

REACH Public Consultation on Singapore's Climate Ambition

5 - 26 September 2022

Respondent Name: Woo Qiyun

1 Singapore has stated that we intend to achieve net zero emissions by or around mid-century. Reaching net zero emissions by 2050 is:

- (a) Just right
- (b) Too ambitious
- (c) Not sufficiently ambitious

Answer:

1.1 [If answered (b) or (c) above] What is a suitable year to reach net zero?

- (a) Not Sure
- (b) 2030-2039
- (c) 2040-2049
- (d) 2050-2059
- (e) 2060-2069
- (f) Beyond 2070

Answer: -

1.2 Please feel free to provide your thoughts on what makes a suitable net zero year.

The decision to declare a net zero by 2050 target is one that is overdue, but greatly welcomed.

The IPCC's reports on climate change have long called for countries to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 in order to give the planet a fighting chance to keep global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Aligning our long-term goal aligns us with one half of the science. The crucial question remains in the how, which I will get to later in this email.

2 Should we enhance Singapore's 2030 NDC which currently pledges to peak emissions at 65 MtCO_{2e} around 2030?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Neutral/ Maybe/ Not sure

Answer: Yes

3 What should our 2030 NDC ambition be and why? (Refer to Paras 3 - 4 of Consultation Document)

The other half of the science concerns our short-term goals, also known as our 2030 goals. The IPCC's recommendations call for global net anthropogenic CO₂ emissions decline by about 43-45% from 2010 levels by 2030, while Singapore's current 2030 plan seeks to peak our emissions at 65Mt in 2030.

Singapore is a growing economy, and setting an upper limit to our emissions growth is laudable. Latest modelling by the IPCC suggests that there is a real need to consider peaking our emissions earlier by 2025 if the world is to keep to the 1.5oC target. The report also calls for major reductions in fossil fuel use alongside rapid scaling up of mitigation technologies such as carbon capture and storage.

To fully align with the science, Singapore should consider peaking our emissions earlier.

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4 What can the Government do to support Singapore's transition to a low carbon future?

The industry sectors continues to take up the largest share of Singapore's overall emissions. A priority in our low-carbon transition would then be to decarbonise our energy sector, pursue sustainability across all sectors, and also prepare the workforce for a climate-resilient future.

On decarbonising the energy sector, EMA's Energy 2050 Committee Report presents a promising view that it is realistic for Singapore's power sector to aspire to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 while still maintaining energy security and affordability. Many of the solutions noted in the report reference supply-side solutions (e.g., imports, hydrogen, technology), but I can't help but also wonder what steps we are taking to manage our electricity demand. As Singapore aims towards being a smart nation, our digitalisation should also take into consideration the energy that such efforts demand. This is not to suggest that the Government monitors or polices individual consumption, but to consider the energy demands of nation-wide efforts and implementations such as implementing electronic billboards, signages within town councils, etc. This can be part of our efforts to shape end user consumption to optimise the power system (Strategy 9).

While Singapore has taken a strong focus on decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors, as well as pursue opportunities in carbon services, there is not yet a strong focus to transform other sectors on the path of a green economy. For Singapore, the Industry Transformation Maps drive industry transformation and promote the growth of 23 industries in Singapore. In each ITM, it integrates productivity improvement, skills development, innovation and internationalisation. To truly seek out a green economy, the Ministry of Trade and Industry should consider sustainability as another key pillar that sits across all ITMs as part of its ITM refresh exercise.

On preparing the workforce for a climate-resilient future, we often hear about the "green economy". As someone who is in a "green job" as loosely defined by Accenture's latest report (Youthquake meets Green Economy), the trajectory for what a green workforce in Singapore looks like is unclear. Similarly to how Singapore has taken strong action to develop tech talent, Singapore should also strongly develop clear plans and roadmaps to detail what a green workforce pipeline would look like.

5 What can businesses and industries do to support Singapore's transition to a low carbon future?

The industry sector is a strong contributor of Singapore's overall emissions and great emphasis should be placed on aligning our heavy emitters with our net-zero by 2050 pathway. While it is notable that our petrochemicals hub, Jurong Island, is taking note of sustainability with the recently released Sustainable Jurong Island Report, there was a lack of targets to reduce the industry's emissions despite plans for abatement. Hence, it would be helpful if Singapore lays clear targets or efforts to decarbonise our heavy-emitting sectors.

Beyond these sectors, other companies operating in Singapore also has strong roles to play in our decarbonisation efforts. While there are efforts to push industry in the right direction (e.g., strengthened disclosure requirements, EPR, etc) Singapore government can take a stronger and more ambitious stance to nudge businesses to transform business models to low-carbon ones. For one, Singapore can be more stringent on EPR laws relating to plastic beyond mandatory disclosure, and also push Right to Repair laws to tackle e-waste.

6 What can individuals and communities do to support Singapore's transition to a low carbon future?

This 3 week consultation period was admittedly tight and also a struggle even as an environmentalist to grasp the various reading materials, research and to formulate a constructive train of thought. The government can and should do more to make technical information more accessible as this will allow citizens to be more informed and aware of what a climate-impacted Singapore means to our livelihoods and futures. The voices of concerned citizens should also be factored early into our decision making process, with enough lead time for agencies to consider, clarify and then make plans. Failing to do so may render such consultative processes tokenistic and often times, not representative of what people feel about an issue. I hope that the Singapore government can consider stronger outreach and communication plans on our considerations for climate targets and also other climate-related plans.

Furthermore, communities can also support the implementation and socialisation of Singapore's net-zero plans. It's undeniable that society will have to make big behavioural and cultural changes to adapt and adopt lower-carbon practices which requires a change to status quo - case in point, the deposit refund scheme. The government should continue working with activists and advocates on the ground, be it support with resources, finances and also networks, to push climate action more holistically and collaboratively.

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7 While there may be trade-offs or inconveniences, I am willing to contribute / play my part in helping Singapore realise its net zero ambition.

- (a) Strongly Agree
- (b) Neutral
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly Disagree
- (e) Disagree

Answer:

8 Do you have any other thoughts on Singapore's climate ambition that you wish to share?

NIL