FOOD SYSTEMS
NDC SCORECARD

United Kingdom Assessment

September 2025

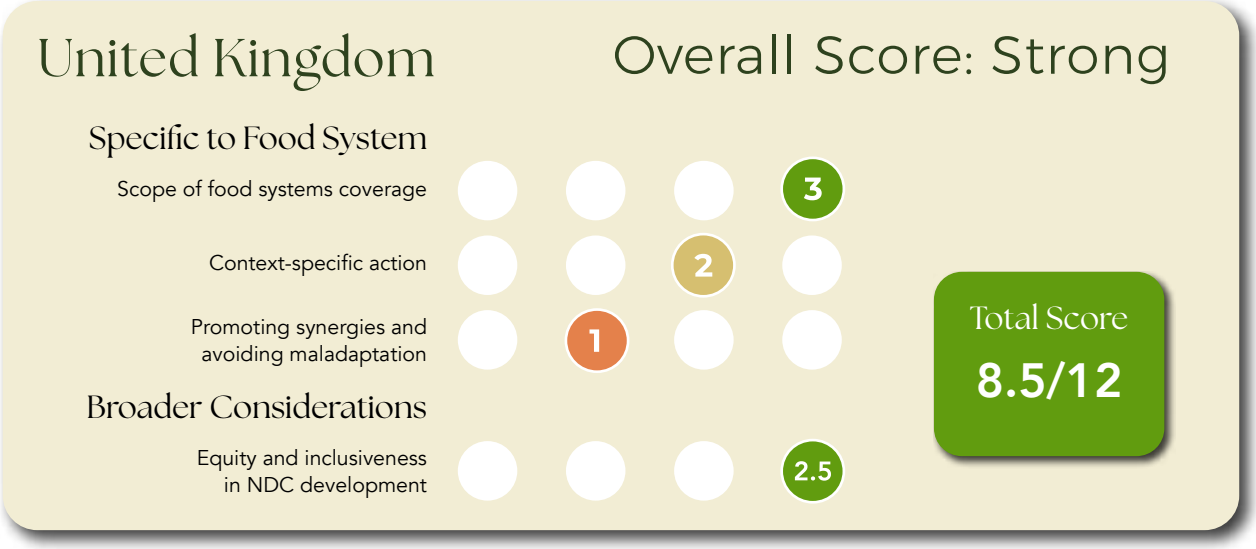
I. Introduction

The United Kingdom is a northern island nation made up of Great Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) and Northern Ireland (Commonwealth.org). It is a high-income country with a high-impact diet (Food Systems NDC Scorecard methodology, Appendices II, IV). The UK submitted the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) on January 30, 2025 (NDC Registry). The NDC describes this submission as reestablishing the UK as a global leader on climate change, even among the G7 (NDC, pp. 1–2). To this end, in November 2024, the prime minister announced the UK's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by "at least 81% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels (excluding international aviation and shipping emissions)" and transition "away from fossil fuels to achieve net zero by 2050" (NDC, pp. 1–2).

The NDC describes one of the UK's five national missions as making Britain "a clean energy superpower" through the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, which concentrates on renewables, carbon capture, and energy efficiency (NDC, pp. 1–2). The NDC conveys that the UK's efficiency plans will focus on household fuel costs and decarbonization (NDC, pp. 1, 54). The NDC highlights the UK's intent to deliver an updated cross-economy plan that will detail climate targets (NDC, p. 2). Additionally, the NDC reaffirms the UK's commitment to spending £11.6 billion on International Climate Finance by 2025/2026, £3 billion of this on nature (NDC, p. 2). Given the multicountry composition of the UK, this analysis considers the policies of the UK's constituent national governments (where positioned as contributions to the NDC) for our scoring purposes.

This NDC was evaluated according to the Food Systems NDC Scorecard methodology using the documents below. All scores are based on evaluations of the NDC and documents cited within each area of the assessment. Where not specified, in this assessment "NDC" may refer to content within an NDC submission document or other documents analyzed as part of the NDC (see Appendix).

