²

In the longer term, greening is a priority of the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) instrument that covers the period 2021-2027. There is a commitment to dedicate 30% of NDICI to climate objectives, which mirrors the overall commitment towards spending 30% of the total EU budget in the period 2021-2027 on climate action.¹³ In light of the programming of NDICI, EU delegations are coordinating the preparations of Team Europe Initiatives, which include a considerable number of initiatives related to the EU Green Deal. These initiatives focus on topics such as biodiversity, forests, circular economy, pollution, renewable energy and agrifood systems (Interviews 2020). To guide the NDICI programming exercise more generally, the Commission has prepared key briefing notes for staff in EU delegations on each of the elements of the Green Deal, and how those can be translated into action (Interviews 2020).

Geographical priorities

The EU's global recovery efforts focus on the most affected countries requiring health support. This includes for instance countries in Africa, the Neighbourhood, the Western Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa, parts of Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean (European Commission 2020). The recovery plan does not mention greening as a consideration in prioritising countries to support.

Multilateralism

The EU commits to promoting and leading a coordinated response to the COVID-19 crisis on the multilateral front (European Commission 2020). This pertains in particular to joint coordinated efforts with the UN, IFIs and the G7 and G20. In addition, there is continued commitment to work with the African Union (AU) on the new strategy with Africa. The joint communication on the EU's global response pays particular attention to the EU's involvement in the development of a G20 roadmap, outlining a number of areas that the EU will focus on. While there is no specific focus on greening, the document does state the EU's commitment to promote initiatives that support countries to recover in a green and inclusive manner.

Moreover, Jutta Urpilainen's statement at the Development Committee meeting, reflects the interest of the EU to work with IFIs in promoting green global recovery. As mentioned earlier, Commissioner Urpilainen considers sustainability, coordination and shared ambition as the only way to achieve the SDGs. With respect to debt relief, which is a core theme of the annual meetings, she stresses the EU's commitment to support the Debt Service Suspension Initiative to prevent exacerbating vulnerabilities in low-income countries. Here, there is also mention of

¹² The initiative is led by the German Government and implemented by Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), and supported by capital contributions and grants from the EU Investment Facility.

¹³ See Press release: European Commission welcomes political agreement on future €79.5 billion for a new instrument to finance the EU external action and lead the global recovery through international partnerships (18 December 2020).

the need to link debt relief and investment to the 2030 agenda, which would in turn help achieve green, digital and inclusive COVID-19 recovery. This is also supported in the earlier mentioned joint communique from the meeting between EU and LAC ministers. It supports the work on bringing debt, investment and capacity building into the context of the SDGs and the goals of the Paris Agreement and the Biodiversity Convention.

Partnerships

The Team Europe Approach is at the heart of the EU's global recovery response to COVID-19. The approach was initiated to guide a single framework of action for Europe's external response to the COVID-19 crisis, encapsulated in a "joined-up" strategy (European Commission 2020). The Team Europe approach aims to pool the resources of the whole European family, namely of EU institutions, EU member states and their implementing agencies, development finance institutions (DFIs), the EIB and the EBRD, to deliver on the strategy, totalling 38.5 billion euros, as of 1 November 2020.¹⁴ Building on the Team Europe momentum, the EU now seeks to apply the Team Europe approach beyond the immediate response to COVID-19, to promote longer-term coordinated EU support to low income countries, not in the least to build back better and greener (Jones & Teevan 2021). This is apparent from the Team Europe Initiatives being developed in the context of the programming of NDICI, as mentioned earlier.

In addition, the EU is also engaged with non-European actors to promote green recovery efforts globally. Recent initiatives include an EU-China seminar on green recovery and green stimulus, where both speakers from the EU and China presented their plans to expand green development policies and their experience of working towards green transition in different sectors.¹⁵ Another example is a joint EU-Korea climate action webinar in which the EU presented the European Green Deal as a roadmap for EU's recovery, while Korea presented its Green (new) Deal.¹⁶

Moreover, the EU will continue to engage with and leverage the private sector for its sustainable development objectives, including climate action. The new European Fund for Sustainable Development-plus (EFSD+), which is part of the EU budget covering the period 2021-2027 and will build on its predecessor (the EFSD), will be a key tool in that regard. As such, more sustainable development finance that mobilizes private sector resources towards climate action is expected to contribute towards long-term global green recovery (Interviews 2020). This is in line with commitments of the EIB and the EBRD to integrate climate concerns more strongly in their operations (Ahairwe & Bilal 2019).

Inclusiveness

The term "inclusive recovery" is amply used in the EU's global recovery response plan. In particular, the document mentions a focus on most vulnerable people, such as "migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and as well as women, children, elderly and disabled people and other minorities", with the overall goal of targeting people most in need of healthcare and protection. There is also a reference to supporting the private sector in particular small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the self-employed. No reference is made to green considerations with regards to supporting vulnerable groups.

¹⁴ [Press release](#) Team Europe steps up delivery to its COVID-19 recovery package up to €38.5 billion for partner countries (November 2020).

¹⁵ [EU-China Seminar on Green Recovery and Green Stimulus](#) (September 2020).

¹⁶ [EU-Korea Climate Action Webinar European Green Deal : An Opportunity for Green Economic Recovery after COVID-19](#) (June 2020).

Use of the term ‘resilience’

The term resilience is referred to a few times in the EU’s global recovery plan, with different meanings. Most broadly, the document talks about strengthening “macroeconomic resilience and stability”. This is also reflected in Jutta Urpilainen’s statement which calls for “a resilient recovery that factors in existing and future shocks”, and the need to build in “resilience considerations from the outset”.¹⁷ It is not entirely clear to what extent the use of the term resilience incorporates green considerations. The global recovery plan also refers to building resilient value chains, as mentioned earlier. This may indirectly incorporate green considerations with the focus on sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Finally, the document calls for support towards “resilient health systems”.

Trade-offs

Based on the information collected, no evidence has been found of trade-offs being considered.

