

ICAT Stakeholder Survey: Findings and Next Steps

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) is building a methodological framework for countries to use to transparently measure and assess the impacts of climate policies and actions. This includes guidance for measuring the effects of policies and actions on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, responding to sustainable development needs and driving transformational change. To inform the design and direction of the framework, the ICAT team ran a survey to gather stakeholder input.

This report presents the results of that survey. These results will be taken into account by the Technical Working Groups that will provide technical input for the duration of the initiative and determine how the ICAT team develops the various components of the methodological framework.¹

The survey was designed to clarify needs, identify desired outcomes, and inform guidance documents that will help countries credibly assess and report the greenhouse gas, sustainable development and transformational impacts of their climate policies and actions. The survey collected a diverse array of perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders. Stakeholders were asked about informational gaps and needs across the 10 components of the framework being developed, as well as about how they might use

¹ The components of the methodological framework are: Sector-Level Accounting for GHG Impacts (Energy, Transport, Agriculture, Forestry), Sustainable Development, Transformational Change, Stakeholder Participation, Verification, Finance and Non-State Action.

the guidance. Results are presented by sector and generally follow the order in which survey questions appeared.

Survey results varied in their granularity. Some results provided a useful level of detail that will directly impact decision-making for certain components. Conversely, some results proved more general, and these may serve as fodder for deeper discussions and examination of options among the framework developers. The reader, therefore, should keep in mind that the survey is just one contribution to a suite of factors under consideration that will shape the development of the framework.

The ICAT team is grateful to the survey respondents for taking the time to contribute their views to this important endeavor.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the survey was to understand the perspectives and draw upon the expertise of a wide range of stakeholders on the needs and gaps for guidance on the assessment of the impacts of climate policies and actions. These inputs are being used to inform the design of the methodological framework.

The survey aimed to gather feedback for nine components of the framework², including information on the tools and methods already in use by respondents for the assessment of policies and actions, and input on elements stakeholders deem important for inclusion in the methodological framework.

3. APPROACH

Information was gathered via a survey with a short questionnaire. The ICAT implementing and supporting partners designed and tested the questionnaire, which included information about the ICAT methodological framework so that respondents would have an opportunity to learn more about ICAT while they were completing it. The questionnaire also asked respondents about their interest in participating in ICAT working groups.

The target completion time for respondents was 15-20 minutes. Many of the questions were optional, recognising that the methodological framework is wide in scope and not all components would be relevant or of interest to all respondents. The questionnaire is available here ([ICAT Stakeholder Survey](#)).

The survey was administered via Survey Monkey. The team solicited responses through an email campaign intended to reach a large and diverse international group engaged in climate change mitigation endeavors across disciplines and sectors. The Climate-L list, the email lists of the ICAT implementing and supporting partner organizations, the Climate Action Network (CAN) and other key initiatives comprised the targeted groups.

The survey was issued on 14 April 2016, corresponding with the launch of the ICAT website. The survey was open for three and a half weeks, receiving a total of 358 responses. 175 of the respondents answered all of the questions on the questionnaire, while the remainder answered a subset of the questions. A sampling size (“n”) is indicated for question summaries below, as the number of responses for each question varied throughout the survey.³

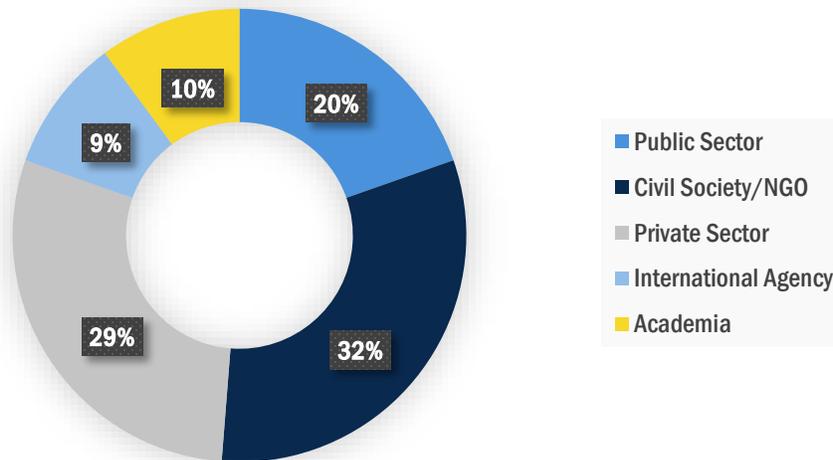
² The Non-State Action component was introduced into the scope of the methodological framework after the survey was issued, so no questions on this component were included in the questionnaire.

³ Because respondents for the survey were a self-selecting group who volunteered to participate rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. This survey may be subject to sources of error, including, but not limited to sampling error, coverage error and measurement error.

In addition, the team distributed the survey to the contact persons for each of the initial ICAT participating countries. At the time of writing the ICAT team has begun to receive these results, which will be used to further inform the design of the framework. Other individuals from the participating countries are also represented among the 358 total responses received.

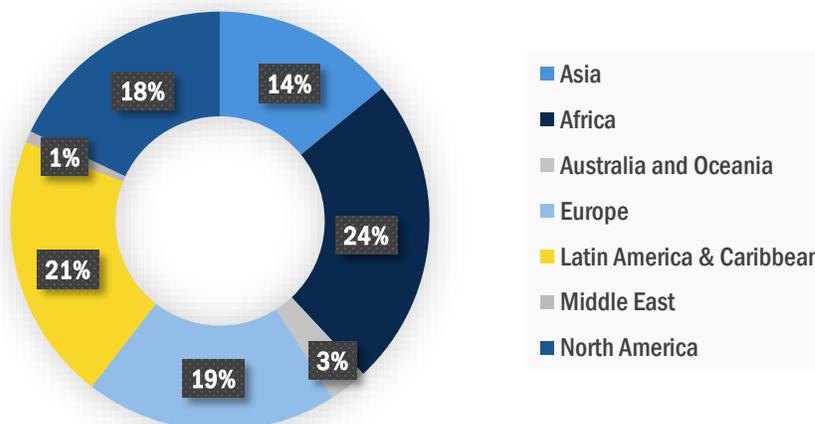
Stakeholders from the following groups responded to the survey: Civil Society/NGO (32%), Private Sector (29%), Public Sector (20%), International Agency (9%), Academia (10%).

