

DISTILLING CRITICAL SIGNALS FROM THE GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

February 2022



The limited time available to the global stocktake (GST) risks being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of relevant information. It will be vital to focus attention and facilitate the emergence of clear messages and priorities that can strengthen the impact of the GST on global climate ambition.

In that context, this paper sets out a high-level, initial description of considerations that decision-makers might want to take into account—and elaborate further as needed—when deciding how to organize the work of the GST.

While the considerations outlined below may seem obvious, it is important they remain simple and accessible. Used within an organizational framework, these considerations can help key stakeholders and decision-makers assess and understand the implications of the mass of information the GST process will likely generate and need to tackle.

These considerations could be of use to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Presiding Officers, the GST co-facilitators, the Subsidiary Body Chairs, and the High-Level Champions (HLCs) as they plan how to organize inputs to and the conduct of the GST.

The considerations could also be used to plan how the GST's eventual outputs can send clear signals to a wide range of stakeholders with regard to realizing the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, including by informing countries' domestic processes in implementing existing commitments and raising climate ambition (such as through nationally determined contributions, or NDCs).

For now, these considerations are preliminary and may be further elaborated, with a focus on the signals that the GST can send through its process and its outcome.

A. GROUNDING THE GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

The world is still far off track from achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. The next decade will be critical in both undertaking the deep and rapid decarbonization needed to keep within the 1.5 degree C temperature limit set by the Paris Agreement and putting in place the policies to adapt and achieve resilience to anticipated impacts. Moreover, mitigation and adaptation action must be considered together with the resources needed to implement them.

Numerous analyses have been undertaken concerning technologies and behavioral shifts needed to raise climate ambition. These analyses have been conducted at an international level but are also supported by studies undertaken within domestic policy environments. For example, in the context of mitigation, currently available technologies are sufficient to drive deep emission reductions, and the policies needed to drive their further development and deployment are known.¹ Therefore, the emissions gap is fundamentally an implementation gap, not a gap in available technologies.

This underscores the importance of the GST process envisaged by Article 14 of the Paris Agreement in clearly highlighting opportunities to drive implementation of existing climate promises that countries have made, as well as highlighting opportunities for more ambition. All the while, the GST must operate in a manner that is effective and timely to inform domestic decision-making processes.

The first GST under the Paris Agreement will culminate in 2023. It will take place in three primary phases, starting with information collection and preparation initiated at the 26th Conference of Parties

(COP) in Glasgow, a technical assessment to commence in June 2022, and countries' consideration of outputs at the end of 2023. The GST will focus on collective progress rather than individual country actions, and its outcome will inform Parties in updating and enhancing their actions and support.²

The GST is expected to generate an enormous wealth of information across inputs and, potentially, outputs. The challenge is that the sheer volume of information could be overwhelming and so undermine its utility.

To be maximally useful to key decision-makers, it will therefore be important that the GST distills clear signals from the extensive volume of inputs and information. In that context, careful thought needs to be given by the UNFCCC Presiding Officers responsible for the conduct of the GST, as well as Parties and other stakeholders, as to how:

- inputs are solicited and organized
- the GST itself is conducted, including how non-Party stakeholders (NPSs) engage
- the outputs and recommendations emerge and are organized.

While the GST will focus on collective progress rather than individual country actions, the process will need to provide for a positive and grounded reflection on the specific opportunities that are available, as well as concrete policies and actions that can unlock them. As the gap between where we are now and where we need to be is already largely clear, it will be of crucial importance that the GST emphasizes what transitions are possible and how they can enable countries to enhance their climate ambition.

B. CONSIDERATIONS THAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

C2ES and EDF have developed an 'opportunities framework' that may be helpful in adding further structure to the information gathering and technical analysis under the GST, as well as toward generating clear outputs. This framework comprises:

- three landscape analyses, or surveys, of promising opportunities that could provide substantial, near-term, scalable, enhanced climate action, ambition, and support in the context of the Paris Agreement's long-term goals³

- a set of considerations to support the effective organization and distillation of clear signals from the GST. These considerations can help assess collective progress and make key messages more accessible and reflective of the broad range of circumstances of Parties.

The table below sets out initial ideas for these considerations, in the hope they may generate interest and discussion among Parties and NPSs, as well as UNFCCC Presiding Officers, the GST co-facilitators, the Subsidiary Body Chairs, and the HLCs.

