

Desert tech and 5G-for-climate. Can we save the world?

Every week, Maddyness looks at the good, the bad and the ugly in climate change news. Today, we investigate Beersheva's bid to become the hottest region for desert tech, Shanghai's 5G roll-out and what it means for motoring emissions, and the Italian farmers growing mangos and avocados.

From Biden to Boris, we've covered a whole host of ambitious (and otherwise) climate action plans on the #MaddyEco. Yesterday, [Climate Action Tracker](#) – taking into account all of these plans, in particular the fact that the world's two biggest emitters (China and the USA) are now on board with global goals – had some good news.

Apparently, the UN Paris Climate Agreement targets are now 'within reach'; we're looking at a 2.1 degree celsius rise by 2100 – which is significantly closer to the Paris Agreement's 1.5 degree target than the +3 degree trajectory we've been on previously.

Overall, 127 countries, responsible for circa 63% of emissions have adopted or are considering adopting net-zero targets. There's a way to go yet – and 2030 targets will need to be seriously strong – but things are looking up.

On the ground, however, the impact of a climate that's already changing

continues. In Bolivia, for example, forest fires and an extended period of drought have seen the departments of Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca declare a state of disaster.

The big ideas

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:

The South African government has just funded 13 youth-led green projects covering climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity and ecosystems, and waste management.

Homethings provides tiny effervescent tabs which, when put into glass spray bottles and topped up with tap water, create powerful, non-toxic and plastic-free cleaning solutions.

Grassroots solutions to deforestation – including access to health care and agricultural training – have seen logging all but end in a 250,000-acre rainforest in Borneo.

Beersheva – the largest city in the Negev desert, Israel – wants to become the world's centre for desert tech, and will be involved in projects such as agricultural innovation in deserts and preventing further desertification.

Oslo's TotalCtrl is a cloud-based food waste prevention system – which can be used by everyone from restaurants to food banks.

Ghana's Ezekiel Chibeze has been declared winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize for his work with 350 Ghana Reducing our Carbon, protesting the Ekumfi proposed coal plant and working at a grassroots level to promote renewables in Ghana.

Juan Fernández Archipelago National Park in Chile is home to numerous species found nowhere else on the planet, and a testament to 'how concerted efforts can bring back to life places that are most degraded by human development.' Efforts are currently underway to protect the endangered pink-footed shearwater.

Shanghai recently received a World Smart City Award for its roll-out of 5G and AI, which is helping the city function more efficiently and thus reducing emissions substantially.

Is biology the future of fast fashion? AlgiKnit, developing materials from the

most renewable organisms on Earth, thinks so.

Farmers in Sicily are growing mangos and avocados as changing weather patterns make traditional olive oil and citrus production increasingly untenable.

There are 2.1 million 'idle' oil wells across the United States, which risk contaminating soil and causing danger to humans and animals alike. Meet the ex-industry insiders doing something about it.

Further reading

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

Why climate change hits Asia hardest, via *Forbes*

The coming 5G revolution: how will it affect the environment? Via Columbia University Earth Institute

Environmental Data Justice, via *Lancet Planetary Health*

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