For the UK, we analyzed the NDC and the following: Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (Net Zero Strategy); Sustainable Farming Incentive: Guidance for Applicants and Agreement Holders (Sustainable Farming Incentive); Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier; Landscape Recovery: Round One (Landscape Recovery); United Kingdom Methane Memorandum; The Next Step in Delivering Our Vision for Scotland as a Leader in Sustainable and Regenerative Farming: Our Vision for Scottish Agriculture (Vision for Agriculture); Rural Payments and Services; Net Zero Wales: Carbon Budget 2; Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland; UK Marine Policy Statement; Marine Strategy Part One: UK Updated Assessment and Good Environmental Status; Joint Fisheries Statement; A Blue Economy Vision for Scotland; Welsh National Marine Plan; Government Food Strategy (per the NDC submission, herein referred to as the "National Food Strategy"); Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework (NI Food Strategy Framework); Sustaining Scotland. Supplying the World. A Strategy for Scotland's Food and Drink Industry; Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 (Good Food Nation Act); Food Matters: Wales; UK Food and Drink Pact: Food Waste Reduction Roadmap; and Waste Prevention Programme 2019: "Stopping Waste in Its Tracks." For additional information on policies considered within this evaluation, please see the Appendix.



II. Scope of Food Systems Coverage (0–3 points)

TOTAL AREA SCORE = 3 POINTS (STRONG)

In this area, the scorecard framework evaluates whether the NDC or policies referenced within the NDC addresses each stage of the food system to assess the full extent of the country's climate mitigation and adaptation potential. The stages are as follows: (1) food production; (2) food loss; (3) food processing; (4) food distribution; (5) food consumption, including food access, diets, and nutrition; and (6) food waste. This area does not assess the policies' benefits or harms; these considerations are addressed in subsequent areas of this assessment. The NDC will receive a "strong" score of 3 points if it addresses all subareas; a "medium" score of 2 points if it addresses at least food production, food access and consumption, and either food loss or waste; a "weak" score of 1 point if it addresses at least one subarea; and an "absent" score of 0 points if no subarea is addressed.

Since the UK's NDC demonstrates action or plans for future action at all stages of the food system, it received **a strong score of 3 points** for the scope of food systems coverage area.

(1) Food production
The NDC demonstrates action at the food production stage through the UK's Sustainable Farming Incentive program and Scotland's Vision for Agriculture, among other policies. The Sustainable Farming Incentive pays farmers and land managers to implement and maintain sustainable farming and land management practices that support production and improve productivity and resilience (Sustainable Farming Incentive; NDC, p. 16). Scotland's Vision for Agriculture describes the country's support for active farming and food production by encouraging organic production and providing financial support through direct payments that are conditioned on low emissions (Vision for Agriculture, pp. 1–2).

(2) Food loss
The NDC demonstrates action at the food loss stage through the Joint Fisheries Statement, which pledges to end "the wasteful practice of discarding and to increase the level of accountability for fishing activities at sea" (Joint Fisheries Statement, p. 17). The NDC does not address other aspects of food loss. While this was sufficient to constitute action in this area for the purposes of scoring, there are opportunities to address food loss across agricultural subsectors that would be beneficial to incorporate in climate policy.

(3) Food processing
The NDC includes several examples of policies demonstrating action at the food processing stage through the Food Matters: Wales policy and the National Food Strategy. The NDC describes a Welsh government strategy to develop the food and drink processing industry (NDC, p. 43). The National Food Strategy, among other actions, pledges to support progress on the development of alternative proteins, including further investment in meatless Quorn products (National Food Strategy, pp. 17–18). The UK also pledges to invest over £120 million in food system research, including to support alternative protein research and innovation (National Food Strategy, pp. 17–18).

(4) Food distribution
The NDC demonstrates action at the food distribution stage through, for example, funding for supply chain resilience in Scotland's strategy for the food and drink industry (NDC, p. 42).

(5) Food consumption
The NDC demonstrates action at the food consumption stage. For example, the NDC, citing the National Food Strategy, describes the UK's commitment to ensuring that everyone has access to nutritious and healthier food (NDC, p. 41).