Transboundary effects of domestic policies

No evidence has been found of the consideration of transboundary effects of domestic policies.

4. Germany

Global green recovery logic(s) used

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) launched an Emergency COVID-19 support programme in April (Federal Government of Germany 2020). It pays hardly any attention to supporting a green transition, which may be explained by the short-term nature of the programme, which focuses on 2020. The Ministry is currently in the process of developing a global green recovery policy for the mid- to long-term (Interviews 2020). Relatedly, it is exploring the possibility of dedicating more staff capacity to this topic. This increasing attention for a green transition mirrors the approach to national recovery support packages, which intend to help the German economy move towards climate neutrality.¹⁸

Documents analysed for this case study, as well as the interviews, indicate that the government considers it first and foremost a necessity to take environmental considerations into account in global recovery efforts. Climate action should be at the heart of the recovery efforts, as “climate change is progressing, including during COVID-19”.¹⁹ This is in line with Chancellor Merkel’s statement that we must bear all 17 sustainable development goals – including climate protection – in mind at all times, as there can be no sustainable development at the expense of individual SDGs. She noted that climate protection and biodiversity remain of paramount importance, also at this time of worldwide crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁰

The government pays particular attention to interdependencies between environmental degradation and health. For example, it is highlighted in the Emergency COVID-19 support programme that climate change and decreasing biodiversity boost infectious diseases, zoonoses and pandemics. In this spirit, BMZ will expand its ‘One Health’

¹⁷ See footnote 10.

¹⁸ See: <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/germany-touts-green-stimulus-in-post-covid-19-policy-push>

¹⁹ [Statement](#) by Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Gerd Müller at the 102nd Development Committee meeting of the World Bank Group (October 2020), and the related [press release](#).

²⁰ [Speech](#) by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel at the XIth Petersberg Climate Dialogue (April 2020).

approach, with the support of a newly set up One Health Directorate. This is a cross-sectoral holistic approach that recognises the links between the health of people, animals and the environment.²¹

While most emphasis is put on the necessity to green global (and national) recovery efforts, it is also considered an opportunity. This is illustrated by Minister Müller's statement that "by striving for a better recovery, we together want to generate a triple dividend, in economic, environmental and social terms."

Thematic priorities

The documents reviewed do not define specific sectors of focus, with respect to green recovery efforts. Bilateral cooperation can be considered as demand driven, with targeted sectors to be identified based on each country's needs (interviews 2020). With regards to economic recovery efforts more broadly, the Emergency COVID-19 Support Programme foresees economic support for companies, prioritising certain value chains (Federal Government of Germany 2020). This includes support to agriculture, textiles, tourism, and automotive suppliers.²² No explicit references to greening are made in any of the sectors prioritised within the Emergency COVID-19 support programme.

One sector that may receive special attention in Germany's mid- to long-term global green recovery policy is energy. This is based on the fact that a global energy transition is an important priority for Germany, predating COVID-19. Germany promotes the expansion of renewable energy and efficient energy technology in its development cooperation, climate diplomacy and trade relations (Ashraf et al. 2020). It is likely to continue to support a green energy transition, for instance through its economic recovery efforts in Africa, as pointed out by an interviewee.

Geographical priorities

The documents analysed for this paper identify no explicit geographical priority areas for Germany's global green recovery efforts. An interviewee mentioned a focus on green transition in Africa to support Paris-aligned development pathways. This is predicated on the fact that German development cooperation has a specific focus on Africa and operates on the basis of the Marshall Plan with Africa (Federal Government of Germany 2018). The Marshall Plan notes that Africa is most at threat from climate change, with seven of the ten countries at greatest risk world-wide being in Africa. Hence, protecting natural resources is one of the 'foundations' of the Marshall plan (Federal Government of Germany 2017). While the priority towards Africa predates the COVID-19 pandemic, it does imply considerable emphasis of German's development cooperation in Africa, including in COVID-19 times.

Multilateralism

The German government considers multilateral organisations to be key in supporting a global green recovery. They are well placed to contribute to global public goods, with a vast range of instruments at their disposal, a broad reach, and the ability to facilitate coordinated action (Federal Government of Germany 2020). Germany seeks to influence different multilateral bodies – in particular the EU, multilateral development banks and UN agencies – in different ways.

The government puts considerable emphasis on the role of the EU and its Team Europe approach. The Emergency COVID-19 Response Programme notes that Europe must extend a helping hand – not only within Europe but also to the poorest countries (Federal Government of Germany 2020). In partner countries, representations of Germany

²¹ [Press release](#): Minister Müller announces creation of a new One Health priority area at the BMZ (October 2020).

²² The rationale for this value chain selection is not explained in the programme document.

seek to contribute to making sure that NDICI programming is ‘green’, with support from headquarters (Interviews 2020).²³

Multilateral development banks, including the IMF and World Bank Group, are also considered important. Germany calls on the World Bank to tie its recovery support to clear criteria in order to respond to the crisis in the short term, while promoting transformations that need to take place over the long term. It insists that this applies to direct project funding but also, and in particular, to Development Policy Operations.²⁴ For this purpose, Germany raises its voice as a shareholder of the World Bank and other multilateral development banks, often in collaboration with other shareholders, including the Netherlands. An illustration of this is the joint op-ed in the Guardian that calls on the IMF and the World Bank Group to deliver clear results on green and inclusive recovery, for example by urgently phasing out investments in coal, oil and gas, while redirecting funds to green jobs and access to renewable energy.²⁵ Furthermore, Germany provides earmarked funding, including 20 million euro for a Green Recovery Initiative that has been launched in December 2020 and that also receives funding from Austria and the UK. It serves as seed funding to enable the World Bank to strengthen its strategic advice to partner countries for green reforms, ensuring that the bank’s recovery programmes go toward climate action.²⁶ As such, it seeks to “support the \$160 billion in emergency response operations that the Bank has already committed to COVID-19 recovery.”²⁷

At the UN level, Germany has increased its core contribution to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to better enable the organisation to make an effective contribution for a global green recovery. Germany has doubled its core contribution from 50 million euro in 2019 to 110 million euro in 2020.²⁸ UNDP assesses the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on economies and communities, to inform and tailor the responses of governments and partners to recover from the crisis in a socially and environmentally sustainable way.²⁹

Partnerships

Germany invests considerably in the Nationally Determined Contributions Partnership (NDCP), to support countries in preparing green recovery plans and packages in response to COVID-19. The Partnership is placing economic advisors in the planning and finance ministries of 32 developing country members.³⁰ A virtual Thematic Expert Group and a Green Recovery Network have also been established to enhance the economic advisory support and facilitate ongoing learning. By September 2021, through this support, 32 countries are expected to incorporate climate ambitions in their recovery and/or national plans in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This support is made available by 14 NDCP members, of which four are individual countries, namely Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK.

