

Policy brief

POLICY@SUSSEX | MARCH 2025

The Global Clean Power Alliance: A label in search of an idea?



1. Summary

Launched at the end of 2024, the Global Clean Power Alliance (GCPA) forms a potentially important pillar of UK Government foreign policy on climate change, energy and development. Though there has been a lot of excitement about this new international initiative which aims to mobilise finance for renewable energy, the granular details on what it will cover and how are still emerging. Given the number of multilateral alliances and initiatives in this space already, there is an urgent need to bring clarity about the niche the GCPA will occupy and how it will function in order to secure its impact and longevity in an increasingly crowded global political landscape.

This policy briefing from the SUS-POL project at the University of Sussex draws together discussions between UK civil society groups that took place in March 2025 at Chatham House. The policy briefing seeks to set out what is known about the GCPA, where the uncertainties lie and potential future directions for the initiative.

2. The Global Clean Power Alliance

The Global Clean Power Alliance (GCPA) was launched by UK Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, at the G20 in Rio de Janeiro on the 19th November, 2024. Touted as a way to position the UK ‘at the very heart of the single most significant technological challenge and opportunity this century’, its main focus to date is accelerating the mobilisation of private finance combined with developing country partnerships to build capacity and overcome barriers to deploying that finance.

Announced as a “major boost for the world’s clean energy transition”,¹ the alliance comprises the UK, Brazil, Australia, Barbados, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Morocco, Norway, Tanzania, and the African Union, with the European Union and the USA, for now, also partnering with the UK. Before the alliance was formally announced, government ministers had made multiple references to it in public speeches and policy proposals, establishing it as a central element of Labour’s climate, energy and foreign policy.

From being dubbed a “reverse OPEC” to a “buyers’ club” for critical minerals, the proposed GCPA has sparked widespread interest from other governments, private industry, and civil society. The wide range of proposed forms and functions highlights the initiative’s potential impact, but also raises concerns that it might be overly ambitious on multiple fronts in an already saturated space for international alliances and initiatives on climate and energy.

Experience suggests that effective initiatives are those that respond to a clear demand; do something different; operate an effective partnership model; and set clear deadlines and milestones around which finance is mobilised.²



At a time when international cooperation on climate, energy, trade, and security is under increasing strain – and as multilateral institutions face mounting challenges – the GCPA is confronting formidable obstacles but might also open up extensive opportunities. To realise these, there needs to be clarity of purpose and coherence in approach.

With this in mind, the University of Sussex partnered with SERA, the Labour Party’s environment campaign, and Stamp Out Poverty to convene representatives from civil society, think tanks, and people involved in policy at Chatham House to discuss the opportunities and limitations of the GCPA and related international initiatives.

This policy briefing captures the main threads of the discussion with regard to: what the GCPA should focus on, how it might move the dial on climate ambition within international climate governance, and how the initiative’s form and function can be shaped to maximise its impact.

¹ UK Gov, 2024, ‘Prime Minister launches Global Clean Power Alliance as UK leads the global energy transition’, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-launches-clean-power-alliance-as-uk-leads-the-global-energy-transition>

² E3G & Chatham House, 2024, ‘Understanding the Functionality of International Climate Partnerships’, Briefing Paper.

2.1 What do we know?

Since the GCPA was formally launched at the G20, its objectives have become clearer, although questions remain over its structure and governance. Some overarching objectives can be distilled from several government announcements issued around the GCPA:

- **Speed up the global drive for clean power** by uniting developed and developing countries across the global north and global south;
- **Bring signatories together and share expertise** with the goal of meeting the COP28 commitments to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency;
- Support countries to build investment platforms and providing the assistance required to “**get clean finance flowing**”.

