

# Unpacking the Paris Agreement Global Stocktake's lessons to inform the future Global Biodiversity Framework's Global Review

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The 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) marked a milestone with the completion of the first Global Stocktake (GST). This process, aimed at assessing collective progress towards achieving the aims of the Paris Agreement, offers valuable insights and lessons that can inform the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as it moves towards establishing its modalities and process for the first Global Review (GBR) of progress towards the achievement of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). What are the lessons from the first UNFCCC's GST? How can the methodologies and strategies employed in the GST inspire the CBD's efforts in transparency and accountability?

## KEY MESSAGES

Designing the biodiversity Global Review demands a proactive and impactful approach. It is not just about holding Parties collectively accountable to the GBF; it is about deliberating on the review's impacts, functions, and objectives. Beyond monitoring, it should foster ambition, learning, support, and facilitate long-term implementation of the GBF.

The review can serve multiple functions to that end: guiding ambition and implementation, informing essential actors, fostering international cooperation, empowering civil society and biodiversity within ministries, and establishing momentum for long-term goals. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the main instruments for implementing the GBF and national reports are the basis for the review process led by the COP, but the Global Review should add value and adopt an encompassing approach to include factors that significantly impact actual practices or policies at many levels, in accordance with the whole-of-society and whole-of government approaches to include factors that significantly impact actual practices or policies at many levels.

The overarching objective of the Global Review should be to send clear signals on ambition, progress, and different ways and solutions to strengthen the implementation of the GBF. This

could be done through the assessment of concrete gaps for specific sectors or much-needed transformations in the real economy. The Global Review can be taken up as a reference, guiding conversations for further improvements in NBSAPs and COP decisions.

To ensure the robustness and relevance of the review process to that end, certain modalities need to be carefully considered and implemented. This includes the preparatory and technical phases to build credibility and produce a robust technical report. Moreover, integrating technical dialogues and foresight scenarios can enhance the effectiveness of the review, ensuring that it remains innovative, adaptive and forward-looking. An inclusive approach is also necessary, ensuring broad participation and the incorporation of multiple perspectives from Parties and experts from many fields and regions, ultimately supporting some kind of creative process to identify and showcase collective solutions.

Recommendations for efficiency and tailored approaches need to be adopted by COP16 at the latest. The first iteration of the review will begin in 2025 and could adopt a pragmatic yet ambitious approach, and focus on specific needs and gaps, such as delays in planning and reporting, and resource mobilization or specific sectors.

# 1. INTRODUCTION TO CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL REVIEWS

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## 1.1. The Paris Agreement's Global Stocktake under the UNFCCC

The Global Stocktake (GST) was established at COP21 in 2015 and its modalities defined through the Katowice Rulebook. Conducted every five years, its first iteration was finalized at COP28 in 2023, at a moment when there was a political call for the need for collective 'course correction' and accelerated action to have a chance to keep the 1.5°C temperature limit. The GST aims to assess collective progress towards the Paris Agreement's long-term goals, including mitigating climate change, enhancing adaptation efforts, and mobilizing necessary support and finance "in the light of equity and best available science." It synthesizes knowledge and data from various sources to identify gaps, share best practices, and inform future policies, ensuring efforts align with the ambitious targets to limit climate change.

The first GST began with an information collection period from November 2021 to June 2023, involving national reports, contributions from international bodies, and non-party stakeholders, with a key input from the IPCC 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report, timed to be relevant to the GST. This data was compiled into a [GST Information Portal](#), underscoring a commitment to transparency and accessibility. The technical assessment (June 2022-2023) focused on evaluating the collective implementation efforts of the Paris Agreement.

This phase featured three technical dialogues, facilitating discussions among Parties, experts, and observers, structured around guiding questions. The final phase of the GST was the political 'consideration of outputs,' meant to translate politically the findings from the [technical assessment](#), starting in the second half of 2023 and culminating in a high-level segment at COP28 and with a final COP28 GST Decision. The '[UAE Consensus](#)' aims to translate technical insights into actionable political signals for States (to be reflected in their updated 2025 Nationally Determined Contributions), and real-economy actors.

