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ICAT 2022 Impact Report

ICAT
Initiative for
Climate Action
Transparency

ICAT Initiative for Climate Action Transparency

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DISCLAIMER

PREPARED BY
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Welcome from ICAT's Director

I am pleased to welcome you to ICAT's Annual Impact Report for 2022.I hope you find it inspiring. As we review ICAT's impact for 2022, I take this opportunity to share some of my own personal highlights of the year with you.

High level support

2022 saw transparency arrive at the highest level of government. At the COP in Egypt, two Ministers joined us at the ICAT side event, which was co-hosted by Nigeria and CCAP. At the African Regional Climate Week, seven Ministers participated in a transparency-focused event, co-organized with the UNFCCC Secretariat and UNDP. And two months ago, the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, President Tshisekedi, spoke about transparency and the Regional Climate Action Transparency Hub for Central Africa in a speech to Heads of State gathered in the framework of the Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS).

All this high level support should now make it much easier for the experts and officials that have to advance transparency efforts to do so.

ICAT Community Meetings

A special highlight this year were the ICAT Community Meetings that were held at the beginning of September in Copenhagen. We welcomed almost 100 participants from some 25 ICAT partner countries, and from our implementing and supporting partners. Collectively, we discussed a range of topics, including some specialized new topics on the transparency agenda. We also looked at overall progress on the transparency agenda, and how this could be advanced – a topic that has become more important than ever.

Regional Transparency Hubs

ICAT's regional transparency hubs made significant progress in 2022. The hub in Central Asia developed its work plan and adopted it at the end of September. And the regional hub in Central Africa kicked off its work plan with a workshop in mid-December.

In-country Activities

My preferred highlight remains what ICAT has been able to advance in working with our partner countries. Here are highlights from just three countries, as examples of this.

Belize developed a national transparency framework as part of its ICAT project. This work also contributed to drafting a national climate change bill, which will now enter into the legislative process.

Fiji enacted a Climate Change Act in 2022 that was drafted with the support of the ICAT project. Also in Fiji, ICAT helped to develop the country's first MRV framework for agriculture, which now has identified measures that can enter into the next update of Fiji's NDC.

Last but not least, China made significant progress in working on an MRV framework for methane. Methane is an important greenhouse gas, particularly because reductions in methane can help to bring about short-term benefits for the global climate.

The ICAT Toolbox

To support the work in countries, ICAT has further developed its toolbox. And here again, I would like to highlight just a few elements. One of them is the methodology developed for tracking climate finance; another is a methodology for tracking just transition processes; and the third is a guide that focuses on the transparency needs of Article 6 activities so that countries can prepare for this. All this is now ready for application, with some country projects having already started.

What unites all these methodologies and tools is what I would highlight as the main theme for ICAT in 2022: Advancing transparency as a key tool for implementing NDCs. That's what developing countries are now very much engaged with. They used the data and information available to design their NDCs. Now, the bigger challenge is to actually put these NDCs into practice. That's an area where transparency can make a significant contribution. Many countries have realized this and have engaged much more actively than ever before.

Continue Reading

I trust that you will enjoy reading this Annual Impact Report, and that you will be inspired by its contents. Should you have any feedback, please let us know.

We look forward to engaging with you in 2023. On behalf of the ICAT Secretariat, I wish you all the best.

Henning Wuester

In 2022, 9 countries completed ICAT projects

Improved climate and sustainable development policies achieved in:

Belize
Chad
Eswatini
Fiji
Liberia
Nigeria
Viet Nam
Zimbabwe

New policies & measures in NDCs achieved in:

Belize
Chad
Nigeria
Viet Nam
Zimbabwe

New or refined adaptation monitoring measures, processes and/or plans achieved in:

Eswatini

New or refined greenhouse gas inventory achieved in:

Chad
China
Eswatini
Fiji
Nigeria

New or refined MRV framework achieved in:

Belize
Chad
China
Fiji
Nigeria
Viet Nam

New or refined NDC tracking framework achieved in:

Belize
Chad
Liberia
Nigeria
Zimbabwe

Improved or enhanced reporting to UNFCCC achieved in:

Belize
Nigeria

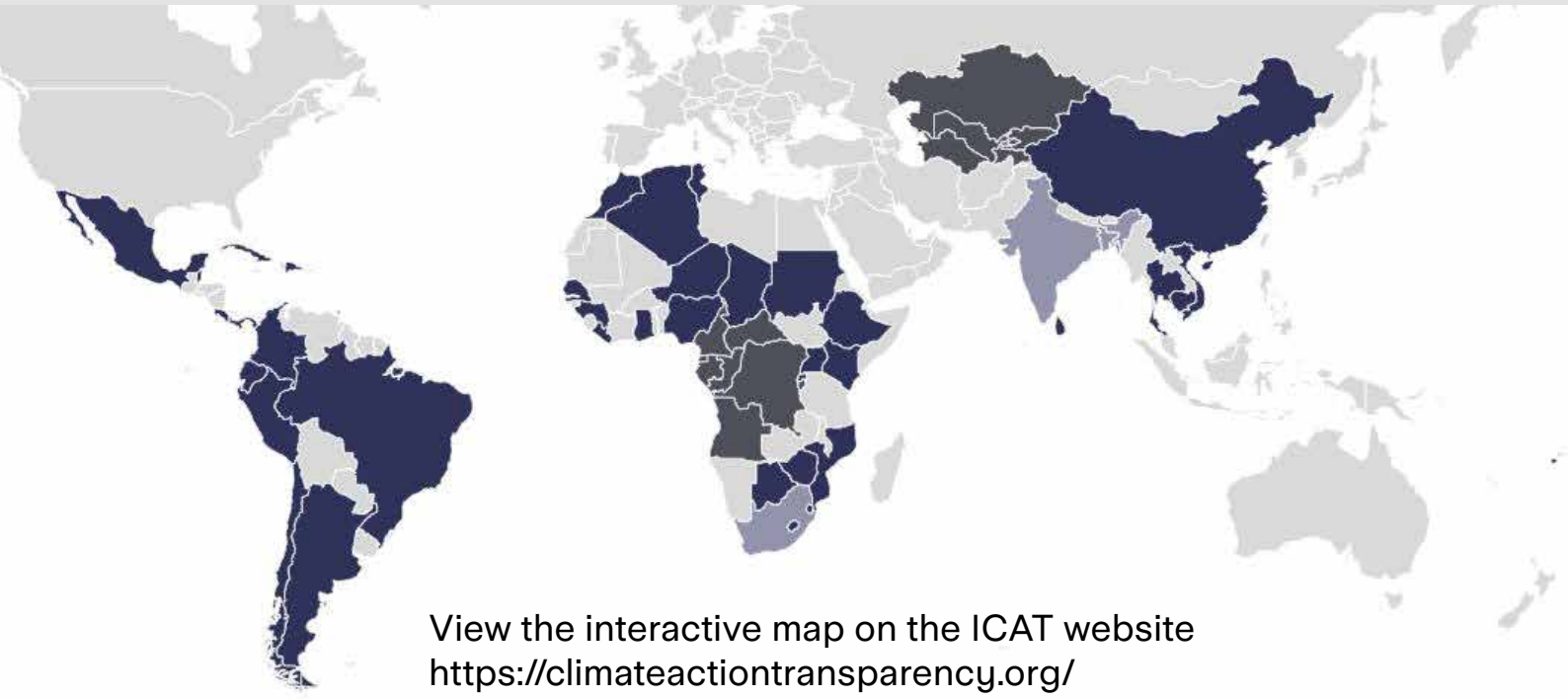
Early signs of transformational change achieved in:

Belize
Chad
China
Eswatini
Fiji
Liberia
Nigeria
Viet Nam
Zimbabwe

Photo: Hu Chen on Unsplash

ICAT provides support to 50+ partner countries

Algeria
Angola
Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina
Bangladesh*
Belize
Botswana
Brazil
Burundi
Cambodia
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Chile
China
Colombia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Equatorial Guinea
Eswatini
Ethiopia
Fiji
Gabon
Ghana
Guinea
India*
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kyrgyzstan
Lesotho
Liberia
Maldives
Mexico
Morocco
Mozambique
Niger
Nigeria
Panama
Peru
Republic of the Congo
Rwanda
São Tomé and Príncipe
Senegal
South Africa*
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Tajikistan
Thailand
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkmenistan
Uganda
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Viet Nam
Zimbabwe



View the interactive map on the ICAT website
https://climateactiontransparency.org/

ICAT Impact: A Refined Greenhouse Gas Inventory

ICAT works with countries to achieve - directly or indirectly - the development and implementation of a new or refined greenhouse gas inventory to improve emissions tracking and reporting. In 2022, Argentina and Eswatini were among the countries to achieve this.

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Since ICAT's inception, 11 countries have completed an ICAT project resulting in a refined greenhouse gas inventory.

Photo: Belltobias Apc on Pixabay

Linking climate action and sustainable development for a refined greenhouse gas inventory in Argentina

In Argentina, the ICAT project investigated the greenhouse gas effects of a circular economy, emissions from the healthcare sector, and if COVID-19 affected emissions from the transport sector.

The project's scope included work in the land use, land use change and forestry sector (LULUCF) and also looked at the use of new technologies. However, it was the project work in the heath and circular economy sectors that pulled in multiple ministries (environment and sustainable development, health, transport, labour and social security, and energy), and demonstrated the interrelationship between climate action and sustainable development.

The project looked at how the health sector contributed to greenhouse gas emissions, how a circular economy approach could reduce emissions, and how those emissions could be included in the national greenhouse gas inventory. In addition, it examined the climate-related benefits of COVID-19's remote working arrangements, and the broader benefits of a circular economy.

Counting health sector emissions

Generally, health care systems play a role in climate adaptation. This is true in Argentina, where the health system deals with the effects of disease transmission by some insects, all of which are expected to increase in density – which in turn could lead to an increase in disease incidence – due to climate change.

While Argentina's health sector continues developing adaptation plans and actions, the Ministry of Health also decided to look at the effect of the health sector on greenhouse gas emissions. The sector is responsible for only 3.9 percent of emissions, but is committed to doing its part in understanding where those emissions arise, feeding that information into the country's greenhouse gas inventory, mapping the information, and using the data to inform policy making that would lead to a reduction in emissions by the sector in the long term.