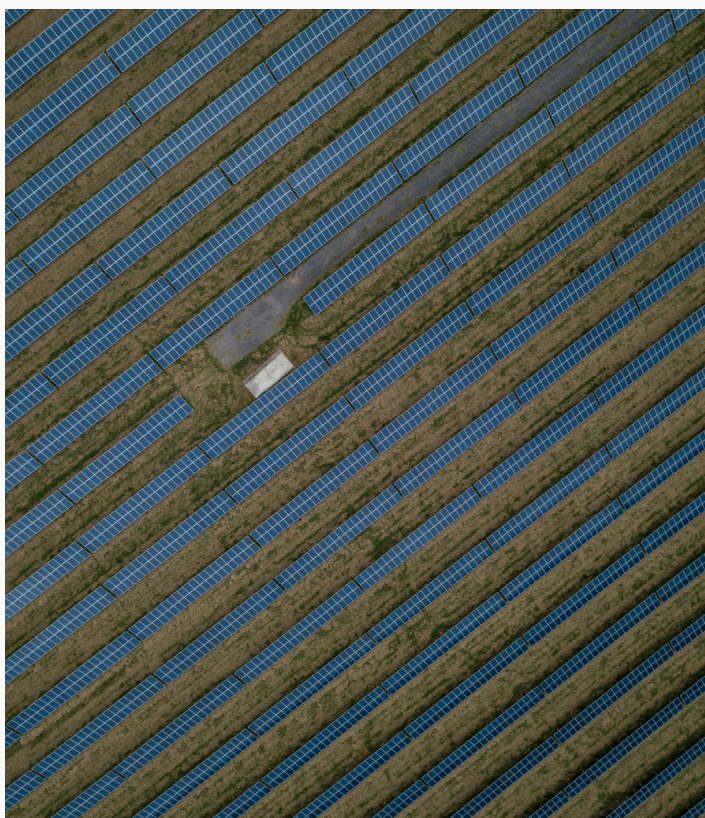
Like the UK Government, the GCPA will take a ‘Missions’ approach, where resources and focus are stewarded towards high-priority goals with clear deadlines. The first of these is the Finance Mission, co-led with Brazil, which has five pillars (see Boxout.1). It is believed that there will be another two Missions announced as part of the GCPA. One of these Missions is likely to focus on the required supply chain for the energy transition, such as critical minerals and key technologies. Very little is known about the third Mission and what it will cover despite speculation that ‘just transition’ may be an overarching focus.

BOXOUT 1: PILLARS OF THE FINANCE MISSION (led by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office):

1. **Stronger architecture to improve coordination** and simplify access to international support through the rollout of nationally- and locally-led country platforms (such as the forthcoming new Brazil Investment Platform) and nationally-led energy transition plans
2. **Stronger policy reform and technical assistance partnerships** to create the enabling environment, remove barriers, and build institutional capacity in the energy and broader finance sector, needed to support investments and lower risks
3. **Stronger project preparation and development** to help build pipelines of bankable projects that can attract capital at scale and ramp up investments;
4. **Stronger support for green industrialisation**, technology innovation and resilient, diverse supply chain development to capitalise on the economic and social opportunities of the energy transition delivering jobs, economic growth and prosperity, in close cooperation with multilateral initiatives like the Climate Club and its Global Matchmaking Platform and the Breakthrough Agenda;
5. **Stronger private investor offers** and improved concessional finance offer where required to derisk investments and attract private capital.

From analysing the UK government’s statements around the GCPA and drawing on the discussion at Chatham House, it is likely that the initiative will be used to:

- **Convene international allies and strategic partners** to reap the economic and political benefits of competitive decarbonisation;
- **Diffuse UK leadership on climate**, specifically around Labour’s domestic policy agenda of reaching Clean Power by 2030 and becoming a ‘clean energy superpower’, the launching of GB Energy, and the proposal to end licensing for new oil and gas production in the North Sea;
- **Collaborate with international partners** to secure supplies of key minerals and components for clean energy technologies and bolster supply chain resilience;
- **Further the derisking approach to climate finance**, whereby scarce public finance is deployed to ‘catalyse’ private investment into energy and infrastructure projects essential to green industrialisation;
- **Create an enabling environment** for investment into clean energy and supporting infrastructures through policy reform, technical assistance and improved coordination;
- **Work with other multilateral initiatives** that are focused on climate and energy.



Despite the GCPA announcement stating the initiative's ambition to meet the COP28 commitments of tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency,⁴ there is no mention of the goal of transitioning away from fossil fuels in a "just, orderly and equitable manner".⁵

In a similar vein, seeking to secure and bolster the supply chains required for clean energy technologies could give rise to diplomatic and political tensions. For instance, if the UK government looks to use the GCPA to bolster supplies of key minerals from alliance partners in the global south without offering much in return, such as concessional finance or technology transfer, the UK government could become vulnerable to allegations of green extractivism and neo-colonialism. Fractures like these would undermine the trust in the GCPA and its ability to convene and effectively collaborate with international partners.

None of these objectives are without their challenges or detached from political developments within the UK and beyond. For instance, the UK's leadership on climate is fragile and contingent on domestic policy developments, such as the recent decision to cut the overseas aid budget and the ongoing uncertainty around the approval of the Rosebank oilfield in the North Sea.

