Trade & Climate Tracker

Methodology Note

Last update: 1 July 2026

1. Project Objective

The purpose of the Trade & Climate Tracker is to systematically map and compare how recent bilateral and plurilateral economic agreements support, structure, or constrain the green transition. The database records agreement-specific provisions related to energy, climate, critical raw materials (CRMs), heavy industry, and notable tariff or market-access treatment relevant to those topics.

The Trade & Climate Tracker is designed for comparative analysis and policy-oriented outputs. It does not measure implementation, legal effectiveness, or environmental impact. It records what the reviewed agreement text provides, establishes, permits, facilitates, promotes, commits, or intends the parties to do. The Tracker does not constitute legal advice and is not a substitute for the authoritative agreement text. Users relying on specific provisions for legal, commercial, or compliance purposes should consult the original agreement and seek qualified legal advice.

2. Unit of Analysis and Scope

The primary unit of analysis is the agreement, regardless of whether the instrument is legally binding. The project focuses on economic agreements signed by at least two governments between January 2025 and June 2026, with agreement text available as of 1 July 2026.

Included instruments comprise:

- Free Trade Agreements (FTAs);
- Economic cooperation agreements (ECAs);
- Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and Memoranda of Cooperation (MoCs);
- Agreements on reciprocal trade (ARTs);
- CRM frameworks, agreements, MoUs, and strategic partnerships; and
- Other bilateral or plurilateral instruments whose primary objective is trade, investment, supply-chain cooperation, industrial cooperation, energy cooperation, or broader economic cooperation.

Excluded instruments are:

- Sub-national -level agreements (e.g. California–Denmark MoU on Clean Energy Deployment);
- Digital economy agreements (e.g. EFTA–Singapore Digital Economy Agreement);
- Agreements whose main objective is not trade, investment, or economic cooperation (e.g., the Singapore–Peru Article 6 Implementation Agreement).

3. Coding Methodology

3.1 Workflow

The coding process combines AI-assisted extraction with expert verification. AI was used to identify candidate provisions, draft summaries, and propose references, but the expert coder remained responsible for validating every coding decision against the agreement text.

Each agreement is reviewed independently. Coding decisions are derived only from the text under review, including annexes, schedules, protocols, appendices, side letters, attachments, and tariff schedules where available.

3.2 Provision-Level Threshold

A provision is coded only when it contains substantive operative content relevant to a topic covered by the Tracker, rather than because the topic appears politically relevant or the agreement may indirectly affect a covered topic. Operative content includes commitments, permissions, cooperation processes, institutional mechanisms, information exchange, investment promotion, trade or market-access treatment, research and innovation activities, capacity building, regulatory cooperation, or other identifiable activities.

Purely descriptive language is not sufficient. General recognition of a topic, chapter titles, definitions, isolated keywords, or references to sustainable development or environmental protection do not qualify unless they contain topic-specific, substantive policy content.

3.3 Topic Assignment

Topic assignment is based on the primary policy object of the provision. A provision may be coded under more than one topic when its substantive content genuinely addresses multiple topics. Multi-topic coding is not based on keywords alone.

Boundary examples:

- Renewable hydrogen production is coded under Energy - Renewables. It is coded under Climate - Emissions only if the provision explicitly links the activity to emissions reduction, net zero, climate mitigation, or an equivalent climate-specific objective.
- A general energy dialogue is coded under Energy - Cooperation and Systems. It is not coded under Climate unless it explicitly addresses climate change, emissions, Paris Agreement implementation, climate finance, adaptation, or another climate-specific concept.
- A steel tariff quota, ownership requirement, or supply-chain security clause is not coded under Heavy Industry unless the provision addresses decarbonization, emissions reduction, cleaner production, resource efficiency, circularity, or another environmental transformation of the sector.
- Supply-chain resilience is not coded under CRMs unless the provision expressly concerns CRMs, battery minerals, mining, processing, refining, recycling, or a CRM-specific agreement context.

4. Content of the Tracker

4.1 Substantive Topics

The Trade & Climate Tracker codes four substantive areas: Energy, Climate, CRMs, and Heavy Industry. Subtopics are analytical tags designed to improve consistency. They are not mutually exclusive when a provision substantively addresses more than one topic.

A. Energy

Definition: provisions concerning energy cooperation, renewable energy, energy trade, energy infrastructure, energy systems, energy security, energy efficiency, or energy-system resilience.