²³ Germany holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of 2020. [Dealing with the coronavirus crisis](#) is a main priority of the German presidency. At the same time, Germany takes on the role of a moderator that seeks to find compromises and solutions among the member states. Therefore, German positions move more to the background. See: <https://www.eu2020.de/eu2020-en/presidency/the-german-presidency---together-for-europe-s-recovery/2361344>

²⁴ [Statement](#) by Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Gerd Müller at the 102nd Development Committee meeting of the World Bank Group (October 2020).

²⁵ [Guardian op-ed](#): World Bank and IMF must spearhead a green and inclusive recovery, by a group of European ministers (from Netherlands, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden) and a European Commissioner (October 2020).

²⁶ See the BMZ Press Release: [World Bank Annual Meeting. Minister Müller initiates climate-friendly investments to overcome economic crisis in developing countries.](#)

²⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange/brief/the-climate-support-facility>

²⁸ See the UNDP Press Release: [COVID-19: Germany doubles its support to UNDP’s flexible core funding.](#)

²⁹ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/coronavirus/socio-economic-impact-of-covid-19.html>

³⁰ [NDCP Economic Advisory Initiative](#)

More generally, with regards to global recovery efforts, and not specifically greening, the emergency response programme mentions cooperation with enterprises, civil society organisations and faith-based organisations in Germany, Europe, and developing countries (Federal Government of Germany 2020).

Inclusiveness

No evidence has been found on Germany targeting particular groups when it comes specifically to green recovery efforts. With regards to overall economic recovery efforts, the emergency response programme identifies women and girls as a vulnerable group in the COVID-19 pandemic, without specific references to environmental issues. More generally, Minister Müller, in his speech at the World Bank spring meeting, emphasized that support for economic recovery must not only be climate-friendly, but also foster equality and leave no one behind.³¹

Use of the term ‘resilience’

The documents analysed, including the Emergency COVID-19 Support Programme, do not use the term ‘resilience’.

Transboundary effects of domestic policies

No evidence has been found in the documents analysed of the consideration of transboundary environmental effects of domestic recovery packages.

Trade-offs

The Environmental and Climate Assessment tool of BMZ includes the systematic screening of all bilateral development cooperation initiatives at the appraisal phase. It helps to make sure that environmental and climate aspects are considered (Ashraf et al 2020). This also applies to bilateral recovery-related interventions.

5. Netherlands

Global green recovery logic(s) used

Green considerations have been incorporated in the Netherlands’ global recovery plans on the basis of multiple rationales. In the letter by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and the Minister of Economic Affairs and Climate to the parliament on global climate diplomacy (in the context of COVID-19), combating climate change is considered a necessary requirement for an effective global recovery response to the COVID-19 crisis (Government of the Netherlands 2020a). It is considered an essential condition for sustainable and future-proof economic growth and not an “extra”. The government emphasises there being “no question of a choice between investing in economic recovery and investing in climate; sustainable economic recovery is green recovery”. The letter underscores the importance of preventing cuts to climate financing, which is under threat because of the crisis. The need to address climate change remains vital, despite the small reduction in emissions due to the economic slowdown caused by the crisis.

³¹ See footnote 24.

In addition, the letter also points to the opportunity that economic recovery has created in terms of focusing more on climate change and sustainable development. Given that global recovery measures account for 10% of the total world economy, there is an opportunity to make economies more sustainable in line with the sustainable development goals and the Paris Agreement. Considering the move towards green transition as an opportunity of COVID-19 recovery is also seen in the letter by the Minister for foreign trade and development cooperation in response to advice of the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) on the Netherlands' global green recovery efforts (Government of the Netherlands 2020b). The recovery package announced in the letter supports the "build back better" call of the UN, highlighting the need for recovery efforts to also contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

While this is not a predominant narrative in the documents analysed, greening is also considered as a stimulator for short-term economic recovery goals. In particular the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, in her speech at the Development Committee meeting of the World Bank Group in April 2020, called for an "economic recovery powered by low carbon infrastructure, green jobs and resilient livelihoods".³²

Thematic priorities

While the documents³³ do not detail on which sectors the Netherlands focuses with respect to greening, a number of areas appear to be given importance. With regards to bilateral cooperation, the focus is on the interests of the partner country and Dutch expertise and knowledge. This is related to development cooperation as well as private sector support in particular sectors including circular economy, circular agriculture, renewable energy, sustainable mobility and nature-based solutions, as stated in the letter on the state of affairs of global climate diplomacy (Government of the Netherlands 2020a). The letter in response to AIV's advice notes that Dutch 'top sectors' such as water, agriculture and food are relevant (Government of the Netherlands 2020b). Furthermore, the Netherlands will continue to focus on the existing priority sectors of development cooperation, which is similar to the ones where Dutch expertise is considered important, such as water, food security, renewable energy, private sector development and forests.

With respect to multilateral development banks, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, in her speech at the Development Committee meeting of the World Bank Group in April 2020, mentioned a similar focus on renewable energy, nature-based solutions, and resilient water and food systems, while seeking to end fossil fuel financing.³⁴ Multilateral development banks are considered to play an important role in phasing out fossil fuels (Government of the Netherlands 2020a).

