

# CLIMATE SCENARIOS: 5 traps to avoid

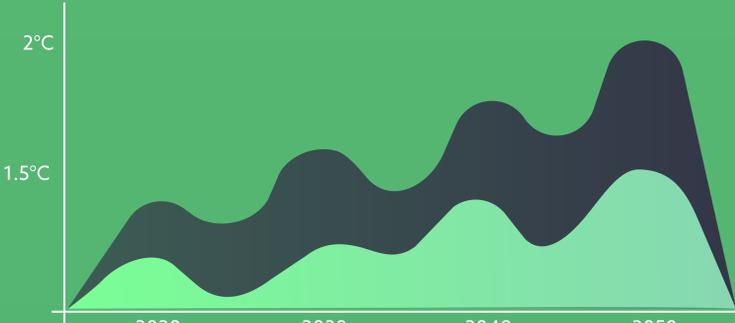
An increasing number of large companies and financial players claim to be working towards carbon neutrality and alignment with the climate goals of the Paris Agreement. To rationalize their strategy, these institutions are increasingly relying on climate scenarios.

In most cases, due to a lack of ambition or short-sightedness, these scenarios guide us towards global warming widely exceeding 1.5°C above preindustrial levels. They become greenwashing tools, allowing corporations and financial players to maintain—and even develop—the most polluting activities while professing a strong climate commitment.

The study of climate scenarios reveals the existence of 5 main traps.

## 1. Trajectories overshooting the Paris Agreement

Many actors claim to adopt scenarios “aligned with the Paris Agreement” but use scenarios that are less ambitious than the goals adopted in 2015 and that lead us straight to global warming going over 2°C.



## 2. Leaving out 30% of global greenhouse gas emissions

Many climate scenarios only consider CO2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion and leave out around 30% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as those from deforestation (10%), methane (15%) and nitrous oxide emissions (6%).



## 3. Taking growth for a divine phenomenon

In many scenarios, growth is conceptualized as an external, independent phenomenon, identical regardless of the chosen hypotheses. However, climate scenarios have various and major impacts on economic development and can themselves be affected by it.



## 4. Making CO2 vanish thanks to negative emissions

Many scenarios bet on negative emissions—using different CO2 capture and storage processes—to maintain fossil fuel production and a high level of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions even though the global deployment of these technologies and solutions is highly unlikely.



## 5. Chronically underestimating the role of renewable energies



Climate scenarios underestimate the development capacities of renewable energies and their weight in the global energy mix, making them second-tier energies and encouraging the competing and continuous development of fossil energies.

## Five traps hiding a sixth one: The protection of the fossil fuel sector at all costs

While the reduction of fossil fuel production is essential to respect a 1.5°C or even 2°C trajectory, many scenarios take advantage of the five loopholes to keep fossil fuels at the heart of the world's energy systems beyond 2040-2050 and forecast massive investments in the sector.

Financial players must immediately commit to entirely phasing out fossil fuels by established and documented deadlines—2040 at the latest in Europe and 2050 elsewhere for gas and oil, and ten years earlier for coal—and immediately stop financing new projects and the players that enable them.

[See the complete note](#)

### Définition of climate scenario

Description of probable future climate, based on a coherent set of assumptions about the main driving forces (pace of technological change, prices, etc.) and the relationships involved. Scenarios are neither predictions nor forecasts but do allow for a better understanding of the consequences of different developments or actions. (Source: IPCC)

**Reclaim Finance**

75 Rue Manin 75019 PARIS

contact@reclaimfinance.org

<https://reclaimfinance.org/>

