

# The GST and Beyond: Understanding the Strategies and Influence of Civil Society Actors

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## Key Findings

- Environmental NGOs and advocacy networks are calling for an inclusive stocktake that fosters transparency, accountability, collaboration as well as ambitious and just climate action.
- More research into civil society perspectives, positioning and mobilization pathways is needed to augment the effectiveness of and inclusivity within and beyond the GST.

## Overview

Within the Paris Agreement, the Global Stocktake (GST) has the primary mission of assessing collective progress towards climate action to subsequently inform and bolster the ambition of the forthcoming round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). With the GST now entering its political phase, there is an urgent need to identify **how its outcomes will be synthesized and communicated to Parties, intergovernmental organizations, and subnational actors so as to build momentum and catalyze ambitious and effective climate action**. In this regard, Parties will have a frontline role through their involvement in high-level events and negotiations at the Conference of Parties (COP) 28. However, the role and ability of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and advocacy networks to influence the political phase is unclear. These and other civil society actors have consistently advocated for ambitious and inclusive climate action, actively influencing decision-making processes through channels inside and outside the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) framework. They have already contributed to the GST process through discussions, submissions and technical inputs and it is anticipated that civil society actors will continue to inform the political phase of the GST, formulate positions in response to its outcomes, as well as utilize GST outcomes to catalyze climate action. Therefore, a better understanding of the perspectives, strategic positioning, and mobilization pathways used by civil society actors to inform and utilize the GST could provide crucial insights for augmenting the inclusivity and collaboration of this process for more ambitious climate action. Moreover, such insights could inform heightened engagement for boosting the effectiveness of upcoming GST rounds.

## Methodology

We are undertaking an exploratory case study consisting of semi-structured qualitative interviews with members of environmental NGOs and advocacy networks, as well as written documents

such as policy briefs, technical inputs into the GST and working/research papers by these actors. While this study is currently underway, below we are outlining our preliminary findings based on document analysis of the perspectives, criticisms and recommendations offered by civil society actors to strengthen the GST.

## Preliminary Findings

Environmental NGOs and advocacy networks perceive the GST as essential for fostering transparency and accountability, promoting collaboration, raising ambition for climate action and as a means for advocating for financial, technical and capacity building support [2,3,5,7,8]. At the same time, they offer diverse views on the implementation gaps and recommendations for increased effectiveness of the GST (see Table X).

NGOs note that there is a lack of attention on loss and damage [2], as well as equity within the GST [6]. They raise concerns about approaches and technologies such as carbon capture and storage, geoengineering and nuclear power acting as distractions from the goals of renewable energy and just transitions [1]. The Nature4Climate Coalition offers a distinctive perspective by underscoring the importance of recognizing and supporting nature-based solutions and nature positive finance through the GST [4]. They also call for increasing support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLC) via the GST [4]. Relatedly, WWF noted the lack of participation of Global South actors and IPLCs as a shortcoming of the GST [8]. Other gaps noted in the GST process include ambiguity and inconsistency in national reporting structures [2] and difficulties with accountability and assigning responsibilities due to the GST's mandate to measure collective rather than individual country-level progress [3].

To increase the effectiveness of the GST and improve uptake of its outcomes, there are suggestions of promoting the GST through relevant events within and outside the UNFCCC[5], producing outputs and conducting dissemination with diverse stakeholders including non-state actors [6,3], promoting inclusivity and participation throughout the GST process [1] and utilizing the two-year periods between GSTs to revise NDCs and build political momentum [3].

## Conclusion

While civil society collectively envisions a robust, transparent, and inclusive GST, their specific methodologies and focus areas vary. These disparities underscore the complexities of the GST process and the requirement for a nuanced understanding of different stakeholders' multifaceted perspectives and strategies to augment its efficacy. Despite the preliminary nature of our analysis, it accentuates the importance of incorporating diverse viewpoints into the GST's design and implementation. More in-depth analyses of civil society perspectives, strategic positioning, and mobilization pathways is needed to ensure the effectiveness and inclusivity of the GST towards increased ambition in the global response to climate change.

## References

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- [7] Greenpeace, “Putting justice at the heart of climate action”, *COP27 Policy Brief*, November 2022.
- [8] World Wildlife Fund, “WWF Briefing Paper: Global Stocktake”, Bonn, June 2022.

