THE SALATA INSTITUTE
FOR CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY
at Harvard University

Annual Report



2026

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Director's Letter

James H. Stock
Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability
and Director of the Salata Institute for Climate and
Sustainability at Harvard University

The past year – like the year before – has seen global turmoil, rapid change, diverging energy pathways, and devastating climate impacts.

Some progress is being made. Led by solar and wind, renewable power generation continued its robust global growth. According to the International Energy Agency, global sales of electric vehicles increased 35% from the first to second quarters of 2026, and the Agency now forecasts that 29% of new cars sold globally this year will be EVs. Oil-importing countries – that is, most of the world – are relearning the energy security lessons of the 1970s, but this time with the option of shifting their energy system to low-cost renewable energy.

But behind these global trends are regional disparities. In the United States, new sales of EVs in the first half of 2026 were down nearly one-fourth from the first half of 2025. Electricity transmission remains a key bottleneck to deployment of renewables, and the data center boom is increasingly being powered by natural gas.

Moreover, with high energy prices, a changing world order, and heightened concerns about AI, climate change and the importance of clean energy have moved to the back seat for some leaders in industry and government.

The reality of climate change is inescapable: from the heat waves this summer in Europe, to deadly tropical cyclones in Southeast Asia to another season of wildfires in Canada and the northern U.S.

The World Meteorological Organization now considers it likely that the mean 2026-2030 temperature will exceed 1.5°C of warming.

And, even in the face of accelerating climate impacts, climate and sustainability researchers are navigating shifts and threats to the federal funding landscape.

While this is a challenging time, it is also a time of inspiration – inspiration born through having so many deeply committed and talented colleagues here at the Institute, across Harvard, and beyond.

I am inspired by how our young Institute has supported impactful projects, large and small, that are already bearing fruit.

I am thrilled by the excitement of my colleagues who are seeking the breakthroughs today that will provide the climate solutions of tomorrow.

And I am heartened that Harvard has continued its institutional commitment to driving forward research and teaching in climate and sustainability.

In four years of leading the Salata Institute, I have found an incredible wellspring of motivation in the work of Harvard researchers, students, staff, and alumni advancing climate and sustainability solutions. I remain optimistic about the world's ability to meet the climate challenge, not just because of the work being done here at Harvard – but because I see this work being done in new ways that promise to unstick wickedly complicated climate and sustainability problems.

The Institute is now home to 11 major research initiatives that bring together leading academics across disciplines. These initiatives are breaking old molds and working directly with leaders and decisionmakers in industry, government, and civil society. As you'll see in the following report, this approach is driving meaningful progress on challenges ranging from global cooperation on carbon pricing to extreme heat to reducing methane emissions to advanced measurement of biodiversity and far beyond.

We are also making great progress in expanding and strengthening climate education. This year, Harvard faculty announced a new undergraduate concentration, Energy, Climate, and the Environment (ENCE). This new cross-divisional path for students matches the interdisciplinary reality of the climate problem, integrating scientific understanding with engineering, social, economic, and ethical considerations – with a focus on solutions. This is a major step forward for climate education, and a valuable complement to the University's other concentrations designed for students passionate about climate, the environment, and biodiversity.

So I am more energized than ever about our ability to drive progress. I've said it before, but it became even more true this year: It has never been more important for universities, especially Harvard, to focus on these challenges.

I am deeply thankful for the energy, dedication, and talent of the Harvard community and our many collaborators in this vital work. I hope you find the accomplishments outlined in this report to be inspiring and interesting, and I look forward to continuing our efforts together.

Onward!

James H. Stock,

Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability and Director of the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability at Harvard University

Salata by the Numbers

People are at the core of our strategy of driving collaboration, building community, reaching the wider world, and ensuring transparency across our key work areas. We track key metrics related to the people we support and the ways we serve and reach them.

1,000+

Students supported through Salata Institute funding programs, internships, and career development programming.

$363K

In student internship funding provided to students across disciplines

58

Leading employers recruited to connect with students at the Salata Institute Climate and Sustainability Career Expo

11

Core research initiatives now call the Salata Institute home

$8M

Research support provided through the Climate Research Clusters and Seed Grant programs to date

225

Faculty associates from every Harvard School formed a growing research community across the University

2,084

Climate practitioners engaged through global convenings, workshops, and closed-door meetings

127

Events on campus and beyond supported the Institute's core strategies of driving collaboration and building community

14,709

Event registrants signed up for Salata Institute programming

333K

Website visitors explored climate and sustainability research, educational programming, and stories on our site

162

Public videos of climate and sustainability talks, events, and explainers posted to date, garnering 141K video views in 2025-2026

23K+

Email subscribers received monthly newsletters and other emails tailored to students, faculty and staff, alumni, and practitioners



Participants gather for an event with the Salata Institute at Harvard Alumni Day. Watch the recording here.

Impacts:
Confronting rising seas in West Africa

In the Gulf of Guinea, climate change fuels violent storms, and rising seas swallow homes and livelihoods. Over three years, a Salata Institute-led research initiative has delivered new tools, data, partnerships, and capacity to help communities weigh excruciating choices about how to adapt.

Mapping rising seas, past – and future

When Harvard researchers and their local counterparts set out to confront sea level rise in the Gulf of Guinea, they contended with a few basic but under-addressed questions: How has sea level changed along these shores in the past? Why did it change? Where will the greatest vulnerabilities lie in the future? Through years of work in close partnership with a new generation of climate scientists in West Africa, the Salata Institute Cluster on Climate Adaptation in the Gulf of Guinea produced a new interactive tool that visualizes the extent – and causes – of sea-level change across the African coastline, looking back to 1900 and ahead to 2100.

The new tool helps fill one of Africa's most significant climate-data gaps. "Tide gauge records are sparse and discontinuous across most African coasts," said Rebecca Berkoh-Oforiwaa, a postdoctoral fellow in atmospheric physics. "These gaps present a critical challenge for climate-adaptation planning." The tool is now used by government officials and local decisionmakers around the continent, as leaders weigh questions about where future vulnerability and growing coastal populations increasingly collide.

Making adaptation choices tangible

Understanding West Africa's climate risks is a start. But adapting to them involves wrenching tradeoffs that can vary from person to person, community to community, as the region loses more ground to the sea. Since 2023, Cluster researchers have worked closely with coastal communities to develop studies, produce data, and find new ways of envisioning more resilient futures. The results range from a cost-benefit analysis on the construction of seawalls in Côte d'Ivoire to analysis of income-diversification strategies for fishing communities to workshops considering options for financing adaptation.

For those closest to the impacts, visualizing a more resilient future is key. Through an innovative traveling physical exhibition, researchers show community members and leaders in coastal areas snapshots of a future in which stretches of vulnerable coast have adapted – or retreated – and are living safely. An aerial photo of Glefe, Accra, is overlain with sketches showing what 2050 could look like: breakwaters just offshore; expanded mangroves; a denser and flood-resilient urban center; and concrete tetrapods that reinforce a coastal road. Researchers have taken this exhibition on the road along the coast, sparking conversations, sharing resources, and shaping future research.

An untold mental health crisis

When the Cluster set out to advance climate adaptation in the region, mental health was not on its research agenda. But, in community after community, they found that climate impacts went hand-in-hand with trauma. Parents and children alike spoke of fear and crushing anxiety. They encountered high rates of symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. When the cluster launched a mental health survey in nine coastal districts, they opened a window onto a problem researchers hadn't yet measured: climate change is driving a mental health crisis in the Gulf of Guinea.

The numbers are stark. Across the three countries included in the study, 56 percent of adults reported nightmares about flooding, and 63 percent reported suicidal thoughts. In Keta, a coastal community in Ghana, 88 percent of parents said their children had nightmares about the water. More than 70 percent of respondents have

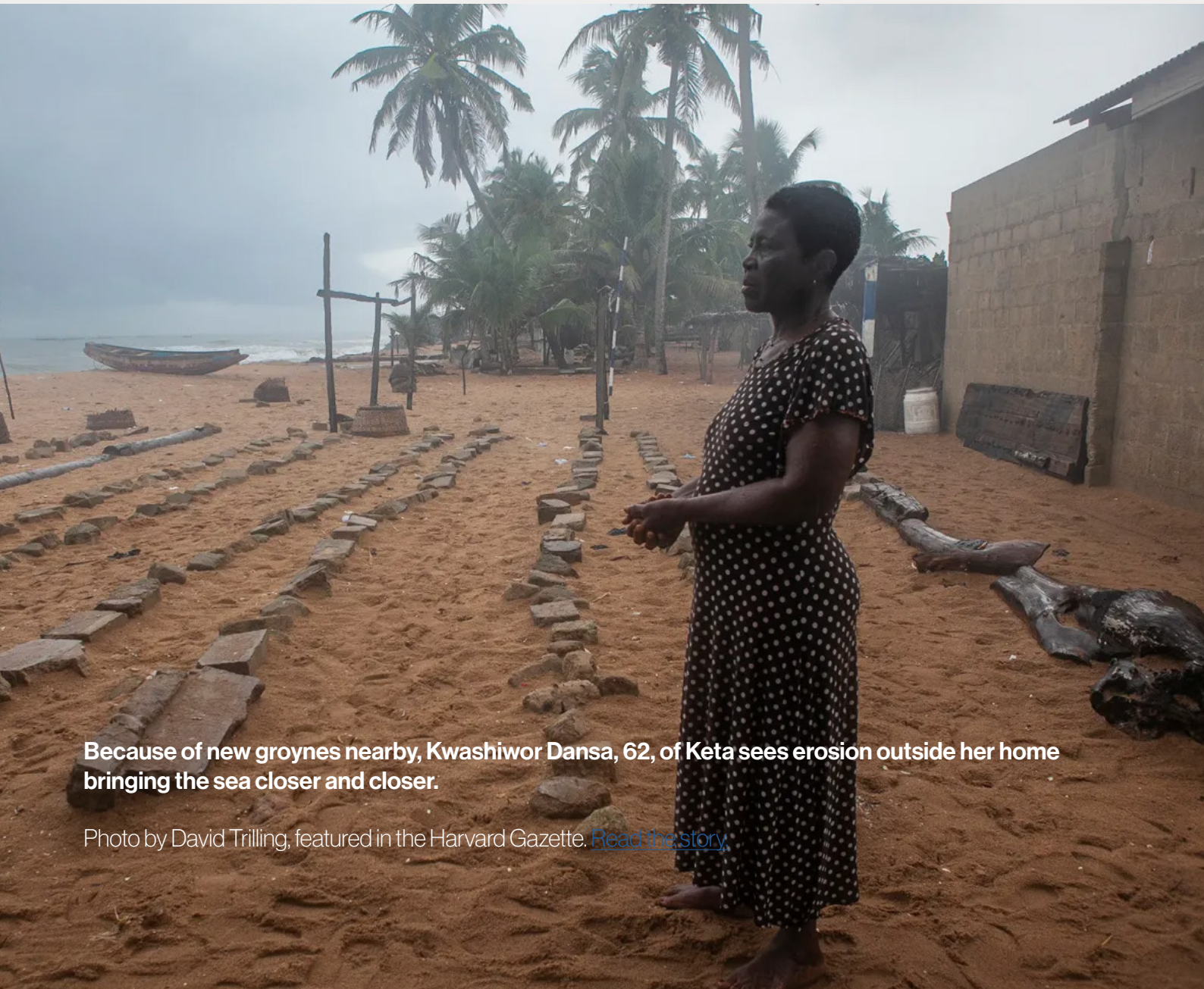
experienced more than five flood or erosion events in their lifetimes; in Nigeria, that figure rises to 94 percent.

