

THE YIDINJI PROPOSITION FOR A JUST REBALANCE

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Introduction

The Yidinji Declaration on Climate Justice was developed at a workshop held in Cairns during April 2023, supported by the Eastern Regional Organisation for Planning and Human Settlements (EAROPH). A video presentation on the Declaration is available here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLJ6VxOhEZw&t=1s>

The Declaration was promoted at various international gatherings including COP 28, and has received much support. It is now appropriate to build on the Declaration to develop practical proposals for achieving Climate Justice. This requires a rebalance of resources between communities creating carbon pollution in favour of those most adversely affected, so that appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures can be undertaken.

COP 28 made notable progress towards developing a global Loss & Damages funding mechanism, with in-principle agreements being reached between many of the carbon polluting countries. There have also been some discussions around how such funding might be allocated. However the work to date suggests a very cumbersome process that may exclude the possibility for small nations to present successful claims. There does not appear to have been any consideration given to how a Loss & Damages mechanism might apply to communities within the same country, for example addressing adverse climate impacts on remote Indigenous communities.

EAROPH is now convening the second Yidinji workshop on June 21 2024 at JCU campus in Cairns, to develop practical proposals that can be advocated to the Australian Government and other national and international stakeholders.

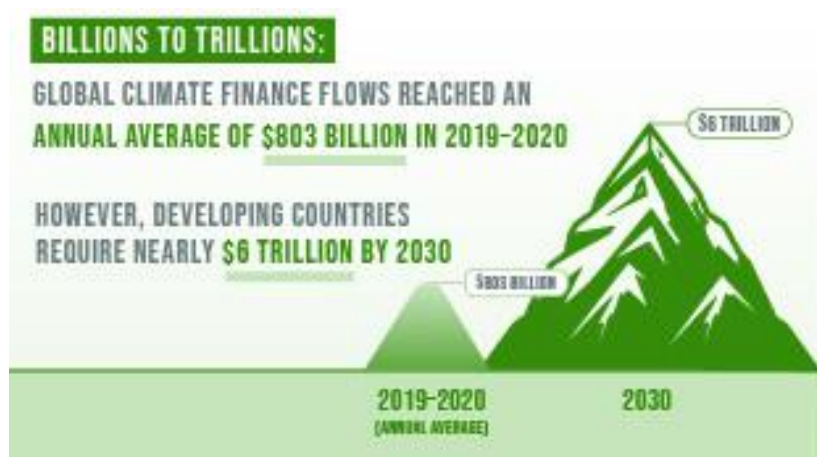
Background for developing the Yidinji Proposition

In November 2022, the The United Nations Climate Change Conference COP27 agreed to provide “loss and damage” funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters. This aims to address the impacts on communities whose lives and livelihoods have been ruined by the very worst impacts of climate change. In November 2023, COP28 operationalised the Loss and Damages Fund to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. USD661.39 million was pledged to the fund.

As part of the Paris Agreement in 2018, developed countries agreed to the goal of jointly mobilizing \$100 billion of “new and additional” funding—finance that is over and above what would have been provided otherwise—through various sources and financial flows in the context of meaningful climate change adaptation and mitigation actions. (<https://www.wgea.org/work-packages/work-package-3-wgea-focus-area-climate-finance/>)

SDG13 requires that countries Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts, and the SDG Report Special Edition 2023 referred to the UNFCCC analysis that found developing countries’ needs amount to nearly \$USD6 trillion by 2030 to meet their NDCs. The 2023 SDG Report said “Reconstructing climate finance delivery schemes and designing a new climate finance goal in 2024 are the next milestones to urgently improve both the quantity and the quality of climate finance going forward.” (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf> p 39)

Table 1: Sustainable Development Goal 13 (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>)



The Green Climate Fund, approved by COP17 in 2011, is the world's largest dedicated climate fund serving developing countries. Its funding of around USD 2–2.5 billion annually over the period 2020–2023 represents just a few percent of the beyond-USD 100 billion to be mobilized for developing countries annually, let alone the trillions in wider investment needs. As of 2024, the GCF has disbursed USD\$4.3 billion, with USD\$11.0 billion in projects now being implemented and a further \$USD13.9 billion committed. That's a total of \$USD53 billion in total for the period 2011 – 2024. Of the 253 projects supported, 106 are in the Asia-Pacific.