If the intention is to drive engagement with the GCPA by relying upon the UK's purported leadership on climate, domestic developments may undermine the potential impact of the initiative. In this regard, if a key goal of the GCPA is to strengthen climate ambition, mobilising private finance for renewable energy is vitally important, but will do little to bend the global emissions curve if this merely adds to the energy mix rather than displaces fossil fuels. To meet international and national climate commitments, large cuts in fossil fuel production are essential.³

There are also important questions to ask around the effectiveness of the derisking agenda, despite its dominance across international development and climate finance. Using scarce public finance, in the form of concessional loans, guarantees or grants, to attract private investment may be unable to deliver the scale of investment needed to accelerate the energy transition and ensure the economic and distributional benefits of clean energy reach the public. Indeed, there is a growing sense that derisking has not delivered on its promises and that new forms of investment and interaction between states and markets are needed to build low carbon industrial economies.⁶

³ SEI et al., 2023, 'Production Gap Report 2023', <https://www.unep.org/resources/production-gap-report-2023>

⁴ UK Gov, 2024, 'Prime Minister launches Global Clean Power Alliance as UK leads the global energy transition', <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-launches-clean-power-alliance-as-uk-leads-the-global-energy-transition>

⁵ SUS-POL, 2023, 'Taking stock of supply: Where next for fossil fuels after COP28?', University of Sussex, <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=suspol-cop28-policy-briefing-final-accessible.pdf&site=676>

⁶ Newell, P., 2024, 'Towards a more transformative approach to climate finance', *Climate Policy*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2024.2377730>

2.2 What we do not know

There is a lot we do not know about the GCPA. Its structure, governance and the scope and depth of its resources are likely to become clearer in the months ahead. But the lack of current detail suggests there is an opportunity to influence the initiative. Drawing on the discussions at Chatham House, there are several overarching questions over the GCPA's development:

How will the GCPA interact with other multilateral initiatives?

Global climate and energy governance is already heavily populated with government-led multilateral initiatives, whose remits and objectives inevitably overlap. There are concerns that by launching a new initiative, the UK government may be reinventing the wheel and inadvertently pulling focus and resources away from other more established initiatives and alliances.

The UK has already played a leading role in the establishment and leadership of several international initiatives by:

- Co-founding the **Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA)** with Canada at COP23 in 2017. Since its launch, the PPCA has grown to 180 national and subnational governments, businesses and organisations.
- Creating the **Energy Transition Council (ETC)** during its COP26 Presidency. The ETC provides political, financial and technical advice to more than 40 governments and institutions on decarbonisation and the energy transition.
- Launching the **Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CETP)**, formerly known as the Glasgow Statement on International Public Support for the Clean Energy Transition. Launched at COP26, this is a joint commitment from national governments and public finance institutions to halt international public finance for fossil fuels by the end of 2022.

Alongside the initiatives that the UK plays a key role in, there are also several other relevant initiatives that the GCPA will interact with:

- **Global Energy Transition Forum (GETF):** Launched at the beginning of 2025 by the EU, the initiative brings together Brazil, Canada, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to Kenya, Peru, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and many others, as well as companies and investors. The Forum has three objectives that overlap with the GCPA: to keep the momentum up on achieving national and international energy targets; transform targets into concrete projects that benefit people; and unlock investment. EU Commission President, von der Leyen, is reported to be very keen on pushing the Forum and this agenda within the EU and beyond it.
- **Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance (BOGA):** Launched in 2021 by Denmark and Costa Rica, BOGA is an international coalition of governments and stakeholders committed to phasing out oil and gas production in line with climate goals. The alliance seeks to advance supply-side climate action by encouraging policies that restrict fossil fuel extraction.
- **Global Renewables Alliance (GRA):** The GRA is a coalition of international organisations working on the global transition to renewable energy, including the Global Wind Energy Council, Global Solar Council, International Hydropower Association, Green Hydrogen Organisation, Long-Duration Energy Storage Council, and the International Geothermal Association. The GRA brings together the often siloed sections of the global energy industry to create a cohesive voice in policy discussions and advocacy efforts.



The stated objectives of the GCPA clearly overlap with the remits and operations of these initiatives, especially those in which the UK has a leadership role. This suggests that one role for the GCPA could be to act as an umbrella to aid the coordination of existing initiatives and bring coherence to what is a crowded international landscape of initiatives and alliances seeking to accelerate the energy transition and facilitate the phase-out of fossil fuels.

How will the GCPA advance the UK's climate and energy goals while driving global progress?

