

**Energy Transitions Commission
Representatives Meeting
Summary Note
Thursday 18th September 2025**

Thursday 18th September 2025, 8.45 – 17.15 UKT

| Time | Topic |
|---------------|---|
| 8.45 – 9.10 | Welcome tea & coffee followed by seating |
| 9.10 – 9.15 | Introduction |
| 9.15 – 11.10 | <p>ETC 2025 Work Programme: impact to date and what's next</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting 2025 key Insights • Outputs so far, and how to maintain impact • Deep dives on two upcoming publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low-carbon molecules: emerging findings ahead of COP30 ○ Driving energy productivity: key conclusions & plans for launch |
| 11.10 – 11.30 | Break |
| 11.30 – 12.45 | <p>Power systems transformation & role of 'firm' power: latest ETC insights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final conclusions, Impact so far and ongoing engagement plan • Scoping the value of 'firm' low-carbon power: Nuclear and Geothermal |
| 12.45 – 13.45 | Lunch |
| 13.45 – 15.00 | <p>Economics of the transition: shaping future analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarising the ETC findings to date • Proposed scope of work |
| 15.00 – 15.20 | Break |
| 15.20 – 16.35 | <p>Looking ahead towards 2026: Strategy and impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking input on the 2026 work programme, including: key focus areas and prioritisation, engaging more actively in global 'state of transition' debates, and considerations on embracing AI in the ETC |
| 16.35 – 17.00 | Inspiring impact: case studies of positive climate solutions in action today |
| 17.00 – 17.15 | Conclusion & Wrap-up |

Key discussion takeaways

The ETC would like to thank its Representatives for their active participation at the meeting and the rich discussion. This note captures the main takeaways from the discussions and all materials from the meeting are available for download on [ETC Member portal](#). Please note that these are internal documents not to be shared beyond your organisation.

1. ETC 2025 Work Programme: impact to date and what's next

The ETC Communications team presented the impact of the 2025 publication campaigns on buildings decarbonisation, carbon credits and global trade, and invited discussion on how the ETC should further extend its efforts in these areas. Key upcoming activities were outlined, including ETC participation at New York Climate Week; looking ahead to COP30, the team shared early plans and confirmed that upcoming pre-COP briefings will be held. Members are encouraged to respond to the email request for COP30 plans and contact [Shane O'Connor](#) to discuss collaboration opportunities.

Representatives commended ETC's impact and influence to date, particularly its ability to engage Tier 1 media and speak credibly to businesses and policymakers—its core audiences. They encouraged the ETC to focus on landing messages that bring clarity and common ground to divisive debates, persuading the "moveable middle" who may be sceptical or misinformed about the energy transition. There was broad support for deeper partnerships with local actors and messengers to tell compelling stories, especially on the consumer cost of the transition. Representatives voiced support for ETC's engagement with youth groups and public engagement groups were seen as vital amplifiers to reach these audiences. It was also suggested that ETC might host a UK-specific member meeting to discuss how to frame UK specific narrative, especially in light of potential political change.

Low-carbon molecules: emerging findings ahead of COP30

ETC is finalising the carbon molecules report, now in its fourth and final phase, which assesses the role of carbon in a net zero world. We emphasised that even under deep decarbonisation, 3–5 Gt of carbon will still be required by mid-century, with a maximum of one-third supplied through circular routes such as reuse and recycling. The report also examined sustainable primary sources of carbon, including biomass, DAC, and ocean-based capture, and assessed the role of end-of-life solutions such as CCS and advanced landfilling.

The discussion highlighted the value of the analysis for policymakers and investors, particularly in clarifying the balance between circularity, sustainable sourcing, and storage. Feedback stressed the importance of anticipating pushback on the continued role of fossil fuels with CCS and on the potential expanded use of biomass. Participants also underlined the critical need for policy and financial support to help bring early-stage technologies to scale. Suggestions included turning the report into technology briefs for targeted audiences and ensuring clear communication of trade-offs around biomass and long-term storage.

The ETC plans to launch the executive summary in October, followed by the publication of the full report in November.

Driving energy productivity: key conclusions & plans for launch

The ETC team presented the final insights from its energy productivity analysis, which shows that by 2050 the world could double GDP and increase useful energy and energy services while reducing final and primary energy demand. The analysis confirms that the COP28 target of 4% annual efficiency improvement is achievable over the next two decades, particularly through rapid electrification of buildings and transport.

In discussion, Commissioners welcomed the strength and clarity of the analysis and emphasised the importance of communicating energy productivity in ways that connect to people's lives – highlighting cost savings, improved services, and reduced waste. Several members suggested simplifying the language and focusing on the high-impact technologies and solutions to translate efficiency into tangible actions. There were also calls to clearly communicate the investment implications and who bears the cost, which the team have taken on board.

The ETC team will reflect feedback in its communications campaign and rollout launch strategy, which begins with the economic-wide insight briefing in October, followed by a road transport report in December and a technical briefing paper on potential in the harder-to-abate sectors in early 2026.

