

COP26: Costa Rica co-heads an ambitious alliance against fossil fuels

At the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, 11 national and subnational governments led by Costa Rica and Denmark announced the launch of the Beyond Oil & Gas Alliance (BOGA). This represents their commitment to ending future oil and gas production and exploration within their borders.

Six nations have joined the alliance as core members including Ireland, Greenland, France, Sweden, Quebec and Wales. Portugal, New Zealand and the state of California will also join as associate members and Italy, the European Union's second biggest oil producer, will join as a "friend" of the coalition.

The BOGA was hailed as an important step by climate campaigners as it is the first such international coalition of governments who are determined to set an end date for their oil and gas exploration and extraction activities. This is in alignment with the objective of the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels.

The coalition describes its key aims as elevating the issue of phasing out oil and gas production in international climate dialogues, mobilising action and commitments and creating an international community of practice on this issue.

Andrea Meza, Costa Rica's environment and energy minister, has highlighted the urgent need to halt new exploitation licences and gradually mark the end of fossil fuel production. "Every dollar that we invest in a new fossil fuel projects is a dollar less that we invest in renewables, in clean transport and for the conservation for nature... it's about how to really leverage momentum to start this conversation," Meza said during a press conference in Glasgow.

For Costa Rica, the issue of banning oil exploration and exploitation is nothing new and when it comes to environmental sustainability, few countries rival the nation in terms of concrete action and ambition.

The country has adopted a plan to achieve total decarbonisation and a zero net emissions economy by 2050. It has also restored large areas of rainforest after suffering one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world in the 1970s and 1980s.

Despite the country's small size, Costa Ricans have also played an important role in developing international environmental policy. One of the most notable figures is Christiana Figueres who is an internationally recognized leader on global climate change and an architect of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

<https://beyondoilandgasalliance.com>