Figure 1. *What type of organization do you work for?*
(Sample size, n = 334)



Stakeholders from 61 countries responded to the survey. The regional breakdown is shown in Figure 2 below. Africa, with 24%, showed the largest representation, followed by Latin America & Caribbean (21%) and Europe (19%).

Figure 2. *Survey response by region*
(Sample size, n = 334)

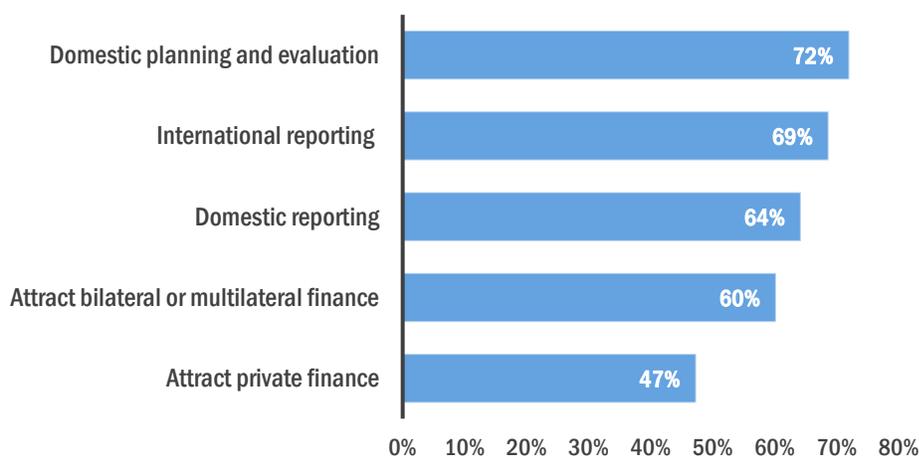


4. FINDINGS

The questionnaire started by posing a few general introductory questions, followed by a series of questions covering each component. The results of each question are presented in the sub-sections below.

The first question asked respondents what were the most useful purposes for the assessment of climate policies and actions. A large majority answered the question (n=332). The results show that the proposed objectives for the framework are appropriate and well-aligned with respondents’ priorities for the assessment of climate policies and actions. The top two options that respondents chose (72% and 69% of respondents respectively), *Domestic planning and evaluation* and *International reporting*, were revealing and presented a clear indication that the framework should meet both domestic *and* international reporting and evaluation needs.

Figure 3. *For what purpose(s) would the assessment of climate policies and actions be most useful?*
(Sample size, n = 332)

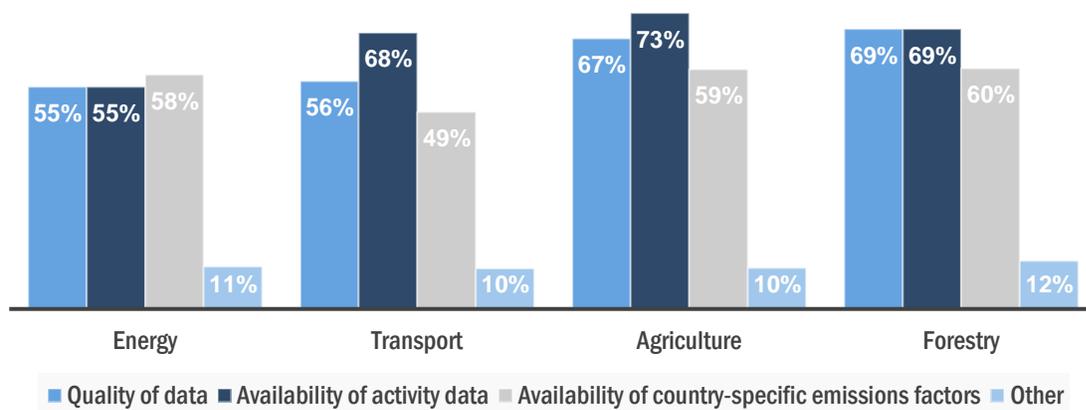


4.1 Sector-Level Accounting for GHG impacts

A. Data

The survey included a question addressing data gaps and challenges faced by the four ICAT GHG sectors: energy, transport, agriculture and forestry. The results show that the four sectors all face similar challenges with respect to the effective estimation of the GHG impacts of policies and actions.

Figure 4. *With respect to data, what do you consider to be the key challenges and gaps in effectively estimating the GHG impacts of policies and actions? Please select all boxes that apply for each sector.* (Sample size, n = 262)



The highest number of responses received was for the agriculture sector, which was taken as indicating that respondents believe this sector faces the largest number of challenges and gaps. The *availability of activity data* was the most commonly selected of all challenges and gaps categories. This may indicate that the challenges of collecting a wide variety of data on activities that influence GHG emissions from several diverse sources can hinder estimation of GHG impacts.

The second highest number of responses received was for the forestry sector. In the energy sector, the overall reported need was lower than in other sectors, and the largest gap for energy was the *availability of country-specific emission factors*. Some noteworthy responses for data challenges and gaps inserted for “Other” include:

- Energy: Attribution of impacts to specific policies; double counting; energy efficiency data
- Transport: Determination of project boundaries and activity data specific to project boundaries; domestic fuel consumption data for imports/exports
- Agriculture and forestry: Land use change data; forest area cover data; biomass expansion factors; deforestation data

The clear feedback here is that data challenges and gaps are crucial elements that should be addressed in the methodological guidance.

B. Level of guidance

One of the main objectives for the sector-level GHG accounting section was to determine whether the need is for high-level guidance that covers the entire sector, or for more detailed methodological accounting guidance for specific sub-sector(s) / policies and actions. This question yielded conclusive results across all four sectors. Illustrated by sector below, each of the graphs depicts an overall preference for more detailed methodological accounting.