(6) Food waste
The NDC demonstrates action at the food waste stage through several food waste elimination programs: the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and the Net Zero Strategy, among other policies (NDC, p. 44; Net Zero Strategy, p. 27). The NDC demonstrates the UK's pledge to continue support for WRAP, which works to reduce food surplus and waste in homes and businesses (NDC, p. 44). The Net Zero Strategy provides financial backing to food waste reduction, dedicating £295 million toward the creation of a food waste collection program for households in England (Net Zero Strategy, p. 27).

III. Context-Specific Action (0–3 points)

TOTAL AREA SCORE = 2 POINTS (MEDIUM)

In this area, the scorecard framework evaluates the depth of food systems integration within the NDC through a framework of seven critical subareas for climate change mitigation and adaptation in the food system: (1) addressing food insecurity and malnutrition, (2) mitigating emissions in food production, (3) reducing fossil fuel use in the food system, (4) reducing agricultural deforestation, (5) shifting from high-impact dietary patterns, (6) reducing food loss and/or waste, and (7) enhancing climate-resilient food production. Subareas 6 and 7 are evaluated for all countries, and the other five are evaluated if applicable to a given country.

Subarea 1 is evaluated for all countries except high-income countries. Although food insecurity is present in high-income countries, this subarea is assessed only for low- and middle-income countries where the prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition are associated with greater climate vulnerabilities. Subareas 2 and 3 are evaluated for high- and upper-middle-income countries only. Subarea 4 is scored for countries that are ranked among the 25 countries with the highest rates of agricultural deforestation according to Global Forest Watch data, and subarea 5 is evaluated for countries with a high-impact diet—countries whose consumption of animal-source foods (ASFs) exceeds EAT-Lancet recommendations by 25%.

The action in each applicable subarea is first assessed as strong, medium, weak, or absent:

- Actions are strong when a specific policy has been adopted or a plan to adopt a specific policy is in place.
- Actions are medium when an intent to take action is mentioned (i.e., no detailed implementation plan exists).
- Actions are weak if only a descriptive mention of it is included and absent when no action is mentioned.

On the basis of these assessments, the NDC will receive a strong, medium, weak, or absent rating for the area as a whole. (See more details in the Food Systems NDC Scorecard methodology, p. 7.)

Subarea 1 was not analyzed because the UK is a high-income country. Subarea 4 was evaluated but not scored because the UK is not one of the countries with the highest rates of agricultural deforestation.

Since the UK's NDC demonstrates strong action in subareas 2, 3, 6, and 7 and weak action in subarea 5, the NDC received **a medium score of 2 points** for the context-specific action area.

(1) Addressing food insecurity and malnutrition
This subarea was not analyzed because the UK is a high-income country.

(2) Mitigating emissions in food production
The NDC demonstrates strong action to mitigate emissions in food production. One way is through three environmental land management schemes (ELMs): the Sustainable Farming Incentive, the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier, and Landscape Recovery. According to the NDC, these ELMs along with capital grants are already active, and the NDC expresses the UK's intent to continue the programs through supporting farmers in their transitions to adopting low-carbon practices and their use of technologies to reduce inputs (NDC, p. 17). The NDC also notes that the UK would publish a land-use framework for England, although this has not been evaluated in this analysis (NDC, p. 17).

(3) Reducing fossil fuel use in the food system
The NDC demonstrates strong action to reduce fossil fuel use in the food system. For example, one area of focus in the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework is to reduce carbon emissions and transition food packaging from plastics to sustainable alternatives (NI Food Strategy Framework, p. 14). In addition, the National Food Strategy states that the UK is focused on developing "more organic-based fertilisers," (National Food Strategy, p. 13). This measure is discussed in the context of reducing supply chain vulnerability, a response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and suggests an intention to shift away from petrochemical fertilizers (National Food Strategy, p. 13). While the impact from either of these efforts would likely be small, relative to the scale of fossil fuel use in the food system, other broader policies, such as the commitments to significantly reducing the carbon intensity of power generation (NDC, p. 54), could be expected to have a more significant impact on reducing fossil fuel use in the food system.

