Africa ETF Dialogue - Practitioners' Exchange

8 September 2023

ICAT Initiative for Climate Action Transparency

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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Introduction

The UNFCCC Secretariat and ICAT, with the support of the Africa NDC Hub, co-organized the second Africa Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) Dialogue, during Africa Climate Week 2023. This was the second time the two-day event took place, and it followed on the success of the first event in Libreville, Gabon, in 2022.

The first day of the Africa ETF Dialogue focused on policy exchange to ensure the political momentum and support necessary for implementation of the ETF. The second day was dedicated to peer-to-peer exchange between transparency practitioners, recognizing that targeted and adapted capacity-building was essential to support developing countries to build and enhance the institutional arrangements needed to implement the Paris Agreement, all the while advancing national sustainable development priorities.

Held on 8 September 2023, the practitioners' exchange welcomed over 60 participants from more than 28 African countries for a full day of knowledge and experience-sharing on key topics for climate transparency in the region. The topics covered were determined based on input from the region, in particular feedback from the African Group of Negotiators, and included:

1. Challenges and national benefits from implementing transparency frameworks;
2. Evidence-based mitigation policies and measures to advance nationally determined contributions (NDCs);
3. How to approach adaptation M&E and assessment of losses and damages; and
4. Transparency on climate finance and support for NDC implementation.

The ICAT Secretariat thanks those partners involved in the organization and delivery of the event, with special thanks to all those who generously committed their time and energy as speakers and rapporteurs, sharing valuable knowledge and experiences to advance transparency efforts in Africa.

Image 1: Participants engaging in roundtable discussions, source: UNFCCC

Main take-aways

The second day of the Africa ETF Dialogue shed light on where the region stood in terms of ETF implementation. The significant increase in the number of African countries that had set up transparency systems, developed measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) frameworks, and defined dedicated budget-lines for ETF-related activities since the last Africa ETF Dialogue in 2022, was noted.

The day kicked off with opening remarks from UNFCCC and ICAT, who set the scene for the day and emphasized the importance of peer-to-peer exchanges to allow the sharing of valuable experiences and solutions. The remaining sessions of the day were structured similarly, starting off with introductory presentations by a transparency support provider followed by country presentations in plenary, and finishing off with roundtable discussions to share national perspectives and experiences.

The first session of the day was focused on the challenges and national benefits when implementing transparency frameworks. After this, practitioners discussed evidence-based mitigation policies and measures to advance NDCs. Following those, the practitioners engaged on how to approach adaptation monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and assessment of losses & damages. The last session of the practitioners exchange focused on transparency on climate finance and support for NDC implementation.

The main take-aways from each session are presented in more detail below.

Image 2: Welcoming remarks by Jigme and Dr, Henning Wuester, source: UNFCCC

Session 1: Challenges and national benefits from implementing transparency frameworks

