ASN Bank

Climate Policy

asn bank

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ASN Bank Sustainability & Research

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1. Introduction

One of our goals as a financial institution is to help prevent climate change. This policy paper explains how we've incorporated this goal into our sustainability criteria.

Our sustainability policy is based on three pillars: Climate, Biodiversity and Human Rights. Our sustainability criteria inform our lending and investment decisions. In taking these decisions, we ask ourselves the following questions:

- Climate: how do our loans and investments help to protect our climate?
- Biodiversity: how do our loans and investments affect nature and the environment?
- Human Rights: how do our loans and investments impact people?

This policy paper describes which sustainability criteria we've defined for the Climate pillar. It also explains how we, in our capacity as a shareholder, are using our influence to engage with listed companies about their climate policy.

What do we mean by climate change?
When we talk about climate change, we are referring to the consequences of global warming due to greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity.

Description and importance of the climate

While the climate has changed from time to time throughout the earth's history, the majority of scientists agree that the current global warming is due to human activity. It's the result of a sharp increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

What are the effects? The previous decade (2010-2019) was the warmest ten-year period on record. And since the 1980s, each successive decade has been warmer than the one that preceded it. This trend is expected to continue.

The effects of climate change are also reflected in other phenomena such as retreating ice, record sea levels, ocean acidification and extreme weather. These negative effects have the greatest impact on geographies where these changes concentrate and whose ability to adapt is limited. Relatively poor regions in the lower latitudes tend to be most vulnerable.

Climate change and human rights

Climate change has a major adverse effect on the lives of people across the globe. And the negative impacts are only set to increase. People living in poverty in countries such as India, Bangladesh and the Congo are hit hardest.

Climate change is also a potential threat to world stability and peace. Floods, long periods of drought and other extreme weather can lead to regional food shortages and displacement of large groups of people, triggering refugee flows that may jeopardise peace, public order and safety, both in the country where the natural disaster occurred *and* in neighbouring countries.

Human rights principles such as justice are key in our response to climate change. Climate change and human rights are inextricably linked since it's a basic human right for people to be protected by states. Climate change threatens people's right to housing or their right to water and sanitation.[1]

Climate change and biodiversity

Climate change is becoming an increasingly serious threat to biodiversity. The earth is warming up due to greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity. Climate change is threatening to wipe out species and ecosystems. Ecosystems are changing because of weather conditions becoming drier, wetter or milder. In many instances, plant and animal species have trouble adjusting to climate change. An example of how climate change can destroy ecosystems is the disappearance of coral reefs due to high concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere, which leads to acidic water.

1 https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/climate-change/

Our long-term climate targets

We see climate change as a highly pressing problem. It's important for everyone to contribute to its resolution. Three divisions of our organisation have defined their own climate targets, which we will elaborate on below. We hope that our efforts in this area will continue to set an example for other financial institutions.

- **ASN Bank**
  ASN Bank sets the bar high. The bank reached its goal of climate neutrality as early as in 2018. The new target is to be a climate-positive bank (on balance) by 2030. Rather than replacing climate neutrality as a target, the goal of climate positivity is meant to complement it. No other bank has been bold enough to aim this high. By embracing climate positivity, ASN Bank is taking a new step as a frontrunner in the financial sector in terms of addressing the climate issue. What's new is that, besides reducing funded emissions and increasing avoided emissions, ASN Bank will also focus on loans and investments that actually help to capture carbon from the atmosphere (sequestering). This will add an entirely new class of climate investments to our energy efficiency and renewable energy portfolios.[2]

- **ASN Beleggingsfondsen N.V.**
  In 2018, ABB's Board of Directors, formulated the ambition that it wanted all the funds' investments to be climate-positive by 2030.

- **De Volksbank**
  De Volksbank, ASN Bank's parent company, is not only concerned with the group's business operations, but also with the activities it funds. That's why it has set itself the objective to be fully climate-neutral by 2030. To achieve this, it has adopted the climate-neutral methodology of its subsidiary ASN Bank, applying it across the board, i.e. to all de Volksbank labels. The principle is quite simple: loans and investments are reported in a profit and loss account based on their carbon emissions. The aim is to avoid as many greenhouse gas emissions as are caused by all loans and investments by 2030.

2 For more information, e.g. on the initiatives we're taking in this context, see also the policy papers Climate-Neutral by 2030 and Climate-Positive by 2030.