³² [Speech](#) by Minister Kaag at Development Committee World Bank Group (April 2020).

³³ This includes i) letter by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and the Minister of Economic Affairs and Climate to the Dutch parliament on global climate diplomacy in the context of COVID-19 (July 2020); letters by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation to the parliament on ii) response to advice of the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) on the Netherlands' global green recovery efforts (July 2020) iii) the Netherlands' position ahead of the annual Meeting World Bank Group 2020 iv) announcing 100 million euro aid package for COVID recovery v) implementation of the 100 million euro aid package. Other documents reviewed include a speech by the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation at the Development Committee meeting of the World Bank (April 2020), an op-ed in the Guardian written by a group of European ministers and a European commissioner on the role of the World Bank and IMF in global green recovery (October 2020), and a non-paper by Netherlands on EU's green recovery (April 2020).

³⁴ [Speech](#) by Minister Kaag at Development Committee World Bank Group (April 2020).

Geographical priorities

Overall, the Netherlands' global recovery efforts have been focused on low-income and the most vulnerable countries, including fragile states and conflict zones (Government of the Netherlands 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; & 2020d). To give an indication, a letter to parliament in July 2020 announced that 132 million euro had been spent in Africa, Middle East, South America and Asia as part of the COVID-19 response (Government of the Netherlands 2020e). In addition, the government is committed to continuing its relationship with partner countries and neighbouring regions, on the basis of self-interest, humanity and strengthening the EU's geopolitical position (Government of the Netherlands 2020b). This is considered an investment in the security of the Netherlands, since the COVID-19 crisis can lead to security and migration concerns in neighbouring countries, which in turn affects peace and security in the Netherlands.

With respect to green transition specifically, the Netherlands will continue to encourage countries to submit ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Strategies (LTs), despite the COVID-19 crisis. There is a specific focus on the responsibility of countries that produce high greenhouse gas emissions (Government of the Netherlands 2020a). For this purpose, the climate envoy, in addition to the ministers, will be deployed strategically. Guided by an approach tailored to each country, the Netherlands will also support countries to increase the ambition of national climate plans and better implement them. This will for example be done by supporting countries through development cooperation and private sector instruments to invest in circular agriculture, renewable energy, sustainable mobility, circular economy and nature-based solutions. The focus on big emitters is reiterated with respect to the EU's external action.

Multilateralism

Multilateralism, in particular contributing to the EU's external action and influencing International Financial Institutions (IFIs), takes centre stage in the Netherlands' global green recovery efforts.

With respect to IFIs, the focus is on influencing the criteria and priority setting of their COVID-19 recovery financing. It is considered important for multilateral banks to continue to comply with their existing commitments towards fighting climate change. The Netherlands has insisted that IFIs develop a strategic framework that ensures low-carbon, inclusive and resilience recovery (Government of the Netherlands 2020a). In a letter to the parliament by the Minister of foreign trade and development cooperation on the Netherlands' position ahead of the World Bank's annual meeting, it was contended that in part due to insistence from the Netherlands, the World Bank has developed a strategy for building back better, which is in line with the Paris agenda and the SDGs (Government of the Netherlands 2020d). The government further encourages the Bank to invest in sectors that contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation and to phase out support for sectors dependent on fossil fuels. There is also a call for a coherent approach towards debt restructuring as it provides fiscal space to allow greener budgetary decisions in the future³⁵. In order to achieve these ambitions, the Netherlands focuses not only on influencing the management of IFIs, but also on working at the design and operation stage at the field office level (interviews 2020). Efforts are being made to link bilateral diplomacy with Dutch embassies and the offices of IFIs at the country level.

The Netherlands considers the EU to have a strong role in steering global green recovery, not least to influence recovery financing by IFIs. The Netherlands is committed to supporting EU efforts to ensure that climate change is a regular part of the EU's dialogue with third countries (Government of the Netherlands 2020a). It emphasises the need for the EU to focus its efforts on large countries that produce high levels of emissions, such as India and China,

³⁵ [Guardian op-ed](#): World Bank and IMF must spearhead a green and inclusive recovery, by a group of European ministers (from Netherlands, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden) and a European Commissioner (October 2020).

as mentioned earlier. In a non-paper on the EU's green recovery, the Netherlands stresses the need for coherence between internal and external policies. While the paper focuses on the EU's internal policy, it does recognize the need to raise the climate ambition of the EU's (forthcoming) NDICI. More specifically, it calls for significantly raising the commitment of climate-relevant expenditure, to ideally 50%.³⁶

Finally, there is specific focus on the Netherlands' continued support towards climate-related multilateral meetings/forums and commitments associated with them. Despite the fact that several climate conferences have been cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19, the Netherlands urges countries to remain committed to climate change goals and maintain the momentum towards green transition. For instance, in the context of the Netherlands Climate Adaptation Summit, hosted by the Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management in January 2021, the Netherlands is committed to accelerating and scaling up climate adaptation action, while maintaining momentum to further shape the "transformational decade (2020-2030) for climate adaptation" (Government of the Netherlands 2020a).

Partnerships

Building coalitions and partnerships, at different levels with various actors, is an important element of Netherlands' global green recovery efforts. This includes working with EU member states, actors in partner and third countries, and global partnerships.

The Netherlands supports a coordinated external cooperation approach by the EU and its member states towards third countries, as well as engaging in joint climate diplomacy efforts with member states. For instance, there is a call for joint climate action by representations of the EU and member states in third countries, particularly in countries with high emissions (Government of the Netherlands 2020a). As such, the Dutch government is in favour of a common orientation of external cooperation, including through possible joint programming (interviews 2020). Moreover, the Netherlands is working with other member states to develop joint messaging around green recovery in the run-up to the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It wishes to strengthen the Team Europe approach, not least to join force with other member states in jointly influencing head offices of IFIs. One example of member states working together to influence global recovery financing is an op-ed for the Guardian written by a group of European ministers, including the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and a European Commissioner, on the role of the World Bank and the IMF in spearheading a green and inclusive recovery.³⁷

Beyond the EU and its member states, the Netherlands is interested in maintaining and further developing cooperation with actors in partner countries. Beyond central governments, the Netherlands is looking for cooperation with local governments and cities, knowledge institutions, young people, companies, and civil society to further its green recovery efforts (Government of the Netherlands 2020a). The private sector, as mentioned earlier, is given specific attention.