(4) Reducing agricultural deforestation
Although we did not score the NDC on reducing agricultural deforestation, it does address deforestation in relation to the food system. For example, under the global food system section in the National Food Strategy, it states that the UK "will implement due diligence legislation to tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains" (National Food Strategy, p. 31).

(5) Shifting from high-impact dietary patterns
The NDC demonstrates weak action to shift from high-impact dietary patterns. The National Food Strategy states that food in the public sector should be healthier and more environmentally friendly (National Food Strategy, p. 27), but there is no mention of efforts to change dietary patterns toward lower-impact foods, such as plant-based foods. Due to the lack of specifics or intent to act, this subarea received a weak score.

(6) Reducing food loss and/or waste
The NDC demonstrates strong action toward reducing food loss and waste in various ways. One example is in the Net Zero Strategy, which says that by investing £295 million in capital funding to support local English authorities in implementing free separate food waste collections for all households, the UK aims to nearly eliminate food waste in landfills by 2028 (Net Zero Strategy, pp. 27, 168, 179, 277). The one example of efforts to reduce food loss is in the Joint Fisheries Statement, which expresses a pledge to reduce discards in the fishing industry (Joint Fisheries Statement, p. 17).

(7) Enhancing climate-resilient food production
The NDC demonstrates strong action to enhance climate-resilient food production in various policies. For example, the Joint Fisheries Statement discusses how protection, restoration, and sustainable management of blue carbon habitats provide a nature-based solution that can help fisheries and aquaculture adapt and be more resilient to climate change (Joint Fisheries Statement, p. 44).

IV. Promoting Synergies and Avoiding Maladaptation (0–3 points)

TOTAL AREA SCORE = 1 POINT (WEAK)

Measures put forth in the NDC can promote synergies with other sustainability, social, and health objectives. These measures could also conflict with the same objectives. In this area, the scorecard framework evaluates the extent to which the NDC has sought to promote synergies and avoid maladaptation or make trade-offs with other sustainable development objectives. This is a two-step evaluation process. The first step is an assessment of whether the NDC considers seven topics in relation to the food system that support sustainable development synergies: (1) nutrition; (2) One Health, animal health, and/or animal welfare; (3) other health considerations; (4) human rights; (5) biodiversity, nature, and ecosystems; (6) gender; and (7) small-scale producers. For each synergistic subarea addressed 0.5 points are given, up to a maximum of 3 points.

The UK's NDC **received 3 points in the synergies main subarea** because it addresses all seven synergistic topics.

The second step is an assessment of the NDC for risks of maladaptation related to the inclusion of five to eight high-risk activities: (1) expansion of agricultural frontier; (2) increasing production of crops such as soy, corn, rapeseed, wheat, and sugar cane for animal feed and energy; (3) increasing pesticide use; (4) intensification measures that threaten the livelihood of small-scale farmers, pastoralists, and fishers; and (5) increasing water consumption. The remaining high-risk activities are evaluated only for high- and upper-middle-income countries: (6) intensification of animal agriculture (and expansion of animal agriculture subsectors), (7) increasing consumption of particular animal products in a country that already exceeds by 25% or more EAT-Lancet levels for ASF consumption, and (8) increasing fertilizer usage.

The UK's NDC **lost 2 points in the maladaptation main subarea** because it engages in two of the high-risk activities considered.

For each synergistic subarea, the NDC receives 0.5 points up to a maximum of 3 points. For each maladaptive high-risk activity, the NDC loses 1 point. The number of points subtracted from high-risk activities or policies *can equal but not exceed* the number of points gained for the synergistic topics mentioned.

The NDC's synergies score of 3 points was reduced by 2 points for the risks of maladaptation, resulting in **a weak total score of 1 point** for the promoting synergies and avoiding maladaptation area.