The cluster is now taking the case for mental health care as climate adaptation – and climate adaptation as mental health care – to governments in the region and the broader global community working towards climate resilience.

Laying a long-term foundation for locally led adaptation

At each stage, Harvard researchers and their local counterparts worked to develop resilience in the Gulf of Guinea region. Postdocs and doctoral candidates from Nigeria, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire were trained and played key roles in developing the sea-level reconstructions and projections. Government officials, academics, and community leaders came together throughout the project in policy dialogues and workshops to jumpstart new collaborations. Researchers from across the region, connected through the Cluster, are carrying forward new projects. “Across West Africa, I’ve met colleagues from Ghana, from Côte d’Ivoire, and we are keeping those relationships,” said Dr. Joseph Onoju, Director of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, of his years-long involvement with the Cluster. Those relationships and experiences are key to the collaboration necessary to meet the climate challenge faced in this region.

Read more about the Salata Institute Climate Research Cluster on Adaptation in the Gulf of Guinea in the Harvard Gazette and on our website.



Because of new groynes nearby, Kwashiwor Dansa, 62, of Keta sees erosion outside her home bringing the sea closer and closer.

Photo by David Trilling, featured in the Harvard Gazette. Read the story.

Impacts:
A practical win for cleaner transportation

Harvard research helped shape Vermont's new electric vehicle charging-data law, informing efforts to decarbonize transport across the country.

Powering a traditional road trip requires little planning. You drive until the fuel gauge dips, take the next exit and choose among the gas stations waving at you. Their tall signs display prices in giant numbers, updated whenever the cost of a gallon changes. You can often compare your options before leaving the highway.

The same moment in an electric vehicle (EV) can turn into a risky, app-based scavenger hunt. A charger may be nearby. But is it working? Is it available? What will the electrons cost? The answers are often scattered across several charging-company apps. Or totally unavailable. If you're driving alone, that's dangerous. And such uncertainty feeds the "range anxiety" that continues to deter would-be EV buyers.

Senior Fellow Elaine Buckberg saw an opportunity for Vermont and other states to change that – to make public charging work more like those gas-station billboards – by calling for charging companies to make basic, real-time information available at drivers' fingertips. With that data embedded in everyday apps like Google Maps, drivers could find a charger and check its status, availability, and price without piecing together information from several sources. As Buckberg wrote last fall in the Brattleboro Reformer, "Vermont can lead the way with a straightforward fix – and it will cost the state next to nothing."

A few months later, her proposal became Vermont law. Drawing on Buckberg's research, the Conservation Law Foundation led the effort in Montpelier. The new law requires public EV charging networks to provide key real-time data to software developers at no cost.

Maryland is considering a similar step, following action in California and Massachusetts.

"By shining a light on broken chargers, operators will fix them faster, enabling EV drivers to trust what their phones tell them," Buckberg wrote in the Baltimore Sun.

Buckberg's team estimates that universal real-time data for highway fast chargers, by increasing confidence in public charging, could increase EVs' share of new-vehicle sales by 6 percentage points in 2030, putting another 3.5 million EVs on U.S. roads.

Charging companies stand to gain as well. Faster EV adoption means more charging sessions and a larger market in which operators can recoup their investments. Price information will become especially important as the used-EV market grows and more drivers without garages or home equipment depend on public chargers for everyday travel.

Vermont has shown states they don't have to wait for Washington. They can open the data and help clear the road to a decarbonized future.



Impacts:

Making methane pollution visible

Open-access software developed by Harvard researchers allows anyone to audit a country's methane claims.

Though it receives less attention than carbon dioxide, methane is a powerful planet-warming greenhouse gas, responsible for about 30 percent of global warming since the industrial revolution. For three years, Harvard researchers have been advancing a range of technologies, studies, policy ideas, and high-level dialogues to reduce global methane emissions. Knowing exactly where methane pollution comes from is an important piece of this puzzle. Over the last year, Harvard Professor Daniel Jacob and his team, supported by the Harvard Initiative on Reducing Global Methane Emissions, have rolled out an advanced version of an open-source tool with the potential to reshape the ways the world measures methane.

A methane tool for anyone

For years, countries have told the United Nations how much methane they emit using a kind of bottom-up bookkeeping: Count the cows and oil barrels, estimate the volume of trash, and multiply by standard emission factors. Those ledgers can miss the mark, suggest measurements from aircraft and satellites. But the tools to translate that data into national emissions estimates have largely remained the domain of specialists.

The Integrated Methane Inversion, or IMI, attempts to change this. In a Nature Communications paper, members of the Harvard team describe how the IMI is designed to let governments, researchers and civil society independently evaluate national methane claims against what satellites detect in the atmosphere, year after year. “This is totally open source, totally transparent, and it’s user-friendly,” said James East, the lead author. “It makes the data much more accessible and reproducible – for someone without a Ph.D. in the area.”

Finding big discrepancies

The team’s first global run of the system, for 2023, found large mismatches between official inventories and what atmospheric observations imply. In about a quarter of the 161 countries examined, emissions appeared more than 50 percent higher than reported. In Venezuela’s oil-and-gas sector, for example, they found emissions 4.8 times higher; in Turkmenistan, 3.8 times higher; and in the United States, the largest absolute emitter, about 1.6 times higher.

Among these results, Venezuela stood out. The researchers estimate that as much as 29 percent of the gas produced there may be escaping to the atmosphere, a level far higher than average. The figure – known as “methane intensity” – is 2.1 percent in the U.S. and 0.1 percent in Qatar, a country with modern and concentrated infrastructure to capture gas. “The findings show emissions from the oil-and-gas sector varying by two orders of magnitude between countries,” said Jacob. “Some countries are doing emissions abatement right. If others followed suit, then we would really have negligible emissions from the sector.”

Toward more consistent national estimates

Looking to the future, the Initiative sees real potential in this repeatable system for accountability. IMI can flag where national inventories appear too high, too low, or out of date – consistently, across countries and sectors – giving governments a way to revisit activity data and emission factors, improve their submissions to the UN, and track whether emissions are moving in the direction promised in their climate plans. The Initiative is currently developing plans to advance a dialogue around this technology at COP31 and beyond.

Read more about the Harvard Initiative on Reducing Global Methane Emissions on our website.

Impacts:
Advancing global climate cooperation

Through direct engagement with global leaders, new research, and an interactive decision-support tool, the Global Climate Policy Project at Harvard and MIT is helping shape the next generation of climate governance.

The Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets, a breakthrough initiative formally launched by Brazil, China, and the EU this year, is exploring a harmonized approach to carbon market integration that could deliver big emissions reductions and significant revenues to member countries.

In 2025, the Global Climate Policy Project at Harvard and MIT (GCPP) played a catalytic role in making the Open Coalition possible.

Now, the team is helping leaders move from concept to implementation.

Helping spur fast – and fair – action

Countries' carbon-pricing systems are often compared by their headline rates: the stated cost for a ton of carbon dioxide a company emits. But that figure is rarely what firms actually pay – and it can make systems look much farther apart than they are.

Take steel. The EU's carbon price was roughly $85 per ton last year, while China's was about $10. On paper, the two systems appear to be $75 apart. Yet steelmakers do not pay those rates on every ton of carbon they emit. European producers receive free allowances – permits to emit – tied to production benchmarks. And in 2025, China allocated nearly all allowances for free. Once those protections are counted, the effective cost is roughly $35 per ton in the EU and close to zero in China. The gap is therefore closer to $35 than $75.

That matters because carbon pricing is increasingly influencing trade policy. Under its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, or CBAM, to level the field with domestic industry, the EU is now charging some imported goods for the emissions generated in making them; other governments are considering similar measures. To decide how foreign goods should be treated, governments need to know whether producers abroad already face a comparable carbon cost. Headline prices alone can give a distorted answer.

In a new report that is already advancing global dialogue, GCPP researchers introduce an "effective carbon cost" that measures the average burden on firms in regulated industries. It then pairs that measure with an assessment of what can reasonably be expected from each country given its income and other local circumstances. The point is not to make compliance-carbon markets identical, but to posit a practical framework for how different systems might work together.

The need is growing. The CBAM entered its compliance phase in 2026, and 11 other countries, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Thailand, and Türkiye, are considering measures of their own. Without coordination, these efforts could harden into a maze of competing standards, reporting systems, and border charges.

So, too, is the opportunity. The launch of the Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets represents a major step toward coordinating carbon pricing and international trade.

This new report, accompanied by GCPP's ongoing engagement of global leaders and decisionmakers, is helping to make the case that agreeing on a common yardstick to better connect systems now will be easier than untangling a patchwork of national rules later.

A tool for tough decisions

According to GCPP research, countries participating in a voluntary coalition around carbon would drive seven-fold emissions reductions and generate nearly $200 billion in revenue.

