

Lessons Learned from GST1

Input from the independent Global Stocktake network

Context

The independent Global Stocktake (iGST) is a consortium of civil society actors that came together to support the first Global Stocktake. The iGST included members of the independent community — from modelers and analysts, to campaigners and advocates — working together to push for a robust first GST that empowered countries to take greater climate action.

Member communities of the iGST include regional civil society hubs in [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), [West Africa](#), and [Southeast Asia](#); and four thematic working groups paralleling each of the GST themes on [mitigation](#), [adaptation](#), and [finance](#), plus an additional group focused on the cross-cutting theme of [equity](#).

We understand that the GST1 was a “learning by doing” process, and so humbly offer the following suggestions for refinement in GST2:

First, keep what works

In addition to refinements suggested below, we’d highlight elements that we believe worked well and would keep in future processes, including:

- **Lean into the GST as a space for discussions not possible elsewhere.** As the only process considering all three long-term goals of the PA, the GST served a needed role in opening up discussions across other agenda items. For example, the finance discussions, while challenging, provided a much wider scope to discuss the interaction of Article 2.1c and Article 9 than had ever been afforded previously. In a similar vein, it provided a platform to address progress in responding to loss and damage, thereby raising the profile of this critical aspect and facilitating its essential recognition as the third pillar of climate action, alongside adaptation and mitigation. This is a unique and important role and should be maintained.
- **Continue to incorporate insights from experts and non-Party stakeholders.** We commend the historic level of inclusivity practiced in the first GST, including the openness to participation of experts and non-Party stakeholders (NPS). Non-Party stakeholders include researchers, businesspeople, grassroots organizers, Indigenous leaders, and others with important information for the Stocktake. We suggest continuing to include these voices and submissions in future Stocktakes.
- **Select skilled co-facilitators for the technical phase,** with both scientific acumen and political experience. We extend our gratitude to the skilled co-facilitators of GST1’s technical phase, and endorse identifying these co-facilitators as early as possible for GST2 so that they can begin planning.

- **Strictly manage the balance across themes** of mitigation, adaptation, and finance and other means of implementation in the technical phase. This resulted in balanced attention in the technical reports, even if this did not fully translate to the political outcome.
- **Maintain a strong geographic and gender balance in the roundtable facilitators and expert presenters.** We appreciated the attention to this in GST1 and endorse its continuation in GST2.
- **Balance the approach between “backward looking” and “forward looking”**, both acknowledging gaps while also identifying ways forward in both the technical and political process.
- **Maintain the Guidance and Way Forward sections in the outcome.** Part of the GST's mandated outcome is to inform the development of the next round of NDCs. We have found the guidance and way forward sections in the GST and its outcomes to be instrumental in providing direction for the formulation of future NDCs. Therefore, we recommend retaining this essential element in the structure and focus of future GSTs.



In addition, we kindly offer the following suggestions for refining GST2, across process and content:

Process Refinements

- **Shift the balance of time and attention between the technical and political phases.** While we found the technical phase valuable, we believe the process would be better served by extending the political phase to allow more time for Parties to reach consensus. This could include:
 - Moving to just two Technical Dialogues, during SB 64 and 65, and allowing for a full year for the political phase;
 - Establishing recurring negotiation workshops on the outcome elements, with the calendar announced well in advance;
 - Convening the High-Level Committee and associated high-level events prior to the COP to allow additional time for the development and consideration of these high-level recommendations. Clarify the connection between the work of the High-Level Committee and the final outcome of the GST;
 - Aiming to cooperate with parallel political processes, such as the G20, to extend high-level discussions to these fora.
- **Keep but re-conceptualize the technical roundtables.** The technical roundtables were an important part of the process, and provide a unique opportunity for structured time for exchange, outside the confines of the formal negotiation process. We believe they could be re-conceptualized to be more successful, including by:
 - Offering more time for each roundtable. Recognizing they already represent an enormous time commitment for the formal SB agenda, we suggest exploring whether there are ways to move them out of the formal agenda while maintaining their importance so as not to lose negotiator attention.

- Identifying methods to strictly limit prepared statements and lean into the “dialogue” spirit of the technical dialogues. We recognize this is easier said than done, but do not believe reading prepared statements is a good use of the limited time.
 - Continuing to encourage new innovative approaches to encourage dialogue, in a continuous “learning by doing” approach. Acknowledging the limitations of the world café setting for a discussion of this size, we support considering refinements or entirely different innovative facilitation techniques.
- **Improve handoff between technical and political.** We found that, once moving into the political phase, many of the insights and careful work that had gone into the technical phase faded into the background. It is always difficult to marry the technical and political, but to the extent possible we suggest considering ways to make this handoff less abrupt and to continue to highlight the technical findings throughout the political phase.
 - **Improve timeline for planning participation of non-Party stakeholders.** We appreciate the ability for non-Party stakeholders to participate in the Roundtables and the 2023 GST Workshops, and believe that it improved the depth of discussions and legitimacy of the process. However, in cases where the Secretariat had to approve nominations, the notice of acceptance was delivered very late, sometimes just days before the event. This resulted in some of the already-limited NPS slots remaining empty during these meetings. Recognizing the logistical challenges of being at the SBs on a specific date, including visa planning, hotel, and flight costs, we would appreciate a greater notice period from the Secretariat.
 - **Enhance global equity and outreach.** Participation of NPS, particularly from developing countries, is critical. Future GSTs should limit inequalities of representation in the discussions. Barriers that face NPS from developing countries include language limitations, lack of capacity and resources, and lack of awareness of the process. Parties and the Secretariat can consider how to address these to ensure future Stocktakes are conducted with greater participation from developing countries in mind.
 - **Increase coordination with the timing of other agendas.** As much as possible – even working with Parties to refine agenda and work program dates as feasible – we would suggest ensuring the GST is aligned with other items on the UNFCCC agenda. For instance, the concurrent NCQG and GGA discussions for GST1 burdened negotiators trying to participate in both while also affecting balance amongst the thematic areas and what was possible for finance and adaptation themes in the final GST1 outcome decision.
 - **Properly resource the Secretariat, facilitators, and other organizers to conduct GST2.** A “learning by doing” process requires that those running the process have both capacity – time, budget, and staff – and a mandate to be able to shift and respond nimbly as the process unfolds. While recognizing that resources are always scarce, we would recommend ensuring that GST2 has the required level of institutional support in terms of capacity and mandate.
 - **Help take the GST technical discussions to the regional levels.** While the GST primarily focuses on assessing global progress rather than specific countries or regions, there is considerable value in incorporating regional perspectives into its technical component. Highlighting progress, trends, barriers, challenges, and