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**Table X**

<b>Civil Society Actors</b>	<b>Expectations from the GST</b>	<b>Criticisms and Limitations</b>	<b>Recommendations and strategies to strengthen the GST</b>
<p>Climate Action Network International [1]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The GST should be a crucial tool for implementing the Paris Agreement effectively and in a timely manner.</li> <li>· It should encompass all aspects necessary to reach the Paris goals, including mitigation, adaptation, means of implementation and support, finance flows, addressing loss and damage, science, technology transfer, and capacity building.</li> <li>· The GST should support raising climate ambition and aim to protect people, their rights and livelihoods, and natural ecosystems from the impacts of climate change.</li> <li>· The GST outputs must propose clear, actionable, and specific paths forward with concrete policies and plans.</li> <li>· Gender-responsive, evidence-based, and human rights-based approaches should be considered in the GST.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The current ambition gap to achieve the Paris Agreement Goal is enormous.</li> <li>· Concerns have been raised by civil society organizations about concepts and technologies that could distract from the urgent and deep transformational changes needed to hold global warming to 1.5°C.</li> <li>· These concepts and technologies are not the best solutions for the most affected people, including indigenous peoples, young people, women, and local communities.</li> <li>· They also threaten human rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ensure inclusivity, being evidence-informed, and maintaining balance across all elements and mandates of the Paris Agreement.</li> <li>· Emphasize transparency and avoid conflicts of interest, particularly when private interests are involved in the GST.</li> <li>· Deliver scientifically based, properly scoped, inclusive, and methodologically legitimate needs assessments across the full range of challenges.</li> </ul>
<p>Center for Science and Environment [2]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The GST should be a robust, transparent, and inclusive process.</li> <li>· It should assess collective progress towards achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.</li> <li>· This includes limiting global average temperature increase, increasing climate resilience, and transitioning to low-carbon development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The GST process is in its early stages and requires further refinement.</li> <li>· Lack of clarity and consistency in reporting structures for action and support at national levels.</li> <li>· Developing countries face challenges due to the absence of robust Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) structures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Conduct the GST process in line with the IPCC review process and ensure openness and transparency.</li> <li>· Start the GST process two years ahead of the Conference of Parties (COP) with preparatory, technical, and political phases.</li> <li>· Establish robust reporting structures for action and support at national levels.</li> <li>· Provide support to developing countries in establishing effective monitoring and reporting structures.</li> <li>· Include loss and damage within the purview of the GST process.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The GST should inform parties in updating and enhancing their climate actions and support.</li> <li>· It should enhance international cooperation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Loss and damage are excluded from the scope of the GST, despite being a separate pillar in the Paris Agreement.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· World Resources Institute</li> <li>· Climateworks Foundation</li> <li>· iGST [3]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The GST should be comprehensive, transparent, and equitable.</li> <li>· It should generate accountability and trust, encouraging countries to strengthen their climate action and support.</li> <li>· The GST should be a participatory process, engaging stakeholders beyond Parties.</li> <li>· It should build political momentum and trigger enhanced ambition and increased climate action from non-state actors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The GST has limitations in directly pointing out country-specific lack of ambition or opportunities to do more.</li> <li>· Its mandate to assess collective progress without singling out countries makes it difficult to address specific issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Establish coordinating mechanisms early to ensure linkages between the UNFCCC and independent organizations designing a robust GST.</li> <li>· Ensure that the work and suggestions of these organizations are incorporated into the UNFCCC's process.</li> <li>· Conceive the GST as a process rather than an event.</li> <li>· Utilize the two-year period between the end of the GST process and the COP effectively.</li> <li>· Carry over the political momentum generated during the GST process into participatory national NDC revision processes.</li> <li>· Use the GST as a feedback mechanism to enhance action and align short-term NDCs with long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.</li> </ul>
Nature4Climate Coalition [4]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Recognize and promote the multiple benefits of nature-based solutions (NbS).</li> <li>· Call on Parties to play a stronger role in recognizing NbS benefits, especially for cities and urban areas.</li> <li>· Commit more funding to local governments for implementing NbS.</li> <li>· Ensure transparent and interoperable data related to NbS.</li> <li>· Support interoperability and publicly available data to develop accountability systems that involve citizens and civil society in the transition to a Nature Positive economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Implies the need for greater recognition of NbS, more funding for local governments, and better transparency and interoperability of NbS-related data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Shift harmful agricultural subsidies to incentivize sustainable and regenerative agriculture by 2030.</li> <li>· Enact measures for high integrity carbon markets and finance for REDD+ results.</li> <li>· Strengthen the role, participation, and rights of Indigenous and local communities.</li> <li>· Encourage non-state actor action to support Parties in delivering action and increased ambition.</li> <li>· Ensure companies exposed to forest-risk commodity production adopt policies to halt deforestation and disclose progress by 2025.</li> <li>· Triple investments in NbS by 2030 through collaboration among local governments, cities, and urban areas.</li> <li>· Restore 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes by 2030.</li> <li>· Establish clear taxonomies with open standards for geospatial NbS data aligned with international accounting standards.</li> </ul>