In the several statements from the UK government that mention the GCPA, there are consistent efforts to connect the UK's domestic agenda on climate and energy with its international role. This reflects the words of Ed Miliband MP, the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, who has stated the government's aspirations to "show leadership on...critical issues around the climate crisis" and that the UK "is determined to lead by example and then use that to show international leadership too".

Yet these ambitions pose questions over the UK's capacity and its comparative advantage in a competitively decarbonising world.

Facilitating a rapid energy transition requires vast amounts of state, industrial and financial capacity, which the UK does not currently boast. In the realm of manufacturing wind turbines and solar panels, for instance, the UK only has a small industrial footprint and is reliant on imports, meaning its own domestic agenda is beholden to global supply chains.

Nevertheless, the UK does have significant expertise in other areas of the energy transition, such as grid reform and decarbonisation, as well as consultancy, which could be leveraged through the GCPA. The UK has also experienced a rapid (and disruptive) energy transition with the phase-out of coal. Lessons from this experience could be instructive for members of the GCPA.

Next steps

Despite a fluctuating and uncertain global political context, continued reference to the GCPA in statements from Labour officials during the 2024 general election campaign, and now with its formal launch and emergent Missions, suggests that there is appetite within government to make the initiative a success, both at a ministerial level and within the civil service. A Clean Power Ministerial this year could be one concrete way to take this forward.

It is unclear when further information pertaining to the GCPA will be made public. There are, however, a number of events on the horizon where further announcements are likely to take place. On the 24th and 25th of April, 2025, the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the UK government are convening a summit in London to discuss the changing energy security landscape and how best to address collective challenges in the near- and long-term. Given the summit's focus on geopolitical, technological and economic factors, this presents an opportunity for the UK government to make announcements relating to the GCPA.

These could include more details on the Finance Mission, with the focused delivery package purported to be published in April 2025, and further details released on the second pillar on the GCPA and what it will cover.

As the GCPA was launched with Brazil, and Brazil is co-leading the finance mission, it is likely that COP30 in Belem will be a critical moment for announcing progress on the initiative and updates to its workplan. Likewise, London Climate Week at the end of June, 2025, may also present an opportunity to convene stakeholders around the GCPA, especially those from the private sector and civil society.

3. What the GCPA should consider

Given the lack of clarity on what the GCPA will do and how it will operate, there is a window of opportunity to influence and help shape this emergent international initiative. Key issues the GCPA could consider in order to maximise its chances of success include:

- **Use convening power:** In a crowded space, the GCPA should act as an umbrella initiative to aid coordination between existing alliances and initiatives and bring coherence to objectives and operations.
- **Leverage the UK's experience of phasing out coal and grid decarbonisation through the GCPA:** The UK should leverage its competitive advantage in a targeted way.
- **Challenge the dominance of the derisking agenda:** The idea that derisking for private capital being the sole route to decarbonisation must be challenged. There is a clear role for public finance and greater levels of public ownership in the energy system, which can be promoted through the GCPA. This could entail subsidy reform, such as rerouting fossil fuel subsidies to clean technologies, and exploring the issues of tax and debt.

- **Better financial governance has a key role to play:** As home to the City of London through which vast amounts of energy finance circulates, there is scope to strengthen international coordination around disclosure, climate stress tests, and atmospheric viability tests for listings on the London Stock Exchange.⁷
- **Addressing the other side of the coin – a fair fossil fuel phase-out:** An energy transition requires both phasing-in clean generation and phasing-out fossil fuels. While it seems that the GCPA will focus on the former, it must not lose sight of the latter. The UK government has made some progress in this area with the proposal to end new licensing for oil and gas, a policy that could be internationalised through the GCPA.
- **Supporting just transitions:** The energy transition the UK government is seeking to support through the GCPA needs to be a just one. The GCPA must approach negotiations over finance, supply chain governance, and policy support cognisant of the legacies of economic injustices and unfair terms of trade that characterise current economic relations and generate meaningful proposals to help address them.
- **Align domestic ambition for global leadership to be credible:** The UK's climate leadership is fragile and contingent. If the GCPA is to rest on this purported leadership, then the domestic agenda on climate, energy and development must remain coherent and ambitious to allow leadership by example in order to remain credible.

For more information about the SUS-POL project, please visit [our website](#) and follow the project on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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⁷ Carbon Tracker, 2024, 'Carbon Tracker Response to 2023 Financial Conduct Authority Consultation on UK Listings Regime', <https://carbontracker.org/reports/carbon-tracker-response-to-2023-financial-conduct-authority-consultation-on-uk-listings-regime-website/>