



How Can Climate Solutions Promote Inclusivity and Equity?

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» Research Questions Addressed

What are the equity-related risks, barriers, and opportunities associated with selected carbon mitigation technologies?

What recommendations can be offered to help ensure a more equitable transition to a low-carbon economy?

What educational, institutional, and policy interventions can help to advance equity across selected carbon solutions?

» Topic Overview

Carbon reduction technologies are not only critical tools for enabling climate action but also promising platforms for helping to remedy existing inequities. Deploying intentional and systematic efforts to ensure equitable access to the solutions and their benefits can also lead to greater scale in solution adoption. This report builds on the Drawdown Georgia Phase 1 multi-university research project that identified 20 high-impact carbon mitigation solutions for the state of Georgia and provided a preliminary examination of potential impacts and opportunities related to “beyond carbon” dimensions, such as equity. For this report, the team expanded its focus on equity by soliciting a broad range of stakeholder perspectives on equity issues associated with selected climate solutions. These solutions include: rooftop solar, mass transit, conservation agriculture, afforestation and silvopasture, and retrofitting. Stakeholder data collected from solution experts, change agents, and community members informed the report’s analyses and recommendations.

» Relevant Sectors

- Afforestation
- Agriculture
- Built environment
- Renewable energy
- Transportation

» Keywords

- Carbon
- Climate change
- Conservation agriculture
- Energy burden
- Equity
- Renewable energy
- Retrofitting
- Sustainable agriculture
- Under-resourced



» Highlights

Public outreach can increase awareness of and engagement in carbon reduction activities throughout Georgia communities.

Participation from historically underrepresented communities in all stages of research and implementation of solutions can help to ensure that equity is a central consideration.

Commitments from corporate and academic institutions can help to advance equity in the implementation of carbon solutions. Institutions can help to support focused climate and equity programming. They can also advance equity via procurement practices, workforce development opportunities, research, and education.



The founders of This Old Farmhouse GA, an historic farm homestead museum. Photo courtesy of Black Farmers' Network.

» Primary Findings

By engaging experts and stakeholders, this report addresses challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for advancing equity among selected carbon reduction solutions. The solutions are derived from the Drawdown Georgia research effort, and the report contributes to a deeper understanding of how equity considerations can be more fully integrated into climate action. The findings highlight barriers associated with: solution awareness; affordability; wealth inequities affecting communities with the greatest energy burden; racial inequities in access to loans for capital investment; gaps in rural broadband and mobility infrastructure; misalignment between the requirements and processes of governmental programs and communities with the greatest need; heirs' property land tenure that reflects historic racial discrimination; and policy, particularly with respect to scaling up solutions such as solar and conservation agriculture, as well as institutional food procurement practices that make sourcing from small farms to institutions very difficult.

» Implications for Sustainable Business

Businesses are increasingly focused on addressing climate change through a range of sustainability commitments, including an emphasis on the environmental, social, and governance framework (or "ESG"). Without a balanced and intentional focus across each ESG component and intersections between components (especially environmental and social dimensions), there is a significant risk that carbon mitigation technologies and solutions will be primarily accessible and of benefit to the affluent members of society. However, these solutions also offer an opportunity for inclusive innovation, wealth creation, and jobs during a transition to a low-carbon economy. Funders, corporations, academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations are encouraged to consider the report findings as they shape proposals and initiatives to advance carbon reduction solutions in Georgia. The findings may also be relevant to other states and organizations pursuing net zero targets.

» Link to Report

Scott, A., Sherrod, N., Forbes, L., Ranson, H., & Pavlin, S. (2022). Drawdown Georgia equity opportunities project (V. A. Heard, M. Oxman, & R. Watts Hull, Eds.). Drawdown Georgia Research Report. <https://issuu.com/gatechbiz/docs/final-equity-opportunities-report>

» Related Link

Brown, M. A., Dwivedi, P., Mani, S., & Polepeddi, L. (2021). A framework for localizing global climate solutions and their carbon reduction potential. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*. doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2100008118



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