

# South Africa most coal-dependent of all G20 countries

South Africa's energy sector is the most coal-dependent of all the G20 countries, according to the fifth annual *Brown to Green Report*. At present, almost 90% of South Africa's electricity comes from coal-fired power stations while a mere 5% come from renewable energy.



The report advises that South Africa will fail to achieve its Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDC) as outlined in the Paris Agreement if the country continues on its current energy pathway.

The report draws on the latest emissions data from 2018 and covers 80 indicators on decarbonisation, climate policies, finance and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

Bryce McCall of the University of Cape Town's Energy Systems Research Group, said that South Africa's domestic industry emissions intensity is also of significant concern.

"Our industrial emissions intensity remains among the highest of the G20 countries. The report found that emissions per capita are roughly double the G20 average. This is truly dismal given our commitment to the Paris Agreement," he says. In recent years total GHG emissions have been almost constant, however McCall says this is largely due to low economic growth.

## Fossil fuels still dominate

Despite commitments by both developed and emerging countries to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels, the report found that 82% of the G20's energy mix still comes from fossil fuels and few have adequate policies to phase out coal.

Although South Africa is a signatory to the Paris Agreement to limit global average temperatures to below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, the government's decision to continue to build additional coal power plants means that South Africa will not reach that target.

The report is however not all bad news for South Africa. SA became the first African nation to launch a carbon tax in June 2019 and is the only G20 country to explicitly reference the principle of a Just Energy Transition as part of its commitments to the Paris Agreement.

**Source:** University of Cape Town

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