

How to organise a Global Stocktake that enhances national climate action and international cooperation

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The Paris Agreement (PA) marked a shift in the approach to the collective climate problem, moving away from burden sharing to cooperative approaches. Yet, the practical translation of this paradigm shift in enhanced international cooperation is still limited in scale and scope, despite its potential for more ambitious climate targets and actions (Waisman *et al.*, 2021).

To foster cooperation and ratchet up countries' ambition, the PA established the Global Stocktake (GST), a mechanism aimed at assessing progress and inform new ambition, with its first round taking place in 2022 and 2023. Its role is to establish a feedback mechanism connecting concrete actions and short-term targets at the national level, as described in Nationally Determined Contributions, with the overall long-term targets of the PA defined at a global scale, and help identify opportunities for international cooperation.

The GST process has been designed with this objective in mind. But its capacity to deliver effectively the required inputs will depend on whether the discussion actually go in depth into the disruptions needed to reach decarbonisation, and what is impeding them. For that, we suggest that it focuses on systemic transformations and their international enablers, which can be acted upon following the GST.

Based on IDDRI's participation in the official GST and experience in international processes, this *Policy Brief* provides insights on the GST process, highlighting pitfalls and avenues for improvement, and proposes recommendations for the coming discussions, grounded in our ongoing research and in-country engagement.

KEY MESSAGES

The Global Stocktake (GST) is a critical instrument to operationalize the spirit of solidarity and mutual support for both ambitious climate action and strengthened international cooperation enacted by the Paris Agreement.

Contributing to this goal requires, from the cyclical GST process, discussions to focus on international enablers of systems transitions compatible with global carbon neutrality.

An effective collective identification of enablers requires that countries, informed by their Long-Term Strategies and related Nationally Determined Contributions, discuss their current barriers for the implementation of systemic mitigation and adaptation transformations aligned with global carbon neutrality. This methodology can provide a strong link between the international discussion on the enablers and the political agenda in key countries.

Operationalising opportunities for international cooperation goes beyond the mandate of the GST, which could however issue a call at COP28 for some follow-up on the different cooperation opportunities identified, which could be taken up within or outside the UNFCCC process.

1. DESCRIBING AND ASSESSING THE GLOBAL STOCKTAKE PROCESS SO FAR

International climate discussions have a great potential to increase ambition and cooperation between actors. And the Global Stocktake (GST) plays a key role in the Paris Agreement (PA) and its mechanism to ratchet up ambition and cooperation. The period between 2022 and 2023 marks the first time this stocktake is being implemented, and its design will be very important to ensure useful outcomes, but also to set the path for the future rounds.

The first GST is being organised in three main phases: (1) information is collected from parties and non-parties with the objective to gather the latest science and ideas on mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation. This information is then synthesized into a synthesis paper; (2) in the Technical Dialogues, parties and other non-party stakeholders discuss on the basis of the synthesized information. Another synthesis is produced based on the dialogues. These two steps are repeated three times: the first completed in June 2022 with the technical dialogues in Bonn, and the second is underway with the technical dialogue taking place at COP27; (3) the outputs will be considered in a political moment at COP28 that will give a clear signal to parties and other stakeholders to increase ambition and action.

The Technical Dialogues have been organised in three different settings. They start and finish on a plenary mode, where the instructions for the sessions are clarified and stakeholders are welcomed to react. Then, there are two engagement sessions. One is the roundtables, structured around the thematic areas of the GST (mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation), where parties and non-party stakeholders discuss broad topics; in the first Technical Dialogue, these led to quite abstract statements and had limited interaction. The second format is the World Café¹, which makes use of an informal setting for participants to explore topics across the scope of the GST, in a larger room with several small tables, and participants can rotate and circulate every 30 or 45 minutes; this format was quite praised by all stakeholders, since it allowed more dynamic and deeper discussions.

Overall, the interactions that took place during the first Technical Dialogue were very constructive, but many highlighted the need to move from “what” the gaps are to “how” to close them, getting closer to identifying challenges, solutions and best practices. The 2nd Technical Dialogue at COP27 will therefore be organised with some slight changes: after an initial presentation in a plenary format, the roundtables will move to breakout sessions to allow more “focused and productive” discussions; the GST has a new section called “focused exchanges”, which will discuss intersections across the different thematic areas of the GST; and the World Café format will be repeated, adding eight tables related to system transformations (energy, transport, industry, agriculture, health, land, water, and urban). According to

the co-facilitators' note², “the focus on systems transformations will facilitate space for dynamic, interactive exchange between Parties and observers [...], specific implementation opportunities and challenges in each of these systems and sectors in an integrated manner.”