The ICAT project provided the support needed for this. Both direct and indirect emission sources were analyzed. Direct sources included fossil fuels used on site (such as natural gas in heating systems) and by vehicles owned by health care facilities (such as ambulances); inhaled anesthetic agents (for example, nitrous and fluorinated gases); and refrigerant gases, produced by leaks in refrigeration appliances, for example.

Indirect emissions included electricity consumption; and emissions linked to the supply chain during manufacture, transport, and use and disposal of products. The latter emissions group also included trips made by patients and healthcare personnel to the relevant health facility.

Photo: Matias Cruz on Pixabay

These emissions have been incorporated into the relevant categories of the national greenhouse gas inventory. The data could also be used to plan emissions reductions in the health sector.

The effect of COVID-19 on emissions

This project aimed to define the processes that had changed or could change due to the impacts of COVID-19 in different work modalities. It also aimed to identify related mitigation potential.

Before the pandemic was declared, about 8.2 per cent of the private sector workforce worked remotely. By the second quarter of 2020, 22 per cent of the workforce worked remotely.

With the pandemic declared in March 2020, researchers compared 2019 emission rates to those of 2020 to find if there was a change in emissions between 2019 (when most people worked from an official workplace) and 2020 (when most people worked remotely).

Surprisingly, they found that residential energy demand remained almost constant. This was likely because extreme weather conditions are not common during the months when confinement was greatest (April and May), and therefore although more people were working from home, the use of air conditioners or heaters was at a relatively low level.

Additionally, it was found that energy demand for transport services dropped by 23.4 per cent, with less people commuting to work each day.

The project team worked closely with other ministries, particularly the Ministry of Transport, on this part of the project. With the focus on climate change and sustainable development, multiple ministries were engaged, and this contributed significantly to reinforcing relationships between ministries.

Both the health sector project and the COVID-19 projects are ongoing, with further research being conducted.

Investigating a circular economy

The ICAT project also examined the life cycle of plastics, metals (steel and aluminium), cement, paper and cardboard, and glass to identify new data sources to enhance the scope of the national greenhouse gas inventory, and identify the co-benefits of a circular economy. The full lifecycle of each product was investigated, from sourcing to shelf, and the environmental, social, and economic benefits of a circular economy were confirmed. As with other parts of the project, the collaboration between different parts of the Environment Ministry, the collaboration between different ministries, and the identification of new stakeholders reinforced the data collection process and the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the implemented actions.

Photo: Daniel Agreloon Pixabay

Eswatini strengthens its greenhouse gas inventory from key sectors

Photo: Ashim D'Silva on Unsplash

Eswatini has set the development of cleaner and renewable energy sources as a priority in its revised NDC. Through the ICAT project, the country strengthened its greenhouse gas inventory from key sectors of its economy.

Nestled between South Africa and Mozambique, Eswatini – formally known as Swaziland – is a small country covering just over 17,000 square kilometres and has a population of slightly more than 1 million people. Lying at the intersection of major climatic zones, Eswatini's climate is highly variable, and drought, floods, extreme temperatures, lightning and hail storms are fairly common.

The intensity and frequency of these phenomena has increased over the years due to climate change. With about 70 per cent of the population living in rural areas, and relying on subsistence farming, these increasingly adverse weather conditions are particularly concerning. Coupled with limited basic services (such as healthcare, energy and education), high poverty rates, and a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, the country faces multiple challenges on all fronts.

Mitigation and adaptation

In an attempt to address its challenges holistically, Eswatini produced its National Development Strategy in 2006 (updated in 2014). In 2016, the country expanded on the climate-related priorities outlined in the strategy, in its National Climate Change Policy, where it committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change while continuing to advance its sustainable development plans.

"The Kingdom of Swaziland [former name of Eswatini] recognizes that climate change is one of the greatest threats to sustainable development. The Government also believes that climate change, if unmitigated, has the potential to undo or undermine many of the positive advances that the

country has made in meeting its own development goals," said the Honourable Mr Jabulani Mabuza, Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, in Eswatini's Third National Communication to the United Nations.

In 1995, Eswatini ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2015, the country signed the Paris Agreement, where – with 195 other countries – Eswatini pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience to adapt to the impacts of climate change. As part of this pledge, Parties to the Agreement are obliged to submit their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to UNFCCC, and update or replace them every five years.

In its revised NDC, submitted in October 2021, Eswatini set the development of cleaner and renewable energy sources as a priority, by targeting an increase of 50 per cent in renewable energy capacity, and introducing commercial bio-ethanol for use in petrol-powered vehicles.

The ICAT project

To help meet its objectives, Eswatini's Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs partnered with ICAT to strengthen Eswatini's NDC-related transparency efforts.

ICAT Director, Dr Henning Wuester, explained that transparency was at the heart of the Paris Agreement.

"For developing countries, transparency is an opportunity for evidence-based policy-making. Sound data and transparency provide: the basis for designing policies and measures, including NDC targets and effective policies that enable NDC implementation; the foundation for turning policies into reality, by mobilizing resources and engaging stakeholders; and the basis for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of NDCs in order to further strengthen them when they are next updated," he said.

Key sectors of Eswatini's economy were targeted, including energy, agriculture, land use, areas of land use change, forestry, and cross-cutting areas, such as water and health.

