

# The COP31 Climate Change Conference

## Introductory overview briefing

### KEY FINDINGS

COP30 (Nov 2025) adopted the **Belém Adaptation Indicators** and finalised the **Baku-to-Belém Roadmap to USD 1.3 trillion** but deferred its most contested files: the **fossil-fuel phase-out roadmap**, the follow-through of the new collective quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG) and the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) indicators (IISD, 2026c).

The Santa Marta First Conference on **Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels** (April 2026) launched a **voluntary TAFF coordination process** that feeds a global fossil-fuel roadmap into COP31, rather than delivering binding phase-out commitments (Governments of Colombia & the Netherlands, 2026b).

The **SB64 meetings (June 2026)** were defined by **gridlock**: the GGA and the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP) were both carried forward to COP31 without agreed text, while the just transition mechanism and the institutional build-out of Article 6 were the main areas of progress (Carbon Brief, 2026b; IISD, 2026c).

Finance was the fault line across every negotiating room during SB64. Developed countries' refusal to anchor the Belém pledge to **triple adaptation finance by 2035** within the GGA text was the single factor that sank the negotiation (Carbon Brief, 2026b; Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, 2026).

For the EP delegation, SB64 confirms that **EU leverage at Antalya concentrates on the files Belém deferred, especially adaptation finance, while the EU's own exposure runs through the trade-CBAM interface**, exposing a widening gap between a universally endorsed language of implementation and the finance and accountability architecture required to deliver it (CAN Europe, 2026; Power Shift Africa, 2026b).

### Objective of this briefing

This briefing provides a concise, evidence-based overview of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiation process and of the Paris Agreement's implementation architecture, as the analytical baseline for the upcoming full study and for the European Parliament's delegation. It synthesises three milestones, which are the 30<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP30) in Belém, the Santa Marta First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels (April 2026) and the sixty-fourth sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (SB64), held in Bonn in June 2026, setting out the main outcomes, unresolved issues and the mandates each hands to Antalya. It is guided by two questions: what would success at COP31 look like, and where lies the gap between ambition agreed and delivery required?



## Setting the scene: COP31 in its UNFCCC trajectory

The COP31 will be hosted by Türkiye in Antalya from 9 to 20 November 2026, with Australia serving as President of Negotiations under a Türkiye–Australia partnership (COP31 President-Designate Murat Kurum; President-Designate of Negotiations Chris Bowen). It will test whether the outcomes of previous COPs in Dubai, Baku and Belém can be translated into operational delivery. COP31 also coincides with the **launch of the second Global Stocktake (GST2)**, whose information-collection phase formally begins at CMA8 (the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement) in November 2026 (ClimaTalk, 2026a; UNFCCC, 2026e).

The path from the adoption of the Paris Agreement (2015) to its current implementation phase runs through a sequence of COPs, each with a distinct outcome. In particular, Dubai, Baku and Belém each contributed a distinct building block to the shift from negotiation to implementation. Dubai (COP28, 2023) concluded the first Global Stocktake, encouraging Parties to align their next Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with 1.5 °C and calling for global efforts to **triple renewable capacity**, double the rate of energy-efficiency improvement by 2030 and transition away from fossil fuels. Baku (COP29, 2024) adopted the NCQG, at least **USD 300 billion/year by 2035** of climate finance for developing countries, with developed countries taking the lead, within a wider USD 1.3 trillion/year call. Belém (COP30, 2025) marked the transition from agenda-setting to implementation under **the NDC 3.0 cycle**, adopted the Belém Adaptation Indicators and a just transition mechanism, but left its most contested files unresolved (IISD, 2026c).

## Where COP30 leaves us: the Belém legacy

The Belém outcome can be read critically across three interrelated layers. The first concerns **what was agreed**. The outcome consolidated several building blocks: on adaptation, the Belém Adaptation Indicators framework; on mitigation, conclusions under the MWP; on just transition, the continuation of the Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) and the decision to develop a just transition mechanism; on finance, the finalised Baku-to-Belém Roadmap to USD 1.3 trillion; alongside Global Stocktake (GST) follow-up modalities, the Technology Implementation Programme and a new Gender Action Plan (IISD, 2026c).

