

Submission to the UNFCCC on the Approach to the Consideration of Outputs Phase of the first Global Stocktake

Feb 15, 2023

About

We are pleased to submit brief reflections on the approach to the “Consideration of Outputs” phase of GST1 (“GST-CO”). This work builds on previous research done by the signatories to this memo and others, and is organized below into “Content” and “Procedural” recommendations.

Content Recommendations

Based on previous research we recommend the following approaches to make the results of the GST as impactful as possible.

First, we recommend that outputs themselves should take the format of:

- I. A **formal CMA decision** fully endorsing the findings of the GST, and urging Parties to take the findings into consideration when revising and implementing their NDCs. The negotiated CMA decision should incorporate key political messages negotiated by Parties and recommendations from the high-level events; identify opportunities for strengthening action and enhancing support; and deliver strong messages to strengthen transparency and accountability. The negotiated text can be thematically structured, including commitments and recommendations for strengthening climate action and scaling up support across the thematic areas of the GST. The CMA decision should also urge non-Party stakeholders (NPS) to consider the findings in their climate plans and action, and invite the work of the IPCC and wider research community to inform future GSTs and fill research gaps identified during the current GST.
- II. A **high-level political declaration** by stakeholders, including NPS, as an output of a series of high-level dialogue events (described in more detail in “Procedural” section below).
- III. A **technical summary and/or annex**, identifying concrete opportunities for strengthening ambition and action in key sectors and themes under mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation and support. This can include policy options, guidance on science-informed time frames and benchmarks, good practices and solutions, and enabling conditions in key sectors and themes. The technical annex can also highlight linkages to actors or initiatives with relevant on-going work.

Second, we suggest that the content of the outputs include the following. While we have more to say on thematic priorities from a scientific standpoint, we have withheld these given the aim of this particular call for inputs.

- Outputs should be **oriented toward actionable solutions**, not simply a restatement of gaps. Though it is important to identify and acknowledge remaining gaps – in climate action, support, and ambition, as well as information gaps – what is more pressing is to identify options and recommendations for *how* these gaps can be addressed, and to agree on the urgent need to resolve them.
- Given the pressing need for sectoral transformations, outputs should **emphasize a sectoral approach in key and high-emitting sectors**. Organizing the political phase of the GST by sector would deliver on two main functions of the outputs of the political phase: sharing knowledge and creating momentum to enhance collective ambition and support. The approach would allow for engaging non-Party stakeholders and for discussing systemic transformations and enablers, as many stakeholders (NGOs, intergovernmental organizations such as the IEA and some UN specialized agencies such as IMO and ICAO) focus on a specific sector rather than on a thematic area. Outputs organized by sector/key system transformations may be better-suited to inform Parties in enhancing their NDCs, as well as in enhancing international cooperation given the frequent sectoral focus of both. There could be specific guiding questions, meetings, and tailored outputs that address key sectors. This would require that results of the technical phase are available in a format that allows for structuring future work along these lines.
- Outputs and GST events should retain **a balanced, equity-rooted, approach to areas under the GST**, including sufficient attention to loss and damage as well as response measures, and considering all work “in the light of equity” as mandated in 19/CMA.1. A comprehensive and equity-based approach to the GST will lend it a broad base of legitimacy among Parties and other stakeholders.
- Outputs should be **clear and practical, enabling Parties and NPS to translate them into straightforward guidance** for the national and regional policymakers. The technical annex can provide information on time frames and sequencing necessary for key transformations, alongside best practices and enabling conditions.
- Outputs should **establish mechanisms to ensure follow-through** on the key priorities outlined in the GST. These measures can include establishing new thematic work programs, calling for further research, commissioning new reports, and encouraging citizen engagement at local levels in response to the GST findings. Such measures can help translate the findings of the GST into tangible changes in national policy and international cooperation, particularly in the two years between the GST in 2023 and new NDCs in 2025.

- Outputs should **encourage further climate action by non-state actors, and acknowledge the need for improved climate transparency from these stakeholders**, ideally kick-starting work on new evaluation mechanisms. It must also encourage an improved exchange of information between non-state actors and countries to avoid double counting of efforts and to enhance overall environmental integrity.
- Given the mandate of the GST to “enhance international cooperation,” outputs should **promote more robust international cooperation**, including between Parties and non-state actors. This could be achieved by highlighting areas where international cooperation is most effective, including suggesting opportunities for collaboration in key sectors and opportunities for engagement between countries beyond the UNFCCC.