It resulted in the following main outcomes:

- Improved institutional arrangements for greenhouse gas inventories and measurement, reporting and verification frameworks. These will serve as a basis for shaping and ensuring implementation of Eswatini's NDC. In addition, they can assist in tracking other issues, such as air pollution and short-lived climate pollutants from transport. Hence, this information can improve the policy making process.
- A roadmap for data collection and institutional arrangements for the agriculture sector to support a Tier 2 approach for greenhouse gas inventories. This is an important step forward for Eswatini to meet its enhanced international reporting standard requirements.
- An assessment of adaption activities in the health and water sectors and a roadmap providing comprehensive actions for moving adaptation forward in these two sectors.
- An improved methodology and data set for mapping forestry and other land use (FOLU) change which was coupled with an updated emissions baseline and projections for this sector. This did, and will continue to, provide useful information to inform the renewable energy biomass projections and policy assessment.
- The analysis of three scenarios for the energy sector, which highlighted that the use of renewable biomass could bring significant emissions reductions, annual revenue for Eswatini's economy in the range of US$28.5 million to US$78 million per annum by 2030. This could also provide considerable sustainable development benefits to thousands of smallholder out-growers in the sugar sector (who supply almost 50 per cent of the sugar cane for sugar processing) and a growing number of timber sector smallholder out-growers in Eswatini's rural areas.

Next steps

The achievements of the project are the first important steps. To continue to meet its climate commitments, Eswatini must maintain its commitment to transparency efforts, ensuring that all the systems that have been developed and strengthened in this process become fully operational, setting up an effective tracking framework for NDC implementation, and establishing the foundations for long-term capacity on the national level.

ICAT Impact: Improved MRV and NDC Tracking Frameworks

Empowering countries to effectively track Nationally Determined Contributions is at the core of ICAT's work, with the Initiative aiming to advance transparency as a key tool for the implementation of NDCs. The development and implementation of an efficient measurement, reporting and verification framework goes hand in hand with this. It is essential to collect and process the sound data and information required to measure and report on the effectiveness of climate policies and actions. The ICAT projects in China, Viet Nam and Belize provide examples of this from 2022.

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To date: 24 countries have completed an ICAT project resulting in an improved MRV framework

Photo: Karsten Würth on Unsplash

China strengthens its implementation of ETF

In China, one of the project's deliverables was a gap analysis and recommendation report on improving an MRV system for non-carbon dioxide emissions, with a focus on methane.

Home to around 1.4 billion people and covering a vast expanse across Asia, China is a diverse country with a complex climate characterized by a monsoon zone in the East, an arid Northwest region and alpine-like weather along the Tibetan plateau.

With these different climate conditions come differing challenges: the concentrated rain of a monsoon can cause floods, storms and typhoons; the lack of surface water in a continental dry climate could lead to a fragile environment; and the frequent sub-zero temperatures of the Tibetan plateau create gales and frost.

On the global front, China ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016. This was followed in-country with the coordinated efforts by national, regional and industrial institutions to tackle the global challenge of climate change.

"Addressing climate change is a shared mission of mankind. Considering its basic national circumstances and the characteristics of its development stage, China is vigorously promoting eco-civilization, and executing a national strategy for actively addressing climate change by integrating climate change into its medium- and long-term [sic] national socio-economic development planning and by attaching equal importance to mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, and trying to accelerate green and low-carbon development by actively controlling GHG emissions and enhancing climate change adaptation capability," stated China's 3rd national communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), published in 2018.

The ICAT Project

China partnered with ICAT in 2019, with the aim of tackling some specific gaps and challenges to implement the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement.

Dr Henning Wuester, ICAT Director, explained that transparency was at the heart of the Paris Agreement. Based on Article 13 of the Agreement, all countries that ratified the Agreement were required to submit biennial transparency reports every two years and track the progress of their NDC implementation.

"Transparency is an opportunity for evidence-based policymaking. Sound data and transparency provide: the basis for designing policies and measures, including NDC targets and effective policies that enable NDC implementation; the foundation for turning policies into reality, by mobilizing resources and engaging stakeholders; and the basis for monitoring and evaluating

Photo: GuangWu YANG on Pixabay

the implementation of NDCs in order to further strengthen them when they are next updated," he said.

A Focus on Methane

One of the project's deliverables was a gap analysis and recommendation report on improving a MRV system for non-CO_2 emissions, with a focus on methane. This deliverable became very important politically after China and the United States pledged at the Glasgow COP to cooperate to enhance the measurement of methane gas emissions.

An improved MRV can enhance data collection, provide solid basis for policy making, and lead to more effective methane emission reductions. A tonne of methane is equivalent to 25 tonnes of carbon dioxide in terms of global warming. If methane levels are reduced, it will have a powerful effect on reducing the impact of climate change, and as a short-lived pollutant, these impacts show more quickly. There are additional benefits to reducing methane emissions as it is a precursor to tropospheric ozone, an air pollutant which can have serious health impacts.

In addition to the work on enhancing MRV systems for methane, the project has also delivered two other important elements: A gap analysis of the Paris Agreement transparency rules, followed by proposed institutional arrangements to fill these gaps, and a handbook for officials and experts to understand MPGs; and a scoping study on the transition from the 1996 to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. The study included identifying new sources of emissions and data collection mechanisms that need to be established.