Synergies

(1) Nutrition
The NDC states that the UK is committed to "ensuring that everyone has access to nutritious and healthier food" (NDC, p. 41). The 2022 National Food Strategy discusses trends in diet and obesity, noting that households have been buying more processed foods that are faster and easier to make into meals but are also higher in fat, salt, and sugar, corresponding to the increasing obesity percentage (National Food Strategy, p. 22). The strategy states that although an excess of calories is consumed in all income groups, "dietary-related ill-health is more pronounced in the most deprived groups ... and many are eating insufficient fruit and vegetables, fibre and oily fish" (National Food Strategy, p. 22). This shows clear consideration of nutrition (however, see the maladaptations subarea below for analysis of the NDC's claim that the UK's fish consumption is insufficient and its plans to increase this). The strategy outlines various plans to address these issues; one way is through schools—the strategy states that there are current "initiatives in schools which promote and provide children with high quality, nutritious, tasty food and drink. We want to help schools take this further and spark a school food revolution" (National Food Strategy, p. 24).

(2) One Health, animal health, and/or animal welfare
The NDC considers animal health and welfare in the food system. For example, the National Food Strategy states that a thriving farming sector is dependent upon healthy farmed animals (National Food Strategy, p. 15). It states that the animal health and welfare pathway provides government funds for vet visits and educates farmers about how to improve the health and welfare of their animals (National Food Strategy, p. 15).

(3) Other health considerations
One example of how the NDC considers health in relation to the food system is found in the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework. The framework mentions the relationship between food and human health several times and says it "will serve as a focal point for addressing policy issues that interconnect with food, such as public health, economy, food poverty, waste and also the impacts of the food system on the environment" (NI Food Strategy Framework, p. 9).

(4) Human rights
The NDC considers human rights in relation to the food system. For example, the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework identifies the right to food as the first principle of the eight guiding principles for future collaborative actions and future policies in line with that framework (NI Food Strategy Framework, p. 20), and Scotland's Good Food Nation Act also discusses the right to adequate food (Good Food Nation Act, Article 2).

(5) Biodiversity, nature, and ecosystems
The NDC considers nature and ecosystems in relation to the food system. For example, the NDC states that the "government is committed to create or restore at least 45,000 miles of managed hedgerows in England by 2050, which will maintain healthy soils and grow cover crops," (NDC, p. 17).

(6) Gender
The NDC considers gender in the context of food systems. One example is in Scotland's Vision for Agriculture, which says that the government must provide support for more women to be able to enter the farming industry (Vision for Agriculture, p. 3).

(7) Small-scale producers
The NDC considers small-scale producers in the food system through various policies. For example, the National Food Strategy states that the government will work with agrifood businesses to address the challenges that small and medium enterprises face, especially with respect to the government's reformed approach of "high quality training" (National Food Strategy, p. 18).

Maladaptations

(1) Expansion of agricultural frontier
Nothing in the NDC suggests that the UK engages in this high-risk activity.

(2) Increasing production of crops primarily for nonfood uses (animal feed and energy)
Nothing in the NDC suggests that the UK engages in this high-risk activity.

(3) Increasing pesticide use
Nothing in the NDC suggests that the UK engages in this high-risk activity.

(4) Intensification measures that threaten the livelihood of small-scale farmers, pastoralists, and fishers
Nothing in the NDC suggests that the UK engages in this high-risk activity.

(5) Increasing water consumption
Nothing in the NDC suggests that the UK engages in this high-risk activity.

(6) Intensification of animal agriculture and expansion of animal agriculture subsectors
The National Food Strategy indicates future expansion of animal agriculture subsectors, including in the seafood sector and sheep exports, and meeting the high international demand for products such as cheese (National Food Strategy, pp. 29–30). Because the UK consumes ASFs well in excess of recommended limits—per capita supply is three times EAT-Lancet's recommended consumption limit—this has been identified as a maladaptive measure (see Food Systems NDC Scorecard methodology, Appendix IV).

(7) Increasing consumption of particular animal products in a country that already exceeds by 25% or more EAT-Lancet levels for ASF consumption
The National Food Strategy implies that the UK plans to increase seafood consumption. The strategy states: "We also do not eat enough seafood—a healthy and potentially sustainable source of protein, vitamins and minerals; oily fish is also rich in long chain omega-3 fatty acids" (National Food Strategy, p. 22) and "Seafood is another potentially lower-carbon and healthy source of protein that can grow sustainably to fulfil its potential within the food sector," and it discusses plans to increase production (National Food Strategy, pp. 17–18). As the UK significantly exceeds recommended limits for ASF consumption, increasing seafood consumption risks further exacerbating the impacts of UK dietary patterns. (For more details, see Food Systems NDC Scorecard methodology, Appendix IV, showing the UK's domestic per capita supply of animal-source foods at over three times EAT-Lancet's recommended consumption limit and seafood availability approaching the limit.)

