



IN BRIEF

Getting the Transition Right for People, Nature and Climate

WRI Europe's Five-Year Strategy (2023-2027)

What the world needs is a fast transition that promotes the well-being of its people, the preservation of nature, and effective climate action. The World Resources Institute (WRI), a globally influential research organization with 14 offices around the world, including a regional office in Europe, is committed to championing this transformation through data-driven solutions and collaborative partnerships. The strategy is a living strategy that builds on 40 years of research and results at the global, country and city level. From research to data, and convening to implementation, we use knowledge-based approaches. The main elements of our new strategy are:

Embracing Three Interconnected Goals



People



Nature



Climate

Our vision is to address systemic problems and simultaneously pursue goals that improve human wellbeing, protect nature and tackle climate change. The transition will not be possible if it doesn't fundamentally benefit people, nor can we curb climate change without safeguarding ecosystems. That's why our five-year strategy puts three interconnected goals for people, nature and climate at the center of everything we do.

The strategy aims to foster economic opportunities for people while meeting essential needs and protecting and restoring nature. It reaches for a world in which global emissions have sharply declined and communities are more resilient.

For example, we believe that restoring biodiversity and soil health across the EU as proposed in the EU Green Deal, will not only benefit nature but will also make agricultural yields more sustainable long-term, benefiting food security and farmers' income. It will also help to sequester carbon and support people's well-being and health.

Addressing interconnected goals while building on European initiatives

Europe is actively promoting a green transition through its EU Green Deal. In our engagement approach around the implementation of the EU Green Deal we emphasize the interconnectedness of human well-being, nature, and climate and global consequences. For example, WRI Europe wants to create more understanding for the local consequences and support the implementation and positive performance of relevant EU directives in developing economies, such as the EU Deforestation Law, a regulation designed to decouple consumption of certain commodities in the EU and deforestation in producing countries. Changing economic activities that harm forests will help nature and also trap carbon dioxide, which is good for climate overall. But we need to make sure that the changes we make still benefit people in developing economies who rely on the production and trade of commodities. Reforms should be fair to those communities in the long run.

Achieving Systemic Change in Europe

To achieve our goals, WRI aims to transform three fundamental human systems responsible for driving inequality, destroying ecosystems and fueling climate change: the food, land, and water system; the energy system; and the cities system. Our in-depth work is supported by our international network and experiences in various parts of the world, as well as collaboration with European partners.

Changing the way the world produces and consumes both food and energy and designs its cities also requires shifting the supporting economics, finance and governance systems. These "enabling systems" often incentivize the wrong behaviors and practices. To achieve real change, we must also revolutionize the systems that underpin them.

Europe is making promising strides on systems change. For example, its ambitious renewable energy transition is pushed forward by new policies, innovation and finance. However, this shift has also highlighted the rapidly increasing need for rare minerals and metals, which are crucial components in renewable energy technologies. The social and environmental consequences of mining such resources need to be taken into account. Also, circularity and greater resource efficiency become essential to maximize the use of available materials as well as tempering energy demand. Furthermore, international cooperation and responsible sourcing are key in managing the increased demand for rare minerals and metals.

WRI Europe can help with the solutions of these deeply challenging issues by its growing work on the energy transition and materials needs, and energy efficiency in the built environment. Our in-depth work is supported by our international network and experiences in various parts of the world. The Systems Transformation Hub in Brussels, a collaborative partnership including WRI Europe which launched in January 2024, intends to inform and serve EU policy making. It aims to include systems change thinking structurally in policies, in the short and long term. The Hub will support integrated policy making through connected systems: for example; a climate-resilient transition in mobility and transportation entails not only a shift to electric vehicles, it will also have consequences for public transport nodes for rural as well as urban purposes, technology solutions and innovation, economic development and housing planning and public health.