2. Principles underlying our climate policy

This section describes the key principles underlying our sustainability criteria in the Climate pillar.

Paris Agreement

The Climate Agreement was presented at the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2 but preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.[3]

The treaty requires signatories to formulate national climate plans that have to be increasingly aspiring in terms of ambition level. It also stipulates that first-world countries are expected to financially support developing countries in reducing their emissions.

The Dutch ambition and implementation of the Paris Agreement was enshrined in the Dutch Climate Accord of 2019. The central aim of this Accord is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Netherlands by 49% relative to 1990.[4]

Meanwhile, the Dutch financial sector isn't idling about. The sector has formalised its specific contribution to the Climate Accord in a pledge, which came about, in part, as a result of the Spitsbergen Ambition[5] that ASN Bank spearheaded and pioneered. In the pledge, financial institutions undertake to report on the climate impact of their loans and investments from 2020 onwards. What's more, by 2022 at the latest, they will have in place action plans that will help to reduce carbon emissions.

Scientific basis

There is overwhelming scientific evidence in support of the argument that we humans are the cause of today's climate issues. As further global warming is unavoidable, it would seem to be too late to find an all-encompassing solution to the climate problem. This important piece of information informs ASN Bank's climate policy. We're aware that our knowledge of the exact effect of different variables on our climate is not exhaustive.[6] [7] [8] There are no absolute certainties. We base our policy on the reports of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which attribute global warming to human activity.

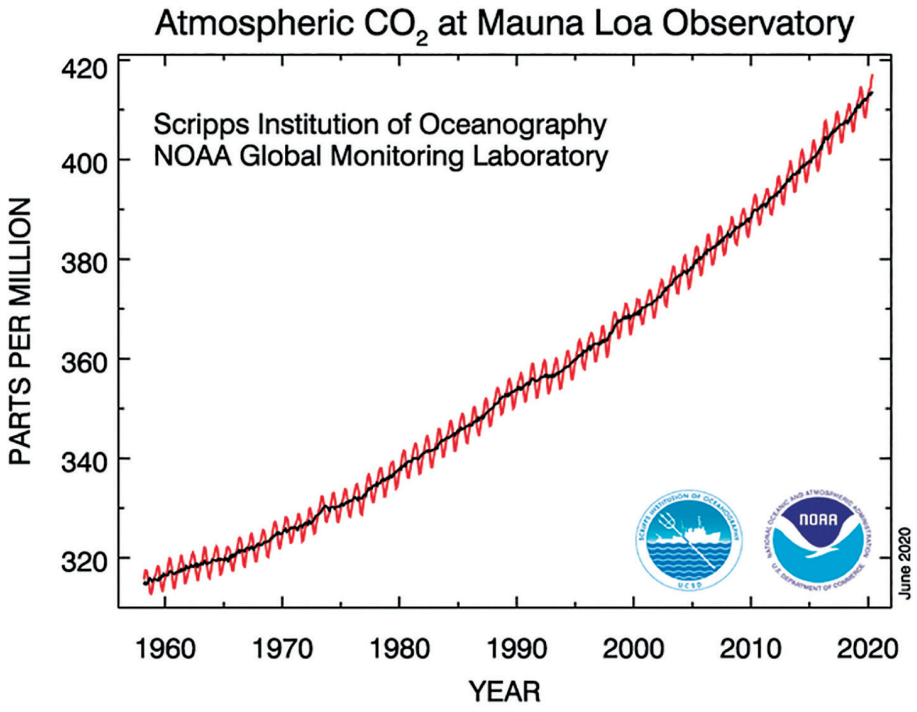
The key conclusions that are drawn in the most recent reports[9] [10] [11] are as follows:

- It has been shown indisputably that the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased, causing the earth to warm up.
- In addition, it has been shown to a high degree of scientific probability (90% to 95%) that:
  - Global warming is due to greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity.
  - The main human activity adding to carbon emissions is the combustion of fossil fuels; land use change is the next largest contributor.
  - The rise in the earth's temperature in the 21st century will be higher than in the 20th century, when it rose by 0.74 degrees Celsius; the global average temperature has increased by 0.8 degrees Celsius since records were first kept.