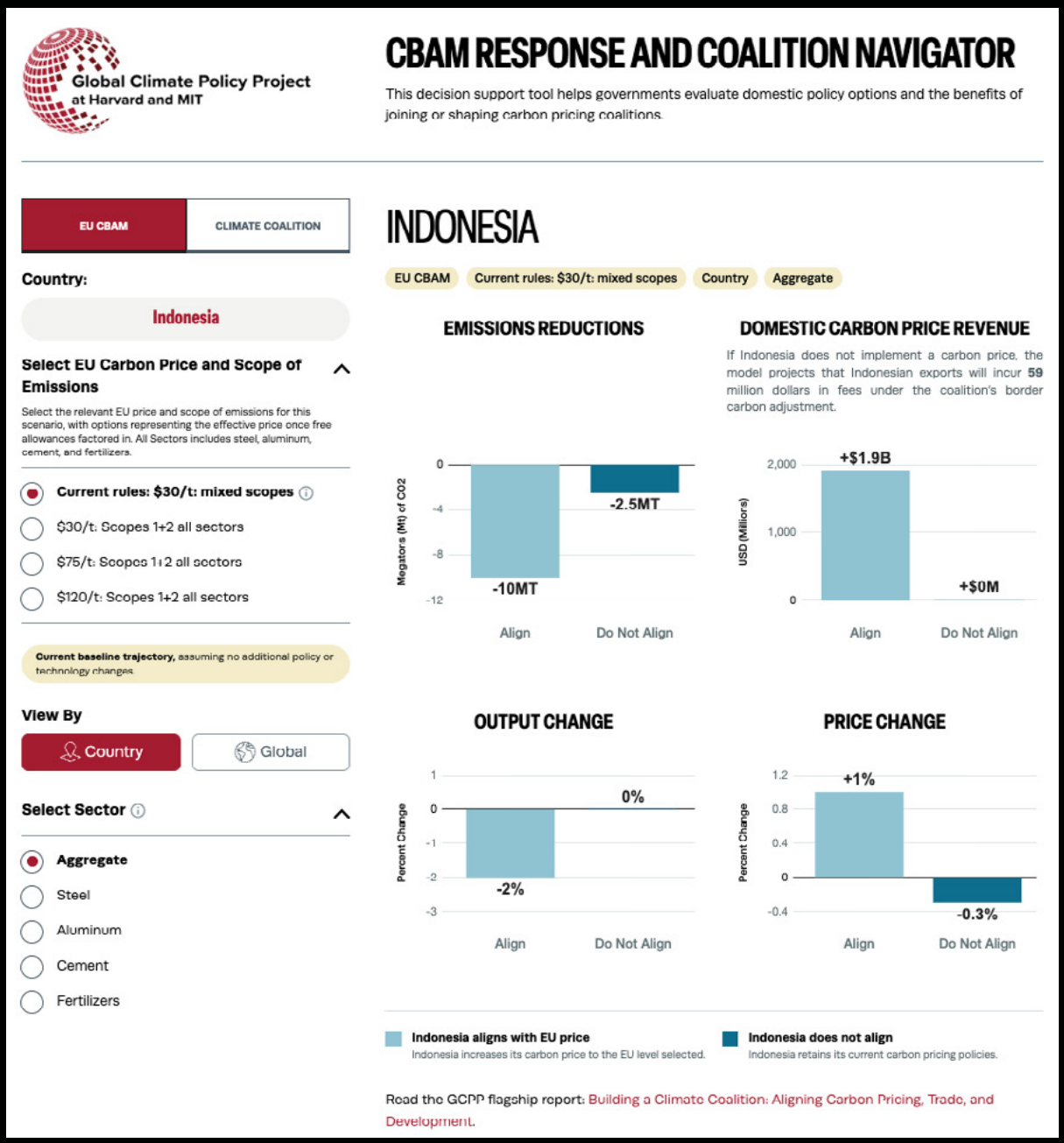
To help policymakers navigate the new landscape for climate and trade, GCPP is developing the "CBAM Response and Coalition Navigator Tool." The tool allows

users to see how different policy choices and scenarios might impact emissions reductions, carbon price revenues, output, and prices in key high-emissions sectors. Researchers used economic research and granular, plant-level data to model how the market will evolve and how different scenarios or coalition designs will affect different key outcomes.

The GCPP team has already begun to use this tool in conversations with leaders considering their next steps.

Read more about GCPP [on our website.]

A screenshot of the CBAM Response and Coalition Navigator Tool. Read more.



Impacts:

Preparing city leaders to save lives

Extreme heat is the top weather-related killer in the United States. Harvard is bringing together leading researchers and public health experts to offer an innovative new simulation exercise to help city planners prepare for a changing climate.

Heat waves – fueled by climate change – are getting hotter, lasting longer, and killing more people. Summer days and nights are getting hotter overall. In cities, features like pavement and tall buildings can cause temperatures to soar even higher and prevent cooling overnight. City officials grappling with this growing urban hazard face complex challenges, from preventing power outages during surges in demand for air conditioning to deciding where to locate cooling stations for vulnerable residents. Through a new kind of simulation exercise, an interdisciplinary Harvard-led team is connecting city officials with the experts and resources they need to prepare.

A new kind of simulation

While disaster drills are certainly not new to city officials, extreme heat calls for a new approach. Extreme heat is here to stay, and it's getting worse. "You can't respond your way out of the new normal," says Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine Satchit Balsari, who leads the simulations program. "Now that this extreme heat is expected every summer, that's not sustainable. We are discussing emergency response, yes, but also preventative approaches that don't really fall under emergency management." In three simulations hosted over the last year, city officials ranging from emergency managers and fire chiefs to planners and public health officers have gathered with scientists, lawyers, physicians, and other experts and stakeholders to simulate a response to the deadly 2024 heat wave in Phoenix. The simulation draws on hundreds of hours of archival news footage from the event to immerse participants in the timeline of the crisis. Participants simulate roles within Phoenix's public agencies, health system, and non-profits. They learn from each other's experiences and break down difficult decision points. Interviews with the Phoenix officials who responded to the emergency and presentations with the latest peer-reviewed research are interspersed throughout the exercise. Crucially, the simulation guides participants towards preventative measures – from proactively understanding who is most vulnerable in a heat emergency, to pre-positioning supplies, to strengthening the relationships that will be called on when temperatures rise.

Letters to a new city heat officer

As the simulation exercises expand, organizers are working to document the growing body of experience and insight generated in these rooms. In the latest simulation, hosted at Harvard during Boston Climate Week 2026, participants worked together to compile learnings into a new resource, Letters to a New City Heat Officer. In this compendium, experienced officials document the hard-won lessons, early warnings, and decision heuristics that they would have found useful at the outset of their careers in heat response and planning.

A growing community confronts extreme heat

Extreme heat is our new reality, in cities and beyond. These Harvard-led simulation exercises represent part of a much broader effort that is coalescing at Harvard in the face of this climate-fueled threat. Researchers across Harvard are working directly with stakeholders and decision makers around the world to answer the most pressing questions raised by this challenge. From generating the data we need to understand how heat and humidity are actually experienced; to designing research-informed workplace standards that protect lives; to developing practical clinical guidance for frontline health workers; the Harvard community is rising to this challenge.



Participants collaborate during the heat simulation exercise and event, "Letters to a New Heat Officer," during Boston Climate Week

Our Work

We put our strategic approach to work across four core areas of activity: education and student support, research, alumni engagement, and the Institute's Climate Action Accelerator.

Education and student support

Our objective is to ensure that a Harvard education prepares students for leadership in a world facing climate change. In 2025-2026, we continued our work to expand and improve the climate and sustainability curriculum and provide direct support to students through funding and career development programs. We continued to build a supportive and unified campus and student community.

Research

Our objective is to realize durable, real-world climate solutions grounded in Harvard research and expertise. In 2025-2026, we continued to advance climate and sustainability research that promises such impacts. We provided direct research funding to support large multi-disciplinary and small, early-stage projects, attracted leading faculty to join the Harvard community, and continued breaking down academic silos that stymie progress.

Alumni engagement

Our objective is to harness the potential of Harvard's talented alumni to advance the mission of the Institute. In 2025-2026, we continued to build the community of alumni working and interested in climate and sustainability issues through global and virtual events designed to build connection and familiarity with the Institute and with Harvard's broader climate and sustainability activities.

Action accelerator

The objective of the Institute's **Climate Action Accelerator** is to identify critical climate problems, home in on promising solutions, and convene the full spectrum of stakeholders who have the authority and the resources to act. In 2025-2026, the Accelerator conducted convenings, closed-door meetings, and public events that connected practitioners with Harvard researchers and advanced practical climate and sustainability solutions.

Our Approach

The mission of the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability is to develop and advance durable, effective, and equitable solutions to the climate change challenges confronting humanity.

To fulfill this mission, the Institute works to transform Harvard in ways that foster ever-greater climate and sustainability contributions.

Drive collaboration

Breaking down silos — within Harvard and between Harvard and the wider world — unlocks powerful insight and action. From advancing multi-disciplinary research initiatives that benefit from Harvard's many diverse areas of expertise to connecting researchers directly with the stakeholders who can inform and benefit from their work, the Institute always prioritizes collaboration and connection.

Build community

A strong community of Harvard students, faculty, staff, and alumni committed to climate and sustainability research, education, and engagement is vital. This community inspires and connects today's and tomorrow's leading experts, setting them on paths that lead to breakthrough research, ideas, and leadership. This community also fosters the multi-disciplinary collaboration needed to tackle the toughest climate and sustainability problems.

Engage directly

Harvard's doors are open to those wrestling with the most complicated and complex climate and sustainability questions. But the University can only serve as a trusted resource and partner if those stakeholders, decisionmakers, and leaders know that we are here to help. Communicating our work and resources to a wide range of audiences and engaging them in that work is key to maximizing Harvard's positive impact.

Prepare future leaders

As a world-class university, Harvard has a unique opportunity to provide the next generation of leaders in business, government, and civil society with the knowledge and tools they need to rise to the climate challenge. This unparalleled opportunity for shaping future progress is central to our vision for fulfilling the Institute's mission.

Research

The Salata Institute pursues research that leads to effective and durable climate solutions.

The Institute funds climate research clusters, fellows, and programs addressing the most complex climate and sustainability challenges. In addition to direct support, the Institute builds community, capacity, and infrastructure that fosters climate and sustainability research across Harvard Schools and attracts world-class faculty. In 2026, the Institute continued to expand these efforts, launching two major climate research clusters and a new biodiversity initiative, awarding new seed grants, announcing new fellows, and advancing work in collaboration with more than 50 Harvard faculty PIs and more than 200 faculty associates.

Research Clusters

Representing the Institute's largest investment in research, clusters comprise interdisciplinary, cross-School teams of researchers, whose varied expertise is required to address the complexity of the problems that they seek to solve. Clusters receive three years of funding from the Institute. In 2026, the Salata Institute announced two new clusters focused on the future of cities in a changing climate. Salata Clusters include:

- Urban Mobility and Climate Change (NEW)
- Sustainable Building and Urban Future (NEW)
- Climate Adaptation in South Asia
- Reducing Global Methane Emissions
- Climate Adaptation in the Gulf of Guinea
- Corporate Climate Targets Project
- Strengthening Communities

Research Initiatives

In addition to Clusters, the Salata Institute supports ambitious, opportunistic, and exploratory undertakings that leverage the Institute's agility and flexibility to advance climate and sustainability solutions.

Salata Institute research initiatives include:

- Accelerating EV Adoption
- Biodiversity Initiative for Planetary Stewardship (HUBS)
- The Global Climate Policy Project at Harvard and MIT (GCPP)
- The Harvard Solar Geoengineering Research Program (SGRP)
- Climate-Related Financial and Macroeconomic Risk

Translational Fund

Co-sponsored by Harvard's Office of Technology Development and the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability at Harvard. Read more.

Seed Grants

The Institute funds nascent research projects that use novel or interdisciplinary approaches to combat climate change.