(8) Increasing fertilizer usage
Nothing in the NDC suggests that the UK engages in this high-risk activity.

V. Equity and Inclusiveness in NDC Development (0–3 points)

TOTAL AREA SCORE = 2.5 POINTS (STRONG)

In this area, the scorecard framework evaluates the NDC on the main subareas of equity and inclusiveness throughout the NDC's development. The NDC as a whole was scored on this area, not just the NDC's content concerning food systems. Each main subarea was scored up to 3 points, and the total score is the average of the two main subarea scores.

The UK's NDC received **a strong total score of 2.5 points** for the equity and inclusiveness area.

Equity

The scorecard framework evaluates equity through (1) equitable 1.5°C alignment, (2) just transitions, (3) consideration of the needs of marginalized and/or vulnerable groups, and (4) equitable finance. Subarea 4 is evaluated only for high-income countries on whether they commit to financing for developing countries. The equity main subarea will receive a strong score of 3 points if all issues are addressed, a medium score of 2 points if two or three issues are addressed, a weak score of 1 point if one issue is addressed, or an absent score of 0 points if no issues are addressed.

The UK's NDC received **a medium score of 2 points** in the equity main subarea because it addresses subareas 2–4 but not subarea 1.

(1) Equitable 1.5°C alignment
The NDC sets a target of reducing emissions by 81% by 2035 compared to emissions levels in 1990, the baseline year (NDC, pp. 1, 3, 4), aiming at a total emissions target of 155.3 Mt (megatonnes) CO2-e by 2035 (NDC, p. 3).

Equitable 1.5°C alignment is assessed according to the fair shares assessment approach of the Civil Society Equity Review (CSER), using the Climate Equity Reference Calculator. Under this analysis, a country's emissions reduction is determined to contribute its mitigation fair share if it meets either of two CSER benchmarks, each corresponding to different but reasonable visions of equity.

According to the 1850 High Progressivity benchmark, the UK would need to reduce its 1990 emissions by 184% in order to equitably contribute to 1.5°C alignment. According to the 1950 Medium Progressivity benchmark, the UK would need to reduce its 1990 emissions by 188% in order to equitably contribute to 1.5°C alignment. Since the UK's 81% planned reduction does not meet either benchmark (falling short of the 1850 High Progressivity benchmark by 11.7 t CO2-e per capita and the 1950 Medium Progressivity benchmark by 12.1 t CO2-e per capita), the country falls short of its fair share, and its NDC is therefore not considered equitably aligned with efforts toward 1.5°C.

(2) Just transitions
The NDC expresses the UK's commitment to supporting workers and communities during their transitions to net zero (NDC, p. 24). To further this goal, the UK is creating Skills England, a national body that will help equip workers with the education and skills they will need in the transition to net zero (NDC, p. 24). The UK also created an Energy Skills Passport, a specific program for gas and oil workers, and commits to accelerating its development to support these workers (NDC, p. 25).

(3) Specific consideration of the needs of marginalized and/or vulnerable groups
The NDC describes one of the UK's goals of supporting rental households through efficient and low-carbon heating, thereby decreasing fuel poverty (NDC, p. 1). The NDC also indicates that the UK supports Indigenous Peoples, women and girls, and other marginalized people that climate change may disproportionately affect, viewing them as "critical leaders and agents of change in climate action" (NDC, pp. 25–27). The NDC also emphasizes the importance of children and young people and the need to provide them with the knowledge and skills to thrive and work in a climate-changing world (NDC, p. 28). To further this goal, England's Department for Education published *Sustainability and Climate Change: A Strategy for the Education and Children's Services Systems* and "appointed two Youth Focal Points for Sustainability and Climate Change in 2023, in partnership with Students Organising for Sustainability UK" (NDC, p. 29).