Figure 5. Which level of guidance is needed?
(Sample size, n = 206)

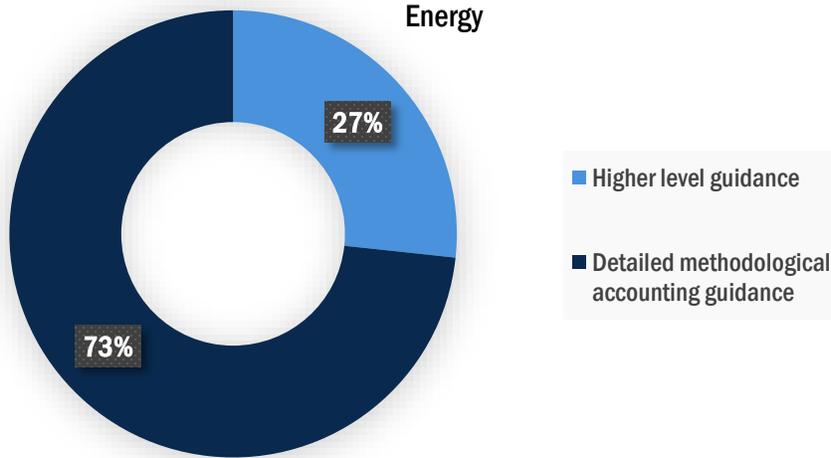


Figure 6. Which level of guidance is needed?
(Sample size, n = 186)

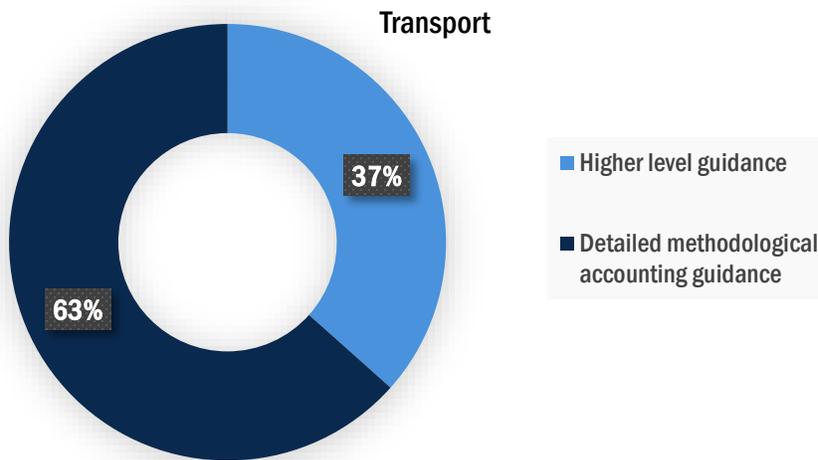
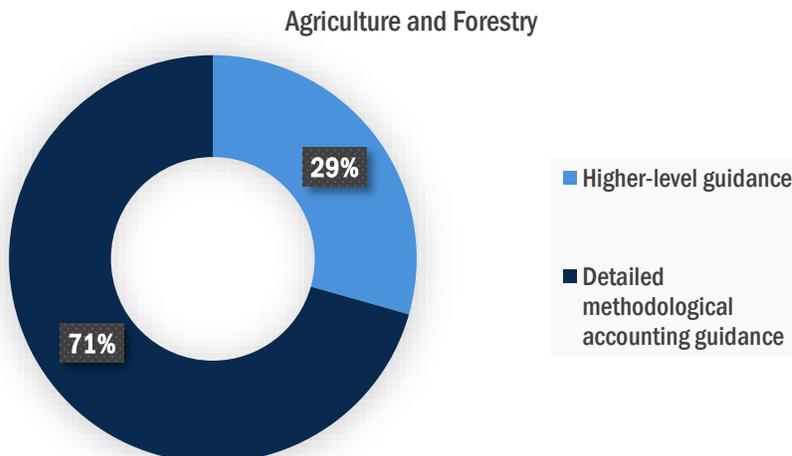


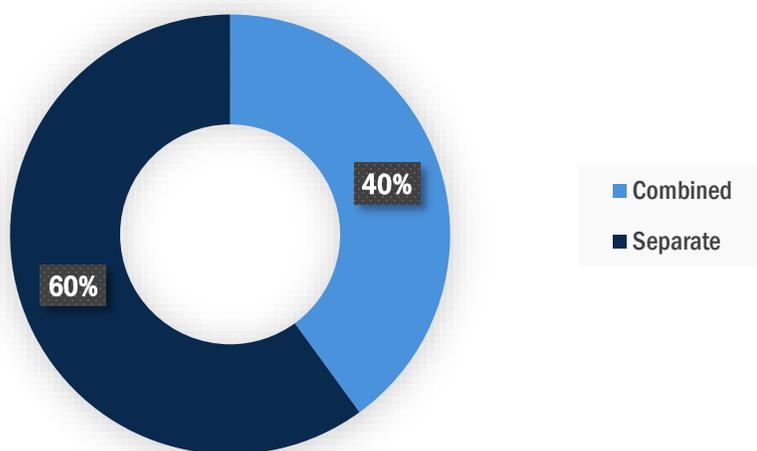
Figure 7. Which level of guidance is needed?
(Sample size, n = 194)



An additional question posed for the agriculture and forestry sectors aimed to determine whether agriculture and forestry guidance should be separate or combined. The rationale for providing combined guidance is that the two sectors are closely linked, because the drivers causing GHG emissions or removals and the carbon pools are the same across all land types. It could be favorable to provide guidance for these two sectors as an integrated whole, using a landscape approach.

Alternatively, separate guidance may be preferred, given that countries report the two sectors separately in GHG inventories to the UNFCCC (ie, LULUCF and agriculture), or because policies and actions might focus on a single land-use sector (ie, either agriculture or forestry). This question yielded a conclusive result which should be taken into account by the Technical Working Groups. As evident in Figure 8, respondents favor separate guidance over combined guidance, 60% to 40%.

Figure 8. *What type of agriculture and forestry guidance would be most useful?*
(Sample size, n = 195)

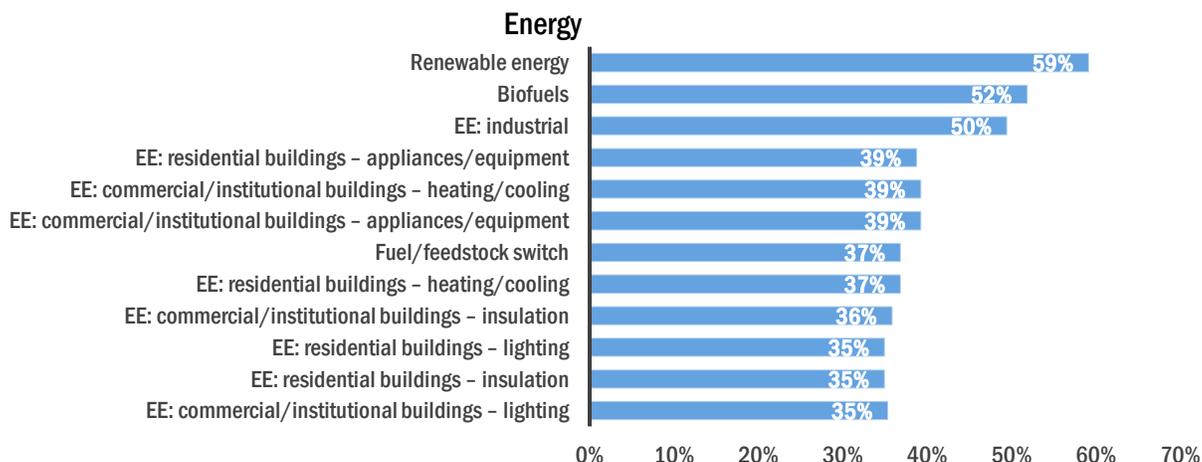


C. Activities

Energy

In the energy sector, there were some interesting results. Perhaps surprisingly, *renewable energy* rose to the top of the list as needing guidance, even though many methodological accounting methods are already available for this sub-sector. Further analysis will be necessary to narrow ICAT's focus.