In the first session of the day, the UNFCCC Secretariat presented the key benefits of climate transparency. Following this, countries were invited to discuss key challenges in the implementation of the ETF and share lessons and experiences on transparency. Enhanced transparency was considered particularly relevant given the expected results of the global stocktake, and the requirement for countries to submit biennial transparency reports (BTR) in 2024 and updated NDCs in 2025.
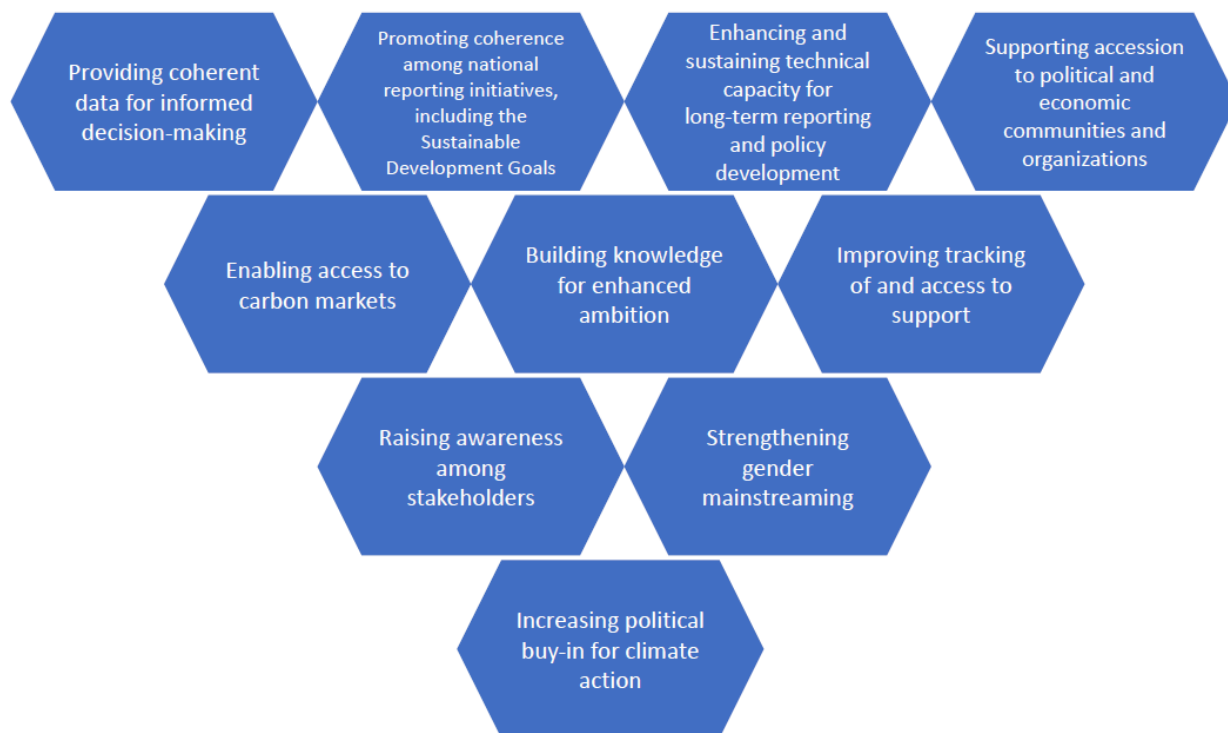
Image 3: Key benefits of climate transparency, source: UNFCCC

Key messages from the session included:

- Solid institutional arrangements remained a significant challenge for many African countries.
    - A scoping analysis to identify transparency gaps and needs in-country was valuable. Such an analysis assisted countries to identify, among others, what was needed in terms of institutional arrangements, and how to ensure clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
    - Examples from Nigeria and Ethiopia highlighted the relevance of having a coordinating institution placed at high-level to oversee line and sectoral ministries in their collection of data, and thereby facilitate data compilation and national reporting duties. Such inter-ministerial coordination works best when it is recorded in legal texts and MoUs with clear SoPs.
    - Solutions were needed for high turnover rates of experts in countries. Ethiopia showed how it had engaged academics to increase capacity.
- Many countries highlighted that they found the tracking of greenhouse gas emissions and NDCs difficult. This was concerning given the upcoming biennial transparency reports (BTR) due in 2024.
    - Several countries reported receiving support from various institutions in this area.

- ○ Many participants noted the usefulness of developing data and transparency frameworks for supporting policy-makers' decision-making processes, in particular for development policies and strategies.

Representatives from ICAT's regional climate action transparency hub in Central Africa, hosted by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) highlighted having supported several of its member countries to conduct scoping analyses of the gaps and needs in terms of transparency, which enabled the drafting of national transparency plans. Such scoping efforts were highlighted as necessary in order to transition to preparing the BTR.

While solid institutional arrangements remain a significant challenge faced by numerous African countries, it was noted that there is growing in-country capacity and expertise, which can be further built up on. The need to find solutions to the high expert turnover countries face was mentioned as a key challenge. An example from Ethiopia showed that collaboration with local transparency academicians, who are usually less affected by staff changes, and investing in their capacity -building can be a way to reduce losing in-country capability.

Links to additional presentations:

- Mozambique: Key challenges in implementing the ETF and national benefits to climate policy-making of transparency frameworks: country experiences and challenges.

Image 4: Participant sharing country experiences, source: UNFCCC

Session 2: Evidence-based mitigation policies and measures to advance NDCs

Building on the day's first session, ICAT provided an [introductory presentation](#), highlighting the importance of measuring policy impact as a basis for planning and implementing climate action, enabling fact-based course correcting, and facilitating reporting. The presentation referred to the BTR reporting tables and highlighted the available methodologies and tools offered by ICAT.

This was followed by plenary and roundtable discussions, which included the following main messages:

- Countries use different tools and methodologies to assess expected greenhouse gas impacts of policies and activities. This includes the use of such assessments to update NDCs and/or design new policies. Often, the services of international consultants were needed for the employment of some tools, and this prevented long-term ownership and sustainability.
- Participants shared activities that had made transparency-related activities simpler. These included:
  - The localization of information-gathering for accurate data collection;
  - Use financial incentives to foster the pick up of solar energy and other renewable energy sources in housing development plans;
  - Engage private companies to share resources; and
  - Raise awareness amongst local communities.