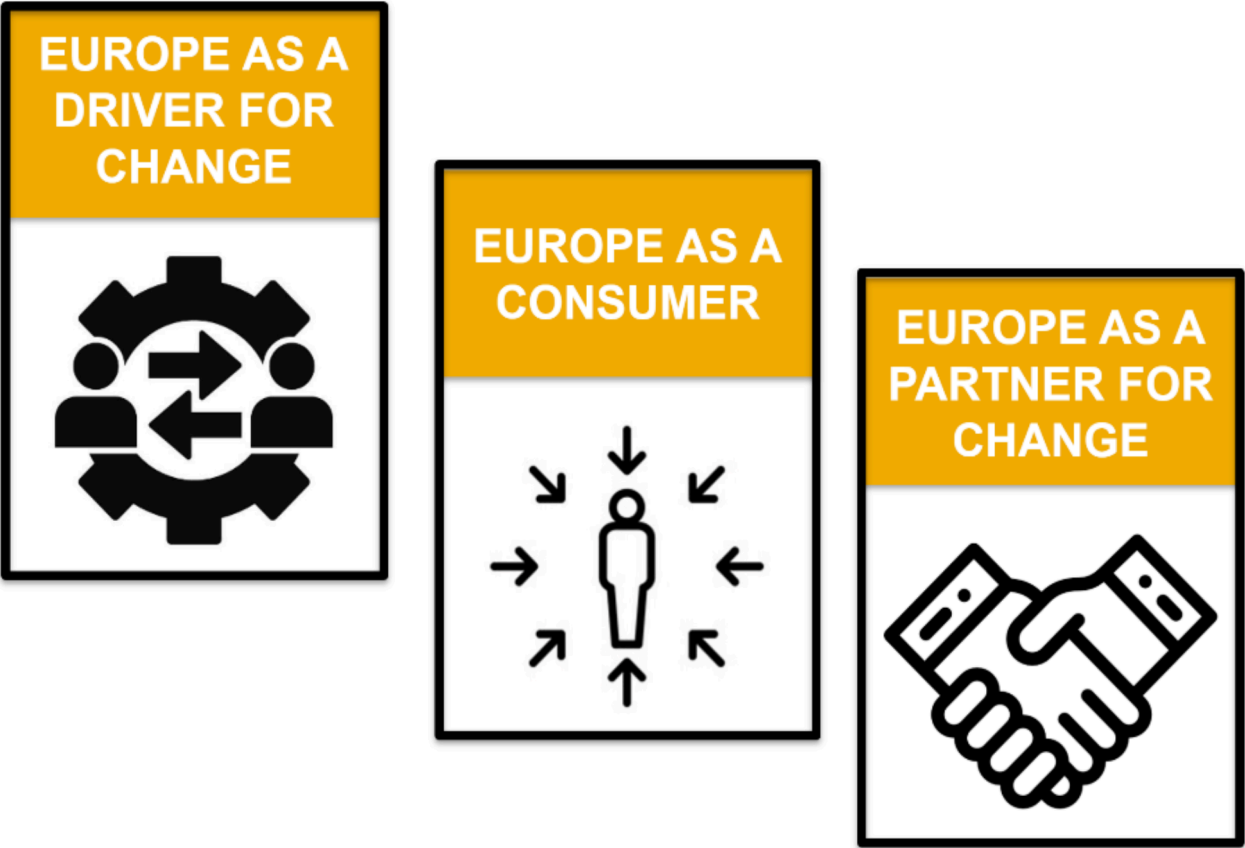
Supporting Transitions worldwide – from Europe, and on Europe

A central aspect of WRI's strategy is to support transition in focus countries – countries with large and emerging economies, with significant current and potentially large carbon footprints, vast amounts of natural resources and growing social and economic development needs of its populations.

We prioritize work in the following countries and regions: Brazil, China, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Europe, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Rwanda and the United States. There is a coordinated regional presence in Africa and Europe.

WRI provides data, research, and evidence-based approaches to help nations transition to equitable, low-carbon economies while preserving their natural environments. We base our work on deep political understanding and aim to co-create solutions with partners in-country.

WRI Europe will work both as an “enabling office” that can support transitions in the focus countries, while at the same time working on addressing Europe’s footprint and necessary transitions. We will do so under three guiding roles:



Europe as a driver for change

In selected themes and sectors Europe has the right political and social circumstances to be a frontrunner and drive progressive development elsewhere. Europe (for example, through dietary shift and energy efficiency) can drive change by pushing the frontier with its own approaches and goals, exemplifying that the transition is possible. In other cases (for example, low-carbon transitions in global value chains), decisive action in the European context will have repercussions around the world.

We want to make sure that these global systems transitions are ambitious, whilst ensuring that developing economies are supported in adapting to such changes.

Europe as a consumer

Europe's policies, consumption pattern, greenhouse gas emissions and financial footprint should be reformed to encourage sustainable behaviors.

WRI Europe will work on solutions and collaborations to bring its footprint in line with planetary boundaries.

Europe as a partner for change

We strengthen relationships with European donors and knowledge partners to inform their climate and development strategies and advance their political funding commitments to key issues.

By working together, WRI and its partners can create an ecosystem for change that fosters sustainability and resilience.

Emphasis on Impact and Accountability

WRI is committed to achieving measurable impact globally. Equally, we will measure how WRI Europe's role – whether related to work from Europe on global issues as well as intra-European work supporting climate and nature positive actions on the continent - contributes to this impact.

It is no longer enough to measure positive outcomes from our own work e.g., policies passed or projects started. Instead, we are setting impact targets based on the demonstrable benefits that we seek for people, nature and climate. This approach ensures accountability towards our partners and donors in Europe and enables course corrections.

Working to achieve systemic change will be a herculean task. Europe stands at a critical juncture in the pursuit of its own green transition. The world needs a great transition that is good for people, nature, and climate. WRI's experience, global role, deep European reach and strategic approach make it a trusted partner in driving this change.



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