Fellows

The Institute hosts and supports a global community of leaders and thinkers from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines. Fellowship programs include:

- Salata Institute Fellows Program
- Harvard Environmental Fellows Program
- Radcliffe-Salata Climate Justice Fellows Program
- Harvard Global Health Institute – Salata-Burke Climate and Health Fellows Program

Clusters:

Urban Mobility and Climate Change

In Global South megacities, on-demand ride apps are booming, urban settlements are expanding, and local vehicle manufacturing is taking off – setting up possibly long-lasting mobility habits. As a surge of private motorized transport is coupled with traffic congestion and local air pollution, planners are struggling to regulate and provide adequate public transportation.

This new Salata Institute Climate Research Cluster marshals experts from urban planning, public policy, economics, computer science, and atmospheric chemistry. They are examining how to optimize public transportation and reduce or electrify private motorcycle trips; measure and reduce co-pollutants; and propose adaptation strategies to climate shocks such as flooding, heat, and storms.

Since its launch, the cluster has sprung into action.

The researchers acquired new global mobility data with applications for public transport network design in developing megacities and other complex problems in sustainable urban mobility.

At a conference hosted by the Cluster in March, policymakers, academics, and stakeholders met to diagnose pressing challenges and advance new ideas. Policymakers from Rio de Janeiro, Quito, Kampala, Cape Town, Lahore, and Jakarta joined the conference, alongside over 200 in-person and virtual attendees.

Further, members of the Cluster have advanced practical research projects considering solutions to transportation challenges in Jakarta and Kampala.

Read more about the Cluster and stay tuned for updates on our website.



Kampala, Uganda

Photo by Gabriel Kreindler, featured in the Harvard Climate Brief. Read the story.

Clusters:
Sustainable Building and Urban Future

Residential and commercial buildings account for roughly 37 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions, driven by essential activities like lighting, heating and cooling, cooking, and construction. This Salata Institute Climate Research Cluster seeks to reimagine urban development and sustainable building through data-driven, interdisciplinary innovation.

Building on the HouseZero® concept, the Cluster aims to modernize – and ultimately transform – energy management by scaling this approach to interconnected communities. The research team draws on expertise in chemistry, materials science, fluid mechanics, AI, computer science, architecture, and engineering.

In its first year, the Cluster has laid important groundwork toward developing cleaner, safer solutions for the built environment.

Making building materials cleaner, and smarter

At the material scale, the Cluster focused on adaptive thermal-storage materials, responsive façade technologies, and intelligent environment-control strategies designed to improve building energy performance – and make occupants more comfortable. Over the past year, the team developed and evaluated phase-change materials that have the potential to store excess heat in opaque building-envelope systems.

At the same time, researchers advanced liquid-window technologies aimed at maximizing building energy performance and occupant comfort. In August 2026, a Liquafilm window prototype was installed at Harvard's HouseZero®, the living laboratory that serves as the headquarters for the Harvard Center for Green Buildings and Cities. These technologies, though in their early stages, hold great promise for a more sustainable built environment.

Building 'digital twins'

Innovative low-carbon building materials and systems alone are not enough to decarbonize buildings and cities at the scale needed to confront climate change. The team is developing digital twins that integrate these materials with sensors and data-driven AI algorithms with physics models that can reshape the energy-efficient operation of buildings and urban environments – starting with HouseZero®. Over the last year, the team has successfully developed a 'digital twin' of HouseZero that functions as an energy-balance model tied directly to the real building. It reproduces thermal behavior and allows researchers to conduct predictive ("what happens next") and counterfactual ("what if") analysis. The team has also developed an early prototype of a data-driven digital twin, which will be evaluated for building control at HouseZero and is working to expand this approach to other buildings.

Scaling to cities

As researchers advance new ideas at the material and building-scales, it is always with an eye towards the urban scale – where these technologies can be used to create grid-interactive communities in which buildings function as active grid assets, rather than just passive net-zero loads. The team is developing a smart-city environment that serves as a control and learning platform, integrating the electrical grid, district heating and cooling networks, data centers, and building thermal systems. While this research is in its early stages, preliminary findings indicate that coordinating building dynamics, data center heat recovery, and grid-tied storage improves multi-energy flexibility and peak-load management across the urban network.

Read more and follow this Cluster's work on our website.

Clusters:

Harvard Initiative on Reducing Global Methane Emissions

Methane, though it receives less attention than carbon dioxide, is a greenhouse gas – roughly 27 to 34 times more potent than carbon dioxide in its global warming impact over a 100-year time horizon. Methane-emissions abatement can, in the near term, significantly reduce the magnitude of climate change and its impacts – giving the world time to "bend the curve" on CO2 emissions, conduct research on carbon removal, and, more generally, to implement longer-term strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The Harvard Initiative on Reducing Global Methane Emissions, launched in 2023, seeks to do what its name suggests: reduce methane pollution, and quickly.

Through a portfolio of 25 distinct research projects, the team is working to build new scientific research on measurement and attribution of emissions; understand legal, regulatory, and political opportunities and constraints to methane-emissions reductions in the United States and some other countries; design policies that might best contribute to methane-emissions reduction; work effectively through existing international organizations and alliances, such as the Global Methane Pledge; and define roles that business – and international and multilateral organizations – can play in these efforts.

Since its launch, the Initiative has built a large community of leading experts from across the University who are now contributing to solutions. As of this year, the Initiative has recruited three dozen researchers from across six Harvard Schools.

The team has been hard at work advancing new research and engaging the decisionmakers who are key to confronting methane pollution. In addition to the Initiative's efforts to advance the Integrated Methane Inversion featured earlier in this report, the team has produced eight peer-reviewed papers, two discussion papers, and a series of research briefs on topics ranging from urban and landfill emissions and recent shifts in U.S. regulation to satellite-based detection and quantification and market incentives and infrastructure constraints on methane emissions from oil and gas production in the Permian Basin of the U.S.

To translate research insights into action, the team has engaged hundreds of practitioners at events including Harvard Climate Action Week, Climate Week NYC, London Climate Action Week, and Methane250. Following COP30, the cluster hosted a workshop in São Paulo, Brazil, reviewing the methane emissions abatement dialogues that were advanced at the global convening. The Initiative also hosted a major workshop on the business of methane emissions abatement, attended by 45 industry leaders and entrepreneurs.

Access a detailed overview of the Initiative's projects here and explore research, updates, and news related to methane emissions reduction on our website.

Clusters:
Strengthening Communities in Energy Transitions

For many U.S. communities – from towns in West Virginia to Tribal Nations in the Pacific Northwest – the clean energy transition is changing everything. This Cluster is conducting new research and working with stakeholders to better understand the social and political dimensions of the shift from fossil fuels and develop playbooks for effective, equitable, and community-driven energy development. The aim is to produce the insights needed to ensure new energy technologies and industries deploy effectively, efficiently, and equitably.

Since its launch in 2023, the Cluster has convened over 900 state, local, and Tribal stakeholders; released three major reports on the U.S. energy grid; preserved over 6,000 government files and databases relating to environmental justice; released new tools to strengthen Tribal access to climate adaptation funding; tracked over 300 environmental justice actions; published research in land management and permitting policy that shaped practical legislation to deliver clean energy development benefits to local communities; and more.

Explore some of the Cluster's work below and read more on our website.

Research to support decision-making

The Cluster focuses on the practical questions faced by decisionmakers and stakeholders advancing and experiencing the energy transition. *Crossed Wires,* a sweeping study examining the regulatory, political, and social factors shaping long-distance transmission and development has informed difficult policy conversations about how to connect new wind and solar resources to major urban and industrial users. In a follow-up report, *How Grid Projects Get Stuck: Four Case Studies of Long-Distance Transmission Development,* researchers offered more granular insights into how leaders and communities can 'unstick' projects that are crucial to decarbonization.

Through the Grid studies, the Cluster found that land management policies at the local, state, and federal level are one of the principal avenues for people and communities to shape energy projects. Identifying a knowledge gap around the regulatory processes for land management and permitting at the state and federal levels, researchers produced a white paper on federal land leasing, energy, and local public finances and are developing a new resource focused on state-level policies.

Communities in transition

For communities in the U.S. that depend on the fossil fuel industry for employment, local government revenue, and support for community groups and activities, the energy transition presents wrenching choices and difficult trade-offs. Research produced with Cluster support has documented the importance of fossil fuel industries to communities – and the relative disengagement of clean energy firms. Researchers have also produced insights into public opinion in fossil fuel communities that can help guide policymakers navigating local transitions.

Through an ongoing collaboration with the Lowlander Center of Louisiana, the Cluster has also convened a series of community meetings to discuss the complex questions posed by climate change and the energy transition with community members, Tribal leaders, and NGOs in the Gulf Coast. This effort builds on Harvard-MIT research on how the Gulf Coast can lead the energy transition, bringing communities together to take a closer look at equitable energy and industrial transition pathways.

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Advancing adaptation

While communities navigate the clean energy transition, many are also experiencing accelerating climate impacts. Cluster researchers working closely with communities in two climate-impacted coastal regions in the U.S. advanced promising new tools and strategies. For Tribal communities in the Pacific Northwest, sea level rise and changes in fishing lands raise serious challenges. Through a collaborative effort supported by the Cluster, researchers and partners produced a new suite of policy tools and resources to help address climate adaptation funding barriers experienced by Tribal communities. For communities in the Cape Ann region of Massachusetts, rising seas and increasingly frequent and severe storms are growing more disruptive. Cluster researchers, who have been working with communities in the region for over five years, have convened meetings and produced resources to support community leaders navigating decisions about how to adapt.

Read more about the Strengthening Communities in Energy Transitions cluster on our website.

Clusters:
Climate Adaptation in South Asia

Climate change is affecting South Asia – home to two billion people – in devastating ways. Among the many climate impacts being felt in the region, extreme heat increasingly stands out. Over the past year, this Cluster's ongoing research, publications, and capacity building initiatives have informed how governments, workers' organizations, and global institutions respond to this rising threat. Anchored by a flagship white paper on India's extreme heat crisis, a pioneering worker-led heat-health study, and the launch of a first-of-its-kind open data platform, the Cluster has made significant contributions to how South Asia measures, governs, and responds to extreme heat.

New insights

CommHATS, an initiative supported by the Cluster, is generating one of the world's largest, most granular worker-led climate-health datasets: More than 8 million person-hours of paired environmental, physiological, and economic data from low-wage workers in India's informal economy. Through a 13-month study with the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), over 800 women workers – home-based garment stitchers and kite makers in Ahmedabad, bangle-factory workers in Firozabad, and farmers in Anand – are documenting how heat reorganizes their bodies, homes, and livelihoods across seasons and over the full 24-hour cycle.