With respect to global partnerships, the NDCP is a particularly important one for the Netherlands, which has co-chaired the partnership from January 2019 until December 2020. Specifically with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Netherlands supports NDCP developing countries in green recovery (through the partnership), by, among other things, facilitating the development of policies and investment plans, and by supporting their implementation (Government of the Netherlands 2020a). The partnership identifies particular needs of developing countries and provides support for drafting policy and investment plans, as well as for finding funding for its

³⁶ [Non-paper by Netherlands on EU's green recovery](#) (April 2020).

³⁷ See footnote 25.

implementation. The Netherlands has paid particular attention to supporting more active involvement of major emerging countries and promoting youth engagement in climate action.

Inclusiveness

While inclusive recovery is amply mentioned in various documents, there is less explanation on how the Netherlands aims to support inclusiveness specifically for green recovery. There is significant attention to supporting women and girls in economic recovery, but not with respect to the green aspects of recovery. Similarly, while support to SMEs is considered important, it does not integrate green considerations, for instance by specifically focusing on climate-friendly investments. One exception is the focus on youth which, in addition to being identified as a specific target group when it comes to economic recovery efforts, is specifically targeted for its role in climate negotiations. As mentioned earlier, a priority for the Netherlands in its remaining period of co-chairmanship of the NDCP is to develop a youth strategy with and for young people. In addition, the Netherlands facilitates the ‘We are Tomorrow Global Partnership of the Youth Climate Movement’ that supports youth movements to develop ambitious climate agendas (Government of the Netherlands 2020a). It should be noted however, that for both these references, it is unclear how and if the efforts specifically address recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Use of the term ‘resilience’

The term ‘resilience’ is mentioned several times throughout the different documents analysed for this paper. However, the meaning varies across references and it is not always clear what the term is referring to exactly. Resilience in socio-economic terms appears regularly in documents, which can refer to the ability of people to make a living and have access to basic infrastructure and facilities in the aftermath of the crisis, and for economies and societies to be more prepared in the event of future shocks. Mention of a ‘resilient health system’ may also be considered as part of socio-economic resilience. Such references have little or a very indirect relation to climate change. On the other hand, the term is also used in reference to supporting countries in becoming more resilient to the effects of climate change (adaptation). Other references of the term appear to be rather general and ambiguous on what is meant concretely. For instance, the climate diplomacy letter mentions the need to support countries in “increasing their resilience” (Government of the Netherlands 2020a).

Transboundary effects of domestic policies

The documents reviewed for this study do not present evidence on the consideration of transboundary environmental effects of domestic policies.

Trade-offs

The documents analysed for this paper do not provide evidence of trade-offs being considered.

6. United Kingdom

Global green recovery logic(s) used

The UK has sought since March 2020 to integrate green considerations in global recovery efforts, partly driven by its chairmanship of the 26th COP to the UNFCCC (originally scheduled for November 2020, but postponed by a year

due to COVID-19). This is based on the rationale that a global green recovery is a necessity, an opportunity and can bring co-benefits.

To emphasize the necessity of a global green recovery, Lord Goldsmith, the Minister for Pacific and the Environment at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), has expressed the need for a “seismic shift”, to adapt our “dysfunctional relationship with the natural world”.³⁸ Similarly, he has warned in another speech that “without action, we will simply be backing vast problems for future generations.”³⁹

At the same time, COVID-19 is seen to provide an opportunity to correct the imbalance by reconciling our economies with nature. With governments everywhere in the world designing their economic recovery packages, it is seen as an opportunity to lay the foundations for sustainable and inclusive growth.⁴⁰

Furthermore, interventions to drive ‘a green, inclusive and resilient recovery’ – which is the terminology currently predominantly used by the UK government (Interviews 2020) – can bring “value for money” and “deliver jobs and economic activity in the near-term”, pointing to a co-benefit rationale (UK Government 2020a). To take the example of energy, a note of the government’s FCDO highlights that doubling the share of renewables within the energy mix by 2030 would lead to an estimated increase in global GDP of between 0.6% and 1.1% and indirectly create 24.4 million jobs (UK Government 2020b).

Thematic priorities

The FCDO has identified four priority sectors to support a green, inclusive and resilient recovery in developing countries. These are: (i) energy, (ii) infrastructure; (iii) fossil fuel subsidy reform; and (iv) land water and food (UK Government 2020a,b,c & d; Interviews 2020). These dovetail with the five key themes of COP26,⁴¹ but are slightly different, as they are tailored specifically to developing countries. At the same time, given the diversity of developing countries and the needs/demand-based nature of development cooperation, the UK recognises that these priority sectors will not be relevant to the same extent and in the same way to all countries (Interviews 2020).

The FCDO has developed notes for each of the four priority sectors. These indicate that various criteria have been used for this sector selection. The sectors are considered to present greening opportunities, while it is expected that this can be combined with strides related to the social and economic pillars of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, it is mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated certain issues. To take an example related to the area of land, water and food: food production and distribution systems have come under acute stress (UK Government 2020a). It is also noted that due to COVID-19 there are additional opportunities and incentives for reform in some of these areas. To illustrate, the COVID-19 pandemic has considerably lowered fossil fuel prices, which opens opportunities for fossil fuel subsidy reform with less disruption (UK Government 2020c).