The second layer, arguably the more consequential for COP31, concerns **what was deferred**. Several of the most contested files were left unresolved, including a concrete **fossil-fuel phase-out roadmap**, subsequently carried into the Santa Marta Conference; the **NCQG follow-through**, namely how mobilised finance is to be measured and accounted for; the technical specification of the **GGA indicators**; and streamlined finance access for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) (IISD, 2026c).

The third layer concerns **how the political landscape was reshaped**. The Brazilian presidency reinforced the legitimacy of the developing-country agenda, bringing finance, equity and Loss and Damage to the fore, while exposing the limits of the high-ambition coalition's capacity to secure agreed language on fossil-fuels.

For the European Parliament's delegation, the consequence is twofold: EU leverage at Antalya concentrates precisely on the files Belém deferred, and the EU enters COP31 having to hold the multilateral line amid US disengagement. **A recurring analytical thread is the provision-versus-mobilisation question**, whether developed-country finance is delivered as public, grant-based support

under Article 9.1 or counted as 'mobilised' private flows, which also bears on the internal coherence of the EU's Emissions Trading System (ETS), Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and 2040 target.

## The Santa Marta First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels

Because COP30 stopped short of a concrete phase-out roadmap, it created the launch pad for the First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels (TAFF) (Santa Marta, Colombia, 24–29 April 2026). Co-hosted by Colombia and the Netherlands, it convened 57 countries (roughly one-third of global GDP) together with over 1,000 stakeholders across 14 groups. By design, this was a **"coalition of the willing"**: co-host Minister Vélez Torres confirmed that China, Russia, the United States and, reportedly, India were not invited, so as to avoid re-running the COP30 deadlock (Carbon Brief, 2026a; Governments of Colombia & the Netherlands, 2026b; IISD, 2026b). Its co-chairs' Statement established a **voluntary TAFF coordination process** (Governments of Colombia & the Netherlands, 2026a). It also created a coordination group of leading countries and the first- and second-conference co-hosts (Colombia, the Netherlands, Tuvalu and Ireland), connected to the COP30 Activation Group 4, and launched the Science Panel for the Global Energy Transition (SPGET). **Three workstreams**, launched in late July 2026, take the follow-up forward: national and regional phase-out roadmaps; macroeconomic dependencies and financial architecture; and producer–consumer trade alignment towards a "fossil-fuel-free trade system". The substantive output, a 176-page final report presenting a ten-point "Santa Marta Vision" and five transition pathways, was delivered to the Brazilian COP30 Presidency in June 2026 and feeds the global fossil-fuel roadmap for COP31 (Governments of Colombia & the Netherlands, 2026b; IISD, 2026a; First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels, 2026).

The European Parliament's ENVI-commissioned briefing (Schell et al, 2026) frames Santa Marta as **"two-tier multilateralism"**: cooperation that does not require the consensus of all UNFCCC Parties, pursued as a complement to the COP process. Notably, its trade-related workstream (including investor–state dispute settlement reform) aligns closely with EU initiatives such as the CBAM. It offers both opportunity and limit: a complementary track that could catalyse a "second wave" of Belém Declaration signatories, yet one that delivers **voluntary coordination, not binding commitments**, and by excluding the largest emitters, its reach is inherently capped (Governments of Colombia & the Netherlands, 2026b).

## The SB64 Bonn Climate Meetings

SB64, the 64th sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), under SBI Chair Julia Gardiner (Australia) and SBSTA Chair Adonia Ayebare (Uganda), convened 9,206 registered participants and was the principal pre-COP technical test of the files inherited from Belém. Against a tense backdrop of the Strait of Hormuz blockade and a strong El Niño, the swift adoption of the SBI and SBSTA agendas allowed substantive negotiations to begin on the first day. However, this smooth procedural start did not translate into substantive progress and soon gave way to what observers termed **"gridlock"** (IISD, 2026c; UNFCCC, 2026c).