The preliminary findings are striking: indoor heat indices routinely exceeded outdoor measurements by up to 18°F, especially overnight; workers spend more time in tachycardia (experiencing heart rates of over 100 beats per minute), especially those with anemia and diabetes; and heat exposure is directly linked to very significant income loss. Study results are likely to inform worker protections, thresholds for early warnings, and guidance on heat action plans and adaptation strategies, globally.

Cluster faculty are also expanding Climateverse, an open-access climate data platform interrogated via an LLM chatbot, that now hosts hundreds of curated datasets on weather, public health, energy, infrastructure, and livelihoods in India, Bangladesh and now, Mexico, as the project expands globally.

Rethinking how India adapts to extreme heat

In April 2026, the Cluster released its flagship white paper, Critical Perspectives on Extreme Heat in India, at the Global Heat and Cooling Forum in New Delhi, organized by NRDC India. Co-authored by 17 Cluster researchers, the paper offers a systems-level reassessment of how extreme heat is defined, forecast, and governed in India.

The paper underscores the importance of collaboration across disciplines in developing the country's heat adaptation strategies – from forecasting and heat action plans to passive design, insurance, and public financing. Bringing together interdisciplinary research and practice, it argues for responses that are grounded in local realities, more accountable in implementation and more responsive to the people most exposed.

A new tool for heat preparedness

The HeatReady API, a new tool developed by researchers working with the Cluster, is a geospatial data service that delivers daily heat exposure metrics for any user-defined area – from city neighborhoods to entire regions – to support heat emergency preparedness and response. The system downsizes remote sensing data across non-standardized formats and localizes these metrics to a customized geographical scale by flipping the analytic model from "data first" to "location first." The API currently supports active monitoring across locations in South Asia, West Africa, Latin America, Europe, and North America.

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The API also layers in socioeconomic vulnerability indicators – including wealth, population density, urban land cover, and healthcare access – to help prioritize interventions in the communities most at risk.

Read more about the Salata Institute Cluster on Climate Adaptation in South Asia on our website.

Clusters:

Climate Adaptation in the Gulf of Guinea

Severe impacts of sea level rise driven by global climate change – including coastal erosion, flooding, infrastructure damage, saltwater intrusion into freshwater supplies, and an increase in water-borne disease – are already being felt keenly in West Africa's Gulf of Guinea. Adapting to the risk of climate change requires careful management informed by solid projections of sea level rise, monitoring of coastal processes, and sensitivity to local governance, socioeconomic pressures and culture.

For three years, the Salata Institute Climate Research Cluster on Adaptation in the Gulf of Guinea has advanced interdisciplinary research in close partnership with local communities and stakeholders in the region.

See page 7 of this report for the impact story. Read more in the Harvard Gazette.



Photo by Daid Trilling, featured in the Harvard Gazette. Read the story.

Clusters:
Corporate Climate Targets Project

Policymakers, investors, and watchdog NGOs have long lacked reliable, comparable data to judge whether corporate climate targets translate into measurable emissions cuts. Amid shifts in climate policy and corporate backtracking, understanding voluntary corporate climate action is particularly urgent.

The Corporate Climate Targets Project, a Salata Institute Climate Research Cluster launched in 2023, studies whether and how climate commitments shape corporate decision-making and emissions reductions – and seeks to understand the drivers of these corporate commitments.

A first-of-its-kind dataset and tool

At Climate Week NYC 2026, the cluster launched the Corporate Climate Targets Database, a free interactive tool enabling anyone to track corporate climate targets and emissions, and chart how they have changed over more than 20 years. It fills critical gaps in available data.

The database covers companies listed in the Russell 3000 Index, representing about 98 percent of U.S. public equities by market capitalization. It documents corporate climate targets from the year 2000 through 2024, drawing from companies' public disclosures, including sustainability reports, annual reports, 10-K filings, and press releases. Targets are mapped against emissions trends from S&P Global Trucost Environmental data.

Companies have issued thousands of voluntary climate commitments – public pledges to reduce their contributions to climate change beyond what the law requires – often in an inconsistent manner that has made tracking and comparisons difficult. Existing resources have relied heavily on surveys or narrower samples. The Corporate Climate Targets Database builds a broader, independent record.

"Corporate climate targets are now a major part of climate policy, but the public has had few tools to evaluate them," said co-lead Joseph Aldy, Teresa and John Heinz Professor of the Practice of Environmental Policy, Harvard Kennedy School. "This project shows who has made commitments and what they cover, and it gives researchers a way to investigate whether voluntary action is associated with real emissions reductions."

Users can explore target and emissions trends over time, compare companies and sectors, and download the underlying data for free.

"Most corporate climate coverage focuses on a handful of high-profile firms," said co-lead Michael Toffel, Senator John Heinz Professor of Environmental Management at Harvard Business School. "This tool enables everyone to see what is happening across nearly 3,000 companies, including firms that rarely make headlines, and to get a fuller picture of targets and trends."

Corporate climate disclosure is becoming more contested and, in some cases, less transparent. Some companies have walked back earlier climate commitments, while others continue to pursue targets that extend to 2030, 2040, or 2050. The database lets users see when companies add, change, or drop targets.

For example, in the database, 83 percent of firms that have announced at least one emission reduction target have made revisions before the target year. About 15 percent of revisions increased ambition in terms of the level of the target (a target with a lower emissions level or emissions intensity), while about 42 percent set less ambitious targets and 44 percent maintained the target ambition. In recent years, some companies have dropped their targets altogether: the total number of companies in the database with climate targets fell from 1,135 in 2023 to

1,056 in 2024. In the electric utility sector, 24 companies set emission reduction targets with deadlines before the year 2025, and about 45 percent met these targets.

The project team plans to update the database annually and, in the coming months, publish analyses of which companies adopt climate targets, how targets vary by sector and policy environment, and whether voluntary commitments are associated with measurable emissions reductions.

The database, interactive tool, and an FAQ with detailed information on the research methodology are accessible here.

Read more about the cluster on our website.

Initiatives:
Accelerating EV Adoption

Widespread electric vehicle (EV) adoption is critical to confronting climate change – but a lack of sufficient public charging infrastructure is holding many potential EV drivers back. A team of researchers from Harvard and the MIT Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research are working to accelerate progress on public EV charging as a gating requirement to achieving widespread EV adoption. The team engages directly with stakeholders and stakeholder groups to identify barriers to seamless public EV charging, build consensus for solutions, and advance those solutions.

Over the last year, the Initiative has generated actionable insights, advanced practical improvements in charging infrastructure, and gathered key decisionmakers at the fore of electrifying transportation.

Research to improve EV charging

The Initiative's research helped inform Vermont's new electric vehicle charging-data law, informing efforts to decarbonize transport across the country. Read the impact story on page 9 of this report.

Helping decisionmakers understand a changing landscape for EVs

A white paper published by the Initiative evaluates the impact of recent and potential policy changes on EV adoption and carbon emissions.

State investment strategies to speed charging deployment

Collaborating with fast charging stakeholders, researchers supported by the Initiative crafted recommendations to help states speed deployment of publicly funded fast chargers—enabling EV travel and boosting EV adoption.

Convenings to electrify progress

A July 2026 workshop on multi-family charging infrastructure hosted by the Initiative drew representatives from large housing developers and charging companies; officials from some of the country's largest cities, joined by their local utilities and states; and leading academics to work toward closing the charging gap and speeding EV adoption. A solutions-oriented report informed by the event is coming soon. In the coming year, the Initiative plans more convenings, including a third workshop on the economics of EV charging, co-hosted with the MIT Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research (MIT CEEPR).

Supporting broader conversations about sustainable transportation

With support from the Accelerating EV Adoption Initiative, the Salata Institute continues to host the Sustainable Transportation Webinar series, convening experts and practitioners for timely conversations ranging from sustainable freight to natural hazards and equity in transportation systems.

Read more about Accelerating EV Adoption on our website.

Initiatives:

Biodiversity Initiative for Planetary Stewardship

Life on Earth is under accelerating stress. Habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change are weakening biodiversity. The intricate web of life within Earth's ecosystems provides essential services people everywhere rely on, from clean air and water to the pollination that sustains staple food crops. Biodiversity is a prerequisite for a habitable planet.

The Harvard University Biodiversity Initiative for Planetary Stewardship (HUBS) is Harvard's response. HUBS is a university-wide effort, anchored at the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability, to generate the evidence, tools, and talent needed to protect and restore nature at scale.

HUBS is built on the premise that addressing the biodiversity crisis requires disciplines to come together. By aligning discovery, measurement, and conservation, HUBS channels Harvard's depth of experience across the sciences, policy, and practice – and leverages the university's convening power – to deliver actionable evidence and scalable solutions.

Over the past year, this new research initiative has been laying the groundwork for an ambitious platform to generate the evidence, tools, and talent the world needs to protect nature and stabilize the climate. Initiative Director Jeannine Cavender-Bares led a COP30 panel exploring the urgent need for advanced data and monitoring of natural systems to speed decarbonization – and prevent ecological backfire. At Boston Climate Week, HUBS hosted a public talk probing different approaches to reconciling nature and economics. Through other public events, publications, workshops, and behind-the-scenes connections supported by the Accelerator, HUBS continues to build.

Learn more about HUBS on our website.



Initiatives:

Global Climate Policy Project at Harvard and MIT

The Global Climate Policy Project (GCPP) is a joint initiative between Harvard and MIT dedicated to identifying and advancing innovations in global climate policies and institutions. Existing frameworks, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, have established an important foundation for climate action but are not sufficient to manage the risks of a changing climate.

With financial support from the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability, Weatherhead Research Cluster on Global Climate Policy, and MIT Climate Project, GCPP puts forward ideas and policy proposals that complement the UNFCCC and address critical gaps in trade, finance, security, and other areas.

By convening leading academics, policymakers, industry experts, and members of civil society, GCPP drives research-backed policy proposals that can shape the global dialogue and accelerate urgent climate action.

Innovations in policies and institutions focus on:

- Climate finance
- Energy transition
- Adaptation
- Trade
- Geoengineering
- Carbon removal
- Research Innovation

The initiative is working to develop actionable, multi-disciplinary proposals that address gaps in global climate governance. Through academic collaborations across Harvard and MIT, GCPP explores how global policies on trade, finance, security, and other topics can help drive more ambitious climate action.

Informing policy
GCPP connects leaders in government, industry, and civil society with research and evidence to help inform the next generation of climate policy.

Student and Alumni Engagement
Through multi-disciplinary coursework, student research fellowships, and alumni engagement, GCPP equips the next generation of climate leaders with the tools to shape global climate policy. We provide mentorship, internships, and other types of opportunities for students and professionals committed to climate action.

Visit the initiative website here.



Initiatives:

The Harvard Solar Geoengineering Research Program

The Harvard Solar Geoengineering Research Program (SGRP) aims to reduce uncertainties surrounding solar geoengineering; generate critical science, technology, and policy insights; and help inform the public debate surrounding this controversial idea.