(4) Equitable finance
The UK, as a high-income country, includes finance commitments to developing countries in its NDC. The NDC notes that the UK is "committed to delivering climate finance to help vulnerable countries adapt to climate impacts and support a transition to low-carbon economies" (NDC, p. 2). The UK has committed to doubling its total International Climate Finance commitment from 2021–2025 to at least £11.6 billion, with at least £3 billion invested in climate change solutions for nature and biodiversity (NDC, pp. 2, 65; Net Zero Strategy, p. 286). The NDC also notes that the UK supported the "International Just Transition Declaration to ensure that overseas funding assists vulnerable and developing economies by creating good-green jobs" through International Climate Finance and Official Development Assistance programs (NDC, p. 25). The NDC also suggests that the UK, through the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership, is working "to scale finance for forests and nature from all sources" and to "decouple agricultural commodity production from deforestation, forest, and land degradation" (NDC, p. 57).

Inclusiveness in NDC Development

Inclusiveness in NDC development was evaluated on whether the following groups were included in the NDC's development: (1) multiple government ministries, (2) departments and agencies of government, (3) subnational bodies, (4) the private sector, (5) academia, (6) civil society organizations, (7) Indigenous Peoples, and (8) other vulnerable and/or marginalized groups, earning 0.5 points for each for a maximum of 3 points.

The UK's NDC received **a strong score of 3 points for the inclusiveness main subarea**.

The NDC states that the UK consulted with multiple government ministries, governmental departments and agencies, subnational bodies, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations, and Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable or marginalized groups (NDC, pp. 27–32).

VI. Analysis and Conclusions (Total score 0–12 points)

THE UNITED KINGDOM'S NDC TOTAL SCORE = 8.5 POINTS (STRONG)

The UK's NDC received **a strong total score of 8.5 points out of 12**. This score is based on evaluations of the NDC and the policy documents listed in the Appendix.

All evaluations and scores are dependent on the UK and its national governments' continuing pre-2031 policies through the 2031–2035 time frame with respect to food systems. We make the following observations for consideration regarding food systems.

In the **scope of food systems coverage area**, the UK's NDC received a **strong score** because it demonstrates action at all stages. However, it could consider more in-depth, ambitious, and comprehensive targets for food loss, food processing, food distribution, and food consumption policies in subsequent NDCs.

In the **context-specific action area**, the UK's NDC received a **medium score** because it demonstrates strong action in all applicable subareas except for the shifting from high-impact dietary patterns subarea, where only weak action is shown.

In the **promoting synergies and avoiding maladaptation area**, the UK's NDC received a **weak score** because although it considered all the synergistic topics, the policies to expand animal agriculture subsectors and increase seafood consumption negatively impacted the area score. These maladaptive and high-risk behaviors undermine the NDC's efforts to promote synergies by causing harm to human health and equity, small-scale producers, animal welfare, and the environment.

In the **equity and inclusiveness in NDC development area**, the UK's NDC received a **strong score** of 2.5 points. It did not receive full points because the UK's emissions-reduction plan does not meet its fair share and thus is not equitably aligned with efforts toward the 1.5°C goal.

The following are some of the ways the UK could improve its NDC score in accordance with this evaluation: (1) including efforts that encourage shifting to lower-impact dietary patterns, consistent with the Climate Change Committee's recommendations in 2020 and 2025 for the UK's carbon budget; (2) discontinuing policies that expand agricultural land use and ones that intensify animal or marine agriculture; (3) discouraging—or at least not encouraging—the increased consumption of seafood as a protein source (e.g., by amending the National Food Strategy) and encouraging consumption of plant-based proteins, such as legumes; and (4) increasing the UK's pledge to reduce its fair share of emissions in line with the 1.5°C temperature limit. The suggested decrease in animal agriculture could help offset additional emissions.

There also appear to be a number of food systems policy developments that have taken place since the NDC was submitted or are planned to take place. For example, in July 2025 the UK published A UK Government Food Strategy for England, Considering the Wider UK Food System (Good Food Cycle). The Good Food Cycle, among other things, addresses the UK's need to shift to a food system that "supports more affordable, healthier and more balanced diets for all, higher in fruit, vegetables and wholegrains and lower in calories, saturated fat, sugar and salt" and includes outcomes covering issues such as food environments that support healthier and more sustainable sales and waste reduction. If the UK's latest NDC is updated (as the 2020 NDC submission was updated in 2022), policies like these, if incorporated or expanded upon, could provide the basis for a strengthened NDC.

