



Stakeholder Participation Guide

Executive summary

Download the guide at <https://climateactiontransparency.org/icat-toolbox/stakeholder-participation/>

The unprecedented challenge of climate change requires that society undergoes a fundamental shift away from carbon-intensive and unsustainable models of development. The urgency of the transition towards net zero global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions was underlined in the 2018 Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

With the adoption of the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, governments around the world are increasingly focused on implementing policies and actions that achieve GHG mitigation and sustainable development objectives.

To ensure that policies and actions are effective in delivering these benefits, and given the fundamental changes they might entail, there is an increasing need to assess and communicate their multiple impacts. Stakeholder participation enhances the effectiveness of policies by integrating stakeholder knowledge and perceptions into policy design and implementation, and builds support for policies through increased transparency, accountability and legitimacy of decision-making. Effective stakeholder engagement is a standard feature of policy processes, and omitting it may jeopardize the implementation of a policy. Paying attention to marginalized people or groups, such as women, indigenous peoples and local communities, can be a key determinant of policy success. The Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) Stakeholder Participation Guide helps policymakers conduct effective stakeholder participation in pursuit of these goals.

Effective stakeholder participation

ICAT provides methodologies for assessing the GHG, sustainable development and transformational impacts of policies and actions (hereafter referred to as “policies”, for brevity) in an integrated and comprehensive manner across all levels of governance. The ICAT *Stakeholder Participation Guide* is designed to be used in conjunction with these methodologies. It provides guidance to help users conduct effective stakeholder participation in support of policy impact assessments. The guide can also help users with stakeholder participation beyond impact assessment – in particular, to support policy design and implementation.

Effective stakeholder participation is a process in which stakeholders have a meaningful influence over decisions. It involves those who are potentially affected by, or interested in, a decision and who have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

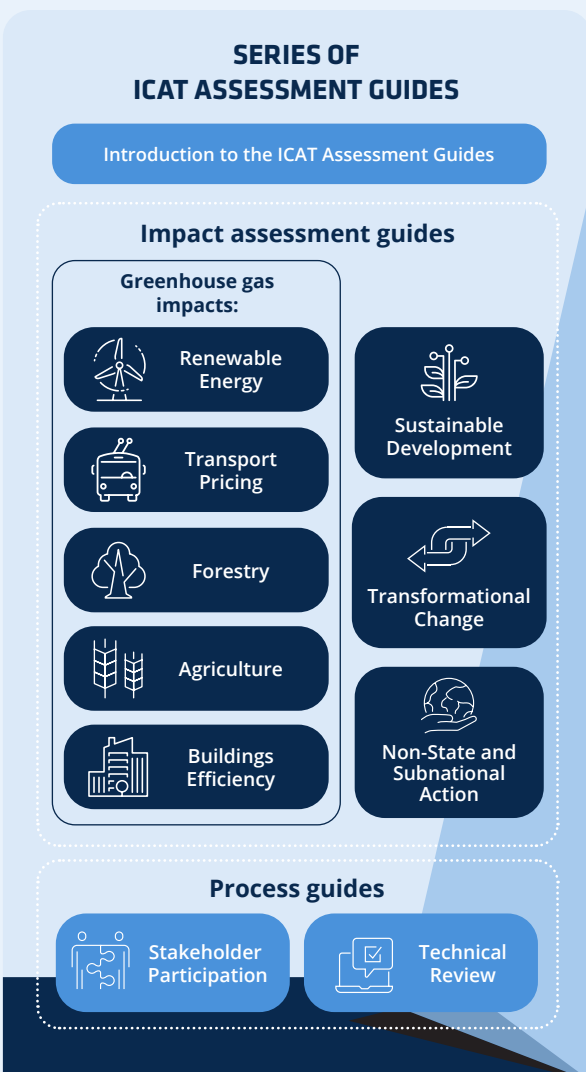
Stakeholder participation enhances policy design, implementation and assessment by:

- raising awareness and enabling better understanding of complex issues for all parties involved, thereby building their capacity to contribute effectively
- building trust, collaboration, shared ownership and support for policies among stakeholder groups, thereby leading to less conflict and easier implementation
- addressing stakeholder perceptions of risks and impacts, and helping to develop measures to reduce negative impacts and increase benefits for all stakeholder groups
- increasing the credibility, accuracy and comprehensiveness of the assessment, drawing on diverse expert, local and traditional knowledge and practices
- increasing transparency, accountability, legitimacy and respect for stakeholders’ rights
- enabling enhanced ambition and finance by strengthening the effectiveness of policies and the credibility of reporting.