### Box 1 – What SB64 means for the EU

SB64 saw the **first formal trade–climate dialogue** mandated under the COP30 Mutirão, where several developing Parties raised concerns about carbon border measures, placing the EU's CBAM under implicit scrutiny as a recurring COP31 theme (IISD, 2026c; Carbon Brief, 2026b). The **just transition mechanism** was a rare area of progress, a file where the EU can show constructive leadership, connecting to its own Just Transition Fund. Across the files, **EU leverage is greatest on adaptation finance** (where a credible signal could unlock the GGA), while it is most exposed on the trade–CBAM interface and on the internal coherence of its ETS, 2040 target and just-transition commitments, which condition its external credibility (Schell et al, 2026).

*Source: authors, based on IISD (2026c) and Schell et al (2026).*

Key aspects to note: (i) several major items, including the MWP, the GGA, the transition of the Adaptation Fund to serve the Paris Agreement exclusively, and research and systematic observation, **ended without agreed text**, with the GGA and MWP falling under Rule 16<sup>1</sup>, meaning they are carried to COP31 with no basis to build on; (ii) **finance was the recurring fault line** across almost every room (iii) **the few areas of progress were procedural**, confirming UNEP as Climate Technology Centre (CTC) host, agreeing the JTWP review terms of reference, advancing the just transition mechanism, and concluding capacity-building reviews. **The implication is that Antalya opens with several files on a blank page and less time to close them.**

Table 1. What SB64 delivered on each flagship issue and the mandate handed to COP31

| Flagship issue         | What SB64 delivered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | What it means for COP31                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Climate finance        | Finance friction cut across all workstreams. The new two-year climate-finance work programme split developed (EU, Norway, Canada: all sources, emphasis on mobilisation) from developing Parties (Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs), Arab Group, G77+China: dedicated Article 9.1 public-provision focus); the G77+China rejected the co-chairs' work plan. The first Veredas dialogue on Article 2.1(c) was held (Carbon Brief, 2026b). | COP30 President André Corrêa do Lago wrote to request an Article 9 item on the COP31 agenda (non-binding). The public-versus-mobilised finance fight, and the fate of the tripling pledge, move to Antalya unresolved (Carbon Brief, 2026b).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Fossil-fuel transition | No formal agenda item; carried politically. Opening statements (Stiell, Kurum, Bowen) stressed reducing fossil-fuel dependence and accelerating the energy transition; many Parties criticised what they called "coordinated attacks" on science by "fossil-fuel interests". Substance runs through the Presidency roadmap and the Santa Marta TAFF Conference track, not negotiated text (Carbon Brief, 2026b; IISD, 2026c).                   | The concrete phase-out roadmap deferred at Belém remains the central, unresolved COP31 file, to be fed by the Presidency's global roadmap and the Santa Marta TAFF Conference (CAN Europe, 2026).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Loss and Damage        | No standalone agenda item, but surfaced across the climate-finance work programme, the GST and the Dialogue on Mountains and Climate Change, touching the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM), Santiago Network and the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) (Carbon Brief, 2026b).                                                                                                                                                   | After SB64, attention turned to the ninth FRLD Board meeting (8–10 July 2026). Its draft report to COP31/CMA8 shows the Fund moving towards implementation, but with a USD 2.8 billion funding pipeline that substantially exceeds current resources. COP31 will need to sustain momentum on timely and accessible funding, the long-term resource mobilisation strategy, the first replenishment cycle in 2027, and coordination across the Loss and Damage architecture (FRLD, 2026). |