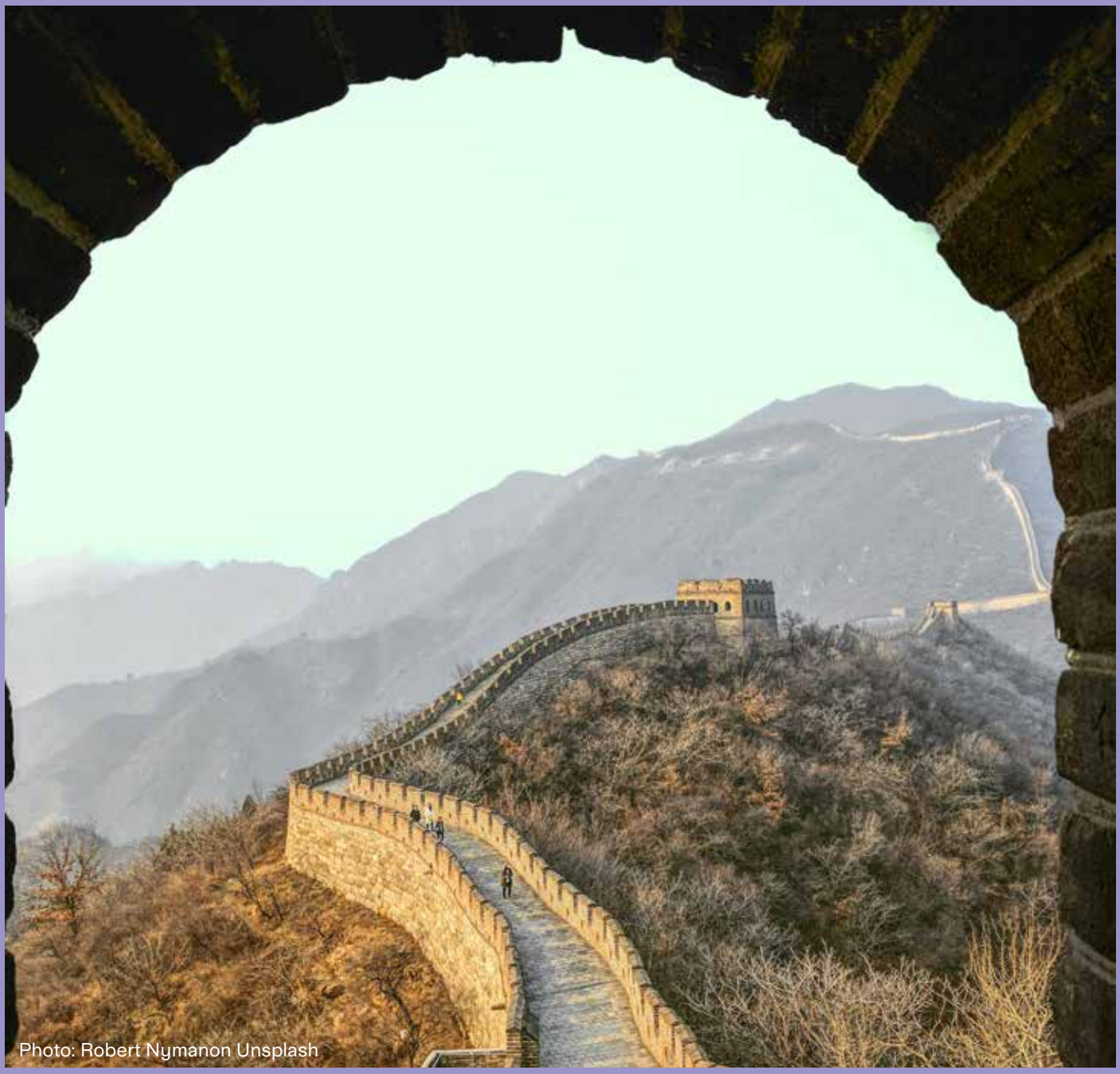

Photo: Robert Nymanon Unsplash

Vietnam: Assessing the impact of climate mitigation initiatives

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Strengthening the MRV framework was also an important aspect for Viet Nam, where the project focused on the energy and agricultural sectors, and included activities related to the implementation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Viet Nam ratified the UNFCCC in 1994; the Kyoto Protocol in 2002 and the Paris Agreement in 2016. The country submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution in 2015, with an updated submission in 2020. In its updated NDC, Viet Nam unconditionally committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 9 per cent by 2030, and conditionally by 27 per cent by 2030.Viet Nam has pledged to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

ICAT, in collaboration with UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre and the Italian Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale, provided support to Viet Nam to develop its greenhouse gas monitoring, reporting and verification system, in line with the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement.

Dr Henning Wuester, ICAT Director, explained that thoroughly assessing national climate policies was vital.

"A full assessment of national climate policies, including those needed to implement the NDC is important. This helps to ensure that policies are effective in preventing the growth or actually reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and that, at the same time, they are in line with national development objectives. The ICAT project in Viet Nam showed how sound policy assessments could help drive NDC implementation and long-term ambition," he said.