<p>Center for Climate and Energy Solutions [5]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Assess collective progress towards achieving the purpose and long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.</li> <li>· Address opportunities for enhanced action and support.</li> <li>· Recognize that higher ambition is a function of urgency and opportunity.</li> <li>· Comprises information collection and preparation, technical assessment, and consideration of outputs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The design of the GST lacks developed interaction with the wider landscape.</li> <li>· Focus on current NDCs limits the assessment of progress towards net-zero by mid-century.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Facilitate timely submission of targeted inputs.</li> <li>· Invite presentations/interventions in the GST's Technical Dialogue.</li> <li>· Organize relevant events within and outside the UNFCCC.</li> <li>· Apply a strong sectoral/thematic lens to the GST.</li> <li>· Engage High-Level Champions (HLCs) and other intermediaries to coordinate inputs.</li> <li>· Generate momentum in the wider governance landscape and enhance accountability and transparency.</li> <li>· Include announcements of key new initiatives and updates.</li> <li>· Consider evolving context, emerging gaps, and substantive/process challenges in the GST's design.</li> <li>· Explore reasons for implementation gaps and identify opportunities for ambitious climate action and support.</li> <li>· Present options for availing these opportunities to Parties and Non-Party Stakeholders (NPSs).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Project for Advancing Climate Transparency</li> <li>· World Resources Institute [6]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The GST should be a robust, effective, and inclusive process.</li> <li>· It should evolve and develop to meet changing needs, priorities, and opportunities.</li> <li>· Assess progress toward the long-term goals and identify opportunities to meet them.</li> <li>· Inform Parties and non-Party stakeholders about cooperation in reducing emissions and mainstreaming climate measures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Inability to deliver all necessary information and manage the volume of information.</li> <li>· Challenges in utilizing thematic expertise.</li> <li>· Inherent conflict as a collective assessment of progress.</li> <li>· Lack of reporting information related to equity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ensure engagement of a broad range of stakeholders.</li> <li>· Build political momentum at all levels and stimulate implementation.</li> <li>· Identify collective capacity-building and technology needs.</li> <li>· Share best practices and lessons learned from successful implementation efforts.</li> <li>· Assess the effectiveness of policies and support to align finance flows.</li> <li>· Identify needs and gaps in policies and support.</li> <li>· Produce outputs that inform actions and decisions of various stakeholders.</li> <li>· Speak to and inform stakeholders within and outside the UNFCCC.</li> </ul>
<p>Greenpeace [7]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ensure access to rapid and adequate financial resources and technical assistance for the most vulnerable countries and communities affected by climate change.</li> <li>· Provide financial resources for low-income countries to prepare for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Lack of support for dealing with loss and damage from climate change.</li> <li>· Inadequacy of current dialogues in delivering needed support.</li> <li>· Urgent need for a new loss and damage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Establish a Loss and Damage Finance Facility.</li> <li>· Develop a robust and well-resourced Santiago Network (SNLD) governed by an inclusive Advisory Body.</li> <li>· Richer, historically polluting countries should contribute additional financial resources to the global loss and damage finance facility.</li> </ul>

	<p>climate change impacts and decarbonize their economies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Require all countries to contribute justly and fairly to the phasing out of fossil fuel use and the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.</li> </ul>	<p>finance facility at COP27.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Introduce loss and damage finance as a third pillar, alongside mitigation and adaptation, under the Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance.</li> </ul>
<p>World Wildlife Fund <a href="#">[8]</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The WWF expects the GST to provide financial, technical, and capacity-building support.</li> <li>· Support should facilitate the participation of Parties and Non-Party Stakeholders, promoting equity, transparency, and quality of inputs.</li> <li>· The findings of the IPCC's 6th Assessment Report should form the basis for the Paris Agreement milestones considered in the GST's technical assessment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· There is a lack of decision or action regarding the support and participation of actors with low capacity, particularly those in the Global South and representatives of indigenous and vulnerable people.</li> <li>· The WWF calls for a consensus on funding and the architecture of a support mechanism for the GST process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Establish a GST mechanism for financial, technical, and capacity-building support.</li> <li>· Acknowledge the latest climate science, such as the findings of the IPCC's 6th Assessment Report, indicating the need for steep emission reductions.</li> <li>· Provide capacity-building support for Party and Non-Party members in the GST and related UNFCCC processes.</li> </ul>