(Session material available [here](#))

2. Power systems transformation & role of 'firm' power: latest ETC insights

Final conclusions, Impact so far and ongoing engagement plan

The ETC provided an update on its Power Systems Transformation report, including a reminder of the key messages and the ongoing communications strategy to promote the report. The promotion campaign resumed this month, with the Power team speaking on the [Modo Energy podcast](#), to [the Financial Times](#), attending the [Central and Eastern Europe Energy Security Summit](#) to talk about energy storage, and collaborating with Ember on its [recent report on the Electrotech revolution](#) in which ETC's analysis is cited.

Participants discussed the value in further unpacking the messages of the report, including how the report's findings on wind and sun belt systems could influence policymakers in countries in these zones, as well as scaling innovative grid technologies. Discussion particularly focused on impactful messaging styles in different regions, with the note that Southeast Asia requires stronger reassurance surrounding solar intermittency, where there are still doubts surrounding the technology, in addition to broad, human-centred stories backed by facts over purely technical reports.

Scoping the value of 'firm' low-carbon power: Nuclear and Geothermal

ETC provided an update on the nuclear and geothermal workstream, focusing on our framing of the value of 'firm' low-carbon power from nuclear and geothermal assets in future clean power systems. We highlighted some key impacts on total system costs spanning generation, balancing, grid stability, and grid expansion, which we will go through in more detail in the upcoming workshops.

The discussion highlighted the strong interest in nuclear and geothermal within the net zero transition, but also the major uncertainties around timing, financing, and supply chains. There was general agreement that while the contribution of nuclear to the energy transition could become significant by 2040, questions remain about whether it can scale quickly enough to make a difference by 2030–35. Similar issues were raised for advanced geothermal, with emphasis on the need to consider fugitive CO₂ as well as embedded construction emissions.

On nuclear, several points were raised: the dominant role of the weighted average cost of capital (WACC) in driving LCOE, the reliance on government balance sheets in countries that are building at lower cost, and the debate over whether similar treatment should be applied to renewables. Concerns included shifting risks onto consumers, dependence on a small number of technology and fuel suppliers (notably Russia and China), and the limited capacity of enrichment supply chains. Participants also stressed the importance of distinguishing between near-term fleet buildouts using Gen III reactors versus waiting for SMRs or advanced designs, where standardisation and learning curves will be critical (but are still unproven). These issues will be central to the upcoming nuclear workshop from 09:30 – 12:30 (UK time) on 2nd October.

(Session material available [here](#))

3. Economics of the transition: shaping future analysis

During this session, ETC presented an initial scope of work. We addressed the costs of the transition – including the aggregate and distributional implications of mitigation costs, as well as considerations on adaptation costs - and the impact of the transition on jobs.

The discussion explored how the costs of the energy transition vary depending on housing type (e.g. ownership versus renting) and how uneven impacts could drive political opposition if benefits and burdens are not fairly distributed. Participants emphasised that while green premiums for materials like steel and cement appear large at the production level, they shrink significantly when spread across end consumers – though developers, and sometimes intermediaries still face high upfront costs which shouldn't be ignored. They also highlighted the importance of distinguishing between Capex and Opex costs, the important impact of the risks of price volatility, and framing costs against the much higher cost of inaction. Finally, there was focus on job impacts, training needs, and differences across countries, stressing the importance of communication, equity, and policy design to ensure the transition is seen as both fair and feasible.

The ETC envisages three deliverables as part of this workstream, covering economics and costs of the transition, market design for low consumer energy costs (in conjunction with the Power workstream), and jobs. The first short publication is envisaged for Q1 next year.

(Session material available [here](#))

4. Looking ahead towards 2026: Strategy and impact

During this session, ETC presented its proposed workplan for next year.

One of the key areas presented was a possible focus on the issue of a “credible reset,” acknowledging that a 1.5C aligned pathway now looks unrealistic, and exploring a shift toward a well-below-2°C pathway – likely ~1.75–1.8°C – paired with targets companies can meet. Michael Liebreich's latest piece was also referenced as part of this discussion. Overall, members were in agreement that a perspective from the ETC on this issue would be very powerful, although there were different views on what a specific target for the call to action might be.

Another area of discussion focused on the potential for a new flagship ETC annual publication on “State of the Transition”, combining the electrification story with progress in heavy industry, and potentially expanding to food/land-use, where there was broad member agreement that this would be valuable. Overall, members raised the need for prioritization toward distinctive, shorter formats, leveraging networks for amplification and tracking real-world influence.

On AI, the consensus was to use it to turbocharge analysis and repurpose content (e.g., podcasts or short clips) while guarding quality and reputation.

Further points raised included the importance of recruiting tech/hyperscalers into membership, advancing regional case studies (e.g., agrivoltaics in India with broader applicability), and deepening U.S. policy outreach and alignment with external voices.

(Session material available [here](#))

5. Inspiring impact: case studies of positive climate solutions in action today

ETC presented a series of case studies highlighting positive stories from the energy transition. Case studies were broken down into categories: A) Clean energy technologies are already outcompeting fossil fuels B) “Niche” business cases are already taking off C) Barriers to clean electrification have been removed dramatically. The case studies will be shared on social media and published on the ETC website. Members supported the focus on positive stories, especially as a positive way to end the session.

(Session material available [here](#))