The ICAT project in Viet Nam focused on the energy and agricultural sectors, and included activities related to the implementation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Investigating renewable energy

Energy is by far the largest greenhouse gas emitter in the country, accounting for about 65 per cent of total emissions, particularly carbon dioxide. Viet Nam is committed to replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources, particularly solar and wind power.

The project used ICAT's Greenhouse Gas Abatement Cost Model (GACMO) to assess the greenhouse gas mitigation potential and costs of the selected policies in the energy sector. GACMO calculates and visualizes a comparison of the

business-as-usual scenario with selected mitigation scenarios to support the analysis of greenhouse gas mitigation options and their cost.It helps policy makers assess mitigation options in terms of their effectiveness, emissions reduction potential, and costs.

Using ICAT's renewable energy and sustainable development assessment guides, Viet Nam learned that renewable energy options came with many advantages and challenges. Besides the obvious greenhouse gas emission reductions, the study found renewables could create twice as many jobs as the fossil fuel sector per average installed megawatt. Some of the challenges learned included having to grow the tertiary education sector to train skilled workers in renewable energy technology, system stability challenges, and the fact that much of the renewable energy would only be available in the day, meaning that other energy sources would need to be maintained for night-time energy.

Dr Wuester pointed to Viet Nam's investigation of renewable energies as an example of how a country can transform its economy in a direction that is good for the climate and good for development.

"This assessment into renewable energy enables a country like Viet Nam to join the global energy transformation currently under way, contributing to global climate action while at the same time creating jobs for the future, improving people's access to electricity, and reducing dependency on fuel imports," he said.

Agriculture central to development

Viet Nam considers agriculture to be central to achieving many of the SDGs. Investing in the agricultural sector could address hunger, malnutrition, and other challenges such as poverty, water and energy use, climate change and unsustainable production and consumption.

On the other hand, agriculture is also responsible for about 27 per cent of Viet Nam's greenhouse gas emissions, particularly methane and nitrous oxide. And rice cultivation is responsible for the lion's share of that amount.

Viet Nam is one of the world's major rice exporters, with rice paddies making up about 75 per cent of the approximate 10 million hectares of agricultural land in the country.

In 2020, Viet Nam implemented the system of rice intensification (SRI) combined with alternate wetting and drying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. SRI is a farming method that raises rice yields through using specific planting and spacing techniques, organic fertilization and other methods. Irrigation is performed intermittently, preventing constant flooding of the paddies. This method has been found to greatly reduce methane emissions without offsetting increases in nitrous oxide emissions.

Using ICAT's agriculture and sustainable development assessment guides, Viet Nam assessed the impact of SRI and wetting and drying. The analysis showed that SRI was able to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, a variety of benefits were found, including the use of lower seed numbers, less fertilizer and pesticide use, and lower water volumes for irrigation. Productivity increased thereby increasing economic efficiency compared to the traditional rice production method.

Transparency needs and gap assessment

The ICAT project also delivered a needs and gap assessment of monitoring, reporting and verification in the energy and the agriculture, forestry and other land use sectors. The assessment highlighted that a monitoring, reporting and verification system for the energy and agriculture sectors, and relevant sub-sectors, was needed. It also highlighted the need for a common emissions baseline at the state and sectoral levels. This could help to develop a foundation for the implementation and evaluation of relevant mitigation projects

In addition, it found that capacity building exercises were needed to improve statistical surveys, data management and greenhouse gas inventories. Finally, it showed that adequate methodologies and guidelines to track implementation progress of significant energy and agriculture policies in the NDC were necessary.

The ICAT project also included a baseline setting for the actions in the energy sector integrated with sectoral monitoring, reporting and verification allowing for attracting result-based finance through the mechanisms of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

NDC tracking framework links Belize's climate and sustainable development policies

In Belize, the ICAT project aimed to address gaps and barriers that were hindering climate change data capture and monitoring. Additional, non-greenhouse gas indicators (such as the associated economic, social and environmental impacts of activities) were included.

Belize's partnership with ICAT began in 2019 and aimed to address gaps and barriers that were hindering climate change data capture and monitoring. In turn, this affected Belize's ability to effectively track its commitments made under the Paris Agreement and ultimately, its ability to meet its reporting requirements.

The country's first Nationally Determined Contribution in 2015 outlined mitigation opportunities across multiple sectors. However, at the time, ways to measure and track NDC progress were lacking, with no comprehensive measurement, reporting and verification framework in place. Tracking NDC implementation is essential to manage progress and eventually monitor the achievement of targets. It provides a key basis for preparing NDC updates when they are due. The development of a national MRV framework was a key focus of the ICA project.

Developing country-specific indicat

Determining what to track was the first step in developing an MRV system. Ensuring the dat was relevant for national policy-making was achieved by integrating both greenhouse gas and non-greenhouse gas indicators. This crea links between systems and sectors, and betw climate action and the United Nations' Sustain Development Goals.

Providing this level of depth when developing dicators goes beyond the requirements laid o the Paris Agreement's Modalities, Procedures Guidelines (MPGs), which outline what is expe of countries to report under the Paris Agreem While reporting on greenhouse gas indicators required, identifying and reporting on non-gre house gas impacts (such as associated econo social and environmental impacts of activities optional. These latter indicators provided dec makers with additional information that was re vant for national development, and was theref important to the prioritization and assessment sustainable development contributions of clim

Photo:Meritt Thomas on Unsp

Photo:Stephanie Klepacki on Unsplash

policies.