Series of ICAT assessment guides

ICAT aims to help countries assess the impacts of their climate actions, and to support greater transparency, effectiveness, ambition and trust in climate policies worldwide. The *Stakeholder Participation Guide* is part of the ICAT series of guides for assessing the GHG, sustainable development and transformational impacts of policies and actions in an integrated way. The guides are a result of collaboration with technical experts from around the world.

The ICAT *Stakeholder Participation Guide* can be used on its own or together with other ICAT guides.



The assessment guides have been used to support capacity-building for transparency in more than 20 countries. Case studies are available on the ICAT website. To learn more about how ICAT supports countries, visit www.climateactiontransparency.org.

Intended audience

The primary intended users of the *Stakeholder Participation Guide* are developing country governments and their partners (domestic and international) who want to ensure the effective engagement of stakeholders in the process of policy design, implementation or assessment, particularly in the context of development and implementation of nationally determined contributions (NDCs), national low-emission development strategies, nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) and other mechanisms.

Similarly, donor agencies, financial institutions, businesses, research institutions and non-governmental organizations can use the guide to help ensure effective stakeholder participation in policies and other actions they may be involved in. The guide can also be used by stakeholders who are affected by policies, to help them participate more effectively in the design, implementation and assessment of policies.

The guide can be used at all levels of governance: national, subnational or municipal.

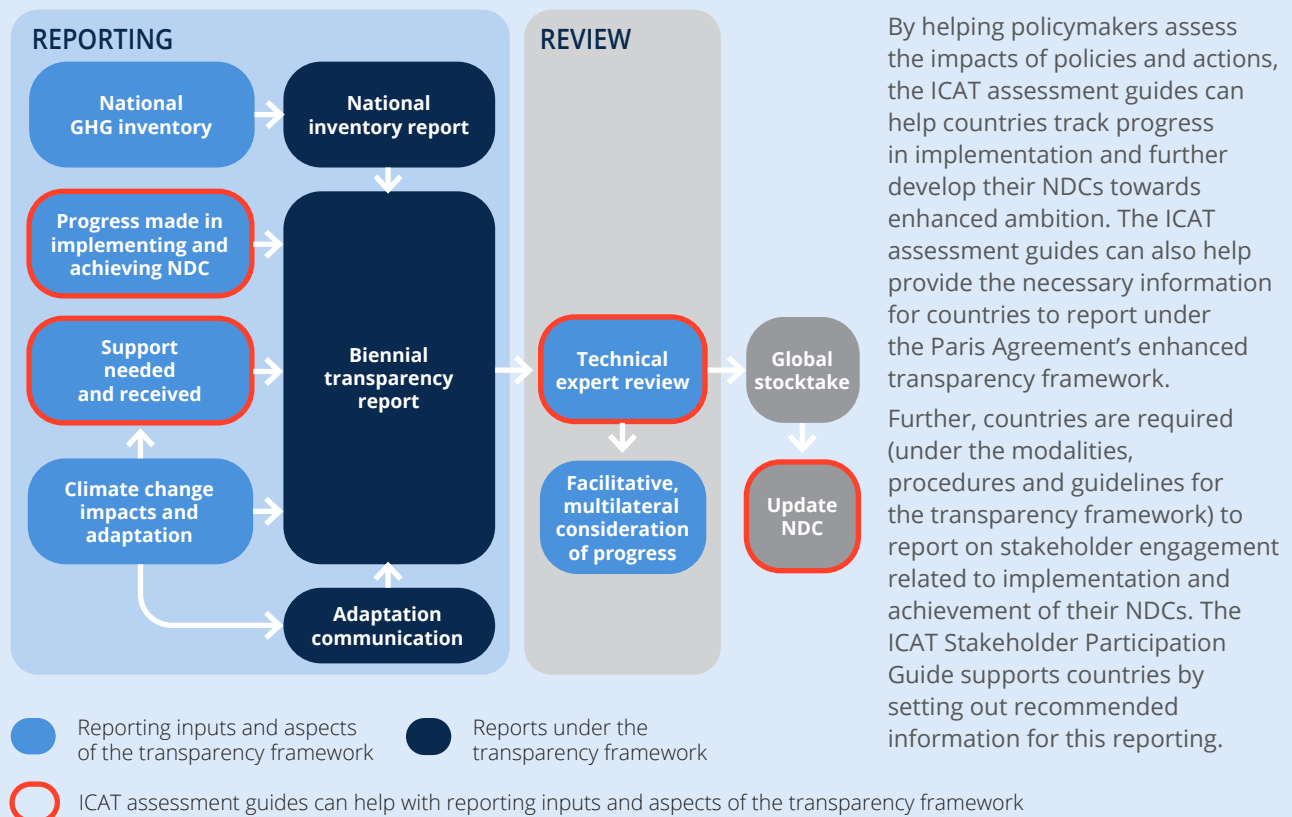
Using the guide during policy design and implementation

The guide can be used at different stages of a policy design and implementation cycle, with its use being governed by the country's needs and objectives. For example, if a country wants to build understanding, participation and support for a policy among diverse stakeholders, including enhancing legitimacy and shared ownership, it would use the guide before policy implementation.