Recognizing that solar geoengineering could not be a replacement for reducing emissions or adapting to climate impacts, SGRP draws on Harvard's research capabilities and global convening power to provide the knowledge necessary in considering solar geoengineering as a supplement to broader mitigation and adaptation efforts. SGRP supports a broad array of natural science, social science, and humanities research, both at Harvard and in collaboration with other academic, civil society, and government organizations and institutions.

Through new research, stakeholder engagement, an international relations expert workshop exploring governance questions, a wide-ranging series of public seminars, and a fourth annual workshop exploring the latest social science research in Washington, D.C., the Program continues to help advance productive conversation grounded in the latest research.

Read more about SGRP on our website.



Initiatives:

Climate-Related Financial and Macroeconomic Risk Initiative

Launched in 2025 by the Salata Institute and Resources for the Future (RFF), the Climate-Related Financial and Macroeconomic Risk Initiative (CFMRI) is a research collaboration dedicated to analyzing the risks that climate change poses to global financial and macroeconomic goals.

Climate-driven floods, fires, and storms are already eroding asset values, destabilizing insurance markets, and straining household finances, while the transition to low-carbon energy is reshaping industrial supply chains and geopolitical alliances. Yet the analytical tools that investors, regulators, central banks, and governments depend on were largely built for a 20th-century climate and a fossil fuel-dominated economy.

CFMRI works to fill that gap by assembling a network of economists, finance scholars, private sector stakeholders, and experienced policymakers with demonstrated interest in solving these challenges.

In a November 2025 editorial in Science, RFF President and CEO William Pizer and Salata Institute Director Jim Stock lay out the urgent case for this work. “Scientists are relatively confident in climate projections over horizons relevant to monetary and fiscal policy-makers, but less clear is how the economy may respond to physical risks from the changing climate and transitional risks such as policy shocks, technological change, and shifting investment sentiment or consumer behavior,” write Pizer and Stock. “This work cannot wait.”

Read the editorial here.

Seed Grants

The Salata Institute Seed Grant Program in Climate and Sustainability funds nascent faculty research projects that use novel or interdisciplinary approaches to combat climate change.

Launched in Spring 2023 with a generous gift from the Troper Wojcicki Foundation, the program has made 62 awards over ten funding cycles for a total of nearly $1.3M. Faculty from nearly all of Harvard's Schools have received funding to pursue an array of challenges.

Evaluating climate co-benefits of U.S. air quality regulations

Principal Investigators: Francesca Dominici and Veronica Ballerini, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

This project assesses whether U.S. air quality rules aimed at protecting health also delivered climate co-benefits by reducing CO2 emissions – a dimension that's often overlooked when most analyses focus on health gains and economic benefits. Focusing on the nationwide PM2.5 air quality standard and its initial enforcement after 2005, the team is building a public, state-level dataset and uses causal inference methods for time-series to estimate how much CO2 emissions were reduced because of the standard, by sector and by state, and then test how sensitive the results are to confounding by systematically evaluating 209 concurrent regulations.

All data pipelines and code will be shared publicly to support replication and follow-on work. The findings could carry important policy implications for how air quality standards are designed and justified in the future.

Tracing mercury from gold mining in the Amazon

Principal Investigators: Scot Martin, Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Elsie Sunderland, Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

This project tackles a major health risk in the Brazilian Amazon: mercury pollution linked to artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Some of the mercury released during mining is microbially converted into methylmercury, a potent neurotoxin that accumulates in fish – a staple food for many river communities. A puzzle is that some of the highest mercury levels in fish and people are reported far from active mining sites, suggesting that river chemistry and seasonal conditions (not just how much mercury is emitted) control when and where mercury becomes bioavailable.

This team is studying the Rio Madeira, a major Amazon tributary heavily influenced by gold mining, by sampling water, sediments, and commonly eaten fish at 15 sites during both wet and dry seasons in 2026. Using mercury "fingerprints" (stable isotopes) alongside measurements of river chemistry, they will identify how much mercury comes from mining versus background sources and pinpoint the environmental conditions that drive mercury's conversion into methylmercury and its movement into the food web. The goal is actionable evidence to better target monitoring and mitigation for the communities most at risk.

Extreme heat and childbirth complications

Principal Investigators: Katherine Semrau, Megan Marx Delaney, and Shruthi Mahalingaiah, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

This project examines how extreme heat shapes childbirth outcomes in low- and middle-income settings, and how accounting for heat can strengthen climate adaptation in maternal care. The team is combining modeled heat exposure (temperature and humidity) with patient-level data from ~160,000 mother–newborn pairs in Uttar Pradesh, India, to quantify how heat may influence outcomes such as maternal mortality, stillbirth, early neonatal mortality, and key morbidities.

The goal is to estimate the potential impact of heat on study results and, in turn, inform how important heat-related antenatal and childbirth-care interventions should be – while producing a de-identified dataset and guidance for future trials.

Judicial dialogues on health and climate change
Principal Investigator: I. Glenn Cohen, Harvard Law School

Over the past decade, climate change has shifted from being approached primarily as an environmental problem addressed through multilateral diplomacy to becoming an increasingly complex human rights and public health challenge contested within judicial arenas. This two-day convening will bring together judges, litigators, and scholars from Africa, Europe, and Latin America to compare what's emerging in different legal systems and what it means in practice.

Hosted by Harvard Law School's Petrie-Flom Center with partners across Harvard and abroad, the event will dig into new legal standards and the real-world challenges courts face when they're asked to rule on climate-related health harms – especially when those harms fall most heavily on marginalized communities.

Migration, genetics, and climate change adaptation
Principal investigator: Charles Taylor, Harvard Kennedy School

This project asks whether our genetic backgrounds help explain why climate and weather affect some people's health more than others – above and beyond factors like income, infrastructure, or the climate people are used to. Using the UK Biobank (genotype data, health records, and residential histories for 500,000 people), the team is working to link each participant's locations to detailed climate data and test whether living in a climate that differs from one's ancestral climate is associated with higher risks of negative health outcomes like cardiovascular disease, vitamin D deficiency, and skin cancer.

They're also looking at what happens during short-term weather swings: for example, whether people with ancestry from hotter regions tend to fare better in heat waves but struggle more during cold snaps – and whether the reverse is true for people with cold-adapted ancestry. As a complement, the team is using ancient DNA to assess whether migration across climates in the past affected natural selection in traits related to temperature regulation and environmental adaptation.

Additional seed grants awarded in Fall 2025 include:

Better outcomes for data center neighbors
Jason Beckfield, Department of Sociology

Calculating the value of trees
Wolfram Schlenker, Harvard Kennedy School
Jeannine Cavender-Bares, Organismic and Evolutionary Biology

Climate migration in Pakistan
Mashail Malik, Department of Government

The effects of climate change on global migration
Ishan Nath, Harvard Kennedy School

Music and Rain, an ethnographic film
Richard Wolf, Department of Music

Fellows

The Salata Institute hosts and supports academics and practitioners across a wide range of disciplines through the Salata Institute Fellows Program, the Harvard Environmental Fellows Program, the Radcliffe-Salata Climate Justice Fellows Program, and the Harvard Global Health Institute Salata-Burke Climate and Health Fellows Program.

The Salata Institute Fellows Program

Elaine Buckberg, Senior Fellow

Elaine Buckberg is a Senior Fellow at Harvard University's Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability and its Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, former Chief Economist of General Motors, and a former senior U.S. Treasury official. She has served as an advisor to top leadership across government, corporate, and finance, using economics to inform real-world decisions and improve outcomes.

At Salata, Elaine leads research and stakeholder engagement to drive better public EV charging outcomes. She also covers industrial policy, supply chains, and geoeconomics and teaches an undergraduate seminar on EVs. Her experience spans macro, micro, and financial economics, U.S. and international, with a deep focus on China and Latin America.

Marcelo Medeiros, Salata Climate Action Fellow

Marcelo Pereira Lopes de Medeiros is co-founder and chairperson of re.green, a company committed to restoring 1 million hectares of tropical forest. The initiative promotes biodiversity and carbon capture, using scalable, research-driven methods to generate significant environmental and social benefits.

At Salata, Marcelo works to convene scientists, policymakers, and business leaders to tackle the thorny question of how to measure, value, and scale carbon-dioxide removal.

James Rosenfield, Salata Climate Action Fellow

James Rosenfield is Founder and Co-Chairman of CERAWeek, and creator of the Innovation Agora. He is Co-Founder with Daniel Yergin of Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA), now part of S&P Global, where he serves as Senior Advisor. Over four decades he has led and contributed to a host of CERA and S&P thought leadership and energy industry initiatives.

Chris Skidmore, Salata Climate Action Fellow

Chris Skidmore OBE is an internationally recognized authority on the energy transition. Skidmore served as a Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom from 2010 to 2024 and served in the UK government between 2015-2020. As Minister for Energy and Clean Growth, he signed the UK's net zero target into law in 2019, making the UK the first G7 country to adopt such a goal.

At Salata, Skidmore examines the energy, cooling, and grid-integration challenges posed by the rapidly growing digital economy, and works on how to deliver new narratives around the energy transition and sustainability. He collaborates with faculty on sector decarbonization roadmaps for transition finance that can be applied internationally.

Chris Smith, Salata Climate Action Fellow

Chris Smith served as Chief Government Affairs Officer at the Ford Motor Company, where he advanced legislation, policy and regulation on issues related to electric vehicles, critical minerals, connectivity, and digital services for Ford's global manufacturing presence. He is a former Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Department of Energy, overseeing the United States Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the National Energy Technology Laboratory, the DOE's $6B portfolio of of

carbon capture demonstrations, and served as the federal official for the Deepwater Horizon Spill Commission. He testified before Congress more than twenty times.

At Salata, Chris is evaluating policy levers to advance domestic manufacturing of world-leading electric vehicles; pursue innovative solutions for carbon-free power; and tackle related supply chain challenges. He will support the Harvard-MIT research Initiative 'Accelerating EV Adoption,' and will work with Harvard researchers across business, policy, and law to analyze the impact of potential policy moves on private sector decision makers.

Vien Truong, Salata Climate Action Fellow
Vien Truong is a nationally recognized expert on sustainability strategies, with two decades of leadership across the public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors. Vien previously led Nike's Global Sustainability Engagement team, where she led cross-matrix efforts connecting sustainability strategies with business objectives, stakeholder engagement, and key moments across global markets.

At Salata, Vien explores the business case for investing in community climate solutions. Her work looks at integrating climate risk and sustainability solutions into business resilience, governance, investment, and community outcomes. Her work explores how disclosure, climate risk governance, and community-led solutions can converge to unlock resilient, inclusive economies. She collaborates with faculty and financial leaders to develop models for transition finance and place-based investment strategies.