"Sometimes getting data goes beyond obligations. Creating a set of country-specific indicators that include both GHG [greenhouse gas] and non-GHG impacts has created a sense of national ownership and encourages a virtuous loop, whereby data collection is motivated by its potential relevance for policy making," said Dr Lennox Gladden, Chief Climate Change Officer, National Climate Change Office of Belize.

From indicators to a national MRV system

As noted by Dr Henning Wuester, ICAT Director: "Identifying sustainable development impacts of climate policies is critical for engaging stakeholders from various sectors and levels of government. These are stakeholders that need to be engaged in the implementation of a country's NDC and should be closely integrated in efforts to track progress."

The development of indicators for Belize involved extensive stakeholder engagement and incorporated a review of existing sectoral MRV processes to identify gaps and determine synergies between sectors. For non-greenhouse gas indicators, this also included an assessment of agroforestry policies using ICAT's sustainable development and transformational change policy assessment guides to better understand their contribution to national mitigation and sustainable development targets. This process helped to ensure that the development of a national MRV system for the country was built on existing structures, processes and institutional arrangements, and included suggestions for how these could be improved or better integrated moving forward.

The ICAT project in Belize came to a close with a training workshop where the system was validated by sector leads.

The project has played a key role in establishing formalized frameworks for transparency contributing to a draft Climate Change Bill for an act to establish the Department of Climate Change, set out the responsibilities and authority of the National Climate Change Committee; provide for the administration of all Climate Change policies and initiatives; and to regulate such other matters connected with or incidental to Climate Change in Belize.

"We saw an opportunity to assist Belize in assigning clear roles and responsibilities for climate change MRV between national institutions, developing a centralized repository for climate change data and information, and strengthening tools and methods to perform impact assessment of climate change policies," noted Federico Canu, project lead at the UNEP-Copenhagen Climate Centre, technical implementing partner for the ICAT Belize project.

"The work plan for the ICAT project was based on these goals."

ICAT impact: Enhancing knowledge

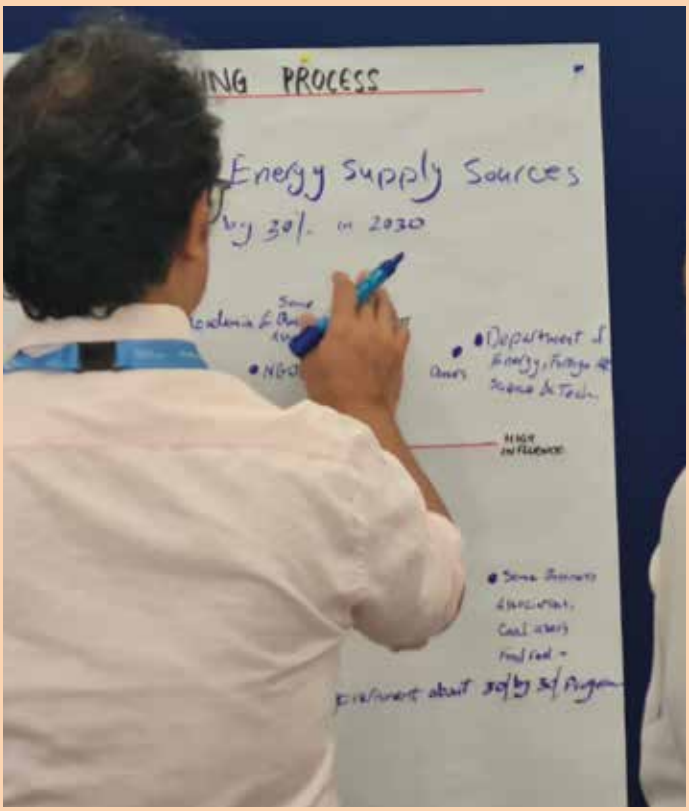
Deepening the climate action-related knowledge base within countries is a key ICAT objective. Through briefings and training workshops, participants' capacity to develop and improve climate-related transparency systems is enhanced.

1,595

To date, 1,595 people have been trained as part of ICAT projects

ETF focus for blended online/in-person workshop

In 2021 and 2022, a blended online/in-person workshop was held for participants from Asia and Anglophone Africa. The workshop aimed to enhance the capacity of participants to implement the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement. Focus was placed on showing how transparency could help to advance domestic and international climate policy objectives and enable the realization of national priorities, including mobilizing climate finance and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.



ICAT Impact: Peer-to-Peer Exchange

To achieve its mission, ICAT promotes knowledge sharing and peer to peer exchange, so all countries can access and benefit from the knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices of ICAT's network of partner countries, regional hubs and implementing partners. In 2022, ICAT's Community Meetings, Partner Forum and a workshop at Africa Climate Week presented the opportunity for such exchange.

64

Since ICAT's inception, 64 peer to peer or knowledge sharing events have taken place.

Photo: Barbara Bonanno on Pixabay

ICAT Community Meetings presented a time for sharing, learning and networking

Over 90 participants representing more than 20 countries met in Copenhagen at the ICAT Community Meetings. The event delivered a full agenda covering various topics on mitigation, adaptation and cross-cutting transparency topics with a focus on sharing country experience and presenting new tools and methodologies.

