Newsletter January 2026

Green Technologies Reshape the Future of Oil & Gas Amid Weakening Climate Commitments and WEF Outlook

The oil and gas sector is entering a period of heightened uncertainty as several major economies scale back or delay climate commitments, accelerating physical climate risks and increasing operational volatility. This trend is reinforced by the World Economic Forum's latest economic outlook, which anticipates weaker global economic conditions and rising geopolitical fragmentation—factors that complicate long-term investment planning. For oil and gas companies, the implication is clear: even as policy ambition softens, the physical and financial impacts of climate change are intensifying, and resilience must be treated as a strategic priority rather than a regulatory response.

WEF analysis highlights that the sector has made progress in reducing emissions intensity—driven by methane capture, zero-flaring technologies, upstream electrification, and early deployment of carbon capture and storage (CCS). Yet the Forum also underscores a widening investment gap: more than **$1.1 trillion in additional capital** is required for the industry to align with net-zero pathways by 2050. At the same time, global demand for oil and gas is expected to peak before 2030 under current policy trajectories but not decline fast enough to meet climate goals without a dramatic acceleration in clean-energy deployment. This creates a dual challenge—maintaining energy security while rapidly scaling low-carbon technologies.

Against this backdrop, WEF leaders are expected to push for stronger corporate accountability, clearer transition plans, and credible emissions-reduction pathways. For oil and gas companies, this means doubling down on technologies that deliver measurable impact: CCS, clean hydrogen, advanced biofuels, geothermal, and

large-scale renewable integration. Companies that leverage their engineering expertise and global infrastructure to scale these solutions will be better positioned to navigate both physical climate risks and investor scrutiny. As global policy signals become more uneven, the industry's competitive advantage will increasingly hinge on its ability to innovate, diversify, and demonstrate real progress toward decarbonisation—regardless of shifting national commitments.

****

Corporate Net-Zero Strategies Mature as Investors Demand Proof

Net-zero commitments are evolving from high-level pledges into detailed, measurable transition plans. Investors and regulators are increasingly scrutinising the credibility of corporate climate strategies, pushing companies to demonstrate real progress rather than rely on offsets or aspirational targets. This shift is driving a surge in demand for high-quality emissions data, lifecycle assessments, and transparent reporting frameworks.

To meet these expectations, leading organisations are embedding decarbonisation into capital allocation, procurement, and product design. Many are adopting internal carbon pricing to guide investment decisions, while others are restructuring supply chains to prioritise low-carbon materials and logistics. As - expectations rise, companies that can show tangible emissions reductions - supported by verifiable data - are gaining a competitive edge in capital markets, talent attraction, and customer loyalty.

****

Governments, Green Groups Welcome Historic High Seas Treaty with Celebration, Calls to Action

The UN High Seas Treaty, the world's first treaty to protect and conserve marine biodiversity in international waters adopted in 2022, entered into force last Saturday.

Formally known as the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, or BBNJ Agreement, the treaty is centered around the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) on the high seas to preserve marine biodiversity. The text, two decades in the making, is essential to achieving a

global goal to protect 30% of the world's oceans, also known as the "30 by 30" target. Currently, only 1% of the high seas are protected, leaving marine life vulnerable.

While 142 countries and the European Union signed the treaty since it opened for signature in September 2023, a minimum of 60 ratifications were required for the agreement to come into force. The threshold was cleared last September, when Sri Lanka, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone and Morocco ratified it.

Time to 'Turn Words Into Action'

For the first time, this legally binding agreement establishes a framework to protect biodiversity in international waters, which cover roughly two-thirds of the ocean. "Protecting our planet hinges on binding protections of international waters – without them, global 30×30 targets slip beyond reach," said Jennifer Morris, CEO of The Nature Conservancy.

However, while many environmental organizations around the world celebrated the occasion, some called for measures that will make the treaty's promises into reality.

"A treaty on paper won't save the ocean. What matters now is turning words into action," Katie Matthews, Chief Scientist at Oceana, said in a statement. "If world leaders are serious about protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030, ambitious action on the high seas is necessary. This is a shared responsibility and the time to act is now." Oceana is the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation.

Governments of signatory nations took a celebratory tone, especially members of the BBNJ High Ambition Coalition, a group of 52 parties who have committed at a high level to achieving an ambitious outcome from the treaty.

Acknowledgement: Jan Lee, Earth.Org

https://earth.org/governments-green-groups-welcome-historic-high-seas-treaty-with-celebration-calls-to-action/