Appendix

Documents Evaluated

- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution
- Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener
- Sustainable Farming Incentive: Guidance for Applicants and Agreement Holders
- Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier
- Landscape Recovery: Round One
- United Kingdom Methane Memorandum
- The Next Step in Delivering Our Vision for Scotland as a Leader in Sustainable and Regenerative Farming: Our Vision for Scottish Agriculture
- Rural Payments and Services
- Net Zero Wales: Carbon Budget 2
- Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland
- UK Marine Policy Statement
- Marine Strategy Part One: UK Updated Assessment and Good Environmental Status
- Joint Fisheries Statement
- A Blue Economy Vision for Scotland
- Welsh National Marine Plan
- Government Food Strategy, June 2022
- Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework
- Sustaining Scotland. Supplying the World. A Strategy for Scotland's Food and Drink Industry
- Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022
- Food Matters: Wales
- UK Food and Drink Pact: Food Waste Reduction Roadmap
- Waste Prevention Programme 2019: "Stopping Waste in Its Tracks"

Document Selection

An NDC submission typically references a number of policy documents. In some cases, these policy documents are referenced to provide context clarifying the content of the NDC. In other cases, these policy documents are referenced because they form part of a country's contribution to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Where a country considers the documents integral to its climate change response, the Food Systems NDC Scorecard considers the content of these documents, if adequately referenced in an NDC submission, to be part of the NDC.

As a reference's intended function is not always clear, the Food Systems NDC Scorecard considers it holistically:

- How the NDC discusses the policy document.
- Location of the reference. For example, if the reference is within the planning processes section of an "information to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding" table, this is a strong indication that the policy was incorporated into the NDC.
- Content of the referenced policy document itself—namely, the extent to which it considers climate change and therefore constitutes part of the country's climate policy framework.
- The Party's overall policy framework—for example, whether a cited policy is active rather than obsolete or superseded by other policy documents and whether other policy documents should perform the same function.

This assessment of the UK's NDC includes both UK-wide policies and policies specific to one or more of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Policies referenced ahead of the table "Information to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding (ICTU)" were not assessed, as the function of this section appeared to be a rhetorical introduction (lacking, for example, the same page headers as the rest of the submission), rather than a part of the NDC itself. Policies for other UK governments (e.g., Jersey's) were not included in the analysis, as the Food Systems NDC Scorecard project does not consider subnational policies. Within the ICTU, the policies were either referenced within the sections "4a(i). Domestic institutional arrangements, public participation and engagement with local communities and indigenous peoples, in a gender-responsive manner," "4a(ii)c. Other contextual aspirations and priorities acknowledged when joining the Paris Agreement," and "6c. How the Party has addressed Article 4, paragraph 3 of the Paris Agreement." In all cases, the policies were referenced in the context of their contributions toward relevant aspects of the Paris Agreement, including mitigation, adaptation, finance, food security, and ecosystems.

Scope of Assessment

This evaluation focuses on a food system perspective. While evaluating equity and inclusiveness more broadly, it does not specifically assess other sectors (such as energy) or indicate the quality of a country's climate policy overall. Additionally, the scoring reflects the presence or absence of particular types of action or consideration within the areas and subareas examined. This does not necessarily reflect ambition in the depth of action. For example, a policy to slightly mitigate food production emissions in a subsector will count equally in scoring to a policy to significantly mitigate emissions. The scores should be understood as indicators to consider alongside the fuller analyses. Finally, while NDCs are critical policy instruments, implementation is necessary to translate their ambition into action. Accordingly, an ambitious NDC alone does not guarantee effective action, just as the ambitiousness of action is not limited to the content of an NDC.

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Please contact the Food Systems NDC Scorecard project (info@foodsystemsndcscorecard.org) with any feedback, comments, or questions.