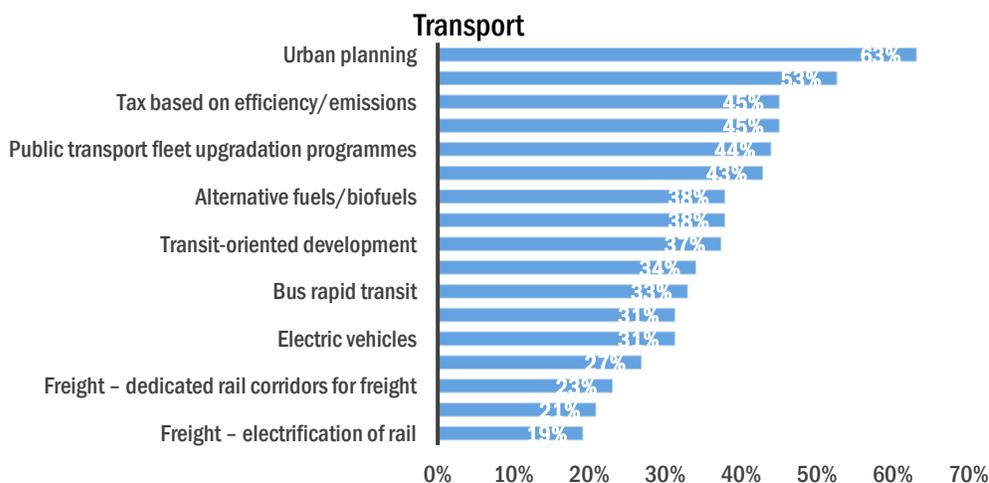
Figure 9. Which of the following need guidance most (eg, existing methodologies/guidance is lacking, is difficult to apply to policies and actions, or contains significant gaps)? Please select all that apply. (Sample size, n = 206)



Transport

Urban planning was the most popular choice for transport with 63% of respondents checking this as an activity where guidance is needed. Other responses for the transport sector seem well-aligned with recent policy trends: emission standards, tax based on efficiency/emissions and fuel efficiency standards.

Figure 10. Which of the following need guidance most (eg, existing methodologies/guidance is lacking, is difficult to apply to policies and actions, or contains significant gaps)? Please select all that apply. (Sample size, n = 182)



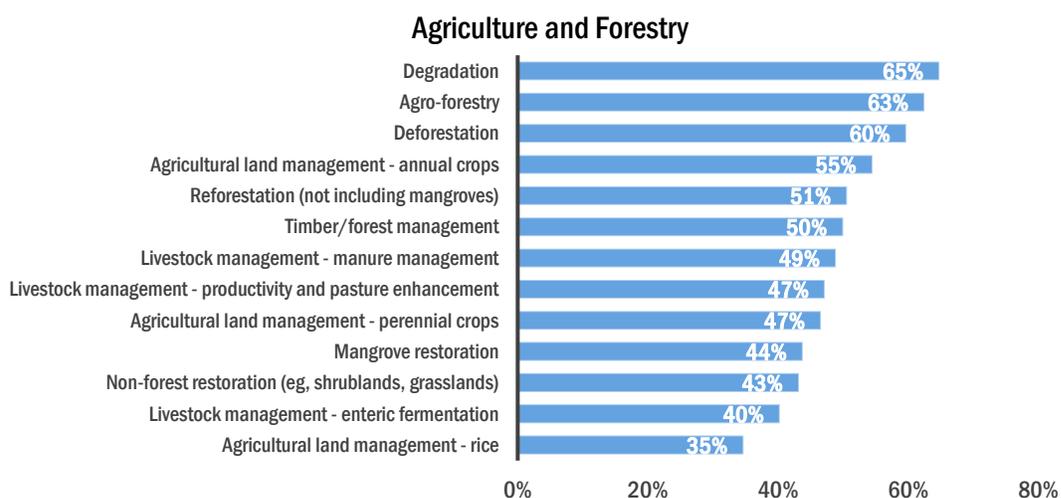
Agriculture and Forestry

It is notable that although a majority expressed a preference for separate over combined guidance (Figure 8), this question elicited responses that are not necessarily well-aligned with the use of separate guidance. As the results in Figure 11 show, the activities most needing guidance for agriculture and forestry were those which would seemingly benefit more from *combined* guidance.

For instance, degradation can be broadly defined as a reduction in canopy cover or stocking within a forest as a result of anthropogenic and environmental changes, which in turn lowers its capacity to supply products and/or services. Given that main drivers of both degradation and deforestation are agriculture and agricultural expansion, this response could be considered at odds with a preference for separate guidance documents.

Because respondents were allowed to check an unlimited number of boxes and some of the findings were more general than anticipated, the results will need further examination in the Technical Working Groups.