3 http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php
4 https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2019/06/28/climate-agreement
5 https://www.nvb.nl/nieuws/spitsbergen-ambitie-sluit-aan-bij-inzet-banken-voor-klimaatakkoord/ (in Dutch)
6 T. Lenton et al. (2008), 'Tipping Elements in the Earth's Climate System', PNAS, 105, 6, 1786-93: http://www.pnas.org/content/105/6/1786.full.pdf+html
7 'Climate Change Controversies', The Royal Society, June 2007.
8 'Klompen in de Machinerie' (Merchants of Doubt), Jan Paul van Soest, August 2011.
9 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: Fifth Assessment Report (2014).
10 Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment/Royal Dutch Meteorological Institute, 2018: Summary for Policy-makers, Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC): Fifth Assessment Cycle, Working Group I.
11 Climate Change: A Summary of the Fifth IPCC Assessment and a Transposition to the Netherlands, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency/Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute, 2015)

Current situation

Global carbon emissions are growing faster every year. The carbon concentration in the atmosphere rose from 379 ppm in 2005 to 390 ppm in 2011 and 416 ppm by April 2020, well above the natural bandwidth of 180 ppm to 300 ppm of the past 650,000 years.



12

Global greenhouse gas emissions have increased by 1.5% on average per year over the past decade, with only slightly lower growth between 2014 and 2016. By 2018, the 2.0%-per-year global increase in greenhouse gas emissions had resumed, with them rising to 51.8 gigatonnes of carbon equivalents (CO_2-eqs) without changes in land use.

The increase was mainly attributable to rising carbon emissions from the combustion of fossil fuel. Global emissions of methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O) also increased, as did emissions of fluorinated gases (i.e. F-gases).

In the end, the rise in the earth's temperature will be contingent on the timing of the stabilisation of carbon emissions and the rate at which these emissions are subsequently reduced. The longer it takes us to stabilise them, the more carbon dioxide will accumulate in the atmosphere and the higher the average increase in earth's temperature will be. The sooner we manage to reduce our carbon emissions, the greater the chance that we'll steer clear of dangerous climate change.

Call for collective action

This growth in emissions has huge implications. That's why more and more scientists are sounding the alarm. They warn that the earth will suffer serious consequences if global warming exceeds 1.5 degrees Celsius. The damage at a temperature increase of 2 degrees Celsius – or more – is likely to be much greater than previously assumed. The 2018 IPCC Report[13] concludes that limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius has great benefits, but will require an even more ambitious collective effort to meet the targets set in the Paris Climate Change Agreement. Although this goal is still achievable in geophysical terms, the transition to a fossil fuel-free society calls for ambitious mitigation and adaptation.

The current pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that have been undertaken by signatories to the Paris Agreement will lead to a rise in the earth's temperature of around 3 degrees Celsius by 2100. If we continue on like we have been, we'll reach the 1.5-degree increase between 2030 and 2052.

12 Bron afbeelding: NOAA

13 https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/

The future: tipping points and carbon budget

There's a fundamental debate ongoing about what level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 'safe' to prevent dangerous climate change. Dangerous climate change means that tipping points are being passed and climate processes initiated that are likely to be irreversible. This will accelerate the process of climate change, triggering climate change over a short space of time that would normally take centuries or even millennia. It's impossible for us humans to adapt to such abrupt climate change.[14] [15]

The term 'global carbon budget'[16] can help us gain an understanding of these dynamics. Carbon budgets are powerful communication tools to illustrate the limits of our planet and the need for urgent climate action. They can help to demonstrate the inconsistencies that are inherent in the growth plans of carbon-intensive industries, as Carbon Tracker has consistently shown since their first report on the carbon bubble in 2011.

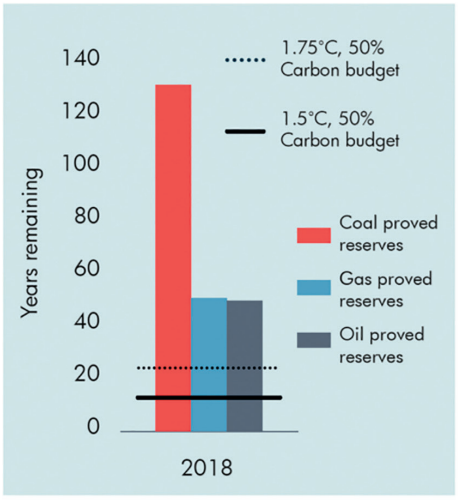
The IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C (2018) is the most recent study on 'total' carbon budgets; this refers to the total volume of emissions that can be released and hence adds to warming across all sectors of the economy (which can be categorised as energy sector emissions plus land use, land-use change and forestry plus industrial sector emissions).[17]