The UK has established a Green Recovery Challenge Fund, which is a capacity-building fund that will disburse £12 million over two years on projects that seek to help countries accelerate their low-carbon transition (e.g. through enhancing skills; policy recommendations; strengthening networks of key actors). The foci of the fund are closely related to the priority sectors. The first funding round was dedicated to ‘electrifying urban mobility’ and ‘greening

³⁸ [Speech](#) by Lord Goldsmith at WWF Side Event at the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals: Mapping recovery through environmental sustainability (July 2020).

³⁹ [Speech](#) by Lord Goldsmith on building a Clean and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19 in Support of Climate Action and the Sustainable Development Goals (July 2020).

⁴⁰ *Idem*.

⁴¹ The five key themes for COP26 are: (i) clean energy (ii) clean transport, (iii) nature-based solutions, (iv) adaptation and resilience, (v) finance / harnessing the power of the markets. Source: <https://ukcop26.org/uk-presidency/campaigns/>

financial systems'. The second round allowed proposals in the area of 'nature-based solutions: promotion of sustainable agriculture and forestry' and 'clean energy transition: integrating grid and off-grid low-carbon energy solutions'.⁴²

The UK has committed to double its international climate finance to over £11 billion between 2021 and 2025.⁴³ However, at the same time, the government has announced that it will cut its aid budget to below the long-held 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI). It will allocate 0.5% of GNI to the aid budget in 2021.⁴⁴ There is therefore limited space for additional initiatives, which is an impetus for the government to integrate green recovery considerations in existing programmes (Interviews 2020). Relatedly, the FCDO note dedicated to clean energy states that "it is better to replicate or expand existing programmes than to attempt to innovate and implement novel interventions that are higher risk over a short period of time" (UK Government 2020b).

Geographic priorities

The main geographical focus of the UK's support to a green, inclusive and resilient recovery in developing countries is on its priority countries (UK Government 2020a,b,c & d; Interviews 2020).⁴⁵ Promising opportunities in specific countries in specific sectors are meant to be largely identified by the offices representing the UK on the ground (UK Government 2020d).

The sector notes referred to earlier do give an indication of what could be particularly interesting countries to engage with. For example, the clean energy note ranks partner countries on the suitability of their energy market for investment, based on the Bloomberg NEF Climatescope index for emerging countries' energy markets (UK Government 2020b). The fossil fuel subsidy reform note ranks countries based on the level of fossil fuel subsidies. It indicates that there will also be consultations with academic experts to see which countries might see the highest promise for fossil fuel subsidy reform (UK Government 2020c).

A stronger triage has been done for countries where the UK sees strong potential for green, inclusive and resilient recovery support of multilateral development banks. FCDO has identified 15 countries, based on the countries' climate mitigation and adaptation contexts, with input from UK embassies. UK officials engage with multilateral development banks on this, to highlight where the UK sees particular opportunities for them (Interview 2020).

Multilateralism

When it comes to multilateral channels, similar to the other case studies, the UK recognises that multilateral development banks can play a key role in supporting green inclusive and resilient recovery efforts, as major development financiers. It therefore engages with regional banks such as the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank to promote a green and inclusive approach, but most efforts are dedicated to engagement with the World Bank.

⁴² See: <https://www.ukpact.co.uk/green-recovery-challenge-fund>

⁴³ [Statement](#) by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 'Building a greener, more resilient global economy' at the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Green Climate Fund side-event: COVID-19 and Climate Finance (July 2020).

⁴⁴ See [DEVEX article](#) 'Breaking: UK cuts aid budget to 0.5% of GNI'.

⁴⁵ Currently, the UK has bilateral programmes in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/where-we-work>.

The UK Governor's statement at the October 2020 meeting of the World Bank's Development Committee stresses that one of the key principles of the World Bank's COVID-19 response should be to support client countries to build a greener, more inclusive and resilient recovery. It is specified that this involves tackling distortive subsidies, reforming inefficient and high carbon energy systems, supporting economic growth through investing and valuing biodiversity, and prioritising measures on adaptation and nature-based solutions. The UK also calls on the World Bank Group to set a clear timeframe aligning their investments with the Paris Agreement.⁴⁶

As noted in the Germany case study further above, together with Germany and Austria, the UK provides earmarked funding to the World Bank's Climate Support Facility that was launched in December 2020.⁴⁷ The interviews indicate that there is scope to further enhance collaboration between the UK and likeminded partners, such as Germany and the Netherlands. The general messages of the UK and likeminded partners vis-à-vis the World Bank and other multilateral development banks is fairly similar, but more information sharing, alignment and joint efforts could be undertaken when it comes to lower-level operational matters. It was also noted in the interviews that UK embassies are starting to engage with field offices of the World Bank and with governments to contribute to building demand and momentum for green recovery investments (Interviews 2020).

The UK has furthermore been actively involved in the UN Secretary General's Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond Initiative, in particular by co-leading the 'recovering better for sustainability' workstream, together with Fiji, Rwanda and the EU.⁴⁸ This is a discussion group, joined by a number of participant countries, which has proposed a menu of policy options to link short-term recovery efforts to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It covers options for global standards and norms, governments, the private sector and international development institutions (United Nations 2020).

Partnerships

The UK seeks to develop partnerships with different actors and at different levels to promote its green recovery efforts globally. The UK's presidency at the COP 26 is a key guiding factor in its global recovery plans, as mentioned earlier. A green and resilient COVID-19 recovery is considered at the heart of the UK's COP 26 presidency. More concretely, the UK encourages all countries to submit more ambitious NDCs, to allow the transition towards more modern and clean economies, as expressed by Lord Ahmad, the Minister of State for the Commonwealth and United Nations at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.⁴⁹ As such, a more bold and ambitious partnership with all countries that steers green recovery is envisioned.

In addition to COP 26, the UK's upcoming presidency of G7 is another opportunity, which will be leveraged to further encourage countries to submit ambitious NDCs.⁵⁰ Finally, the UK will build on its existing involvement in global initiatives, such as the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), to further its green recovery efforts (Government of the UK 2020d).