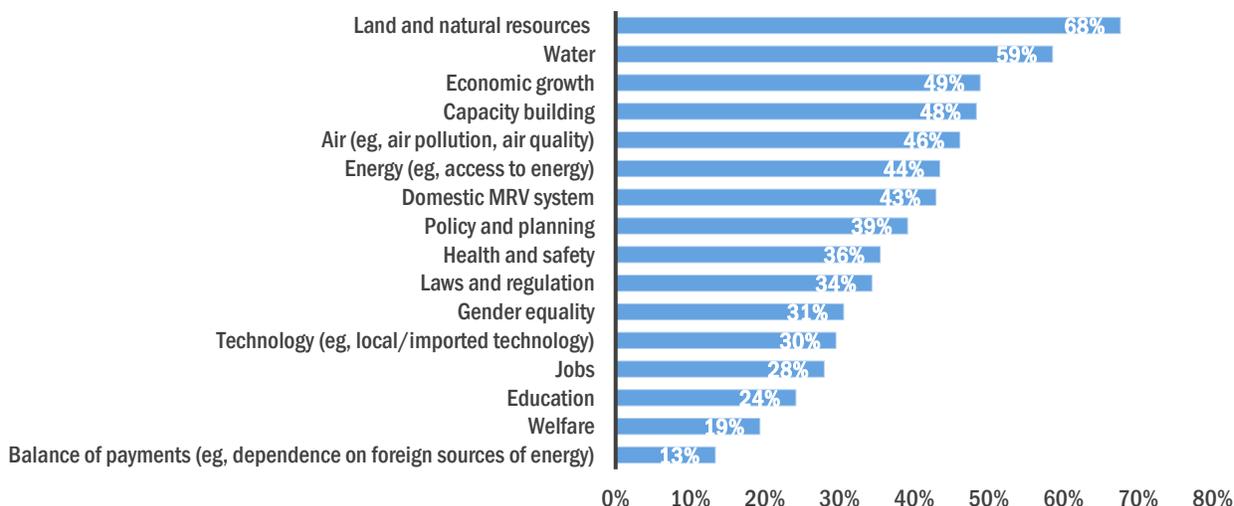
Figure 11. Which of the following need guidance most (eg, existing methodologies/guidance is lacking, is difficult to apply to policies and actions, or contains significant gaps)? Please select all that apply. (Sample size, n = 176)



4.2 Sustainable Development

The first question on sustainable development asked what types of impacts most need additional, more specific guidance. Respondents were allowed to select up to five types of impacts for this question, and the responses were distributed across the whole list.

Figure 12. Sustainable development impacts. *For which types of sustainable development impacts (ie, social, economic, environmental impacts) would additional, more specific assessment guidance be useful? Please check up to five types of impacts.*
 (Sample size, n = 186)



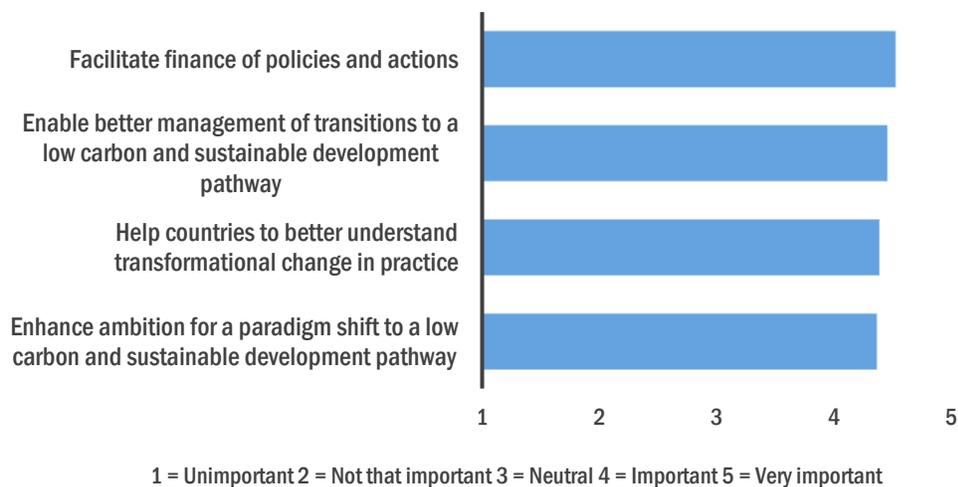
Many respondents noted that the most important impact categories in a given country depend on national priorities and objectives. This notion is consistent with the proposed approach to address all sustainable development impact categories in a general way, allowing users to choose the impact categories they will assess based on what is most important in their local context. Additional consultations will be needed to determine on which impact categories the guidance should focus.

4.3 Transformational Change

Respondents were first asked to rate a set of objectives for the transformational change guidance. These results show that a majority of stakeholders believe this component is important. As seen in Figure 13, a large majority of respondents rated each one of the objectives listed as *important* or *very important*. The average ratings for each objective lie within a very narrow range of 4.37 - 4.53, or a scale of *important* (4) to *very important* (5).

Figure 13. Transformational change. *On a scale of 1-5, how important do you think the following objectives are for the guidance?*

(Sample size, n = 194)



The results convey that the objectives are important and that they are well-aligned with stakeholder priorities. A number of write-in responses under *Other* included that the guidance should address the perceived trade-off between growth and environment, incorporate the mobilization of private as well as public finance and speak to the interconnectedness of these objectives. As one respondent wrote, “a better understanding of transformational change will enhance ambition for a paradigm shift which will need to be financed and managed.”

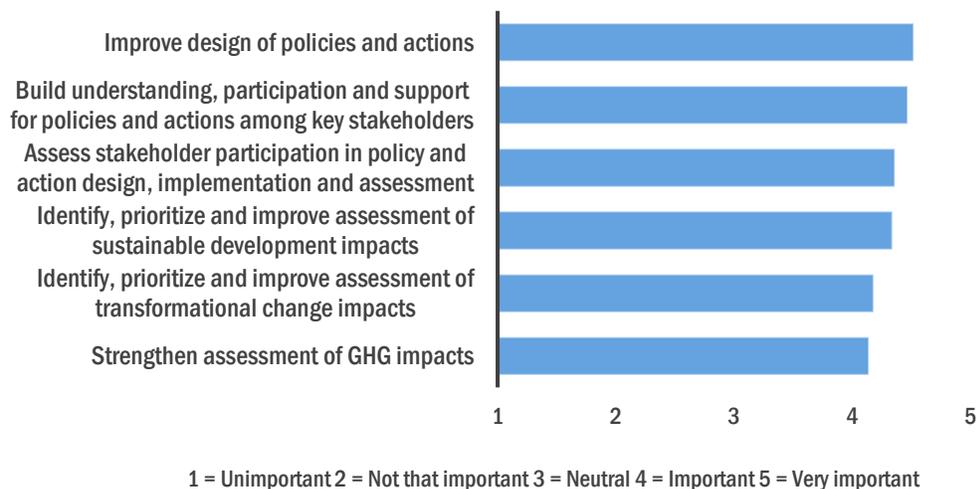
It is revealing that many respondents (286) skipped the subsequent question, “*What existing guidance, tools, standards or methods are you aware of that are useful for assessing the transformational change impacts of policies and actions?*” Out of the 80 who responded, many stated that little or no guidance is available to assess transformational change impacts. Twenty-six respondents indicated that none is available.

