ICAT Initiative for Climate Action Transparency

ICAT at SB 60: Report of Activities

The June Climate Meetings (the 60th session of the subsidiary bodies under the UNFCCC – SB60) took place in Bonn, Germany, from 3 to 13 June 2024. Climate delegates from around the world were joined by stakeholders from the public and private sector for two weeks of discussions on climate action.

Given the 2024 deadline for the first Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) under the Paris Agreement, transparency took a prominent role. Transparency is at the heart of the Paris Agreement for a reason: It is central to effective climate action. The BTRs are due by the end of 2024 and the next Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by February 2025. It is crucial to realize the synergy between the two, and maximize the resulting benefits. SB60 provided a platform to champion transparency, highlight achievements, and exchange experiences and best practices. This way, countries can accelerate national efforts towards effective climate action and prepare for the landmark moments of the first BTRs and updated NDCs.

ICAT hosted or contributed to a number of events and activities at SB60 aimed at supporting transparency efforts. This report provides a summary of the events.

Official side events

Cuba/UNOPS official side-event: Using data to assess and improve climate policies

(Thursday, 13 June 2024)

This side event explored how developing countries are using data to assess impact, improve the design, and track the implementation of climate policies, drawing on lessons learned and the methodological support available.

Robust transparency mechanisms and quality climate data can enable the design and implementation of effective climate change policies. Credible and robust data facilitates evidence-based decision-making across all sectors, including energy, agriculture, and transport. For countries, transparency frameworks can help in setting ambitious yet attainable climate objectives and tracking the implementation of measurable policies and measures.

Speakers included Odalys Goichochea Cardosa (Director General of Environment) and Orlando Ernesto Rey Santos (Climate Advisor), both of the Cuban Ministry of Science, Environment and Technology; country presentations by Abraham Nasak from Vanuatu's Department of Climate Change, and Tirivahnu Muhwati of Zimbabwe's Climate Change Management Department, as well as presentations by Henning Wuester and Celeste Gonzalez from the ICAT Secretariat.

The following key points are highlighted:

- ICAT's assessment guides have proven to be useful for countries, allowing for the assessment of climate policies and actions in different sectors. Results can help policy makers understand the impacts and make informed decisions. Assessment can be ex post or ex ante, generating key data that can be reported in the BTR and serve as a foundation for updating NDCs.

- Good policies are those that are effective for climate objectives, in line with economic and other policy priorities and can be funded and implemented.

- The role of robust transparency mechanisms and quality climate data in planning, designing, implementing and evaluating effective climate change policies is critical. Accurate and reliable data enables evidence-based decision-making across various sectors, ensuring that policies are grounded in reality and can drive substantial impact. At the same time, it has to be recognized that sound data is not all: there is also a need for political will and leadership, and above all implementation requires adequate climate finance.

- Developing countries are actively using data to assess the impact of climate policies, drawing on global lessons and methodological support. Presentations highlighted how countries like Cuba, Vanuatu, and Zimbabwe were leveraging international best practices and frameworks to improve and track the implementation of their climate policies, demonstrating the value of global collaboration and knowledge exchange. An integration of climate action in development planning was one of the key aspects highlighted as important, also with a view to map out investment needs.

- Transparency frameworks are instrumental in helping countries set ambitious yet attainable climate objectives and track the implementation of measurable policies. The event illustrated how countries were using these frameworks to ensure their climate goals were not only ambitious but also realistic and trackable, facilitating continuous improvement and accountability in their climate action efforts. As ambition rises and actions become transformational for certain sectors, the importance of a good assessment also increases.

- Transparency has a role to play for both adaptation and mitigation. Good planning and valid long-term scenarios up to 2050 are critical, in some cases determining the very survival of communities. Developing further NDC developments, including further actions beyond 2030, requires increasingly more robust assessments of climate and development impacts.

ICAT-hosted events

ICAT roundtable on BTR preparation and NDC update
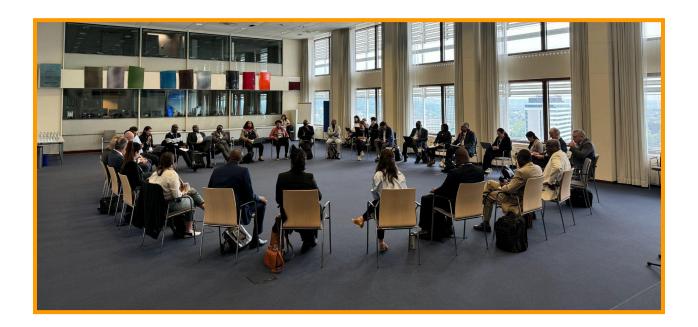
(Monday, 3 June 2024)

This invitation-only event aimed to identify transparency support needs of ICAT countries related to preparing their first BTRs and for updating their NDCs. This informal gathering brought together governmental experts from ICAT countries and implementing partners for an exchange on the process for preparation of the BTRs. It also covered the links to preparing the NDC update, using the information gathered for the BTR, for instance related to progress in NDC implementation.