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| Article 6 (carbon markets)        | The file that advanced while others stalled. Art. 6.2: the Secretariat set out a USD 8–9 million funding gap for registry/infrastructure (USD 10.7 million approved, ~USD 2.1 million available for 2026–2027), 48 cooperative approaches submitted, 67 Parties interested; four funding options tabled. Art. 6.4 the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism (PACM) is operational, with the first credits issued in February 2026 (UNFCCC, 2026h). Art. 6.8: SBSTA convened the Glasgow Committee on Non-Market Approaches (GCNMA 9) and initiated the work-programme review (West African Climate Alliance, 2026; Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2026). | Choice of Art. 6.2 funding model, share of proceeds for adaptation and environmental-integrity safeguards move to Antalya; observers warn the institutional build-out is outpacing progress on finance and adaptation (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2026).             |
| Climate governance (GST, NDC 3.0) | The first UAE Dialogue on implementing GST1 was widely judged underwhelming; GST2 preparations reached no agreement (resume at SB65). The third and final annual GST–NDC dialogue was held (16 June). No standalone NDC negotiation; NDC 3.0 was carried through the GST, MWP, response measures and transparency tracks, most of which stalled. Adaptation parity failed as the GGA collapsed under Rule 16 (ClimaTalk, 2026a; ClimaTalk, 2026b).                                                                                                                                                                                              | GST2 information-collection begins at CMA 8. The ambition gap (2025 NDC Synthesis Report: ~17% cut vs the ~60% needed for 1.5° C) is acknowledged without follow-up modalities; the adaptation gap widened rather than narrowed (UNFCCC, 2025; ClimaTalk, 2026a). |

Source: authors, based on Carbon Brief (2026b), ClimaTalk (2026a, 2026b), Heinrich Böll Stiftung (2026), IISD (2026c), UNFCCC (2025) and West African Climate Alliance (2026).

## The Belém implementation vehicles

The two voluntary vehicles created under the Global Mutirão decision (1/CMA.7) advanced procedurally, not through negotiated text. The **Global Implementation Accelerator (GIA)**, a cooperative and voluntary initiative guided by the CMA7 and CMA8 Presidencies, aims to speed up on-the-ground implementation of countries' NDCs and national adaptation plans. At an information session during SB64, it exposed familiar developed/developing and Party-versus-stakeholder splits over its governance arrangements and the process for selecting solutions (IISD, 2026c; UNFCCC, 2026b). Its complementary counterpart, **the Belém Mission to 1.5 (BM1.5)**, spans the CMA6, CMA7 and CMA8 Presidencies and is tasked with enabling NDC

ambition and delivering a report ahead of CMA8; at SB64, delays to its 2026 vision raised concerns about whether its scope and contribution to COP31 remained sufficiently clear (ClimaTalk, 2026b; UNFCCC, 2026a, 2026b). Together with TAFF, both remain to be articulated with COP31's incoming Climate

### Box 2 – The COP31 Presidency's Action Agenda targets (non-negotiated)

Alongside the formal negotiations, the incoming Türkiye COP31 Presidency launched its Global Climate Action Agenda at SB64 (9 June 2026), announcing a set of non-negotiated 2035 targets: a flagship **global electrification target** (raising electricity's share of final energy demand from just over 20% today to 35% by 2035); **halving the growth in global waste**; a **Resilient Cities target** to cut building-sector energy-consumption intensity by at least 25%; and raising the **circular material use rate** to at least 15%. The International Energy Agency (IEA) was commissioned to map delivery pathways.