(<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/strategic-plan-gcf-2024-2027.pdf>)

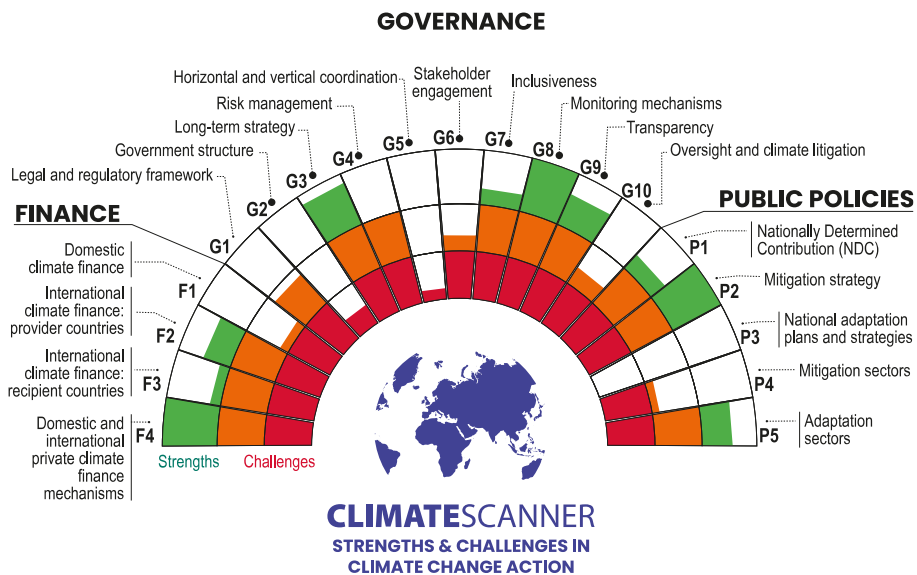
While multilateral agencies are setting up instruments to finance responses to climate change impact, donor countries have yet no agreed definition of climate finance, few countries have objectives associated with climate contributions and there is limited monitoring of overall contributions or financial flows.

Recipient Developing Countries also have no agreed definition of climate finance, few have objectives associated with climate finance contributions and it is rare that a country monitors the links between the climate finance and its strategic plan.

Similarly in North Queensland. Councils aren't routinely monitoring the services they provide, focusing instead on new works. And Queensland Treasury is not yet ready for government owned entities or councils to prepare climate-related financial disclosures. (<https://www.qao.qld.gov.au/blog/what-we-covered-our-2024-client-technical-update-event>). Rather, reporting on climate related risks and financial reporting is determined federally and starts with entities reporting under the Commonwealth Corporations Act 2001.

In addition to funds for adaptation and mitigation, the promise of funds to redress loss and damages sits within a context demanding recipients report the impact of climate in a way that satisfies funders, the media and the general public that funds so applied result in fewer loss and damages. This is costly for Pacific Island Countries, and not yet possible for local governments and communities.

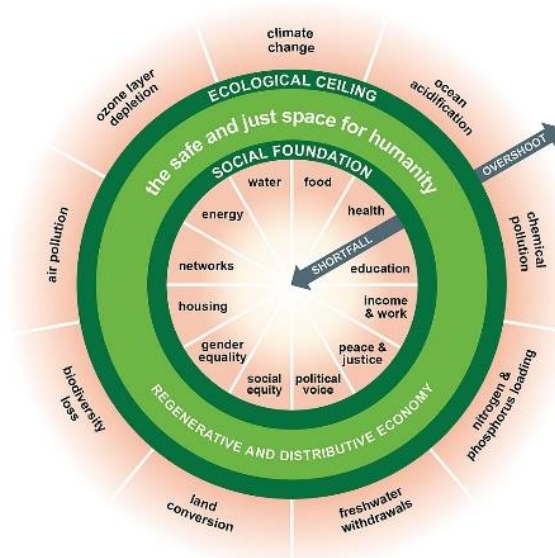
The ClimateScanner is an innovative rapid review method and a tool for assessing governments' actions to deal with climate change under three axes: governance, public policies, and finance. (<https://www.environmental-auditing.org/projects/climatescanner/>)



All these tools and funds are aimed at the national and international levels, and strengthening nations so that they can deliver/attract climate finance and comply with fund requirements. None are yet aimed to demonstrating how the funds are being applied locally within nations, in local government areas and within communities to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate changes. Locally is where the results will be delivered.

This workshop addresses the challenge of delivering of mitigation and adaptation measures as well as measure to counter loss and damages at the local level.

EAROPH is expanding the Yidinji Declaration to apply globally to First Nations peoples and Traditional Owners and to operationalize the implementation of climate justice. To put climate justice into practice, EAROPH is developing a Loss & Damages formula with the Doughnut Economy Action Lab (DEAL). The Doughnut concept is illustrated as follows, and aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals.



Work is underway to “unfur!” the doughnut to address the following.

