

Green steel; green denim; green President. Can we save the world?

Every week, Maddyness looks at the good, the bad and the ugly in climate change news.

Today, we cover what a Biden presidency will mean for global climate targets, fossil-fuel-free steel production, and the ratification of the Escazú Agreement.

I wrote last week's #MaddyEco assuming that, by the time it came out at 7am the next morning, we would know the next president of the United States. I was, of course, sorely mistaken. We found out who would *probably* lead the country for the next four years at about 4pm on Saturday, as Pennsylvania – coincidentally, the state at the centre of the US's ongoing fracking debate – turned blue. It will be a while yet before we know who will *definitely* take the reins, but it looks set to be Joe Biden.

What will a Biden presidency mean for planet Earth? A lot – in terms of culture shift as well as policy reevaluation. The world's second biggest carbon polluter after China (which is working towards net zero by 2060, and which has historically emitted far less than the US) is set to jump straight back into the Paris Agreement. This will validate the carbon-cutting efforts of the 194 countries that haven't been umming and ahing about it for the last five years.

Biden's climate plan outlines the desire to achieve 100% clean electricity in the next 15 years, and to reach net zero by 2050. He wants to invest \$2T in the

climate fight, and will most likely remove climate deniers from federal agencies. Banks from Goldman Sachs to JP Morgan will face scrutiny for bankrolling fossil fuels, and are already outlining eco-friendly investment plans. A green, jobs-creating COVID recovery plan should also be on the cards.

As things stand, the Republicans look set to keep hold of the Senate, so there are questions about the extent to which Biden will be able to push through the aforementioned goals. He will probably need to rely heavily on executive orders and other presidential powers that don't require congressional approval. Luckily, however, there is *some* precedent for cooperation between Republicans and Democrats on climate-related issues; earlier this year, for example, they reached a compromise on restricting the use of hydrofluorocarbons.

The big ideas

On Monday, *Maddyness* profiled several startups applying high tech solutions to environmental problems. Electron, for example, is dealing with the inconsistent output of renewable energy. Local energy assets can be used to store excess renewable power that would otherwise be wasted – diminishing reliance on power that can be ramped up on demand, like coal and gas.

Another eco-startup – this time more interested in armpits than coal pits – is Wild Cosmetics. I wrote how they're dismantling the bathroom's squeaky clean image with refillable deodorant here.

Beyond this, have a look at the ideas and innovations from across the spectrum of politics, social justice and big business that caught my eye this week:

WaterBear Network is 'the first streaming platform dedicated to the future of our planet'. It's free, and launches in two weeks.

Mexico has just become the 11th country to ratify the Escazú Agreement, meaning that countries across Latin America will implement protections for biodiverse regions and the indigenous people who inhabit them.

In Kenya's Lamu County, women are reversing the degradation of mangrove forests – which are vital for local economies, and also sequester carbon and prevent erosion. The initiative involves tree planting and microfinance.

shado mag and Mishcon de Reya are hosting 'A Hostile (un)Welcome: How will the World React to Climate Migration?' next Thursday. Tickets here.

The We Mean Business coalition introduces the [Race to Zero](#) online platform, from the COP26 Champions Team. The site will feature signs of progress towards a zero-carbon future, across all systems, geographies and stakeholders.

In Myanmar, COVID-19 and climate are [affecting agriculture](#). The Food and Agriculture Organisation launched a home gardening programme providing vegetable seeds to 2,000+ families, and is teaching climate smart farming techniques.

A [Dutch Denim Deal](#): a partnership featuring government authorities and global leaders in the denim industry has been signed to make denim production more sustainable. One goal is to produce at least three million pairs of jeans from recycled textiles in the next three years.

Plant-based diets can be 84% more environmentally friendly than omnivorous ones. Should [meat be taxed](#) to help the planet?

The Wadi el Ku project (constructing weirs to conserve rainwater) in Sudan's exceptionally dry Darfur region [is in its second phase](#). This will see the construction of more weirs, irrigation channels, community forests and more to restore water access and thus improve livelihoods.

Steel production is responsible for 10% of Sweden's CO2 emissions, but its new [HYBRIT plant](#) – a collaboration between LKAB and Vattenfall – will use renewable energy and hydrogen, rather than fossil fuels, to extract oxygen from iron ore.

Further reading

If you're still reading, here's even more reading:

What the climate movement can learn from indigenous values, by tribal attorney and activist Tara Houska, [via Vogue](#)

Stock markets are not pricing in the risk of climate change, warns IMF, [via World Economic Forum](#)

[HEATED](#) speaks to Tom Steyer, who led the Biden campaign's initiative to mobilise voters who prioritise climate change and environmental justice