Subtopic	Includes	Excludes and boundary rules
Energy - Renewables	Renewable energy production, deployment, trade, investment, research, innovation, infrastructure, technology transfer, or capacity building. Includes solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, tidal, wave, sustainable biomass, renewable electricity, renewable hydrogen, green hydrogen, green ammonia, renewable fuels, and renewable energy technologies.	General energy cooperation without a specific renewable component is coded under Energy - Cooperation and Systems. Climate cooperation without a renewable-energy component is coded under Climate only if it meets the climate definition.
Energy - Cooperation and Systems	General energy cooperation, energy partnerships, energy dialogues, energy trade, energy security, security of supply, electricity systems, grids, interconnections, energy storage, energy efficiency, energy infrastructure, emergency response, and energy-system resilience.	Routine trade in energy products is not coded if the provision contains no cooperation, policy, security, infrastructure, transition, or systems content. Biofuels or ethanol are coded here only when framed as energy, fuel, energy security, or energy transition rather than purely agricultural trade.

B. Climate

Definition: provisions explicitly addressing climate change, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, net-zero objectives, climate adaptation, climate governance, international climate commitments, climate finance, climate-related cooperation, deforestation, or land-use change with explicit climate relevance.

Boundary rule: sustainable development, environmental protection, natural-resource conservation, biodiversity, forestry, timber legality, illegal logging, forest management, or environmental standards are not coded as Climate unless the provision contains a climate-specific or deforestation-specific concept.

Subtopic	Includes	Excludes and boundary rules
Climate - Emissions	GHG mitigation, emissions reduction, net zero, carbon neutrality, carbon pricing, carbon markets, Article 6 cooperation, methane or other GHG-specific provisions, climate-related measurement or reporting, and emissions-related industrial or energy cooperation.	Renewable energy, energy efficiency, or industrial cooperation is coded here only when explicitly connected to emissions reduction, climate mitigation, net zero, carbon neutrality, or equivalent climate-specific objectives.
Climate - Deforestation	Deforestation, deforestation-free supply chains, forest carbon, REDD+, carbon sinks, climate-linked land-use change, and land-use provisions that explicitly address climate mitigation, emissions, removals, or carbon storage.	General forestry, forest cooperation, forest protection, sustainable forest management, timber legality, illegal logging, biodiversity, protected areas, agriculture, land management, or land-use cooperation unless the provision explicitly mentions deforestation, deforestation-free production or trade, forest carbon, REDD+, carbon sinks, emissions, climate mitigation, or equivalent climate-specific language.
Climate - Others	Paris Agreement, UNFCCC, climate governance, adaptation, climate resilience, climate finance, transition finance, just transition, climate-related capacity building, climate technology cooperation, and broad climate cooperation not captured under Emissions or Deforestation and Land Use.	General environmental cooperation, sustainable development, or green economy language is not coded unless the provision contains climate-specific language.

C. CRMs

Definition: provisions concerning critical minerals, CRMs, strategic raw materials, battery minerals, or mineral value chains relevant to the green transition.

Boundary rule: General supply-chain resilience, strategic investment, mining, industrial cooperation, infrastructure, or resource development is not coded as CRMs unless minerals, CRMs, battery minerals, mining, processing, refining, recycling, or a critical-minerals-specific agreement context is explicit.

Subtopic	Includes	Excludes and boundary rules
CM - Value Chain Stages	Exploration, mining, extraction, processing, refining, separation, smelting, recycling, recovery, traceability, responsible sourcing, environmental and social standards for mineral value chains, and cooperation on specific minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, manganese, copper, rare earth elements, or other identified critical or strategic minerals.	General mining provisions unrelated to critical, strategic, battery, or energy-transition minerals are not coded unless the agreement itself is explicitly a critical minerals agreement and the broader context supplies the mineral-specific scope.
CM - Supply Security	Diversification, supply-chain resilience, secure sourcing, strategic partnerships, stockpiling, investment promotion, project facilitation, standards cooperation, capacity building, research, innovation, and information exchange concerning CRMs or mineral supply chains.	General supply-chain cooperation, industrial supply chains, strategic investment, transport infrastructure, or economic security provisions are not coded unless minerals or mineral value chains are explicitly part of the provision or agreement scope.

D. Heavy Industry

Definition: provisions concerning the environmental transformation of emissions-intensive industrial sectors, including decarbonization, emissions reduction, cleaner production, industrial energy efficiency, circularity, resource efficiency, pollution reduction, or low-carbon industrial technologies.

Boundary rule: references to steel, aluminum, cement, chemicals, fertilizers, or other industrial sectors are not sufficient. Heavy Industry is coded only when the provision has an environmental, climate, circularity, pollution-reduction, energy-efficiency, or decarbonization component.

Subtopic	Includes	Excludes and boundary rules
Heavy Industry - Decarbonization	Industrial decarbonization, low-carbon manufacturing, cleaner production, industrial emissions reduction, industrial energy efficiency, electrification, renewable or low-carbon hydrogen for industrial use, CCUS, low-carbon steel, low-carbon aluminum, low-carbon cement, low-carbon chemicals, and related technology cooperation.	Tariffs, quotas, supply-chain security, ownership requirements, or market-access provisions for steel, aluminum, or other industrial goods are not coded unless the provision contains an environmental, decarbonization, or emissions-reduction component.