Harvard Environmental Fellows

The Harvard Environmental Fellows Program brings some of the most talented postdoctoral scholars in the areas of climate and the environment to Harvard to work with faculty hosts and the broader Salata community. In 2025-2026, nine environmental fellows worked with their hosts across the Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Harvard Kennedy School, and the Faculty of Arts & Sciences departments of History, Chemistry, and Earth and Planetary Sciences.

Karl Aspelund (2024-2025) uses models grounded in economic theory, paired with spatial and administrative data, to design environmental policies that advance equity, efficiency, and sustainability.

Matthew Goss (2024-2026) researches how the oxidation of organic molecules in the atmosphere affects the formation of fine aerosol particles, which play an important role in climate and air quality.

Seán Kavanagh (2024-2026) uses quantum mechanical simulations to identify bottlenecks in the performance of renewable energy materials.

Jiameng Lai (2025-2027) is an environmental scientist who integrates plant physiology theories, land surface modeling, satellite remote sensing, and data assimilation techniques to monitor, understand and predict the complex dynamics of terrestrial ecosystems in response to environmental change.

Cameron MacDonald (2025-2027) uses numerical models and theory to better understand the fundamental dynamics of Earth's atmosphere.

Aaron Molnar (2024-2026) mobilizes paleoclimatology and archaeology with documentary sources to understand how the premodern state over time adapted to climate change in the Chinese-Mongolian steppe borderlands.

Nkosi Muse (2025-2027) utilizes a mixed-methods approach to examine unique, humid heat hazards that threaten human health and productivity in urban areas and develop policy solutions to equitably adapt in a warming world.

Nathaniel Tarshish (2024-2026) is a climate scientist with broad interests in understanding historical and committed global warming.

Guglielmo Zappalà (2025-2027) applies statistical and econometric methods grounded in economic theory to traditional and geospatial satellite data to better understand the socioeconomic impacts of climate change and humanity's ability to adapt.

Radcliffe-Salata Climate Justice Fellows Program

The Radcliffe-Salata Climate Justice Fellowships are year-long appointments that afford recipients the opportunity to pursue ambitious projects in the unique environment of Harvard Radcliffe Institute. Fellows are drawn from some of the most thoughtful and exciting contemporary scholars considering questions of climate justice. The current Radcliffe-Salata Climate Justice Fellows are:

Marccus D. Hendricks

An environmental planner and public health practitioner by trade, Marccus D. Hendricks works at the nexus of race, resilience, and the built environment. As a Radcliffe-Salata Climate Justice Fellow, he is completing his first solo-authored book manuscript, which critically examines Baltimore's historic sewerage system development and unpacks how infrastructure itself becomes a mechanism of exclusion, determining which communities receive investment, whose neighborhoods flood with sewage, and who is deemed disposable when systems fail.

Jessica A. Shoemaker

Jessica A. Shoemaker is a legal scholar whose work explores how property law shapes human communities and environmental conditions across the American countryside. As a Radcliffe-Salata Climate Justice Fellow, she is writing a book examining how property rules – shaped by ongoing collective choices – make and remake rural landscapes, including in contemporary conflicts over farmland transitions, energy infrastructure, and Indigenous land claims.

Harvard Global Health Institute Salata-Burke Climate and Health Fellows

In partnership with the Harvard Global Health Institute and made possible by a generous gift from Katherine States Burke AB '79 and T. Robert Burke, the Burke Climate and Health Fellowship offers support for eligible research fellows, postdoctoral scholars, and early career faculty pursuing scholarly research at the intersection of climate change and global health. Current fellows include:

Fabian Reitzug

Dr. Fabian Reitzug is an epidemiologist and social scientist as well as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. He is pursuing a project titled "The Role of Community Health Workers in Mitigating the Health Effects of Climate Change in Rural Madagascar."

Thalia Viveros Uehara

Thalia Viveros Uehara, PhD, is a legal scholar whose work examines the intersection of climate change, public health, and human rights. She is currently a visiting scholar at the Petrie-Flom Center at Harvard Law School. She is pursuing a project titled "Litigating the Invisible: Climate Change and Health in the Global South."

Timothy Downing

Timothy A. Downing is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Nairobi's Institute for Climate Change and Adaptation. He is pursuing a project titled "Setting the groundwork for implementing Community Heat Adaptation and Treatment Strategies in Urban Informal Settlements of Kenya (HATS-RISK)."



Poster presentation at Harvard Climate Action Week

Climate Action Accelerator

The Climate Action Accelerator's mission is to maximize the real-world impact of climate-related work at Harvard, in support of the Salata Institute's mission "to develop and advance durable, effective, and equitable solutions to the climate change challenges confronting humanity."

The Accelerator connects Harvard researchers with policymakers, businesses, communities, and other stakeholders to develop actionable climate, sustainability, mitigation, and resilience solutions grounded in Harvard research and expertise.

Especially during this time of global turmoil, the Accelerator has an opportunity to advance transformative climate solutions. It does so by providing a credible, nonpartisan platform for discussions and progress on climate problems; by leveraging Harvard's work through collaboration with external partners; by holding climate-related events for the general public; and by providing services for external engagement involving Institute affiliates.

The Climate Action Accelerator is launching its next phase at a moment of unusual consequence. Climate impacts are intensifying and exposing deep inequalities in the distribution of these impacts.

In the face of these dynamics, the demand for practical, evidence-based solutions is growing. Universities have a singular opportunity to help society navigate rapid and equitable transitions in energy, infrastructure, public health, finance, and governance. In this context, the Accelerator's core objective is to ensure that Harvard's research is relevant, trusted, and used where it can make the greatest difference.

Thus, over the last year, the Accelerator has continued to expand its efforts to drive meaningful, practical climate solutions. The Accelerator engaged over 2,000 climate practitioners through global convenings, workshops, and meetings. These efforts advanced a wide range of practical, meaningful climate solutions from EV charging improvements to trainings for city officials confronting extreme heat, to breakthrough multilateral collaboration on carbon pricing.

Explore highlights from the Accelerator's work during Academic Year 2025-2026 below.

New leadership

In November 2025, the Salata Institute announced David Cash as the new Director of the Climate Action Accelerator. The former U.S. EPA Regional Administrator for New England joined the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability at Harvard University at a critical time. As U.S. climate policies shift substantially, Cash sees significant value in Harvard's role as a steady resource and partner, especially at the community, state, and regional level, and on the global stage. "Harvard is older than the U.S., older than today's political parties — it's the perfect home for climate work that demands long-term thinking and clear-eyed, nonpartisan collaboration," said Cash. "I am looking forward to working with extraordinary faculty, staff, and external partners putting the University's catalytic and convening power to work in service of creative, robust, and equitable climate solutions."

Read more about David Cash here.

Harvard Climate Action Week

In September 2025, the Accelerator hosted the third Harvard Climate Action Week, drawing 772 in-person attendees and over 1,000 virtual attendees. Practitioners, experts, and stakeholders gathered across 38 events, main stage panels, and breakout sessions exploring practical pathways towards decarbonization and resilience. The Harvard Climate Summit, the week's cornerstone event, featured a keynote by Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey and Tracy

Palandjian, Co-Founder and CEO of Social Finance, on workforce innovation in the energy transition. Breakout sessions delved deep into federal climate policy, insurance, sustainable computing, methane emissions, and much more. Explore coverage and recordings from Harvard Climate Action Week 2025 and previous Harvard Climate Action Weeks on our website.

Advancing global climate cooperation

The Accelerator is proud to support the efforts of the Global Climate Policy Project at Harvard and MIT (GCPP) as it advances the next generation of climate governance. At each stage of this initiative's work, the Accelerator has provided resources and convening power to bring together key leaders and promote research-backed insights. At the Harvard Climate Symposium and Climate Week NYC 2025, GCPP unveiled its proposal, prepared for the Brazilian COP30 President André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, to create a coalition of countries willing to align carbon pricing, avert trade frictions, and unlock $200 billion in annual revenues. These activations, coupled with behind-the-scenes connection, were critical in laying the groundwork for the breakthrough announcement of the Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets at COP30.

Bringing nature to the fore

With support from the Accelerator, the Salata Institute launched the Biodiversity Initiative for Planetary Stewardship (HUBS) – a Harvard-wide response to the biodiversity crisis. Bringing together leading faculty from across the University, and in collaboration with experts and leaders around the world, HUBS seeks to generate the evidence, tools, and talent the world needs to protect nature and stabilize the climate. The Climate Action Accelerator is helping provide HUBS with the staffing and support needed to build towards the ambitious platform envisioned by the initiative.

Over the past year, Initiative Director and Climate Action Acceleration Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Jeannine Cavender-Bares, led a COP30 panel, exploring the urgent need for advanced data and monitoring of natural systems to speed decarbonization – and prevent ecological backfire. HUBS also hosted a public talk probing different approaches to reconciling nature and economics at the inaugural Boston Climate Week.

Through other public events, publications, workshops, and behind-the-scenes connections supported by the Accelerator, HUBS continues to build. Learn more about HUBS and stay tuned for additional events and publications on our website.

Confronting extreme heat

As extreme heat events become increasingly frequent and severe, the Accelerator is supporting efforts across the university to better understand and manage the risks. Notably, the Accelerator supports the heat simulation exercises described earlier in this report. Since its inception, this simulation has been offered to nearly 20 small and large cities in the United States including Tucson, Baltimore, Atlanta, New York, Phoenix, Chicago, and LA County. During Boston Climate Week 2026, the program was extended to a two-day workshop titled "Letters to a New City Heat Officer," and included interactive sessions and panels on the built environment, labor, infrastructure, power, and health that built on discussions catalyzed by the simulation. Looking to the future, the Accelerator plans to build on this progress and expand the program.

Exploring the future of offsets

Over the last year, policy shifts and concerns over integrity, measurement, and performance have left the future of carbon offset markets highly uncertain. Amidst this landscape, Salata Climate Action Fellow Marcelo Medeiros has convened key leaders and academics to explore innovative approaches to advancing carbon offset market design and credibility. In workshops supported by the Accelerator, Medeiros convened key thinkers to develop policy-oriented research proposals and explore pathways to more impactful, credible offset paradigms. Building on this work, Medeiros facilitated a public panel at the Accelerator's 2026 Climate Week NYC event, drawing together leaders grappling with these questions in real time.

Electrifying transportation

With Accelerator support, the Harvard-MIT Accelerating EV Adoption research initiative continued to produce actionable recommendations and draw together government officials, private sector leaders, and stakeholders leading on EV charging. A July 2026 workshop on multi-family charging infrastructure, supported by the Accelerator, drew practitioners from utilities; officials from major cities; representatives from charging companies, and leading academics to work towards closing the charging gap and speeding EV adoption.

Read more about Accelerating EV Adoption on our website.

