COP30 and What Changes for Companies: Obligations, Opportunities, and Risks

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Authors

Fernanda A. Tanure

Marlus Oliveira

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COP30, held in Belém – a major city in northern Brazil and a gateway to the lower Amazon region – marked an important shift from negotiation to action. The conference focused on implementing climate commitments and updating international mechanisms for financing and monitoring.

The Belém Political Package was organized around three main pillars:

- strengthening climate transparency and reporting mechanisms;
- reviewing and enhancing mitigation targets for 2035; and
- reaching consensus on guidelines for international carbon markets, including cooperation between countries and minimum integrity standards.

While some of these measures depend on domestic implementation, they set regulatory expectations that will directly impact the private sector in the coming years.

Below we highlight the conference outcomes most likely to create new obligations, risks, and opportunities for businesses and investors in Brazil.

1. Advances in the International Carbon Credit Market

COP30 made significant progress in implementing Articles 6.2 and 6.4 of the Paris Agreement. The conference established:

1. clearer procedures for government authorization of internationally transferable mitigation outcomes (ITMOs);
2. guidelines to prevent double counting;
3. common integrity criteria and audit standards; and
4. a global, interoperable registry system.

Impact for companies: The international carbon market is expected to become more predictable, expanding the range of financeable projects and affording greater legal certainty to cross-border transactions. Companies seeking to generate or acquire carbon credits will need to comply with new standards for documentation, monitoring, and proof of additionality. Projects that fail to meet integrity requirements may lose market value or become ineligible for international transactions.

In anticipation of these changes, Bradesco – one of Brazil's largest universal banks – and BNDES – the country's economic and social development bank – have announced the creation of ECORA, a new carbon credit certifier expected to begin operations in mid-2026.

2. Unilateral Trade Measures (CBAM, Due Diligence, and Green Barriers)

To prevent environmental measures from being used as disguised trade barriers, COP30 broke new ground by formally establishing a forum to discuss the intersection of climate policy and international trade rules. This move reflects a growing trend: the expansion of unilateral climate-related trade measures, such as:

1. mandatory environmental due diligence requirements;
2. traceability standards for global supply chains;
3. carbon border adjustment mechanisms (CBAM); and
4. proof of zero deforestation for imports.

Although there is no global consensus on harmonizing these measures, the conference recognized their legitimacy when aligned with climate goals.

Impact for companies: Brazilian exporters – especially those in the steel, aluminum, cement, fuels, agribusiness, and pulp and paper sectors – must prepare for a business environment where carbon increasingly determines competitiveness. Companies that do not implement measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems, as well as mitigation targets, risk losing market share, facing carbon-related tariffs at their destination, or encountering market restrictions. Supply chains will be under pressure to provide granular traceability, starting with the primary producer.

3. Just Transition and Socio-Environmental Obligations

One of the most prominent themes at COP30 was the strengthening of the "just transition" concept, now explicitly included in climate policy implementation guidelines. The final text emphasizes:

1. sector-specific transition plans with social safeguards;
2. protection for workers and vulnerable communities; and
3. requirements for prior social engagement in low-carbon projects.

Impact for companies: Businesses in energy, mining, infrastructure, and heavy industry will need to demonstrate – often to investors – how their decarbonization strategies address social impacts, workforce training, productive inclusion, and mechanisms to mitigate risks for local communities. Increasingly, lenders and investors are expected to require just transition plans as a condition for financing, especially for projects involving energy transition or automation.

4. Gender Inclusion and Traditional Communities

COP30 reinforced the integration of gender issues, indigenous peoples, quilombolas, and other traditional communities into climate governance frameworks. The final agreement provides for:

1. mandatory participation of these communities in consultation processes;
2. clearer allocation of economic benefits from carbon and biodiversity projects; and
3. strengthened social safeguards as a condition for financing.

Impact for companies: Businesses operating in regions with significant community presence – such as renewable energy, bioeconomy, mining, infrastructure, and forestry – will face more structured requirements for stakeholder engagement. Failure to ensure adequate participation may lead to litigation, loss of financing, and challenges during international due diligence. Carbon projects involving land occupied by traditional communities will need to demonstrate fair benefit sharing and shared governance.

5. Climate Accountability and Regulatory Strengthening

COP30 introduced the Declaration on the Integrity of Climate Change Information, reinforcing a trend already underway in major markets: expanding corporate responsibility for climate disclosures, environmental commitments, and communications with investors and consumers. Regulators, market authorities, and international organizations are converging on stricter standards for transparency and integrity, increasing both legal and reputational risks for companies.

Impact for companies: Companies face new rules prohibiting vague environmental claims – such as “carbon neutral” statements without technical substantiation – and a greater risk of liability for climatewashing. In Brazil, these developments mean increased scrutiny from regulatory bodies and a higher likelihood of climate-related litigation. Businesses will need to ensure their reports are technically and legally validated, strengthen internal climate compliance policies, and improve governance and verification processes. These changes also raise the stakes for exposure to personal liability for officers and directors.

Conclusions

COP30 delivered important advances for the climate agenda. Some measures are already reflected in Brazilian legislation – such as the Future Fuel Law (Law 14.993/2024) – while others remain under discussion in Congress, including the National Policy on Critical and Strategic Minerals (Bill PL 2780/2024), or await regulation, such as the Brazilian Emissions Trading System (SBCE).

Even without a global commitment to phase out fossil fuels, Brazil is signaling its own path. The Presidential Order published on December 8, 2025, calls for a roadmap to a just and planned energy transition, with a gradual reduction in fossil fuel dependence and new financing mechanisms, including the creation of an Energy Transition Fund funded by revenues from oil and natural gas production. This initiative reinforces the private sector's role as a driver of change and raises expectations for its contribution to national climate goals.

It's clear that the climate agenda is now a central factor in competitiveness and governance. Companies that embrace these changes as opportunities – not merely obligations – will be better positioned to join resilient global supply chains, attract capital guided by ESG criteria, and reduce legal and reputational risks.

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Fernanda A. Tanure


Marlus Oliveira