## 1.2. The CBD's Global Review

The Global Biodiversity Review (GBR), adopted under [Decision 15/6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) at COP15, was established to evaluate global progress towards the goals and targets set by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). This review will assess the implementation of national strategies and action plans, measuring advancements towards all [targets](#). Although foundational elements of this review mechanism have been established, detailed modalities and specific methodologies for comprehensive evaluation are still under discussion, expected to be considered at SBI-4 and adopted at COP16. These components will be critical in shaping the scope, effectiveness, and future direction of the biodiversity GBR of progress.

## 1.3. Importance of these reviews

These collective opportunities to assess progress on implementation, make high-level decisions and consider future actions by the COP are essential to achieve the objectives of the conventions, including providing adequate international cooperation and ensuring countries' success in implementing their national plans. Their effectiveness depends on multiple factors, including their conduct, scientific rigor, thoroughness of data collection, and political will to translate technical insights into bold ambitious political action. This reflective exercise prompts critical questions, with the GBF 2030 deadline fast approaching: What is the status of implementation and aggregated ambition? What steps must we take to fill identified gaps? To ensure clarity and effectiveness, the modalities of a GBR should clearly define its scope, the procedures involved, the participants, and the timelines.

## 1.4. Preliminary impacts of COP28's GST Decision

In the run-up to COP28, scientific inputs revealed that the world is not on track to meet the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal. This triggered a global call for urgent and intensified mitigation efforts, emphasizing the need for deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, reflected in the [COP28 GST decision \(paragraph 28\)](#). [Key directives include tripling of renewable energy and phasing down/out fossil fuels](#), though the agreement fell short of a complete phase-out. It however marks a significant acknowledgment of the necessity to shift away from polluting energy sources. The GST decision may have influenced discussions, leading to the [G7 Environment Joint Statement](#), where industrialized economies pledged to set a deadline to phase out coal and support the global transition away from fossil fuels, sending a positive signal to developing countries requiring more flexibility in this regard.

The first GST is expected to spur ambitious, 1.5°C-aligned emission reduction targets and domestic policies in the upcoming round of NDCs by 2025, even if it is not a foregone conclusion whether governments will take up the conclusions at the needed level. This involves translating domestically the COP28 goal to triple renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency improvements by 2030. The GST recognized the substantial gap between financial commitments and the trillions needed for developing countries' clean energy transitions and adaptation efforts and emphasized the importance of reforming the multi-lateral financial architecture and creating innovative sources critical for delivering necessary funding.

A missed opportunity was to more comprehensively address biodiversity, even as science has been clear that achieving the climate goal is contingent on achieving biodiversity outcomes as enshrined in the GBF, and vice-versa.<sup>1</sup> While the GST COP28

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC-IPBES Co-Sponsored Biodiversity and Climate Change Workshop Report (2021), H.-O. Pörtner, *et al.* (2023). Overcoming the coupled climate and biodiversity crises and their societal impacts. *Science*.

Decision mentions the need to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030, it fell short of providing fuller coherence between collective climate and biodiversity action, including, calling to collectively correct over-dependence on land-based Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR)<sup>2</sup> in NDCs and long-term plans. Interestingly, the second iteration of the GST should conclude in 2028, which may coincide with the preparation phase of the second biodiversity GBR (culminating at COP19 in 2030). It presents an opportunity for synergies: by aligning certain aspects of both reviews, such as shared dialogues, we can enhance the effectiveness of both processes. This proactive planning could lead to more integrated and comprehensive global environmental reviews, fostering stronger interlinkages between climate and biodiversity.