The guide can be used to strengthen the assessment of the GHG, sustainable development or transformational impacts of a policy by enhancing the comprehensiveness of the assessment through diverse expert, local and traditional knowledge and practices.

If the guide is used at multiple stages in a policy design and implementation cycle, it becomes an iterative process, such that previous experience informs improvements to policy design and implementation, and the development of new policies.

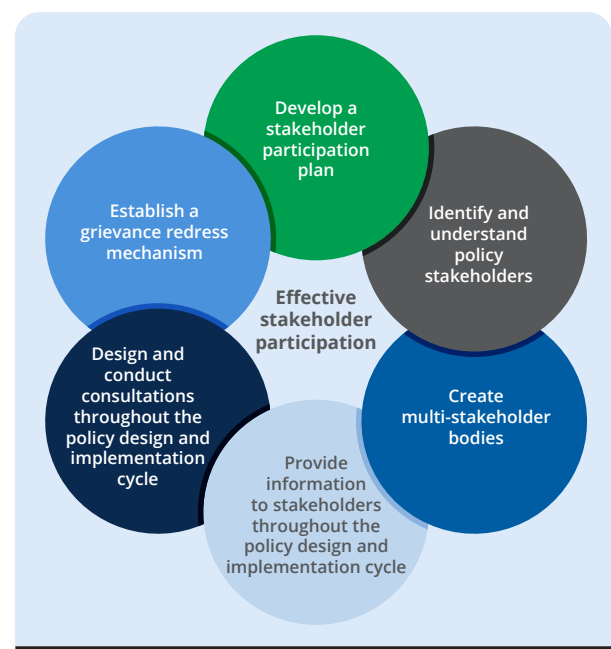
Advancing climate action through the enhanced transparency framework



Key elements of effective stakeholder participation

The guide is organized around a number of key elements, which collectively provide the basis for conducting effective stakeholder participation:

- Develop stakeholder participation plan. Identify the activities, methods, timing, roles, responsibilities and resources for stakeholder participation, and share the plan with stakeholders. This helps stakeholders understand the opportunities for participation and the role they can play.
- Identify and understand policy stakeholders. Identify the full range of policy stakeholders, paying special attention to those who may be marginalized. Marginalized people or groups are those that have little or no influence over decision-making processes. They tend to be ignored, misrepresented or underrepresented.



- Create multi-stakeholder bodies. A multi-stakeholder body or structure is a formal or informal regular gathering of people representing various constituencies, interests and stakes. Use multi-stakeholder bodies to enable the participation, contribution and influence of stakeholders towards the goal or strategy.
- Provide information to stakeholders throughout the policy design and implementation cycle. Actively disseminate information so that stakeholders can understand the issues, and provide richer and more effective input.
- Design and conduct consultations throughout the policy design and implementation cycle. Consultations are processes that enable exchange of information between stakeholders (including between government and other stakeholders). Provide information and capacity-building to stakeholders, and enable diverse stakeholders to provide input that reflects their needs and interests.

- Establish a grievance redress mechanism. A grievance is an issue, concern, problem or claim (perceived or actual) that an individual or group wants addressed and resolved. Grievance redress mechanisms are the formal systems through which stakeholders can lodge these grievances. Use grievance redress mechanisms to safeguard policies, secure adequate protection for human rights, and ensure just transitions to greener and low-carbon economies.

Stakeholder participation spectrum

There are many levels of stakeholder participation, each with its own goal and associated promise to the stakeholder. The appropriate level for a given stakeholder group and participation process depends on the context.

| Low level of stakeholder participation | | Mid level of stakeholder participation | High level of stakeholder participation | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Inform | Consult | Involve | Collaborate | Empower |
| Provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information to help them understand the problem, alternatives and solutions | Obtain stakeholder input on analysis, alternatives or decisions | Work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered | Partner with stakeholders in each aspect of decision-making, including developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions | Place decision-making in the hands of stakeholders |
| “We will keep you informed.” | “We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influences the decision.” | “We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision.” | “We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions, and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.” | “We will implement what you decide.” |

Source: Adapted from IAP2 (2014).