Table 2: (c) Doughnut Economics Action Lab (DEAL)

LOCAL	OUTWARD GLOBAL IMPACT	INWARD GLOBAL IMPACT	
<p>Ecological ceiling How can the ecological health of this place be restored?</p>	<p>Ecological ceiling How can this place respect the health of the whole planet?</p>	<p>Ecological ceiling How is the ecology of this place affected by global human activity?</p>	ECOLOGICAL
<p>Social foundation How can all the people of this place thrive</p>	<p>Social foundation How can this place respect the wellbeing of all people</p>	<p>Social foundation How is the wellbeing of local people affected by global human activity?</p>	SOCIAL

The consideration of inward global impacts might then address:

- What are the adverse impacts of global human activity on local ecology?
- What are the adverse impacts of global human activity on the wellbeing of local people?
- What are the required mitigation, adaptation or compensatory (eg relocation) measures to achieve global justice?

The DEAL has already carried out research that enables some of the internal and external impacts to be quantitatively measured in ways that enable the performance of different countries to be compared. In addition, the idea of a framework for responsible rebalancing is emerging. This presents some exciting possibilities for incorporation in a “Loss & Damages framework.

Here is a great video for a deeper dive into this.

<https://doughnuteconomics.org/tools/exploring-national-doughnuts>

The following principles for a Just Global Rebalance are adapted from the Sharing Principles developed by the City of Amsterdam in applying the Doughnut Economics model to its city planning to compensate recipient developing countries for the impact the city has had on the climate.

1. Take account of both current and historical impacts affecting global ecological health (cumulative impacts over time) in providing compensation from high impact countries/settlements to highly impacted countries/settlements.
2. Rebalance with financial compensation to take account of the population size of countries/settlements adversely affected and their socioeconomic status.
3. Provide green and blue incentives for both the compensating and receiving countries/settlements to contribute to lowering or offsetting global greenhouse gas emissions.

In relation to Principle 1, some countries find it contentious to deal with legacy impacts, but ignoring them is contentious for others. A starting point may be to address current impacts while further consideration is given to addressing legacy impacts.

Another starting point for the rebalance would be to look at the main drivers of adverse climate change impacts, which may be readily capable of quantitative assessment. It is recognised that there may be global impacts from other activities undertaken by individual countries, for instance ozone depletion and overfishing, that are currently difficult to quantify. While it is difficult to apply a compensation formula to these just yet, there should be scope to address these in future.

We also need to include the impact of the world's plastics manufacture in the carbon accounting. As a result of putting carbon derived plastics into product value chains, with a large proportion ending up in waste, we are undermining both terrestrial and marine ecological health as well as human wellbeing. Incentives for switching to biodegradable materials are needed at the point of manufacture.

Another gap in assessing emissions impacts relates to military activities. There is increasing concern about the adverse impacts of the emissions of the world's militaries which countries have not yet been required to report.

While it is essential to agree on a method for allocating the resources from global funds to address Loss and Damages, any such method would also have other potential applications. Providing a formula for the rebalance of resources may be of use in relation to the various legal proceedings underway, making claims for compensation to reflect the adverse impacts of climate change both between and within different countries. At present the courts do not have a benchmark for awarding damages, so a well-founded formula might be useful to the courts.

On this basis a starting formula for the global rebalance might involve the following criteria.

- A. Annual contributions by each country to the global rebalance should reflect:
 - current actual carbon emissions over an agreed benchmark limit per capita
 - current carbon locked into plastics manufactured in that country.

- B. Allocation of resources to adversely affected countries and communities should be made on an annual basis to reflect:
 - current population size
 - socio-economic status (ranked according to an assessment of the Social Foundation in the Doughnut model)
 - ecological vulnerability (ranked according to the Ecological Limits in the Doughnut model)
 - net carbon emissions measured by level of per capita emissions minus national sequestration of carbon resulting from human activities.

Workshop structure

The workshop on 21 June will bring together a mix of Australian First Nations leaders and Pacific Island representatives as well as subject experts to develop practical proposals. It is recognized that there may be a need for ongoing discussions around particular topics, in which case a series of online workshops will be convened, starting with a webinar on Monday 24th June.

The agenda for the main workshop is proposed to cover each of the following topics. Each topic will be informed by brief presentations from experts in different fields followed by yarning circle/talanoa deliberations.

- Session 1: Introduction to Loss & Damages framework from COP 28
- Session 2. Pacific Islands' progress towards reversing loss and damages
- Session 3. Yarning circles on global actions of the Yidinji Declaration
- Session 4: Assessing needs, resources, constraints and opportunities for addressing loss and damages
- Session 5: Current work on reversing loss and damages.
- Session 6: Identifying practical pathways to climate justice for the Pacific and Australian First Nations peoples.