However, despite these organisational changes, the current stocktake process could fall short of its objectives, as the World Cafés represent only a very small part of the whole Technical Dialogues, and keeping the usual “mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation” divide might make it more difficult to identify actionable solutions. We instead suggest that, instead, the GST unfolds discussions around systemic transformations and their international enablers.

2. INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION ON INTERNATIONAL ENABLERS TO ACCELERATE CLIMATE TRANSFORMATIONS

Identifying system transformations and their enablers in a bottom-up manner

Ambitious 1.5 °C pathways require rapid, far-reaching transformations across all systems and sectors, i.e. energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), industry (IPCC, 2018; see examples in Table 1). Their implementation requires gathering a broad set of conditions. For the purpose of this brief, we refer to these conditions as *enablers*, defined by the IPCC as “conditions that enhance the feasibility of adaptation and mitigation options” and including finance, technological innovation, strengthening policy instruments, institutional capacity, multi-level governance and changes in human behaviour and lifestyles (IPCC, 2022). These enablers could be national, e.g. depending on national actors' actions, or international, e.g. depending on actions by international institutions or companies, or by groups of other countries (and often require cooperation between a subset of these actors).

National strategies, presented in revised LTSs and NDCs, are describing with more or less details how these system transformations take place in their country and gather elements on their related national and international enablers. These governmental analyses, and other analyses carried out by national actors, could provide relevant evidence for an international discussion. This bottom-up approach facilitates and ensures ownership and leadership in countries in the implementation.

At the global level, an effective collective identification of enablers requires that countries, informed by their LTS and related NDCs, discuss their current barriers for the implementation of systemic mitigation and adaptation transformations aligned with global carbon neutrality (Fazekas *et al.*, 2022). This

¹ <https://theworldcafe.com/>

² https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/GST%20TD1.2%20Information%20Note_20221007.pdf

methodology can provide a strong link between the international discussion on the enablers and the political agenda in key countries.

Using enablers in international climate discussions

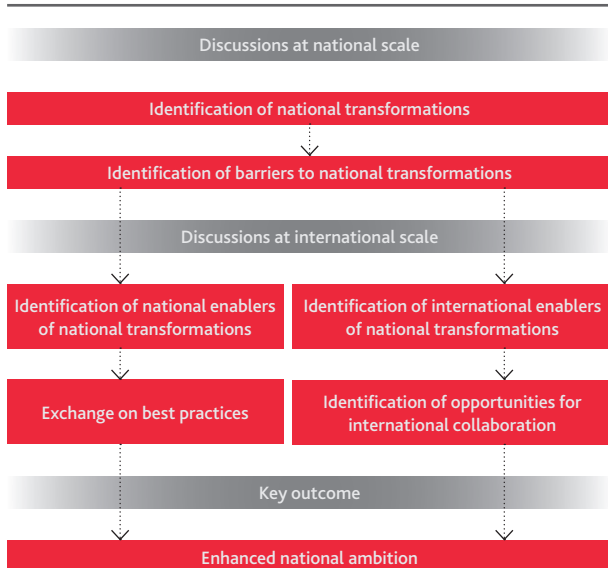
International climate dialogues can make use of both national and international enablers to support increases in national climate ambition.

For national enablers, international climate dialogues can provide a space for national actors to compare experiences and share best practices on how to reach domestic agreement on the main transformations to pursue and the actions that can trigger these transformations.

Regarding international enablers, international climate dialogues can contribute to the identification of international enablers, given that they bring together actors from different countries and international actors. However, this requires that the international climate dialogues organise discussions around sectoral and systemic transformations for global carbon neutrality and their related enablers. Second, once the transformations and their enablers have been identified, they should move to formulating concrete opportunities for international cooperation. This requires broad stakeholder discussions to identify the actors and actions who must effectively leverage an international enabler, and the conditions under which key actors will agree to pursue identified actions.

Figure 1 illustrates schematically the process of moving from the identification of national transformations, through the identification of their barriers and enablers, to their potential role in international climate dialogues, whilst showing at what political scale the discussions should take place.

FIGURE 1. Translating national transformations into opportunities for international cooperation and exchanges on best practices through national and international discussions.



We illustrate this framework with two examples.

The number of renewable energy production assets should increase in all national energy mixes for achieving global decarbonisation. However, many countries, in particular emerging and developing countries, are facing difficulties in providing all investments from national actors. It is therefore unsurprising that recent research shows that facilitating access and reducing cost of international capital for renewable energy investments is a key international enabler of this national systemic transformation (DDP, 2021).