Much of the existing guidance cited by stakeholders is actually more closely related to the assessment of sustainable development impacts, highlighting a misunderstanding of transformational change as being almost synonymous with sustainable development. This point further reinforces the need for clarification between these two concepts. The lack of existing tools for the assessment of transformational change means that this component will mostly be developed “from scratch.”

4.4 Stakeholder Participation

The first question asked respondents how important stakeholder participation guidance is for meeting a set of objectives. Similar to what was observed for transformational change, these results fell within a narrow range, showing that stakeholder guidance is important to achieving all of the listed objectives.

Figure 14. Stakeholder participation. *On a scale of 1-5, how important do you think stakeholder participation guidance is for the following objectives?*
 (Sample size, n = 177)



4.5 Finance

The first question on finance asked whether respondents were seeking or planning to seek finance for their policies and/or actions. Figure 15 below shows that 82% answered either *yes* or *maybe* while Figure 16 illustrates the regional breakdown of these respondents.

Figure 15. *Are you currently seeking, or planning to seek, (or working with a country that is seeking or planning to seek) external finance for policies and/or actions?*
 (Sample size, n = 183)

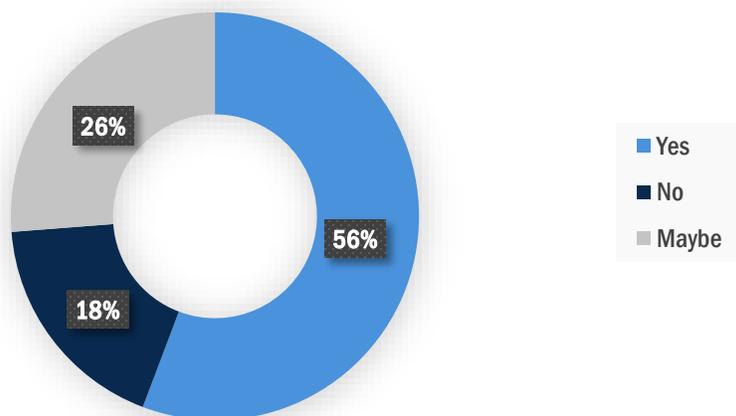
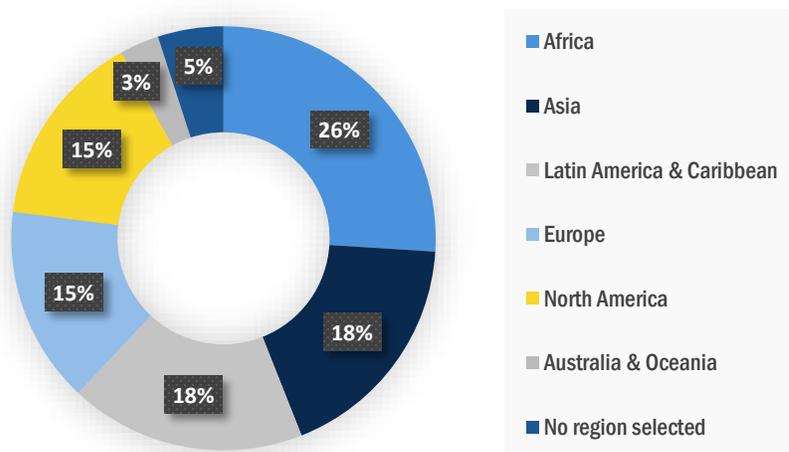


Figure 16. By region: respondents answering *yes* or *maybe* to the question *Are you currently seeking, or planning to seek, (or working with a country that is seeking or planning to seek) external finance for policies and/or actions?* (Sample size, n = 149)



The main purposes of seeking finance are illustrated in Figure 17. Respondents could choose as many categories as they wanted. The most common choice was to *Implement a policy or action*. A majority also chose the option *Reward actors for achieving reduced GHG emissions and/or removals, sustainable development or transformational change benefits; or otherwise sharing benefits in the context of relevant results-based mechanisms*.

Figure 17. *What is/would be the main purpose of that finance? Please select all that apply.* (Sample size, n = 148)

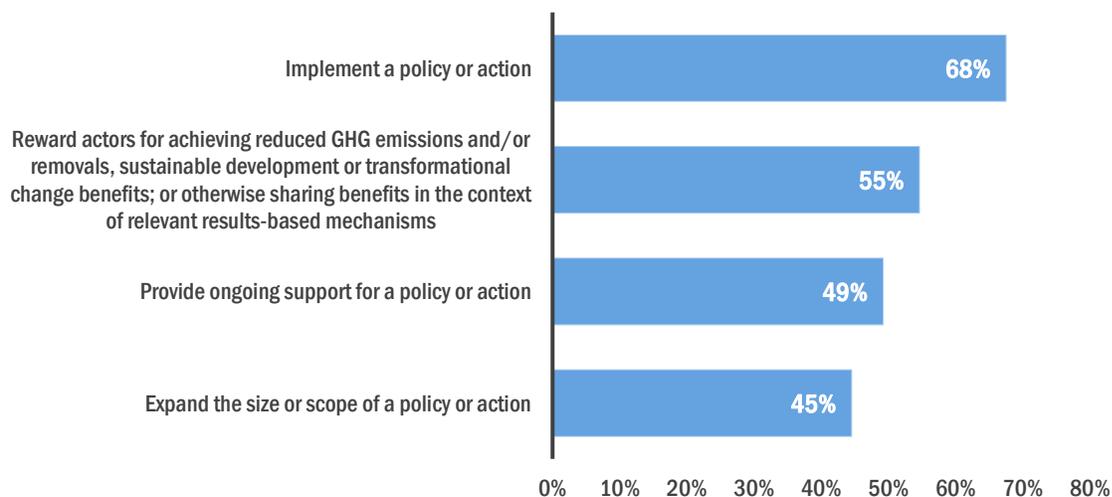
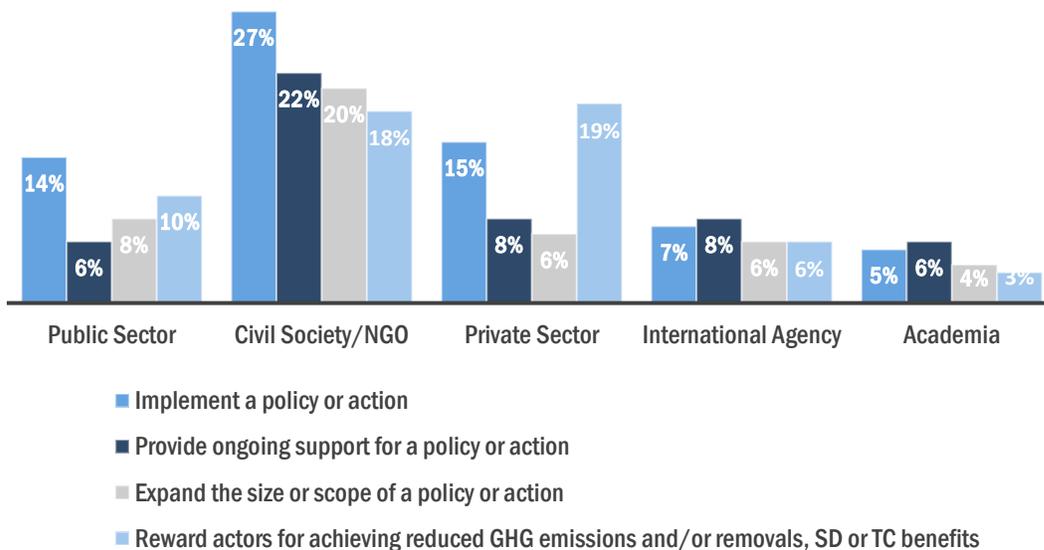