Looking to the future: an expanding portfolio

Looking to the next year, the Accelerator anticipates the launch and expansion of new initiatives taking on complex climate challenges. These include:

- **AI and the Grid:** As the U.S. energy grid is pushed to the brink by growing power demand, fueled by accelerating AI use, a multidisciplinary team of researchers supported by the Accelerator will advance solutions for a modern, decarbonized, resilient grid.
- **Accelerating Climate Innovation:** Since 2021, the Climate Circle Accelerator at Harvard i-lab has selected and supported high-potential climate ventures led by Harvard affiliates. The initiative has now supported 135 ventures, developing technologies ranging from advanced EV charging to coastal protection technology. Over the next year, the Accelerator will deepen its partnership with the iLab, building towards a world-class climate innovation hub at Harvard.
- **Advancing Indigenous and Tribal-led Solutions:** Through deepened collaborations, both across Harvard and with Indigenous and Tribal-led organizations, the Accelerator will launch a new fellowship and collaborative programming that elevates Indigenous knowledge systems, governance strategies, and community-led climate and sustainability solutions, including exploration of Rights of Nature frameworks.

Education and Student Support

The Salata Institute is working to ensure that a Harvard education prepares students for leadership in a world facing climate change. Through programs and activities developed in coordination with Harvard's Schools, students have opportunities to contribute to climate solutions today, while learning valuable skills and developing professional connections for tomorrow.

In academic year 2025-2026, the Salata Institute supported more than 1,000 students through co-curricular programs and campus programming. The Institute also helped advance a new interdisciplinary climate concentration that aligns education with evolving energy, climate, and environmental challenges.

Explore highlights from the year and an overview of Salata Institute co-curricular programs below.

Are you a Harvard student interested in climate and sustainability? Subscribe to our monthly student newsletter and visit our student hub website to explore opportunities.





Education
A new interdisciplinary climate concentration

In Spring 2026, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences voted to approve a new concentration: Energy, Climate, and the Environment (ENCE). This broad, cross-divisional, cohesive new pathway for undergraduate students matches the interdisciplinary reality of the climate problem, integrating scientific understanding with engineering, social, economic, and ethical considerations – and with a focus on solutions.

ENCE will give students a single framework for climate study while drawing on all three FAS divisions and SEAS. It combines a shared introductory course with four distinct curricular tracks, each offering additional core courses. And because real climate challenges do not fit within a single discipline, the capstone requires students from different tracks to work together on a real-world problem.

The new concentration complements Harvard's other climate concentrations including Environmental Science and Public Policy (ESPP), Earth and Planetary Sciences (EPS), Environmental Science and Engineering (ESE), and Integrative Biology.

Read more about ENCE on our website.

Launching climate and sustainability careers

415 students and over 50 leading employers in climate and sustainability connected at the third annual Salata Institute Climate and Sustainability Career Expo.

Watch presentations from the 2025 Expo here.



Student Support
Co-Curricular Programs

The Salata Institute's co-curricular programs were developed in partnership with students, faculty, and staff across all Harvard Schools to meet a wide range of student needs and ambitions. The Institute currently offers the following opportunities:

Travel Grant Program

This program funds individual students who are planning trips for the purpose of advancing their academic or professional development goals. The program also considers applications from small groups who may be traveling together to conferences or to conduct research. In 2025-2026, **65 students** traveled across the United States and 17 other countries. Read more.

Student Climate Activities Fund and Climate Collaboration Grant

This funding supports student groups that undertake climate- and sustainability-focused activities or projects independently or in partnership with another student group. In 2025-2026, **725 students** participated in these activities. Read more.

COP Student Observers Grant

The COP Student Observers Funding Program provides travel funding and related programming to Harvard University students who attend the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The program is funded through partnership between the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability and the Harvard Project on Climate Agreements. In 2025, **10 students** attended COP30 through this program. Read more.

Internship programs: Climate Policy Summer Internship Program and the Harvard Climate Internship Program

The Salata Institute Climate Policy Summer Internship Program places Harvard undergraduate and graduate students in legislative offices whose policy agendas address climate, environmental, or sustainability issues in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Through this internship, students gain hands-on experience supporting real-time legislative work while developing a deeper understanding of how climate policy is shaped at the state level. Interns contribute to policy research, stakeholder engagement, and legislative processes while working closely with staff in elected offices. Read more.

The Harvard Climate Internship Program (HCIP) is a university-wide program supporting graduate students who work in a climate policy-oriented summer internship. Recipients are awarded funding, plus mentoring and an opportunity to participate in programming with policy practitioners and Harvard faculty. Read more.

In 2025-2026, **60 students** were employed as interns through Salata Institute internship programs.

Summer Research Funding Program

This program supports undergraduate and graduate students who undertake summer research focused on climate, sustainability, or the environment. The program is designed to support a

broad range of research pathways, from faculty-led research assistantships to independent undergraduate and graduate research projects. During summer 2025, **30 students** conducted research through this program. Read more.



Harvard students measure a changing climate

During a summer in Harvard's Research Village, climate-focused undergrads examined polluted rivers, migration patterns, and plant resilience, among other topics. Read highlights from their work, funded through the Summer Research Funding Program, here.

Student Support

Community-Building Events

Building a student community around climate and sustainability is a vital part of the Salata Institute's work to prepare the next generation of leaders to face this global challenge. In addition to supporting student-led events, the Institute hosts key gatherings throughout the year.

At the Institute's semesterly open house event, students from across the University learn about co-curricular programs and resources and hear updates on the Salata Institute's work. Students also network with one another and meet our staff. At the Spring open house, students learn about summer programming opportunities.



Public Outreach

The Salata Institute aims to communicate broadly to climate professionals, the Harvard community, and the climate-curious public. By tailoring content and engagement strategies to these groups, the Institute works to build trust, amplify Harvard expertise, and grow the communications channels needed to contribute as a global leader for climate insight.

Through the Harvard Climate Brief, social media, broadcast email, video production, and an agile media relations practice, the Salata Institute augments traditional academic publication streams to reach large, diverse audiences of climate practitioners and stakeholders.

Over the last year, the Institute's public outreach efforts have continued to yield encouraging results. In FY26 the Salata Institute generated 685,000+ website views, received 333,000+ website visitors, drove 141,000+ video views, 600,000+ social media impressions, and delivered 97 earned media clips in leading outlets.

Explore some communications highlights from 2025-2026 below:

Harvard Voices on Climate Change

This virtual event series, hosted by the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability and the Harvard Alumni Association, features Harvard faculty and fellows who discuss various dimensions of the climate challenge. The series is hosted by Jim Stock, Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability and Harold Hitchings Burbank Professor of Political Economy at Harvard University.

Talk topics in 2025-2026 included:

- The road ahead for electric vehicles
- Biodiversity and climate resilience
- Measuring forest-based carbon emission reductions
- Mapping the future of renewable energy
- Corporate climate commitments

View all episodes of Harvard Voices on Climate Change on our YouTube channel.

The Harvard Climate Brief

Launched in 2024, the Harvard Climate Brief is a jargon-free platform that translates faculty research into clear, timely articles. Over the last year, the Brief has produced 42 features, including:

- Will AMOC slow? Collapse? Four ways scientists study the Atlantic current
- How communities view data centers
- Climate change and allergies
- Cloud thinning
- The legal reasoning behind the endangerment rescission

In 2025-2026, the Brief drove over 69,000 pageviews and informed climate and sustainability coverage in key media outlets, including The New York Times, Reuters, and The Wall Street Journal.

Subscribe to the Harvard Climate Brief newsletter to receive new editions as they're released!

Connecting climate experts to top outlets

The Salata Institute connects leading experts from across Harvard University with members of the media covering climate and sustainability news. In 2025-2026, direct outreach and engagement with members of the media led to 97 news clips in outlets including The New York Times, The Washington Post, Reuters, AP, Politico, CNN, USA Today, The Boston Globe, The Times of India, Axios, and many more.

Read a few examples:

- The New York Times: Women Toiling in India's Insufferable Heat Face Mounting Toll on Health
- E&E News: International carbon taxes would expand under climate proposal
- Bloomberg: What Killing Tax Credits Means for the Electric Vehicle Market
- Reuters: Sustainable Switch: Climate change, Venezuela, and Big Oil
- CNN: Big tech is increasingly promising to pay for spiking power costs. But there's not much to enforce it
- E&E News: Harvard taps former EPA regional chief for climate division
- Axios: Exclusive: Electricity rates aren't top concern about data centers, poll shows.
- E&E News: Deadly heat is coming. But funding to save lives is not.
- Brattleboro Reformer: Commentary: Elaine Buckberg: Vermont can encourage EV adoption and create jobs, for free
- The Times of India: 'We can't just count heat deaths, we must count human suffering too'

Alumni Engagement
supporting climate leaders

The Salata Institute's alumni engagement strategy recognizes that Harvard's more than 400,000 alumni are advancing climate solutions and sustaining a vibrant community of practice. Alumni roles in government, business, and civil society permit them to have impact well beyond the Harvard campus, and the Institute works with alumni and alumni groups to advance our shared mission. We support alumni to become more effective and resilient climate leaders, to build stronger climate-aligned networks, and to strengthen Harvard's climate initiatives.

The Salata Institute Alumni Working Group comprises alumni leaders across professional sectors and regions, as well as representatives of groups such as Harvard Alumni for Climate and Environment (HACE) and ClassAct groups. The group, in conjunction with HACE and other organizations, seeks to help alumni to become more educated, engaged, effective, and resilient climate leaders.

The Institute's alumni engagement efforts are anchored by Peter Tufano, Baker Foundation Professor at Harvard Business School and Senior Advisor to the Salata Institute.

In 2025-2026, the Salata Institute and its alumni partners:

- Built community and connections by organizing alumni networking events around significant global climate and sustainability convenings, including COP30, Climate Week NYC, London Climate Action Week, and CERAWeek.
- Hosted alumni-focused educational programming and talks, bringing new climate and sustainability research to alumni through a core session at Harvard Alumni Day and our virtual Harvard Voices on Climate Change series, hosted with the Harvard Alumni Association.
- Hosted a dynamic session at Harvard Climate Action Week 2025 featuring TED-style talks from inspiring Harvard alumni who are integrating climate into their diverse careers.
- Connected alumni in climate and sustainability with students seeking mentorship.
- Expanded the alumni hub on the Salata Institute website, collating alumni-focused events, career development and learning opportunities, and other resources.

Looking to the year ahead, the Salata Institute will work with the Alumni Working Group and alumni partners to expand opportunities for alumni education and action; help support local alumni groups working on climate and sustainability challenges; and create more opportunities for alumni to share their insights with one another.



A moment from Harvard Alumni Day 2026

At Harvard Alumni Day 2026, the Salata Institute hosted a faculty panel covering the current state of climate science, the impacts we're facing, how Harvard is advancing work on climate resilience, and opportunities for alumni. Watch the talk here.