POSSIBLE CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT THE DISTILLATION OF CLEAR SIGNALS FROM THE GLOBAL STOCKTAKE	
CONSIDERATION	DESCRIPTION
1. Positive impact potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential for mitigation and adaptation is substantial and scalable relative to the level of mitigation or adaptation needed. ▪ Significant, feasible near-term mitigation or adaptation (prior to 2030) that complements longer-term action.
2. Maturity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maturity and readiness level of the technology and/or practice allow for stability and feasibility in implementation. ▪ Costs associated with the technology and/or practice are falling or need to be driven down, therefore creating incentive for continued uptake. ▪ Confidence exists in the measurement of impacts.
3. Strategic targeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sectors have substantial and/or growing emissions footprint or are specifically vulnerable to climate impacts. ▪ Interventions target innovations that can unlock untapped opportunities. ▪ Interventions have multiplier and replicability effects that expand mitigation or adaptation impacts across other activities and sectors. ▪ Interventions address both mitigation and adaptation priorities. ▪ Interventions build institutional capacity, integrate complementary planning and risk measures, and reduce climate vulnerability. ▪ Potential exists to impact mitigation or adaptation in other countries through dissemination of technology and practices.
4. Sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic, social and environmental benefits are provided. ▪ Potential for positive synergies among the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outweigh negative trade-offs. ▪ Significant resource conflicts do not arise.
5. Non-Party stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actors outside central government are willing to participate and meet policy requirements or encouragements. ▪ Subnational jurisdictions are ready to partner with central government in policy or action implementation.
6. Case for government intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support through government policy and/or action can be expected to realize greater mitigation or adaptation impacts through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achievement of technology breakthroughs and cost reductions • alignment of objectives and decision-making • more effective use of institutions and resources • removal of barriers • dissemination and mainstreaming of technology or practice. ▪ Government action is specifically required to mobilize other support.
7. Feasibility of policy or actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policies and actions are available and cost effective. ▪ Technologies and practices are able to attract investment, in terms of their definability, implementation, risk, and returns. ▪ Measures are locally appropriate. ▪ Measures possess legal and administrative feasibility. ▪ Institutional capacity exists or can be built to support implementation.

These considerations deal in large part with the efficacy of mitigation and adaptation opportunities over the long term, with special attention being given to taking advantage of opportunities that are already in train and immediately available. The urgency of halving global emissions over the next decade and reducing climate vulnerability means that a broad spectrum of opportunities must be considered and pursued. Some are, however, more ready than others, as reflected in their maturity, cost, and certainty of impact. Furthermore, some opportunities have a greater need for government intervention than others.

How well countries are positioned to drive critical, forthcoming mitigation and adaptation opportunities will differ. Some countries will lead future technological breakthroughs by refining technologies and practices, strengthening maturity and reducing

costs, or demonstrating and mainstreaming their implementation. Other countries will benefit from advances made elsewhere and will focus more on dissemination and optimizing their application. Lessons in integrating planning and decision-making processes for countries can also be demonstrated and shared among their peers.

Considerations, such as those above, may be critical in helping to structure information collection and technical assessment during the GST, and in doing so contribute toward developing clear political signals. These can underpin the core role of the GST in the Paris Agreement in enhancing the ambition of climate action over time, through connecting and enabling the global assessment of progress to countries' national processes for deepening and enhancing their NDCs.

ENDNOTES

- 1 IEA (2021), Net zero by 2050: A roadmap for the global energy sector, revised version (3rd revision), International Energy Agency, Jul 2021, <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>.
- 2 Decision 19/CMA.1, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/CMA2018_03a02E.pdf.
- 3 See *Climate Finance Landscape Analysis: Themes and Trends*, www.c2es.org/document/climate-finance-landscape-analysis-themes-and-trends; *Mitigation Landscape Analysis: Themes and Trends*, www.c2es.org/document/mitigation-landscape-analysis-themes-and-trends; *Landscape Analysis of Adaptation Opportunities for Climate Ambition*, www.c2es.org/document/landscape-analysis-of-adaptation-opportunities-for-climate-ambition.



The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to forge practical solutions to climate change. We advance strong policy and action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote clean energy, and strengthen resilience to climate impacts.