Figure 18 breaks down finance purposes by stakeholder group, illustrating that the private sector is the only group to rank highest the option of rewarding actors for achievement. The group seeking to *Implement a policy or action* above all is the public sector group whereas other groups are more likely to augment or continue policies that are already in place. This information is useful input for further discussion within the finance Technical Working Group.

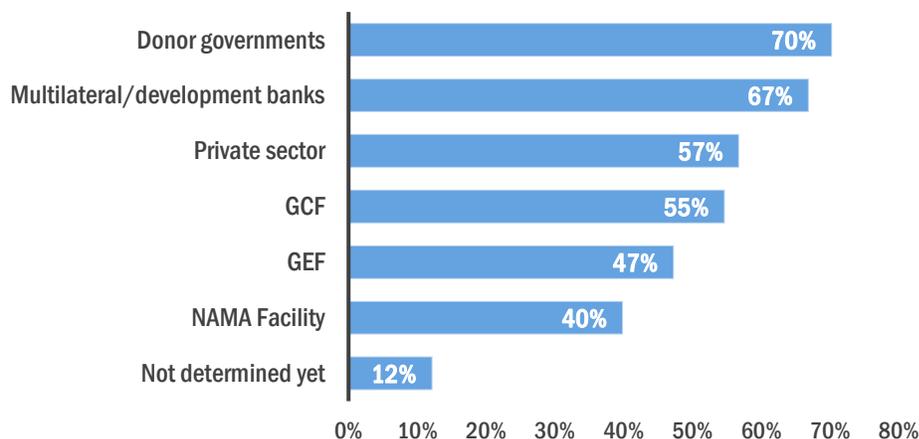
Figure 18. By stakeholder group: *What is / would be the main purpose of that finance? Please select all that apply.* (Sample size, n = 148)



The anticipated targeted finance sources are shown in Figure 19. Donor governments and multilateral/development banks are the top choices with 70% and 67%, respectively.

A relatively small percentage (12%) of respondents selected the option *Not determined yet*. This low number may indicate that most respondents already have an adequate understanding of where they can access climate finance, or may reflect an unrealistic expectation of the scale of contributions from donor governments.

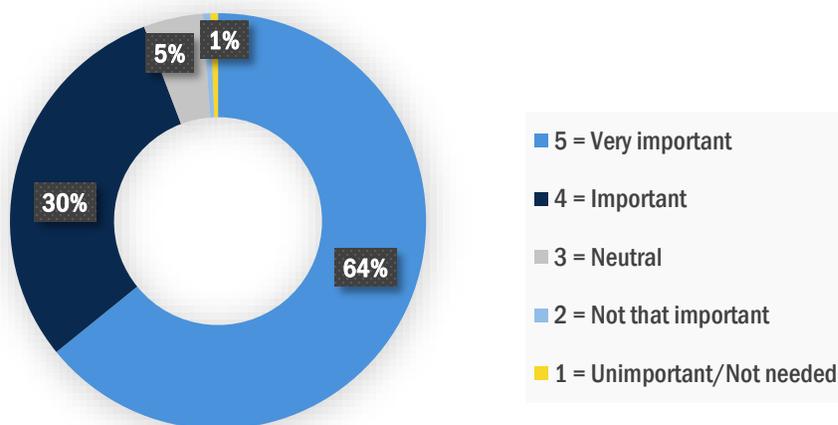
Figure 19. *What specific sources of external finance do you expect to target? Please select all that apply.* (Sample size, n = 148)



4.6 Verification

The questions on verification gave some of the most conclusive results of the survey. Figure 20 shows how important it is for verification guidance to help countries meet their UNFCCC reporting requirements. A striking 94% of respondents rated this as either *important* (4) or *very important* (5).

Figure 20. Please rank on a scale of 1-5 how important it is that verification guidance help countries meet current or future reporting requirements under the UNFCCC. (Sample size, n = 173)



The results in Figure 20 reveal an apparent paradox when viewed alongside the question about the most useful purposes of the framework (Figure 3). On the one hand, it is important that guidance help countries with UNFCCC reporting, while on the other, the framework’s use as a tool for domestic reporting, planning and evaluation is seen as most important.

Figure 21 shows the subsequent question asked about reasons for verification. *External credibility* and *public reporting* are the top-rated reasons and further reinforce that the framework should align with both UNFCCC reporting and domestic planning. The guidance should seek to help with both domestic and international reporting requirements, especially in light of the Paris agreement and the potential for the development of new requirements post-2020.