Links to additional presentations:

- [Mali](#): (*in French)* Bref aperçu sur le dispositif de transparence

Session 3: How to approach adaptation M&E and assessment of losses & damages

Session 3 started off with an [introductory presentation](#) by UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre, on five ICAT adaptation country projects (Kenya, South Africa, Dominican Republic, Bangladesh, and India), and on the following three ICAT guides and tools on adaptation and Loss & Damage:

I.   [Assessment Tool for Adaptation Project Proposals (ATAPP)](#),
II.   [Integrating subnational and non-state actors into M&E systems for national climate change adaptation policies,](#) and
III.   [Assessing climate change-driven losses and damages](#)

This was followed by a discussion where countries were invited to share experiences on national approaches to adaptation M&E and losses and damages assessments. The main messages from this discussion were as follows:

- It was important to ensure adaptation plans were locally developed and owned to account for each country's unique circumstances.
    - Involving grass-roots communities in adaptation plans was essential.
    - Grass-roots implementers needed robust systems for relaying data to collection points.
- The technical difficulties in assessing losses and damages, and establishing M&E systems for adaptation, remained a challenge. Other challenges included the lack of adequately skilled staff, limited financial resources and weak institutional arrangements.
- To assess impacts and adapt accordingly, national M&E systems should include target outputs (for example, the number of adaptation policies) and target inputs (for example, reduced vulnerability).
- An analysis of existing policies, as well as stakeholder mapping to assess institutional arrangements, was beneficial.
    - This should be followed by stakeholder engagement to encourage buy-in to M&E plans.
    - Capacity building amongst stakeholders was also necessary.

Links to presentations:

- [South Africa](#) - Transparency, Monitoring & Evaluation of Progress Towards a Just and Equitable Transition in South Africa.
- [Zimbabwe](#) - Adaptation M&E and assessment of losses and damages.

Session 4: Transparency on climate finance and support for NDC implementation

ICAT introduced the session with a short presentation on the [ICAT climate finance methodology](#). The methodology is adaptable to a country's national context and priorities and is being applied in a number of countries (Ivory Coast, Senegal, Belize). The importance of transparency in climate finance at all stages was

highlighted, as transparency was crucial to measure progress and advance the implementation of the NDCs. In addition, there were close links with the use of cooperative approaches under Article 6, which required an even stronger transparency framework to meet reporting obligations and ensure environmental integrity.

The participant discussion that followed highlighted some key strategies:

- A robust climate financing and carbon credit tracking system is vital. Special attention is needed to avoid double counting.
- To assess NDC implementation costs, wide stakeholder engagement is needed in order to get data across sectors.
- A climate financing fund could be established as a basket of all funds for climate actions.
- Strong institutional arrangements were required, with one Ministry (similar entity) being the coordinating party of all climate finance activities.
- Private sector resources and support were key to access. In some countries, banks had been accredited by the Green Climate Fund.
- Several countries mentioned plans to develop a carbon market framework.
- Some countries are experiencing challenges in obtaining additional money, because "old" money is often just rebranded as climate finance. While some resources may be available to build elements of a green economy, no funding could be mobilized for transitioning away from fossil fuels and ensuring that such a transition is "just".

The practitioners' exchange ended with closing remarks by the organisers. ICAT highlighted that African countries had taken enormous strides in advancing climate efforts. Transparency remained crucial for advancing NDCs, engaging stakeholders and mobilizing finance. This was followed by comments from the UNFCCC Secretariat reiterating the message that resonated throughout the Dialogue: transparency matters, transparency is relevant and transparency is important.

Conclusion and next steps

The outcomes of the different sessions and discussions brought out important messages in terms of priorities and essential needs of African countries, both existing and upcoming.

Source: Mentimeter results of the Africa ETF Dialogue

Many African countries continue to demonstrate commitment to transparency. Opportunities such as the ETF dialogue allow experts to exchange common experiences and solutions and learn from one another.

Based on the positive experience from this event, the organization of similar events will be pursued in the context of the upcoming Regional Climate Weeks, expected to take place in October 2023 for the Latin America and Caribbean region.

Source: Mentimeter results of the Africa ETF Dialogue

The Africa Regional Dialogue on the ETF was co-organized by:

The UN Climate Change secretariat

The Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT)

With the support of the Africa NDC Hub