Sixteen ICAT countries participated: Botswana, Chad, Chile, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Ghana, Mali, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Niger, Paraguay, Tajikistan, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe. The ICAT Secretariat provided brief introductory presentations to kick off the discussion. The meeting was held under Chatham-House rules, and hence no position of individual participants were recorded.

Main messages coming from this event were:

- Many countries faced challenges in the BTR process, primarily related to data collection, capacity building, and adherence to timelines. Flexibility is expected to be used frequently, particularly concerning projections and the quantification of the impacts of policies and measures. Some least developed countries and small island developing States are using flexibility to manage the timing of their BTR submissions, and indicated a need for more robust support and resources.

- The need for strong transparency systems and institutional arrangements to streamline BTR processes was highlighted. Countries explained the necessity of institutionalizing climate change policies and creating dedicated climate change units. The integration of the BTR and NDC processes is seen as beneficial, with countries leveraging existing measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) infrastructure and coordination teams for consistency and improved reporting and planning. Key elements that link BTR and NDC update efforts include emission projections, policy assessments, and planning for an effective use of Article 6 mechanisms.

- The need for support in understanding and implementing modalities, procedures and guidelines; training; and data management is evident. Countries emphasized the importance of capacity building, while others focused on relying on national capacity and engaging stakeholders. The ICAT project plays a crucial role in providing this support, helping countries develop their MRV systems, conduct greenhouse gas projections, and track NDC commitments.

- Many countries highlighted the need for capacity building. Several countries highlighted delays in accessing Global Environment Facility funding as a serious problem, but some indicated that they were advancing work nevertheless, and expecting to replenish resources subsequently. A few countries are well advanced in planning progress over successive BTRs, for instance using flexibility in BTR1, but building capacity to cover the aspects in BTR2.

ICAT partner reception

(Friday, 7 June 2024)

The ICAT partner reception brought together members of the ICAT Community in a social event to celebrate achievements, and connect on what's coming up ahead in our ongoing efforts to strengthen climate transparency across the world.

Guests were also introduced to the [ICAT Transformational Change Toolkit](), which was officially launched on 19 June 2024.

<u>Events with ICAT participation</u>

UNEP-CCC event: Technical exchange focusing on institutional arrangements related to transparency in loss and damage

(Tuesday, 4 June 2024)

The impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow-onset events, have increasingly highlighted the need for effective mechanisms to address loss and damage. The Paris Agreement and subsequent climate negotiations have recognized the importance of transparency in reporting and addressing loss and damage. However, operationalizing transparency mechanisms, particularly in developing countries, presents significant challenges due to varying capacities, resources, and institutional arrangements.

This technical exchange meeting aimed to discuss such challenges and share experiences and best practices in enhancing transparency in institutional arrangements related to loss and damage. The technical exchange was focused on understanding the current state of institutional arrangements, identifying gaps, and exploring opportunities for capacity building and international cooperation.

ICAT Director, Henning Wuester, provided opening remarks at the event sharing perspectives on the role of data, and highlighting ICAT support for transparency for loss and damage.

(Photos courtesy of UNEP-Copenhagen Climate Centre)

UNFCCC side event: Tracking the journey of just transition strategies and policies

(7 June 2024)

The main objective of this event was to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices in the tracking and monitoring of just transition policies and strategies. While a just transition is recognized as necessary for a sustainable future, there have been very limited efforts for tracking or measuring their impacts.

This event was a call-to-action to encourage countries to set up monitoring frameworks to track their just transition strategies, to ensure the intended impacts of social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic prosperity, are achieved. This event also encouraged countries to report their progress in achieving a just transition in their NDC 3.0 and long term, low emission development strategies.

ICAT Director, Henning Wuester, spoke on the event's panel highlighting ICAT approach on monitoring just transitions, the work in Nigeria and South Africa, and the upcoming ICAT guide on the topic.

(Tuesday, 4 June 2024)

Developing countries, particularly the least developed countries and small island developing States face serious challenges when it comes to the implementation of the Paris Agreement's enhanced transparency framework and the submission of BTRs. This in-person workshop organized by the UNFCCC Secretariat was designed to help developing countries prepare for the submission of their first BTRs under the Paris Agreement. It introduced some of the resources available to these countries to create sustainable systems for reporting and meeting transparency requirements. The ICAT Secretariat representatives participated as facilitators of break-out groups.

Countries shared their experience and expressed their concern about receiving sufficient support and in a timely manner. Both countries and support providers will need to scale up and accelerate processes to access support for the BTR.

<u>Bilateral meetings</u>

Across the two weeks of the SB 60, the ICAT Secretariat met with representatives of many of its partner countries and other partners in person to discuss the progress of ongoing ICAT activities and preparation of new projects and collaboration.

Bilateral meetings were held with the following 31 partner countries: Algeria, Belize, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius,

Mongolia, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, South Africa, Tajikistan, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe.

Meetings were also held with representatives of the following partners: Economic Community of Central African States, IPPC Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale, Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement, Central American Commission for Environment and Development, and the United Nations Development Programme.