Figure 21. Considering the GHG, sustainable development or transformational change impacts of policies and actions, please rank on a scale of 1-5 the importance of the following reasons for verification. (Sample size, n = 177)

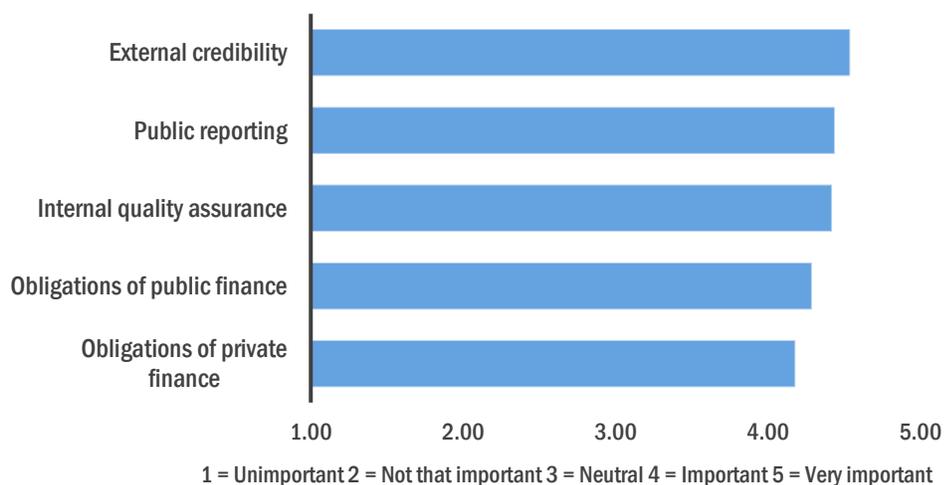
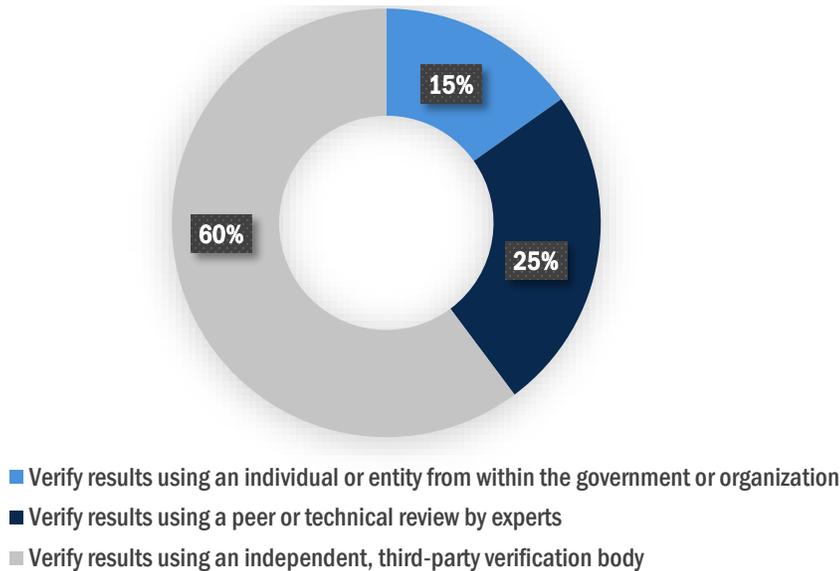


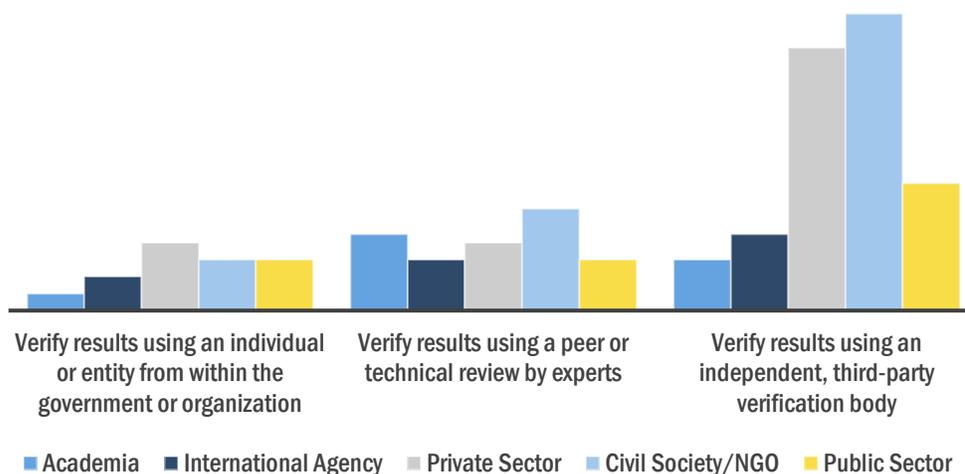
Figure 22 shows the preferred verification option given the need to balance cost, ease of use and credibility. The majority of respondents (60%) chose *Verify results using an independent, third-party verification body*. This was an unexpected result that needs further investigation, especially considering the nature of third party verification and the financial costs involved.

Figure 22. Which verification option is preferable when aiming to balance cost, ease of use, and credibility? (Sample size, n = 171)



Analysing by stakeholder group (Figure 23 below) shows that academia is the only group that did not choose this option as its first choice, instead ranking the *peer or technical review by experts* option highest. It is likely that this verification option is most familiar to this group.

Figure 23. By stakeholder group. Which verification option is preferable when aiming to balance cost, ease of use, and credibility? (Sample size, n = 171)



5. CONCLUSION

The survey aimed to understand the guidance needs of a wide range of stakeholders, in order to inform the development of the methodological framework for assessing the impacts of climate policies and actions. While some survey results sent clearer signals than others, the results have been very useful.

In some cases, the results provide clear, unambiguous input for Technical Working Group discussions. For instance, the sector-level GHG accounting guidance should be detailed methodological guidance rather than higher-level guidance. For the verification component, the results revealed a clear need for guidance that helps countries with international reporting requirements to the UNFCCC as well as guidance for domestic planning, reporting and evaluation.

In other cases, the results were clear, though further exploration of these results is needed. For example, the results showed a clear preference for separate rather than combined guidance for agriculture and forestry, but the Technical Working Group process will need to ascertain whether this would in fact be the best approach. Likewise, results showed that a majority of respondents prefers verification by a third-party verification body, but this option may not meet country needs, suggesting that the results should not necessarily be taken at face value and be explored further.

In further cases still, the results were not clear-cut and deeper exploration of the topics will now happen via the Technical Working Group process. The survey did not provide conclusive results on the sub-sectors on which the guidance documents should focus for sector-level GHG accounting or the impact categories that most need guidance for the sustainable development component. For the transformational change component, the results were inconclusive on which were the most important objectives for the guidance. The results also provided limited clarity on the importance of stakeholder participation for meeting various objectives. In these last two cases, however, the results did indicate that the objectives set forth by the ICAT team were aligned with respondents' priorities, since all of them were rated as important.

Overall, the results validate the framework's established priorities and initial plans. The Technical Working Group process will now see the experts working on each component carefully consider these results in the context of their ongoing discussions, so that the groups may further refine the focus of their respective guidance documents.