



Wilton Park



**COP26
PRESIDENCY
UK 2022**

**DELIVERING THE
GLASGOW CLIMATE PACT**

Report

**COP26 Catalyst for Climate Action Assembly at the
UN Regional Climate Week for Africa**

Transparency and reporting

Wednesday 29 September 2021



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Introduction

In its role as the incoming COP26 Presidency, the UK is committed to better understanding the capacity building challenges faced by developing countries and climate finance recipients, particularly those most vulnerable to climate impacts, and to providing opportunities to share positive experiences and lessons learned across the Africa and MENA regions. Strong mechanisms to report on greenhouse gas emissions, progress in achieving NDCs and adaptation plans and are key to achieving ambitious outcomes under the Paris Agreement. All countries need to be able to produce reliable, transparent and comprehensive information on emissions, climate actions and support under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) - transfer of support and long-term capacity building is crucial if we are to achieve a sustained approach.

The aim of the session was to explore capacity building in relation to transparency under the Paris Agreement, to lay out key challenges that Parties and partners may face in the implementation of the ETF and to gather ideas and solutions from participants to inform the work of the COP26 Catalyst's Action Group on Transparency and Reporting. This conversation came at a crucial time when developing countries, including in the Africa and MENA regions are preparing to submit final transparency reports for 2024. This entails a considerable amount of enhanced institutional coordination, increased capacity and experience as well as increased support. Countries around the world are engaging in this process at different starting points and levels of reporting experience. This means that targeted capacity building to enhance reporting capabilities are a priority to enable an effective transition to the ETF and to inform climate action and its progress. It is also important to identify the national benefits of improved climate transparency in order to ensure nationwide engagement for this exercise. This report provides a summary of the key points raised during the meeting.

Capacity building for enhanced transparency and reporting: challenges and suggestions

Panelists at the meeting discussed the following questions: What are the key capacity building challenges for transparency and reporting in Africa and MENA regions? How can countries in Africa and MENA regions build their national capacities for transparency and reporting? What support does your organisation provide that could benefit capacity building for transparency in Africa and MENA regions?

Summary key points of challenges and suggestions

The points made in this summary reflect comments made by participants, and do not indicate that consensus was reached on any particular statement.

Challenges

Many capacity building gaps in countries are addressed through a top-down, project-based, one-size-fits-all approach. This is ineffective and unsustainable.

It is challenging for countries to have a fully functioning national monitoring and evaluation system in place, with clear institutional arrangements for data collection and reporting, and the exchange of credible data.

There is an urgent need for national ownership of climate issues. A project-based approach supported by international consultants does not encourage country ownership. Data collection on an ad-hoc, project-focused basis will not allow countries to comply with global requirements.

Efforts to integrate climate reporting into national systems take time and are very expensive.

Developing countries require a lot of training for interpretation and implementation of modalities, and guidelines for the ETF.

Robust data is needed for reporting, however when data is unavailable it needs to be created which is a challenge, and requires greater national capacity and funds.

There is an absence of technical experts at national level, and a need for a critical mass of these experts to be developed to support the process.

In some countries the value of academia is underappreciated, with sensitivities around the use of data, access to data, and issues of trust about what academia will do with the data.

Suggestions for how to better build national capacity

Effective capacity building should be considered in three dimensions: human capacity, institutional capacity and systems capacity. Move away from project-based approaches to setting up sustainable systems level arrangements.

Generate buy-in at the highest political level. Raise awareness that there are many national and international benefits to engaging with the ETF and undertake strategic capacity building to enhance decision making at all levels of government.

Embed a culture of reporting into the government structure. It takes time and must be done progressively; this way it can become a permanent feature in the government infrastructure.

Many countries invest in databases to support climate reporting, but this must be founded in sustainable systems.

As they have a legal mandate to collect and use data, countries need to make use of existing national data infrastructures and integrate climate reporting requirements into them. Focus on building upon existing structures that already have legal backing.

Pathways for integration of data and mainstreaming reporting require careful design and must be tailor-made. Appropriate stakeholders, with clarity around roles and responsibilities must be identified and engaged.

Involve the national office that is responsible for statistics, as they have they legal mandate to adapt their infrastructures. Also, involve the private sector as they manage the data at facility level.