Carbon Tracker has calculated that the remaining carbon budget for a 1.5°C scenario at the beginning of 2020 was around 495 Gt of carbon dioxide (based on carbon budgets updated by the IPCC in 2018 and emissions data from the Global Carbon Project). Based on the 2019 emissions of 43.1 Gt, this budget can be expressed in terms of years remaining at current emissions levels – as of 2020, this equates to 11.5 years for a 50% probability of a 1.5°C warming outcome. [18] [19]

TABLE 1. FOSSIL FUEL RESERVES REMAINING AT CURRENT PRODUCTION LEVELS

Fossil fuel	Remaining proved reserves, years left at current production
coal	132
gas	51
oil	50

FIGURE 1. THE 2018 CARBON BUBBLE: RESERVES LIFE OF OIL, GAS AND COAL, AND CARBON BUDGETS



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14 'Climate tipping points — too risky to bet against', Timothy M. Lenton, Johan Rockström, Owen Gaffney, Stefan Rahmstorf, Katherine Richardson, Will Steffen & Hans Joachim Schellnhube, | Nature | Vol. 575 | 28 November 2019.

15 https://www.carbonbrief.org/explainer-nine-tipping-points-that-could-be-triggered-by-climate-change

16 https://www.globalcarbonproject.org/carbonbudget/

17 Other sector-specific carbon estimates for a given warming outcome are published by various organisations, e.g. carbon emissions by the energy sector published by the IEA.

18 https://carbontracker.org/resources/terms-list/#carbon-budgets

19 https://carbontracker.org/reports/balancing-the-budget/

20 Afbeelding: Carbon Tracker, November 2018. Bronnen:IPCC, Global Carbon Project, BP, CTI analysis.

Strategies for a climate-neutral society

There are several well-documented, feasible strategies for meeting the world's energy requirements while preventing dangerous climate change. A number of studies offer a framework that can help us in fine-tuning our climate strategy. The Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, for instance, has collated the most promising strategies in its Post Carbon Pathways project.[21] Examples are:

- *A Plan to Power 100 Percent of the Planet with Renewables*[22]
- *Zero Carbon Britain 2030: A New Energy Strategy*, the second report of the Zero Carbon Britain project *by* the Centre for Alternative Technology[23]
- *The Energy Report: 100% Renewable Energy By 2050*, Ecofys and WWF[24]
- *Global Energy Assessment: Towards a Sustainable Future*, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, 2012[25]
- *Roadmap 2050 – A Practical Guide to a Prosperous, Low-Carbon Europe*[26]
- IPCC Special Report: *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, 2018[27]
- *Sustainable Development Scenario, World Energy Outlook,* IEA 2019[28]

The most recent example is the European Green Deal[29], the EU's ambition to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, including a European climate law and a roadmap.

21 'Post Carbon Pathways, Reviewing Post Carbon Economy Transition Strategies', John Wiseman and Taegen Edwards, CPD Occasional Paper 17, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, March 2012.

22 M.A. Jacobson and M.Z. Delucchi, Scientific American, Nov 2009 issue, accessed Feb 2012 at http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=a-path-to-sustainable-energy-by-2030

23 M. Kemp and J. Wexler (eds), 2010. Wales: CAT Publications, accessed Feb 2012 at http://zerocarbonbritain.org/

24 February 2011.

25 Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria.

26 www.roadmap2050.eu/attachments/files/Volume1_fullreport_PressPack.pdf

27 https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/

28 https://www.iea.org/weo/weomodel/sds/

29 https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

3. Sustainability policy in practice

How do ASN Bank and ABB contribute to resolving the climate issue?

Selection
We steer clear of issuing loans to and investing in businesses that emit high levels of greenhouse gases. In our selection process, we favour companies that emit low levels of greenhouse gases. For details, see Section 4.

Engagement
Engagement means entering into a dialogue with businesses and institutions with a view to increasing their awareness of their sustainability performance and urging them to improve it. We engage with companies on climate issues if an abuse has been uncovered due to which a company no longer meets our sustainability criteria. The investment funds also proactively engage on climate issues. If they don't like what they see, they may decide to sell their investment.

