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From COP26 to the Global Stocktake

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COP26 marked the beginning of the two-year process under Article 14 of the Paris Agreement, known as the Global Stocktake (GST)[1](#). Aiming at assessing the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Agreement and its long-term goals on mitigation, adaptation, and finance, this process will inform the updating and enhancing of countries' Nationally Determined Contributions, the provision of support, and international cooperation for climate action. As a key part of the ratchet-up mechanism of the Paris

Agreement, which could help countries understand better what is needed to increase ambition and action, we argue that instead of focusing solely on a gap analysis towards reaching the 1.5°C goal and the other long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, this process should focus on how to support short-term domestic action.

Beyond the gap analysis

Assessments made under the GST on the state of progress on greenhouse gas emission trends and targets, as well as the efforts made towards adaptation or meeting the financial commitments will be very important. They will provide convincing evidence to accelerate action in the immediate and short term, including the revision of NDCs, and provide robust and accurate information that the climate community and civil society public can use to mobilize and exert pressure.

However, such gap analysis will not be enough to accelerate climate ambition and action. For that, the GST should also focus on identifying what hinders and spurs action, understanding the conditions that make them happen, which could be i.e. political, social, economic, governance. A more granular and context-specific analysis of trends and progress of national and sectoral transformations will help identify the conditions for accelerating ambition.

Creating momentum for climate action

COP26 has highlighted the need for countries to quickly update their national plans, including as early as 2022. In this respect, the GST could:

- 1) Create the conditions for an open conversation on the **international enablers of national ambition**, as a key condition to unlock it. In most cases, country ambition is limited by the—implicit or explicit—assumptions about the international boundary conditions (on e.g., technology, trade, finance, etc.). Having an in-depth understanding of these conditions can help structure constructive discussions on international cooperation that should be enforced as a key requirement for national ambition.
- 2) Organize a process for **knowledge sharing and identification of best practices** across countries, based notably on concrete examples of actions already in place or being discussed, which could inspire other countries. Showcasing the variety of workable actions and policies could increase confidence in the possibility for committing to more ambitious targets and the understanding of the necessary policy actions and structural conditions to meet them.
- 3) Create space for **open dialogues** across different stakeholders to support better coordination of actions. This is notably critical to operationalize the [many announcements and coalitions made during COP26](#) and make sure that they are turned into real actions in the real-world economy, as they are key elements to drive change in country ambitions. In this regard, the GST could become a “clearing house” to crystallize such bilateral and multilateral agreements.
- 4) Facilitate **ownership** by a diversity of actors of the climate challenge and the risks and opportunities of the low-emission and resilient transition. The “collective” approach to the GST should indeed not be limited to the “international” scale but calls also for an engagement with actors of the transition at all scales, including with civil society.

Thinking ambition differently

Earlier this year, IDDRI coordinated a [report](#) with 40 experts, to assess the evolution of climate ambition in 26 countries and 3 hard-to-abate sectors. Its purpose is to take an approach similar to what has been highlighted above, thus offering a complementary perspective to climate ambition.

Considering climate ambition through the lens of underlying transformations forces a move away from a purely global perspective and relies on the adoption of a more granular approach based on country and individual sector perspectives. Thus, the report explores trends and progress on these transformations, as locally observed over the past years, notably since the Paris Agreement. The underlying rationale is that a good understanding and assessment of the past and current situation will inform the maturity of climate policy and its strengths and weaknesses. This 'backwards looking' approach can help identify where developments are going in the right direction, where they should be accelerated and where major tensions remain that should be addressed as a priority to avoid undermining the transition.

The report identifies country-by-country and sector-by-sector key [international enablers](#), and highlights cross-cutting messages emerging from these perspectives to identify the critical enablers emerging from this composite picture, such as the need for international cooperation. It is also an illustration of an implemented cross-cutting, bottom-up assessment of collective progress and projected ambition, that could serve as inspiration to the GST. As such, it provides an example of the type of cross-cutting information that should be considered to jointly assess the adequacy and the credibility of national contributions and their global aggregation. It also prepares the terms of the dialogue on what is needed to unlock or accelerate transformation, in particular, what necessitates more international cooperation.

Adaptation as another key component of the GST

Adaptation gained traction at COP26 with key discussions on finance and assessment approaches, with a view of contributing to long-term challenges towards ambitious climate action. How to assess adaptation progress and effectiveness on the ground is an important policy concern and a major scientific challenge. The COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact "calls upon the research community to further the understanding of global and local impacts of climate change, response options and adaptation needs", and asks the IPCC to produce by November 2022 a synthesis of the findings of its 2022 report (Working Group II). This call will undoubtedly trigger efforts by multiple partners to develop more specific methods to assess adaptation progress and with the aim of feeding the UNFCCC process, especially the GST, and evaluating progress towards reaching the Global Goal on Adaptation. The latter is at the heart of the [Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme](#) to support countries in communicating and measuring adaptation progress.

IDDRI's [GAP-Track approach](#) aims to contribute to understanding adaptation needs and argues that, in addition to national approaches and relevant reporting processes (Adaptation Communications, A-NDCs), a global perspective is needed to support the international community with a reference point and global adaptation priorities. Assessing global progress on adaptation using the GAP-Track approach could contribute to garnering an imperative momentum towards driving collective efforts in adaptation planning and implementation. The method will allow to highlight commonalities across countries in terms of adaptation progress/gaps, which is essential for creating an open conversation and knowledge sharing on adaptation. As evidenced at COP26, Parties, especially Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States and the African Group of Negotiators, voice that it is critical to advance the Global Goal on Adaptation, as an important international political instrument to trickle down support to vulnerable communities in the face of climate change impacts and ensure that adaptation is fully part of long-term strategies.

A collective, bottom-up assessment of climate action

Methodologies that embrace an in-country or in-sector granularity and bottom-up approach, and that highlight commonalities across those, such as IDDRI's "Ambition Report" and GAP-track approach, can provide means for reflection and action within the international climate community, and will be particularly important to inform focus areas for advancing an implementable ambition agenda.

We believe that such approaches should be the core of how the Global Stocktake is designed and implemented across 2022 and 2023. Thus, it would maintain its collective nature, not focusing on any specific country, but would present more composite bottom-up pictures that will help identify the conditions for accelerating ambition and action. This could lead to informing more ambitious NDCs, but would also help catalyze action on the ground.

¹ As agreed in the Katowice Rulebook in 2018 (<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/katowice-climate-package>), the Global Stocktake will be constituted of three main parts: information collection; technical assessment of this information; and consideration of outputs. The co-chairs of the technical bodies of the UNFCCC gave some pointers (https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/REV_Non-paper_on_Preparing_for_GST1_forSBs_15Sept.pdf) earlier in the year on this structure, notably on the guiding questions that should inform the whole process.

