

COP26 Glossary

Key Word	Definition
agrichemical	A chemical used in farming.
agroecology	A sustainable method of farming that works with nature.
agroforestry	Growing both trees and crops on the same piece of land.
biodiversity	The variety of all the different species of organisms on Earth or within an ecosystem.
biofuel	Any fuel taken from living or recently living organisms.
biogas generator	Equipment used to produce methane gas as a fuel.
business	An organisation that makes goods or provides services.
carbon emissions	The release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
carbon footprint	The total greenhouse gas emissions caused by an individual person, organisation or community.
carbon-neutral	When a process does not increase the overall amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere because it takes in as much carbon dioxide as it releases. An example is the burning of biofuels.
climate change	A change in the average temperature and cycles of weather over a long period of time.
climate justice	An approach to the climate crisis from a social justice perspective.
coastal seas	Parts of the ocean that are up to 230km from land.
consumer	An individual who uses a product.
COP26	The 26th meeting of the parties that have signed up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). COP stands for Conference of the Parties.
coral bleaching	The release of algae from coral that causes it to turn white and die.
deforestation	The process of clearing a large area of trees.
developed country	A country with a high quality of life, a developed economy and advanced infrastructure. Also known as an industrialised country.

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developing country	A country that typically has less industrialisation, a lower life expectancy, reduced access to education and low income compared with a developed country. The definition is not universally agreed upon.
Doughnut Economics	A concept that recognises that we should aim to live, as a society, in a way that meets the basic needs of all humans but does not cause damage to the planet.
drought	A long period with low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water.
economy	How much money a country or place has and its success in making and trading products and services.
ecosystem	The interaction of a community of living organisms and the non-living parts of their environment.
electric vehicle	A vehicle (e.g. a car or van) that is powered by electricity.
energy-efficient	An action that transfers less energy than alternatives to complete a task. A larger proportion of the input energy is transferred as useful output energy.
erosion	A process in which materials are worn away.
extinction	When there are no individuals of a species left alive.
extreme weather event	Unexpected, severe or unseasonal weather, for example drought, heavy rainfall or hurricanes.
fertiliser	A chemical that promotes plant growth.
finance	The management of large amounts of money, especially by governments and companies.
fishing quota	A limit on the number of fish of a species that can be caught.
fossil fuel	A fuel formed over millions of years from the remains of dead plants and animals. Examples are coal, oil and natural gas.
global warming	The gradual increase in the temperature of the Earth's atmosphere.
greenhouse effect	The trapping of energy in the atmosphere due to greenhouse gases.
greenhouse gas emissions	The release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide and methane are examples of greenhouse gases.

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infrastructure	The structures in a society, such as buildings, roads and power supplies.
innovation	The process of turning an idea into a solution that overcomes a problem.
insulation	Using a material that does not allow energy to transfer through it easily to reduce energy transfer to the surroundings.
inequality (social)	Unequal opportunities and rewards for different groups of people in society.
interdependence	The dependence of each species on other species for food, shelter, pollination, seed dispersal, etc.
intersecting inequalities	The inequality experienced by those that fall into multiple disadvantaged groups.
investment	Giving money with the expectation of generating an income or profit.
low-carbon	Causing only a small release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
malnutrition	The lack of a healthy diet, caused by not having enough to eat or not eating enough of the right nutrients.
marine animals	Animals that live in the ocean.
microorganism	A very small organism that can only be seen using a microscope.
migration	The seasonal movement of a population from one region to another.
MP	Member of Parliament. A person who has been elected to represent the interests and concerns of an area.
national determined contributions	A commitment from a country to reduce its carbon emissions by a given amount.
net zero	Carbon emissions are balanced by removing carbon dioxide from the air.
organism	A single living thing.
Paris Agreement	An agreement signed in 2015 that set out an ambitious plan to tackle climate change.
photosynthesis	A chemical reaction which transfers energy from the environment to plants or algae by light.

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pesticide	A chemical used to destroy insects or other pests.
pollution	The introduction of a harmful or poisonous substance into the environment.
poverty	When someone does not have enough money to meet their basic needs.
predator	An organism that kills and eats other animals.
producer	An organism at the beginning of a food chain which makes food by photosynthesis.
profit	The financial return that is left after paying all costs.
Road to Zero Strategy	A government strategy that aims for cars and vans to be zero emission by 2050.
renewable resource	An energy resource which can be replenished and will not run out.
social justice	Fairness within a society.
society	A community of people.
soil degradation	A decrease in soil quality.
soil erosion	A process in which soil is worn away.
species	A group of organisms that can breed with each other and produce offspring (children) that will also be able to breed.
sustainable	An action that can continue without resources running out or damage being caused that will stop it being able to carry on in the future.
sustainable development	Development that meets the needs of the current population without preventing future generations from being able to meet their own needs.
Sustainable Development Goals	Seventeen goals that set out all of the things that need to be achieved to protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.
unsustainable	An action that uses up resources that cannot be replaced at the same rate or produces waste that cannot be broken down. This means that future generations will no longer be able to meet their needs in the same way.
urban	Relating to towns or cities.
zero-emission	A process that does not release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.