Voting at shareholder meetings
If an ASN investment fund invests in a listed company, it has voting rights that can be exercised at shareholder meetings. Our voting pattern ties in closely with our sustainability policy; it focuses on issues relating to human rights, climate and biodiversity. Being a shareholder allows us to vote in favour of investments and actions that reduce water use or restore biodiversity. For the full voting policy, see the prospectus of ASN Investment Funds.

Championing sustainability
We see ourselves as an influencer, connector and champion of climate issues for the financial sector. We fulfil this role by setting targets and measuring the climate impact of investments, as well as by fast-tracking climate policy.

Setting targets and measuring climate impact:
- In 2013, ASN Bank was the first bank in the world to define a climate-neutral target for all its loans and develop a corresponding measurement methodology. In 2018, we took the logical next step by setting ourselves the target of climate positivity.
- At the Paris climate summit in 2015, we took the initiative to create the Platform for Carbon Accounting – Financials (PCAF). This initiative has now developed into an international partnership and is on its way to becoming a global standard for measuring a financial institution's climate impact. After four years of having chaired the platform, we now serve as a partner in PCAF Netherlands. We also founded the Steering Committee of PCAF Global.[30]
- We were one of the initiators of the Spitsbergen Ambition[31] for the Dutch financial sector in 2018. This Ambition was an important step towards the financial sector's pledge to support[32] to the Dutch Climate Accord.

Championing and fast-tracking climate policy:
- We seek to bring about transitions that resonate with us and that allow us to make a difference by championing them. Over the coming period, we will focus on a transition in the construction industry: from cement to cross-laminated timber.
- We use the ASN Foundation and sponsorships to support projects that help to protect our climate.
- We support public interest organisations that share our vision of climate issues, such as Urgenda, and we contribute to their campaigns.
- We lobby with governments (EU and Dutch governments) and corporates, with the aim of helping to achieve a climate-neutral economy.

30 https://carbonaccountingfinancials.com/
31 https://www.devolksbank.nl/en/corporate-responsibility/sustainability/de-volksbank-blij-met-groene-voornemens-banken
32 https://www.duurzaambedrijfsleven.nl/finance/31943/klimaatakkoord-financiele-sector (in Dutch)

4. Climate selection criteria for companies and projects

We apply our climate-related criteria in sustainability research. These criteria help us decide which companies, institutions and projects to finance or to admit to our investment universe. The climate-related criteria apply to all our investments and activities.

In this chapter, we have described activities that can be positive and harmful to the climate. We don't invest in fossil fuel at all, but we make as many investments in renewable energy as we can.[33]

4.1 requirements for a positive rating

Mitigation
Mitigation means preventing the earth's temperature from continuing to rise, thereby containing the climate problem. Limiting the temperature increase will improve the chance of adaptation and might yet help to prevent dangerous climate change.

In the context of mitigation, we invest in activities that contribute to creating a climate-neutral society. Energy savings and energy efficiency play an important role in this regard. Since we consider energy savings and energy efficiency as the most cost-effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we prioritise investments that add relatively little to greenhouse gas emissions in our selection process. We also invest in energy-saving technologies, such as LED lighting, thermal insulation, heat pumps and ground-coupled heat exchange systems.

Renewable energy generation is an excellent way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We accept different forms of renewable energy generation in our investment universe, such as solar energy, wind energy, geothermal energy, heat pumps, hydropower and tidal energy. For more details on this policy, see the SSP on Renewable Energy.