## 1.5. Reflecting on the GST's first iteration

Reflecting on the first GST process, it is of vital importance to delve into its intricacies to ascertain what lessons can be learned and applied. It is crucial to assess which aspects of the GST were successful, identify the challenges encountered, and consider how these lessons can inform the creation of a robust, effective, and inclusive GBR mechanism for biodiversity. While the CBD and UNFCCC operate under different frameworks and objectives, they share a **common goal: to assess and accelerate progress toward environmental targets**. Notably, the Paris Climate Agreement does not prescribe specific numerical global targets, allowing for flexibility in national commitments. In contrast, the CBD's GBF sets explicit targets for 2030, establishing a somehow more prescriptive while flexible path for biodiversity efforts. However, the upcoming GBR under the CBD should play a crucial role not only in assessing how the aggregation of targets and distribution of efforts are ultimately supporting the achievement of 2050 goals via models and scenarios for instance, but more importantly in identifying gaps and collectively learn and brainstorm on ways to fill them and where global collaboration is needed to unlock further ambition. Thus, while the outcomes of these reviews may slightly differ, both processes are instrumental in delivering key messages to the international community. These messages can provide a critical chance for countries and all stakeholders to recalibrate and strengthen their environmental commitments and actions towards global goals.

## 2. DESIGNING THE FUNCTION(S) OF THE GLOBAL REVIEW

Adopting a proactive and impactful approach is essential for the GBR to be of added value. While some goals, like supporting monitoring and review processes or underlining the lack of ambition may be straightforward, the review should also facilitate long-term implementation effectively and be built to that end.

<sup>2</sup> Land Gap Report (2023); Deprez *et al.* (2024). 'Sustainability limits needed for CO<sub>2</sub> removal', *Science*.

**A. Sending clear signals.** The review and its "global report" can formulate recommendations or actions, endorsed through a COP decision and high-level summit, to convey strong signals and make concrete requests. This could entail directing actions towards specific sectors or addressing identified gaps, thereby encouraging transformative pathways or actions. The GST's first iteration indicated a shift in global climate governance towards more targeted and sector-specific action, as highlighted by the need for sectoral transitions.<sup>3</sup>

**B. Informing "responsible" stakeholders.** Transparency mechanisms play a crucial role in informing actors responsible for implementing initiatives and allocating resources, such as national authorities obviously, but also donor countries, development banks, and public and private investors at all levels. By providing clear information, transparency fosters a sense of responsibility and solidarity among stakeholders, and it also serves as a tool to address the accountability gap,<sup>4</sup> ultimately improving decision-making, especially if solutions or innovations are put forward during the definition of signals.

**C. Putting challenges under the spotlight.** The review process can empower civil society organizations (CSOs) to engage in implementation and constructive criticism, thus holding Parties accountable for their commitments at domestic levels. CSOs can leverage information from global reviews to influence actions through advocacy, position papers, lobbying, and social campaigns. CSOs often serve as data providers through their field projects and assist countries in achieving their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action plans (NBSAPs). Providing information to international fora, and using information arising from global reviews, CSOs both support and urge Parties to progressively enhance ambition and implementation through non-confrontational strategies.<sup>5</sup>

**D. Evaluating the pace of implementation and establishing momentum for long-term goals.** This involves progressively bridging the gap between national targets or plans and global goals. This principle is somewhat akin to what occurs in the GST, where there is a function to 'set the pace'<sup>6</sup> for gradually narrowing the disparity between NDCs and Long-Term Strategies (LTS). A similar progression could also apply to the GBF, aiming to systematically reduce the divide between collective targets and global 2050 goals, ultimately underlining the necessity to elaborate nature-positive long-term pathways.

Currently, the scope and intent of Decision 15/6 do not specify the purpose or function of the GBR comprehensively. Parties must ensure a clear vision for the review, considering

<sup>3</sup> Obergassel, O. *et al.* (March 2024). NDC Aspects – Lessons Learnt for the Global Stocktake [https://www.ndc-aspects.eu/sites/default/files/2024-04/NDC%20ASPECTS\\_D6-4\\_Global\\_Stocktake\\_20240326.pdf](https://www.ndc-aspects.eu/sites/default/files/2024-04/NDC%20ASPECTS_D6-4_Global_Stocktake_20240326.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Rankovic, A. (April 2021). Inventing a geopolitics of effort for biodiversity <https://www.iddri.org/fr/publications-et-evenements/billet-de-blog/inventer-une-geopolitique-de-leffort-pour-la-biodiversite>

<sup>5</sup> Ulloa, A.M. (2023). Accountability as Constructive Dialogue: Can NGOs Persuade States to Conserve Biodiversity? *Global Environmental Politics* 2023; 23 (1): 42–67.