opportunities at the regional level can enrich discussions and provide nuanced insights that are relevant to the global stocktake outcome. For instance, while the GST acknowledged an acceleration in renewable energy uptake globally, it missed noting that financing for renewables is concentrated in particular regions such as the US, EU, and China. This regional differentiation is crucial for understanding progress in climate action. Regional climate weeks offer a significant platform for hosting such discussions but their use hasn't been optimized in the first GST. By integrating regional perspectives, these events can broaden participation in GST technical discussions, especially for those who are unable to participate in the global dialogues.

Content and Outcome Refinements

- **Develop stronger guidance and frameworks for voluntary sources of input to the GST.** As above, we commend the uniquely broad inclusivity of the process. However, we also recognize that this inclusivity comes with real time costs, both for those participating and those processing inputs. To increase efficiency in GST2, we would endorse a clearer framework for submissions, such as a page length limit, more focused guiding questions and themes released ahead of each Roundtable, and/or a semi-structured template allowing for more efficient processing of responses.
- **Elevate the profile of Loss and Damage in the Global Stocktake.** In light of already intensifying climate disasters and their profound impacts on lives and livelihoods, the issue of loss and damage is increasingly prominent, particularly for vulnerable countries and communities. Although loss and damage was considered in the first GST, there is a pressing need to elevate its status to be on par with themes such as mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation and support. It is crucial that future technical dialogues distinguish between loss and damage and adaptation, recognizing them as distinct issues. To enhance the effectiveness and relevance of future GSTs, it is imperative to elevate the prominence of loss and damage in both its technical and political components.
- **Further strengthen integrated and holistic approaches.** While the GST rightly acknowledged the necessity for bold transformations across systems and sectors encompassing mitigation, adaptation, and associated means of implementation, there remains a need for deeper exploration of how system transformation can be addressed in a truly cross-cutting manner during technical discussions. Additionally, it was unclear how discussions under the integrated and holistic approach were considered in the political phase of the GST. To address these challenges, it is imperative to elevate cross-cutting discussions significantly, ensuring a comprehensive approach rather than a siloed one. This elevation can foster greater balance among different thematic areas of mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation.
- **Further specify the outputs of future GSTs.** The Katowice decision provided valuable provisions on the components of the GST, yet it left ambiguity regarding its outputs, such as whether it would result in a decision and/or declaration. Similarly there was ambiguity regarding the potential inclusion of a technical annex and who is responsible for its development. To address these issues, future GSTs can play a vital role in clarifying the expected outputs and identifying the responsible entities for their development. By

establishing clear guidelines, future GSTs can mitigate confusion and enhance the effectiveness of decision-making processes.

- **Press for balance of themes in the final outcomes.** The final GST outcome contained relatively strong emphasis on mitigation themes, with less attention to other items mandated under the GST including adaptation, finance, loss and damage and response measures. As noted above, this was partially due to the overlapping NCQG and GGA agendas, which is something we hope could be mitigated in future GSTs, but an emphasis on mitigation to the diminishment of other themes is also a recurring theme of Paris Agreement negotiations. We reiterate the importance of a balanced approach to future GSTs.

Summary:

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- Lean into the GST as a space for discussions not possible elsewhere.
- Continue to incorporate insights from experts and non-Party stakeholders.
- Select skilled co-facilitators for the technical phase.
- Strictly manage the balance across themes in the technical phase.
- Maintain a strong geographic and gender balance in the roundtable facilitators and expert presenters.
- Maintain a balanced approach between “backward looking” and “forward looking.”
- Maintain the Guidance and Way Forward sections in the outcome.

Process Refinements

- Shift the balance of time and attention between the technical and political phases.
- Keep but re-conceptualize the technical roundtables.
- Improve handoff between technical and political.
- Improve timeline for planning participation of non-Party stakeholders.
- Enhance global equity and outreach.
- Increase coordination with the timing of other agendas.
- Properly resource the Secretariat, facilitators, and other organizers to conduct GST2.
- Help take the GST technical discussions to the regional levels.

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- Elevate the profile of Loss and Damage in the Global Stocktake.
- Further strengthen integrated and holistic approaches.
- Further specify the outputs of future GSTs.
- Press for balance of themes in the final outcomes.