Moreover, there is interest in partnering with various non-governmental actors to deliver on the UK's global green recovery plans. Lord Ahmad highlighted the importance of working with the private sector, including through public-private partnerships, to mobilise more investment in support of green recovery in developing countries. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the UK supports a number of implementing partners in developing countries, through

⁴⁶ [UK Governor's statement at the Development Committee of the World Bank Group \(October 2020\)](#).

⁴⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange/brief/the-climate-support-facility>.

⁴⁸ For more information see: [UN Financing for Development, Discussion Group II: Recovering Better for Sustainability](#).

⁴⁹ See footnote 43.

⁵⁰ See footnote 39.

its Green Recovery Challenge Fund under the UK PACT (Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions) programme.⁵¹ Funds are available for international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations, research institutes and private sector companies.

Inclusiveness

As noted earlier, the UK refers to a ‘green, inclusive and resilient recovery’ to encompass all the dimensions of its global recovery efforts. The term ‘inclusive’ was added to green and resilient recovery, to account for how different groups are harder hit by the COVID-19 pandemic (Interviews 2020). In general, it is considered important to ensure that recovery efforts support the poorest people. With respect to fossil fuel subsidy reform in COVID-19 recovery, it is deemed important to ensure that benefits also reach the poorest (UK Government 2020c). As such, funds freed up from the subsidy reform can be used to ensure that poorer households are not left worse off, while also accompanying the reform with equitable compensation mechanisms, such as direct cash transfers and food subsidies.

With respect to specific vulnerable groups, the UK particularly focuses on gender inclusion in COVID-19 recovery efforts. There is a recognition of the impact of COVID-19 on widening the gender gaps and reversing the gains made in women’s and girls’ economic and social development (UK Government 2020a). For instance, women and children are considered more vulnerable to climate-related disasters, given the lack of capacity to cope and inadequate access to early warning systems. The COVID-19 pandemic is considered to have exacerbated such issues. Thus, supporting women and girls to achieve more inclusive global recovery is deemed necessary. For instance, in a programme aimed at supporting farmers through the provision of digital information and advisory services, there is consideration of the need to tailor the efforts to the specific needs of women (UK Government 2020a).

Use of the term ‘resilience’

The term ‘resilience’ features amply in speeches and government documents related to a global green recovery. As noted earlier, it is even explicitly used in the overall denomination that is now generally used by the UK government, namely ‘green inclusive and resilient recovery’. The term resilience in this context primarily refers to the ability to withstand the effects of climate change (Interviews 2020). It is used broadly, for example ‘resilient infrastructure’, ‘making infrastructure resilient to the effects of climate change’ ‘green and climate resilient cities’ (UK Government 2020d) and ‘food systems resilience’ (UK Government 2020a). As such, it underscores that the recovery should not only be in line with the economic and social pillars of the SDGs, but also encompass the environmental SDG pillar and the pursuit of the climate goals of the Paris Agreement.

Transboundary effects of domestic policies

While the documents studied for this case study do not provide considerable evidence of transboundary effects of domestic policies being considered, there are some references to the issue. Lord Goldsmith in a speech referred to the UK’s commitment towards ensuring that its ecological footprint does not extend “vastly beyond” its shores. He recognises the need to clean its supply chains, and work with consumer and producer countries towards delivering change globally.⁵²

⁵¹ [UK PACT](#).

⁵² See footnote 38.

Trade-offs

The UK government seeks to take account of the trade-offs between environmental and economic objectives of recovery. For instance, interventions in land, food and water systems are considered potentially beneficial across multiple objectives, while also recognising that there is “scope for tensions across objectives” (UK Government 2020a). To systematically take account of these different considerations, the note on land, food and water systems contains a table presenting the potential impacts of specific interventions on climate mitigation, climate adaptation and resilience, absolute poverty reduction, key SDGs, nature’s contribution to people, feasibility and cost effectiveness. Interventions have been scored on a scale ranging from “very positive” to “very negative”. Similarly, the note on low-carbon, resilient infrastructure includes a table scoring the different options presented with respect to the economic multiplier/jobs created, climate impacts and ease of implementation (UK Government 2020). This allows staff using the table to consider trade-offs between climate-related and other goals, such as poverty reduction.

7. Conclusion

This paper has looked into approaches of the EU and a selection of countries to support a global green recovery. The research aims to support the Netherlands in shaping its global green recovery efforts but can also be relevant for other development actors seeking to design and implement recovery plans that integrate green considerations. Key insights that emerge from a comparison of the case studies are the following:

Global green recovery logic(s) used

In all case studies green considerations have been incorporated in global recovery plans on the basis of multiple rationales. Without exception, greening global green recovery efforts is considered both a necessity and an opportunity, although the emphasis differs.⁵³ The documents analysed and the interviews suggest that the Danish government puts most emphasis on greening as an opportunity; while the German government emphasises greening as a necessity. In the other cases no particular logic seems to prevail. It must be recognised that this may vary between documents/statements, as depending on the exact topic and setting, certain logics may be more appropriate than for others.

Thematic priorities

The case studies have illustrated that bilateral cooperation is based on a country-specific approach, taking into account the needs and priorities of partner countries and regions. This means that priority sectors can differ across partner countries. Nevertheless, the case studies pay particular attention to certain sectors, with quite some diversity, but also some overlap. A sector that features in all case studies is energy. In addition, agriculture / food is mentioned as a priority area in various case studies - namely Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK. The choice of which themes/sectors to focus on is guided, to a large extent, by priority sectors of development cooperation more generally, as well as – relatedly – the expertise and knowledge available in the donor country. Another criterion that has informed the priority setting is the existence of particular greening opportunities in certain sectors, while it is expected that this can be combined with strides related to the social and economic pillars of the SDGs. A further criterion that has been identified is the exacerbation of issues due to COVID-19 in certain sectors. These criteria can guide not just the choice of sectors, but also the choice of interventions within a certain sector.

⁵³ The co-benefit logic is apparent in the UK and – less prominently – in Denmark and the Netherlands. No evidence of this logic has been found in the case of the EU and Germany.