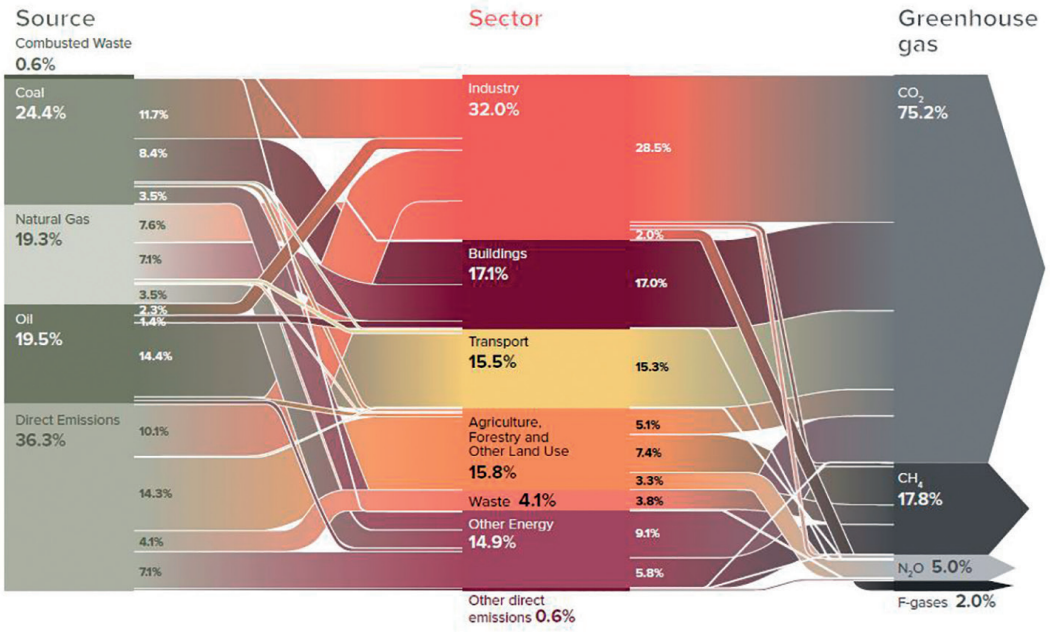
Adaptation
Adaptation means anticipating to the impact of climate change. The importance of contributing to adaptation is growing. This is particularly relevant in areas where the climate impact is most severe, such as low-lying areas and geographies traditionally suffering from dry spells.[34]

In the context of adaptation, we're looking to make investments in activities that mitigate the negative effects of greenhouse gases, such as investments in water management, poverty alleviation and activities aimed at preserving and expanding forested areas. Although there are limited options for funding climate adaptation at this point, that doesn't stop us from pursuing this avenue.

33 For more details on the selection criteria, we refer to our Sustainability Criteria Research Guide.
34 'Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change in Developing Countries' (WRI EarthTrends: Chris Ward, 30 July 2007).

4.2 activities to be excluded

We don't invest in activities that add heavily to the greenhouse effect, either directly or indirectly, and thereby exacerbate climate change.[35]



Figuur 1 wereldwijde broeikasgasemissies (2017). Bron: Navigant & ASN Bank

[36]

We've categorised these activities into 1) electricity or heat generation causing high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, 2) activities causing high levels of greenhouse gas emissions and 3) products causing high levels of greenhouse gas emissions in their usage.

1. Electricity or heat generation causing high levels of greenhouse gas emissions

Electricity generation is the one activity that adds the most to the greenhouse effect. We don't invest in electricity generation that causes greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, and has other unwanted side-effects.

Lignite, coal, shale gas, oil and tar sand oil

These forms of electricity generation account for the highest greenhouse gas emissions per kWh of electricity generated. Although these emissions can be reduced by improving efficiency, that's not enough for us. We believe that there's no such thing as a clean coal-fired power station, not even with carbon capture storage (CCS), a technology that leads to extra energy consumption and is still in its infancy.

Natural gas

We steer clear of electricity generation from natural gas. That said, from a climate perspective, this form of electricity generation is clearly preferably over burning fossil fuel. The fossil gas sector accounts for significantly lower levels of greenhouse gas emissions than the rest of the fossil fuel sector. In addition to burning natural gas, however, the extraction of natural gas also causes greenhouse gases in the form of methane. Although we see the benefits of natural gas, we choose to invest in much more sustainable energy sources such as wind and solar energy, which offer greater climate gains for every euro spent.

35 https://guidehouse.com/-/media/www/site/downloads/energy/2019/asn_navigant_emissionsflowchart.pdf
36 Global greenhouse gas emissions (2017). Source: Navigant and ASN Bank.

Biofuel

Our loans and investments in biofuel are limited. Biofuel is used to generate electricity or heat, or to produce biodiesel and biopetrol. Materials that can be used as a basis for biofuel include corn, grass, straw, manure and wood. They don't contribute equally to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. What's more, they each have a different adverse effect on biodiversity. So-called first-generation biofuel leads to a carbon reduction of no more than 50% across the production chain. In practice, the reduction tends to be even less.

To avoid incurring sustainability risks, we steer clear of investments in first-generation biofuel. We believe that there are only limited options for using wood as a biofuel; this should be subject to strict conditions. We may decide to invest in biofuel if certain conditions are met. For details on these conditions, see the SSP on Renewable Energy.