It is important that the process and the framework of data collection and reporting is open to allow different stakeholders to participate including civil society organisations and the private sector. Inclusive approaches that empower women and youth to participate in the reporting framework are crucial. Donors are called upon to support youth initiatives to enhance participation.

Countries should create a solid base for data collection and reporting work in national universities because all climate-related issues should be integrated into national systems. Universities can undertake regular training and teaching, with students graduating on specific thematic areas.

Raise awareness of the value of academia and provide a business case for why academia should be part of the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system in order to generate political will and overcome issues of trust.

Develop a network of qualified technical experts. Countries can create a roster of national experts, which can help resolve the problem of high staff turnover in developing countries. Wherever these professionals are, they can still contribute to the system, supported by refresher courses.

National and regional capacity building knowledge platforms for peer-to-peer learning are beneficial.

A regional MRV training centre could provide an effective solution - it would cost less for each member country to support a regional centre, and could benefit the region as a whole. South-south collaboration and learning should be encouraged. A regional focus for SIDS might be particularly useful to SIDS.

Country examples

Ethiopia developed a robust M&E framework to be in place across sectors and trained trainers, giving them an assignment to collect data for one year to generate the required information. Through this, people were engaged to be owners of the process.

In both the **Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon** the US Forest Service's Central Africa Programme supported over 100 women to receive training to strengthen their integration in national M&E processes. They learnt how to contribute to the calculation and reporting of GHG inventories, took part in consultations and learnt negotiating skills.

Summary of breakout group discussions

Participants discussed some further questions in breakout groups. Points raised are summarised below.

What are the key current capacity building challenges around reporting that you experience in your country?

- Funding is needed for data collection, verification and reporting at the national level.
- There is poor access to financial resources to build the MRV system in order to report, especially for small countries with a limited budget and small populations.
- There is a lack of understanding of the issues at a high level of state.

- MRV is a new concept, and can be hard to understand.
- There is a lack of governmental political commitment and engagement to make the reporting process work.
- Innovative financing mechanisms can support data collection if the country is seen as a 'carbon sink'.
- Exploring how to develop innovative automated systems to use the data may help.
- Discussions around how to justify and prioritise country budget expenditure on reporting under the ETF, as well as how to make that investment sustainable.
- Institutional financial structures must ensure permanence and sustainability.
- Sometimes countries have systems in place but they are not being implemented.
- Youth groups are not always included in trainings and reporting activities. It is critical to start involving them in capacity building initiatives and engage them in the process of combating climate change.
- Statistics agencies need to play a more important role and be engaged under a legal framework.
- Several technical partners focus on one sector.
- Countries lack a critical mass of national experts on various issues relating to transparency. Consultants and expertise often comes from external sources; there is a need to emphasise training and technical expertise at the national level.
- Without research data and analysis it is hard to present evidence.

What future capacity building challenges do you expect your country will experience whilst transitioning to the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF)?

- There is a need to streamline reporting requirements as there are too many different elements including BTR, NC, GHG inventories, NDC implementation and adaptation communication.
- There is a need to provide support to countries' according to their priority issues and topics.

What topics should the COP26 Catalyst Action Group on Transparency focus their efforts on this year, in order to support and promote capacity building in this area going forward?

- We need to address sustainability and approach capacity building in fundamentally different ways.
- Raise awareness and support countries to establish a legal mandate for the collection and sharing of data.
- Support for peer-to-peer learning both within and between countries will help to better understand how institutionalising transparency and reporting can work well in different contexts.
- The GHC inventory network in Latin America could be a useful model for African countries to learn from each other about how to improve GHG inventory networks and methods.

- Provide support to develop a network of national technical experts, which could enhance or build on an existing network. Expanding national capacity by integrating climate change as an agenda into the system will make this concrete.
- In land use and forest management in Africa, the issue of monitoring systems is not yet well-enough developed.
- Further guidance on adaptation reporting through the BTR (perhaps disaggregated by the landscape/region), and highlighting the importance of reporting on 'optional' sections of the report is needed.
- Building the infrastructure is a priority.
- It is important to highlight difficulties for countries to have a transparency system at sub-national level and engage the private sector.

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