Procedural Recommendations

To allow the necessary time and attention to forge agreement on the challenging topics under the GST, we recommend a full-year 2023 workplan. This plan can include organized events both in the lead-up to the formal GST-CO component, and a series of strategically sequenced high level events during COP28:

I. In the lead-up to the GST-CO component at COP28

- Provide ample opportunity to meet for collaborative dialogues throughout the year. Given the complexity of the GST, consider enlisting professional facilitators with experience in complex policy negotiations to support these dialogues. Opportunities to hold GST-specific discussions could include: the regional climate weeks, the G7 Climate, Energy and Environmental Ministerial (April 15-16), G20 energy and environment ministerial meetings (tbc), the World Bank/IMF Spring (April 10-16) and Fall (Oct 13-15) meetings, the Petersberg Dialogue (May tbc), UNSG leaders summit (Sep 13), and of course the UNFCCC intersessional (June 6-16) and UNSG Climate Ambition Summit (*tentative* Sep 18-24).
 - NB: It will be tricky but important to make sure that these discussions inform the remainder of the Technical Assessment phase but do not replace it. Each should feed the other, supporting a strong scientific basis for the final GST outcome. For specific sequencing, for instance, we suggest that the currently planned April meeting on the GST design could provide guidance on topics that need additional discussion during TD3, which can in turn feed back into the October meetings.
- Continue to encourage Parties and non-Party stakeholders to hold events in support of the GST, outside of the above mentioned moments. For example, this could include events held by international organizations, such as IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) meeting Jul 3-7, ICAO, WHO’s World Health Assembly May 21-30, WTO in the context of the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Dialogues (TESSD), FAO, ILO, IEA, among others.

- Use the recommendations emerging from the workshops with Parties and NPS in April, as well as the updates from the Presidencies and Chairs of the Subsidiary Bodies in June, to reinforce messages on the need to convene at national, regional, and international levels to support coming to strong consensus on the GST.
- The Egypt and UAE COP Presidencies can begin early diplomatic outreach to advance the conversation, find common ground, and ensure high-level buy-in to the GST outcomes, including from heads of state and government and ministers.
- Continue to prioritize transparency and inclusivity, providing for participation of observers and experts with diverse knowledge of relevance to the GST, in order to support the robustness and legitimacy of the GST.

II. During the GST-CO component at COP28

We suggest that the high-level events (to be organized by the SB Chairs and COP Presidencies) forming the GST-CO follow the following format for maximum effectiveness:

- Include an opening high-level segment with high-level participation, specifically including heads of state and government-level participants. Messages coming out of this meeting should include strong renewed political signal of commitment to the PA, including pledges to strengthen action across all thematic areas of the GST; commit to engage with the findings of the of the GST to inform the revision of their NDCs and reflect the highest possible ambition and progression; as well as more specific messages at sector and thematic levels.
- Following the opening, we suggest holding several high-level dialogues, spread over the first week and part of the second week on specific priority topics, with a dedicated focus on sectors and system transformations needed to address the climate crisis. Spreading out the dialogues in this way can help to ensure balanced consideration of each thematic area, and sustained attention from the national leaders and NPS whose support will be needed to translate the outputs into tangible climate action. These dialogues might be organized along the following principles:
 1. Reflect a balanced approach to the GST thematic areas
 2. Discuss the implications of the findings of technical assessment pertaining to the topic area
 3. Design outputs of these events to include recommendations that could then be reflected in a closing high-level segment.
 4. Assign facilitators and rapporteurs to facilitate discussion and capture key messages and recommendations. Consider retaining professional facilitators with experience in complex policy mediations.
 5. Encourage participation from line ministers
 6. Showcase best-practices

7. Include subject matter experts that can comment on the results of the Technical Dialogues and non-Party stakeholders. The presence of experts and non-Party stakeholders, particularly those directly affected by a given topic, can support wider legitimacy of GST as seen as based in science and lived realities.
 8. Include representatives from the private sector, financial institutions, and Parties making commitments to fund solutions mentioned in the technical synthesis report.
- Finally, following these events throughout COP28, the SB Chairs and COP Presidencies should organize a closing high-level segment. During this segment, Parties can discuss the recommendations from the previous dialogues, endorse the recommendations, and send political signals via pledges to take up the outputs of the GST to guide the revision and implementation of their NDCs and strengthen international cooperation. The diplomatic outreach that begun before COP28 will be helpful in ensuring successful conclusions during this segment.

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Additional Reading: Selected References on GST Design

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