2. Activities causing high levels of greenhouse gas emissions

These include activities such as mining, extraction and production of lignite, coal, oil, tar sand oil, natural gas, shale gas, base chemicals (including petrochemicals) and base metals, and cement production.

Extraction and production of lignite, coal, natural gas, shale gas, oil and tar sand oil

We don't invest in the exploration, production and refining of fossil materials. The extraction and production of lignite, coal, natural gas and oil account for high levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Shale gas and tar sand oil are so-called unconventional sources of fossil fuel. Not only do they add greatly to the greenhouse effect, but they also pose new sustainability risks for humans and the environment, particularly in the extraction process.

Mining

We steer clear of investments in mining companies or mining activities for two reasons. Firstly, nearly all mining companies are responsible for major environmental infractions. They emit greenhouse gases, cause soil, water and air pollution, or mine in protected natural areas. Secondly, nearly all mining activities involve serious violations of human rights. In countries with weak public administration systems, mining companies tend to abuse their power so that they pay little or no tax on the raw materials they extract in that country, while leaving the local population to suffer the consequences.

Base chemicals (including petrochemicals) and base metals

We steer clear of the base metals and base chemicals sectors, as long as they mainly use fossil fuel, since they emit high levels of greenhouse gases and other harmful substances. Companies in these sectors produce bulk materials for the chemical industry, such as ethylene and polymers, from crude oil.

Cement production

We steer clear of cement-manufacturing companies as they produce high levels of greenhouse gases and have a harmful effect on ecosystems.

Deforestation

We don't invest in companies that contribute to deforestation. Deforestation, i.e. large-scale logging or burning of primeval forest, tropical rainforest or mangrove forest and clearing of peat lands, has an impact on our climate. As trees grow, they filter carbon dioxide from the air. High-carbon stock (HCS) forests are particularly good at absorbing and retaining carbon dioxide. If these forests are cleared and the timber is used as fuel, most of the carbon dioxide that was stored in them will be released back into the atmosphere.

In addition, forests form a water buffer, which ensures continuity in the groundwater level. They also protect the soil from erosion and mitigate temperature differences. What's more, the loss of forests also leads to desertification. Trees are logged legally and illegally for the purposes of selling timber. They are also logged for mining, gas and oil extraction, and to clear land for palm oil plantations, soy cultivation and livestock farming.

3. Products causing high levels of greenhouse gas emissions in their usage

The production of internal combustion engines runs counter to our vision of a sustainable society without the use of fossil fuels. That said, we don't rule out the use of internal combustion engines in public transport vehicles, such as buses. For details, see our Transportation Policy.

5. Own operations and governance

While this policy paper describes our assessment of companies, public authorities and institutions for selection purposes, we also have a climate policy that addresses our own operations. This policy covers de Volksbank as a whole, i.e. ASN Bank, BLG Wonen, RegioBank, SNS and de Volksbank itself in its capacity as the parent company.

- Our ambition is to reduce our carbon emissions per FTE every year.
- We buy green energy where we can. We offset all our other carbon emissions by purchasing REDD+ credits.
- Our car lease scheme adopted the motto “100% electric” in 2017. At year-end 2019, half of our company car fleet were electric cars.
- The SNS branches shops have embraced the principle of circularity in their design and outfitting.
- Our office buildings are energy-efficient.

6. Appendice

Additional information about greenhouse gases

Besides carbon dioxide, there are five other so-called 'Kyoto greenhouse gases'. While they add far less to the greenhouse effect than carbon dioxide does, at 45%, their combined contribution is still sizeable. The other long-lived greenhouse gases (LLGHGs) – in order of decreasing importance – are methane (CH_4); nitrous oxide (N_2O), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF_6). The so-called 'Montreal gases' (CFCs and HCFCs) also add to the greenhouse effect. The same goes for water vapour in the troposphere. The contribution of these gases to the greenhouse effect is expressed in carbon equivalents (CO_2-eqs). In this document, any mention of CO_2-eqs refers to all greenhouse gases combined. Water vapour in the troposphere is also considered a greenhouse gas. Depending on the temperature, water can condense, freeze or evaporate. In other words, the physical conditions determine whether water vapour leads to a change in temperature. At higher temperatures, water vapour in the atmosphere will increase rapidly. The level of water vapour in the atmosphere responds rapidly to warming and cooling, and intensifies the greenhouse effect caused by other substances in the atmosphere.