Subtopic	Includes	Excludes and boundary rules
Heavy Industry - Circularity	Industrial circular economy, resource efficiency, materials efficiency, industrial recycling, material recovery, waste valorization, sustainable materials, circular manufacturing, and reduction of industrial waste or pollution where linked to heavy industry.	General recycling, waste management, circular economy, or pollution-control provisions are not coded here unless they concern industrial sectors, industrial materials, manufacturing, or emissions-intensive production.

The table below provides illustrative examples for each coded topic.

Topics	Definitions	Example
Energy – Renewables	Provisions supporting the production, deployment, trade, investment, infrastructure, research, or cooperation related to renewable energy and renewable energy technologies.	The EU–South Africa Clean Trade and Investment Partnership identifies "renewable energy, low carbon and net-zero technologies relevant for mutual energy transitions to net-zero objectives" as one of the strategic clean supply chains of mutual interest (Section 4(1)(a)).
Energy – Cooperation and Systems	Provisions addressing general energy cooperation, energy security, energy trade, infrastructure, grids, storage, efficiency, emergency response, or energy-system resilience.	The EU–Uzbekistan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement provides for cooperation on "energy efficiency and energy security," including regional energy markets and inter- and intra-regional energy trade and exchanges (Article 284(a)).
Climate – Emissions	Provisions addressing greenhouse gas mitigation, emissions reduction, net-zero targets, carbon pricing, carbon markets, emissions reporting, or other climate-mitigation activities.	The UAE–New Zealand Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement states that the Parties will promote "carbon markets as an effective policy tool for reducing greenhouse gas emissions efficiently, both domestically and internationally" (Article 14.7(4)(a)).
Climate – Deforestation	Provisions addressing deforestation, deforestation-free supply chains, forest carbon, REDD+, carbon sinks, or land-use measures explicitly linked to climate mitigation or emissions.	The EFTA–MERCOSUR Agreement states that the Parties "recognise the importance of ensuring conservation and sustainable management of forests with the objective to preserve biological diversity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from deforestation and degradation of forests and related ecosystems" (Article 13.10(1)).
Climate – Others	Provisions addressing climate cooperation not covered by emissions or deforestation, including the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC processes, adaptation, resilience, climate finance, just transition, capacity building, or climate technology.	The India–New Zealand FTA provides for climate cooperation through sustainable finance, cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, climate and energy solutions, and clean and climate-friendly technologies (Article 12.8(4)).
CRM – Value Chain Stages	Provisions addressing the exploration, extraction, processing, refining, recycling,	The EU–South Africa Sustainable Minerals and Metals Value Chains MoU commits the Parties to promote

	traceability, responsible sourcing, or environmental and social standards of critical mineral value chains.	investment along minerals and metals value chains, including value addition, beneficiation, rare earth elements, manganese, and enabling infrastructure (Objectives, paragraph (d)).
CRM – Supply Security	Provisions addressing diversification, supply security, resilience, investment, strategic partnerships, project facilitation, standards, research, or information exchange related to critical mineral supply chains.	The US–Australia CRM Framework states that the Participants will intensify cooperation to accelerate the “secure supply of CRM and rare earths,” including through US stockpiling infrastructure and Australia’s Critical Mineral Strategic Reserve (Section I(1)).
Heavy Industry – Decarbonization	Provisions supporting the environmental transformation of emissions-intensive industries through decarbonization, cleaner production, emissions reduction, energy efficiency, electrification, low-carbon hydrogen, carbon capture, or low-carbon industrial technologies.	The EU–Mercosur Interim Trade Agreement identifies renewable and low-emission electricity as most notable relevant for “industrial sectors where greenhouse gas emissions reduction is challenging” (Annex 18, para 31(b)).
Heavy Industry – Circularity	Provisions addressing circular economy, resource efficiency, materials efficiency, recycling, material recovery, waste valorization, sustainable materials, or pollution reduction in heavy industry or manufacturing.	The EU–Mexico Modernised Global Agreement promotes the efficient use of resources by improving production processes and supporting the durability, reparability, design for disassembly, reuse, and recycling of goods (Part III, Article 30.6(g)).

4.2 Tariffs and Market Access

The database records only notable tariff, quota, tariff-rate quota, exclusion, transition-period, duty-free treatment, or other market-access provisions that are relevant to Energy, Climate, CRMs, or Heavy Industry.

The tariff column does not summarize all tariff concessions in an agreement. It is used only when the agreement contains tariff or market-access treatment that is analytically relevant to the coded topics.