

Global stocktake and beyond

 Check for updates

COP28 will see the conclusion of the first global stocktake, which assesses efforts towards long-term climate targets. In addition to the assessment process, the stocktake could also address current problems within climate governance and interact with other policy instruments.

The 2015 Paris Agreement marked a milestone for global climate governance, but setting up the temperature target alone is not enough without action. The global stocktake (GST) process is designed to evaluate the collective progress every five years towards the mitigation, adaptation and finance goals set out in the Paris Agreement. Based on the outputs of the GST process, each party is expected to update their nationally determined contribution (NDC) with increased ambitions. The first GST includes three phases and will conclude during December 2023's United Nations climate conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

In this issue of *Nature Climate Change*, we feature a series of opinion pieces focusing on various aspects of the GST. Beyond assessing progress on mitigating emissions and updating NDCs, the process itself could facilitate efforts from different related parties and effectively help to address long-existing issues in the current global climate governance framework. While there is no doubt that governments and international organizations will be at the centre of the GST, the engagement of non-state actors is also essential in advancing the process. Their efforts can make sure the GST will not only be an accounting device, but also an approach to spur further efforts. In a Comment by Kuyper and Tørstad, four tailored strategies are [proposed](#) for non-state actors to have a functional role under different contexts. Depending on whether the NDCs are credible and ambitious, or not, non-state actors could adopt different approaches, including facilitative, accountable, proactive and



offensive roles, to enhance or supplement state actions.

Beyond ratcheting up ambitions, equity should be a central focus of the GST process, and of the entire climate governance regime, yet is faced with complex challenges. In a Comment in this issue, Klinsky [discusses](#) issues regarding collective progress and scoping that affect the GST's capacity to address equity concerns. Further, the author introduces needs-based assessment, an emerging strategy that relies on requirements for deepening climate action, in particular with inequality in consideration. The approach could provide a practical way to shed light on the inequity problems at all levels.

The GST could also have a broader implication and interaction with other international climate governance instruments. COP27 witnessed a breakthrough for climate finance with the decision to establish the loss and damage (L&D) fund, with the specific form of the fund undecided and remaining a key topic in international climate discussions. The GST could help accelerate financing for L&D funds,

as [illustrated](#) in a Comment by Watson and Gonzalez. They show how the GST provides a unique opportunity to integrate L&D with other existing mechanisms and to scale-up climate finance.

Integrating the stocktake with other initiatives might bolster progress on multiple fronts. For example, similar to the GST assessment of needed climate effort, progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be reviewed at the SDG summit in New York in September 2023. In their Comment, Hermwille and colleagues [discuss](#) how the GST process could be better integrated with the SDG framework. They demonstrate how the integration could promote both climate ambition and implementation of SDGs, with examples including the steel sector, land transportation, renewable energy and so on.

These Comments are also part of an online [Focus](#), which includes archived publications on other important factors that are essential for the success of the GST process, such as adaptation¹ or an implementation gap². The Focus aims to provide a platform to spark policy discussions on the necessary actions to meet the purpose of GST as well as meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement.

At the time of writing, the United Nations had just released the synthesis report on the first technical dialogue of the first GST³. It shows that although the Paris Agreement has driven large-scale actions, it is still insufficient to meet the long-term targets and the remaining carbon budget is running out. The upcoming conclusion of the first GST is not an end point or even a resting place. It marks an urgent new beginning, where all related parties need to take more effective measures to boost progress.

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References

1. Canales, N., Klein, R. J. T., Bakhtaoui, I. & Macura, B. *Nat. Clim. Change* **13**, 413–414 (2023).
2. Fransen, T. et al. *Nat. Clim. Change* **13**, 752–755 (2023).
3. *Technical Dialogue of the First Global Stocktake: Synthesis Report by the Co-facilitators on the Technical Dialogue* (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2023); <https://go.nature.com/3LkZgCX>