<sup>6</sup> Dagnet, Y. *et al.* (September 2020). World Resources Institute. Part of the iGST Designing a Robust Stocktake Discussion Series.

both current and future barriers, while maintaining a collective learning and informative rather than prescriptive approach. Additionally, the review should exhibit foresight proposing transformative actions over time. Leveraging existing initiatives and structures, while progressively developing its own identity and benefits, will be crucial in ensuring the effectiveness of the GBR.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE THE ROBUSTNESS AND RELEVANCE OF THE PROCESS

As we navigate the tight schedule leading to the first global biodiversity review in 2025-2026, culminating at COP17, it is crucial to underline lessons regarding concrete modalities.

#### 3.1. Make the technical and preparatory phases credible

The preparatory and technical phases are foundational for credibility and robustness. Insights from the GST underscore the success of science-based policy and technical dialogues, but caution against information overload. Emphasizing comprehensive and inclusive data collection from many sources is vital, albeit challenging due to the sheer volume of reports. Similar comprehensive preparation for the biodiversity review can bolster its foundation. Careful considerations should be made to support this process, by the Secretariat and other knowledge platforms or regional capacity-building centers. Acknowledging resource and time constraints, it is essential to involve key organizations. The role of scientific and technical platforms, akin to the GST's involvement of the International Energy Agency (IEA) which integrated technical dialogues even at higher 'political' levels, is crucial. Identifying equivalent platforms for biodiversity, such as BIOFIN, UNEP, FAO, or convening power from Party-led initiatives,<sup>7</sup> as well as non-state reporting<sup>8</sup> could greatly improve the results of the GBR. Some platforms could facilitate continuous dialogue and engagement outside formal meetings, thereby enhancing inclusivity and transparency even further, like the Independent Global Stocktake (iGST) has for

<sup>7</sup> For instance the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership or the High-Ambition Coalition for Nature and People

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.pbl.nl/en/publications/accountability-of-commitments-by-non-state-actors-in-the-cbd-post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework>

instance coordinated submissions from CSOs and enhanced the review's depth and breadth.

#### 3.2. The importance of an inclusive and participatory approach

Inclusivity is of paramount importance; the GST's experience reveals challenges faced by some developing countries due to resource constraints.<sup>9</sup> Successful inclusion of diverse stakeholders in the GST underscores the facilitation process's importance for meaningful engagement. Replicating this at the national and regional levels is crucial. For the GBR, mechanisms ensuring broad participation, including indigenous peoples, local communities, and non-state actors, are imperative. To address time and resource constraints, the Secretariat suggests that the open-ended forum supports the GBR process, which could emphasize openness to various organizations. Beyond suggesting mechanisms for broad participation, it might be useful to propose specific frameworks or models for engaging underrepresented groups.

#### 3.3. Make the review actionable

Achieving a balanced actionable focus is paramount for the success of the global biodiversity review process. While the GST's synthesis report was scientifically robust, efforts are needed to ensure technical and scientific messages diffuse into high-level political decisions. Plus, drawing from the experience of the GST, which emphasized mitigation strategies to align with the Paris Agreement and inform NDCs, it is evident that disaggregation is essential for clarity on implementation steps. While the GST provided clear signals, there was a lack of specificity regarding pathways to achieve these targets, even though progress has been made towards setting specific targets, indicating a more focused approach towards low-emission systems.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, there was limited emphasis on addressing gaps in international cooperation, such as finance, capacity-building, and technology transfer. Thus, for the biodiversity review process, it is imperative to ensure a comprehensive approach that delineates actionable steps and addresses needs and enablers for international collaboration to achieve the GBF.

<sup>9</sup> Ngwadla, X. (2023). Status quo analysis on African engagement and perspectives on the UNFCCC GST.

<sup>10</sup> Obergassel, O. et al. (March 2024). NDC Aspects – Lessons Learnt for the Global Stocktake.

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