Announced at COP26 last year, the South African Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) between South Africa, the USA, the UK, France, Germany and the EU provides financing to support decarbonisation in South Africa, in particular for the public energy provider to reduce the share of coal and increase the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix; as such, it shows how discussions at an international scale can identify opportunities for international collaboration around international enablers.

Table 1 proposes examples of key systemic transformations and their related international enablers, inspired by the IPCC AR6 (2022). The table does not seek to provide an exhaustive list of international enablers for each transformation, but rather provide a few for illustration. The mapping of key transformations and their international enablers should be continued, and could serve as a guide to structure the GST discussion around the implementation of international enablers.

TABLE 1. Illustration of key mitigation and adaptation transformations and related international enablers

Systemic transformations	Examples of International enablers
Phasing out fossil fuel electricity generation and accelerate carbon-free generation through renewable energy sources (IPCC - Chap 6 Energy Systems, 2022)	Limiting access to and increasing the cost of international capital for fossil fuel energy investments Facilitating access to and reducing cost of international capital for renewable energy investments and power distribution and transmission investments Sharing planning capacities and good practices for the integration of a high-level of intermittent renewable energy sources in power grids
Reorganise the structure of business value chains to reduce long-distance transport and related energy demand (IPCC - Chap 10 Transport, 2022)	1. Increasing international labour standards to reduce international wage costs differential 2. Increasing international transport costs through environmental requirements for international transport and switch to zero-emission fuels 3. Developing international transparency standards on value chains' impacts on Sustainable Development Goals
Conserving forests from deforestation and degradation to conserve carbon stocks, biodiversity and resilient ecosystems (IPCC - Ch. 7 AFOLU, 2022)	1. An international system for the payment of environment and ecosystem services, compensating landowners for preserving carbon- and biodiversity rich ecosystems. 2. Preferential trade mechanisms to require traceability and proof of origin of agricultural and forestry products, in order to penalise or ban trade in products from illegally deforested areas.

Despite some very promising progress, discussions under the GST could still make it difficult for actors to extract learnings that bring enhanced climate action and more international cooperation. To achieve its goals, we argue that the GST should take stock of the implementation of international enablers of transformations required for Paris-compatible pathways. International enablers should then be pointed out, based on country-led identification of net-zero pathways' transformations, alongside the actions required to leverage the enablers. On this basis, international climate discussions should focus on how to leverage opportunities for enhanced international collaboration to support ambitious system transformations at national level.

However, the abovementioned modifications in terms of its focus and organisation (section 1) are insufficient for the GST to host discussions about the opportunities for international collaboration around international enablers of national systemic transformations. We therefore suggest specific practical recommendations for the future iterations of the Information Collection and Technical Dialogue:

- The Information Collection and synthesis should be organised around systemic transformations and their international enablers. These should emerge from national assessments, to ensure anchoring of global discussions in domestic realities, therefore countries should be encouraged to conduct and submit such analyses. The transformations and enablers identified could be used to structure and organise the coming information collection and the synthesis reports led by the Secretariat and the constituted bodies. This structuring would provide more in-depth and actionable information to foster an informed conversation in the Technical Dialogues. Therefore, the third round of the Technical Dialogues should be organised to discuss a) the necessary transformations; b) their national enablers (for experience sharing); and c) their international enablers, in order to come to agreements on the international collaboration necessary to leverage international enablers.
- A stronger connection is needed between the roundtable discussions on mitigation and adaptation on the one hand, and means of implementation (MOI) on the other hand. Ideally, the mitigation and adaptation discussions should define the required transformations, which would give a clear agenda for the MOI roundtable, which could discuss the

means required to implement the transformations defined in the other two streams, helping concretise and bring specific arguments to the MOI discussion. In this way, the discussion on international enablers and the actions required to leverage them, would fall under the MOI roundtable.

- Once the Technical Dialogues have identified the systemic transformations and the enablers necessary to make them happen, this will naturally highlight opportunities for international cooperation. Operationalising these opportunities for cooperation goes beyond the mandate of the GST. However, the GST could help identify the necessary high-level political negotiations in order to find an agreement that would probably entail sharing the risks of transition, sharing the negative or positive impacts or the benefits of these transformations. For example, the GST could issue a call at COP28 that asks for some follow-up on the different cooperation opportunities identified, which could be taken up within or outside the UNFCCC process.

RESOURCES

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