Geographic priorities

The degree to which green considerations are a factor in prioritising countries/regions for COVID-19 recovery efforts differs across the case studies. While for the EU and Germany no mention is found of greening as a consideration in prioritising countries to support, there are some references in other case studies. For instance, documents analysed for Denmark and the Netherlands refer to countries that produce high greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, Denmark mentions the Sahel, where severe climate change threats render economic recovery more difficult and hence more support is required.

It is relevant here to note that geographical priorities may differ across sectors/themes, as illustrated by the UK's recovery plans. In the case of energy for example, country priorities can be informed by the suitability of the energy market for investments. And in the case of fossil fuel subsidy reform, it may be informed by the level of fossil fuel subsidies and experts' views on an enabling context for fossil fuel subsidy reform. Furthermore, promising opportunities in specific countries in specific sectors are meant to be largely identified by the offices representing the UK on the ground.

Multilateralism

Across the case studies, multilateral organisations are considered key in supporting global green recovery efforts. They are well-placed to contribute to global public goods, with a vast range of instruments at their disposal, broad reach, and the ability to facilitate coordinated action. Multilateral development banks in particular take centre stage across the case studies, including regional banks such as the African Development Bank, but even more so the World Bank. Development partners seek to influence different multilateral bodies in different ways, including engagement at the management level as well as at the country level (field offices of banks) and through the provision of earmarked funding. Countries are pushing multilateral organisations to set clear greening criteria and a timeframe to align investments with the Paris Agreement, and to pay particular attention to certain sectors and countries for global green recovery support.

Development partners are joining forces to influence multilateral development banks and international financial institutions more broadly. There is interest to further enhance collaboration between EU member states and like-minded partners more broadly to influence international financial institutions.

EU external action is also considered important. References are made to NDICI, with for example Germany indicating that, through its representation in partner countries, it seeks to contribute to making sure that NDICI programming is 'green'. The Netherlands mentions not just financial support, but also the importance of ensuring that climate change is a regular part of the EU's dialogue with third countries.

Partnership

Across the case studies, partnerships with different actors and at different levels are considered important to promote green recovery efforts globally. This includes non-state actors, such as the private sector, civil society, and research institutions. Additionally, case studies have highlighted the importance of international partnerships to promote the global green recovery agenda. In particular for the EU and its member states, partnering in the context of the Team Europe approach is considered a key channel to coordinate and collaborate for a global green recovery. This is notwithstanding the specific partnerships that some countries prioritise. For instance, Denmark prioritises collaboration and coordination with other Nordic countries as an essential component of its global green recovery efforts. The UK considers the COP26 and G7 important, particularly in light of its upcoming COP26 and G7 chairmanship roles.

Inclusiveness

In all case studies recognition has been found that the effects of the pandemic are not distributed evenly, which needs to be taken into account in global recovery efforts. Specific references in this regard are made to women (and girls) as a specific target group. Other groups mentioned include MSMEs, youth and vulnerable people in general. With respect to green recovery efforts specifically, little evidence has been found of them targeting particular groups. Some references made in documents include the UK's recognition that women and children require specific attention, as they are more vulnerable to climate-related disasters. Denmark seeks to support women in pursuing climate-proof economic activities, which is intended to also generate green jobs for women. In general, there is a lack of specific plans to address environmental vulnerabilities of specific groups or to exploit opportunities for green recovery support.

Use of the term resilience

While the term 'resilience' is used across the case studies, the intensity varies. For example, the term is amply used in the UK, and also features in the overall terminology used by the UK government, namely 'green inclusive and resilient recovery'. The term 'resilience' is also widely used at the EU level and by the Dutch government. On the other hand, documents analysed for Denmark and Germany suggest that the term has so far been used less by the governments of those countries. It is also relevant to note that the term is used in different ways across and within case studies. In some cases, including in Denmark, the EU, and the Netherlands, it refers to the capacity to deal with future shocks in general. In other cases, including in the Netherlands and the UK, it refers to the capacity to deal with climate change specifically. Examples of the latter meaning are (climate) 'resilient infrastructure' and 'resilient cities', which illustrates that it is used in a broad set of sectors. In some cases, across the case studies, it is unclear what the term exactly refers to. Moving forward, countries may want to pay particular attention to clarity and consistency when using the term resilience.

Transboundary effects

With the exception of the UK, where a general reference has been found to the country's ecological footprint that extends vastly beyond its shores and the need to clean its supply chains, no evidence has been found of the consideration of transboundary effects of domestic policies. This does not necessarily mean that these considerations are not made, but it does point to the need to explore the area further to understand if and how countries may be addressing transboundary effects of domestic COVID-19 recovery policy.

Trade-offs

Similar to transboundary effects, little evidence has been found that trade-offs are considered. Exceptions are the climate assessment tool of BMZ that includes the systematic screening of all bilateral development cooperation initiatives at appraisal phase, and FCDO's scoring of different interventions on their potential impact to contribute to for example climate mitigation, climate adaptation, job creation and poverty reduction.

This paper has presented some of the emerging trends in efforts towards integrating environmental considerations in global COVID-19 recovery. As the long-term effects of the pandemic continue to unravel, development partners are increasingly responding with updated support packages and more forward-looking recovery plans. The paper therefore provides a basis to inform and further analyse the evolving landscape of global green recovery efforts towards building back better and greener.

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Annex 1: List of Interviewees

Sr. no	Name, title	Organisation
1	Martin Kipping, Head of division, Climate Policy	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
2	Tomas Anker Christensen, Climate Ambassador	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
3	Frank van der Vleuten, Policy coordinator climate finance and energy	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4	Alex Way, Team Leader – Climate & Environment – Integration, Resilience & Learning	UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
5	Ross Hilton, Climate & Environment Adviser	UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
6	Carla Montesi, Director Green Deal & Digital Agenda	Directorate General of International Partnerships (INTPA) of the European Commission

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