Source: UNFCCC, 2026g; COP31 Presidency, 2026

Implementation Bridge, the **main risk being a fragmented ecosystem of overlapping voluntary tracks without a clear accountability architecture.**

### Why the Global Goal on Adaptation failed: the highest-weight deadlock

The GGA is the flagship issue on which the widening implementation gap is most exposed. The trigger was, once again, **finance**: the African Group, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the LDCs, Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC) and the G77+China demanded that the Belém pledge to **"at least triple adaptation finance" by 2035** be anchored within the GGA text; Canada, Norway and Japan opposed, arguing finance belonged under other items. Successive drafts left the reference bracketed, and the final text remained entirely bracketed (Carbon Brief, 2026b; UNFCCC, 2026d). A parallel dispute over whether the indicators task force (up to 40 experts) should be **expert-driven** (Brazil, EU) **or Party-driven** (the Southern Group, LMDCs, Arab Group) was never resolved (UNFCCC, 2026d). With no consensus, the GGA **fell under Rule 16**; AOSIS called the outcome "completely unacceptable" and E3G warned that invoking Rule 16 was "worse than a procedural outcome" (Carbon Brief, 2026b; Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, 2026; Power Shift Africa, 2026b). Analysts stress that the technical impasse, including the expert-driven versus Party-driven split, on which the EU sided with Brazil, is unlikely to move at Antalya without progress on adaptation finance (Climate Action Network International, 2026b; CEDARE, 2026; Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, 2026).

### The sectoral frontier: shipping, aviation, hydrogen, CDR and non-CO<sub>2</sub>

Emissions governed outside the UNFCCC increasingly shape its mitigation story. The shipping **Net-Zero Framework of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) stalled** when its formal adoption, expected in October 2025, was postponed by a year following a motion led by Saudi Arabia. **The adoption is now expected in October 2026** (IMO, 2026; ENDS Europe, 2026). The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) reaffirmed **Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) as aviation's sole market measure** (ICAO, 2026). Hydrogen, sustainable fuels and carbon dioxide removal (CDR) advance chiefly through the Article 6 market rather than dedicated tracks, while methane and other non-CO<sub>2</sub> gases remain outside formal negotiation (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2026; Global Methane Pledge, 2026; Climate & Clean Air Coalition, 2026).

### Looking ahead: what to watch before and at COP31

On the basis of what SB64 deferred, the following can already be flagged for the European Parliament's delegation (this outlook is necessarily provisional and will evolve over the coming months):

- **Adaptation and the GGA:** whether Antalya restores the tripling-of-adaptation-finance pledge to the text and settles the indicators task force, a clear test of whether adaptation achieves parity with mitigation (Carbon Brief, 2026b; UNFCCC, 2026d).
- **Climate finance:** whether the Article 9 work programme is placed on the COP31 agenda, and how the boundary between finance provided, mobilised and aligned is drawn under the Baku-to-Belém Roadmap (Carbon Brief, 2026b).
- **Fossil-fuel transition:** whether the Presidency's global roadmap and the TAFF process together produce a concrete phase-out roadmap, or another procedural deferral (Governments of Colombia & the Netherlands, 2026b).

- **Just transition:** adoption of the just transition mechanism, the clearest area of progress at SB64 and a potential defining legacy of Antalya (CAN Europe, 2026).
- **Article 6 and Loss and Damage:** the Art. 6.2 funding decision, and whether the FRLD moves from first funding requests to a credible delivery pipeline (West African Climate Alliance, 2026).
- **GST2:** whether the second GST's information-collection phase, launching at CMA8 (Nov 2026), is given clear modalities, or repeats the underwhelming UAE Dialogue (ClimaTalk, 2026a).

In sum, the Belém 'implementation era' rests on voluntary, Presidency-led tracks, while the negotiated files that require finance keep collapsing into procedure; success at Antalya depends on matching implementation language with real finance and decisions (CAN Europe, 2026; Power Shift Africa, 2026b).

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<sup>1</sup> Rule 16 note: under the UNFCCC draft rules of procedure, any agenda item whose consideration is not completed is automatically carried to the next session. Applied to the GGA and MWP, it signals the 'worst-case' outcome — Parties could not even agree procedural text to serve as a basis for talks — so negotiations effectively restart at Antalya (Power Shift Africa, 2026a).

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Coordination: Kristi POLLUVEER      Editorial assistance: Donella BOLDI  
Contact: [ecti-poldep-b@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:ecti-poldep-b@europarl.europa.eu)

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