The ICAT Secretariat and the ICAT Adaptation project implementing partner, UNEP-CCC, joined forces to deliver a full agenda on mitigation, adaptation and cross-cutting transparency topics.

The topics for the different sessions were selected after consulting ICAT partners,.The final programme included workshops on current priority topics such as loss and damage and linking Article 6 to the Enhanced Transparency Framework. The event also addressed topics of universal interest among countries, such as transparency for mitigation and adaptation in the agriculture session, and tracking and mobilizing climate finance, as well as dedicated sessions on ICAT tools, such as GACMO, TraCAD and SINAMECC, and previews of new methodologies under development.

The ICAT Community Meetings achieved their objective, by delivering a platform and programme to enable robust knowledge sharing, peer-to-peer engagement and in-depth discussion, enabling ICAT to learn from the experiences of countries and regional activities, understand their priority needs, as well as the gaps that participants identify in the global transparency support landscape. Finally, the event brought together the ICAT community, including the Advisory Committee and Donor Steering Commitee, to advise on ICAT's plans and priorities.

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 moderators, speakers, panelists and rapporteurs, sharing valuable knowledge and experiences to advance our global transparency efforts.

Based on the positive experience from the ICAT Community Meetings, the event will return in the future. Taking into account the respective advantages and disadvantages of online and offline meetings and events, ICAT has decided to follow an approach encompassing both virtual and in-person formats for its future knowledge sharing partner events. Therefore, a virtual Partner Forum will be planned for early 2023, in line with the previous years' partner forums, while an in-person meeting of the ICAT community will take place in early 2024.

Photo: Rebekka Olschewski/UN City Copenhagen Communications

African leaders lay out the vision for transparency to drive strong climate action

Transparency gained increased visibility at the Africa Regional Climate Week during an ICAT co-hosted Africa Dialogue on the ETF, a two-day event with policy and practitioner exchanges. It opened with the participation of ministers from seven countries and other senior officials.

For the first time, ministers, and other regional and international leaders met with policymakers at Africa Climate Week 2022 to advance the implementation of the new Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement.

The Africa Dialogue on the Enhanced Transparency Framework took place in Libreville, Gabon, on 31 August and 1 September. It kicked off a series of regional dialogues on the ETF, to be organized within the framework of the UNFCCC Regional Climate weeks. ICAT, the UNFCCC secretariat, and the UN Development Programme, with the support of regional organisations, such as COMESA and ECCAS, and PATPA, organized the first regional dialogue on the ETF during the 2022 Africa Climate Week.

On the first day, ministers, and other regional and international leaders laid out their vision for ambitious implementation of the new transparency arrangements. They underlined that the ETF allows countries to not only comply with their international climate obligations but also to benefit from relevant data collected and reported under the UNFCCC and verification process. This will help them strengthen their mitigation and adaptation plans and be better equipped to mobilize financial support for their implementation.

On the second day, dozens of national policymakers and international experts exchanged experiences and perspectives about the challenges and opportunities for faster and stronger climate action offered by the ETF. They discussed various aspects of how transparency can foster the NDC process, including the monitoring and evaluation of adaptation and just transitions, tracking of climate finance and related capacity development.

With the negative impacts of the climate emergency accelerating everywhere, ministers underlined the urgency for nations to move forward in the implementation of their national climate plans while building robust transparency mechanisms.

“We take transparency seriously. At home, Uganda is accountable to its people, and we must be accountable to the global community as well. Transparency also enables countries to identify financial, technological development and transfers, and capacity building from different perspectives,” said Beatrice Atim Anywar, Minister of State for Environment, Uganda.

"The shared transparency data can be adequately used, and it also gives us an opportunity to have informed decision making as leaders. It also enhances the opportunity to access financial institutions and the capacity building that can support developing countries," she added.

Gilberto Da Piedade Verissimo, President of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), said: "In light of the warnings of our scientists, strengthening our joint action against the adverse effects of climate change is no longer up for negotiation. This region of Africa and of the world is unique in its tropical forest ecosystems, and important projects are underway to provide sustainable solutions to the fight against climate change, including effective climate diplomacy.

"We need to strengthen our capacity for climate transparency. In this sense, the Regional Centre for Transparency, in partnership with ICAT, is a world first."

Arlette Soudan-Nonault, Minister of Tourism and Environment of the Republic of Congo-Brazzaville, underlined the importance of enhancing transparency and thanked ICAT for financing the new regional hub.

"The peatlands of the central Congo Basin alone capture 31 billion tonnes of CO_2 30 times more than the Congo Basin forests; 20 times the annual emissions of the US; and three to four years of global greenhouse gas emissions. They are both a treasure for humanity and a time bomb. Hence the urgent need to break the lock on Africa's access to carbon finance."

Lee White, Minister of Forests, Oceans, Environment and Climate Change, Gabon, urged for increased transparency to track the support from developed to developing countries.

"Not all developing countries have invested as much as Gabon, and need technical and capacity-building support from developed countries. We have a very clear policy of transparency in Gabon, some developed countries could be inspired by our position," he said.

Kavydass Ramano, Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Mauritius, also shared his vision for transparency underlining the need for tracking climate finance.

"We share everyone's concern about the issue of the enhanced transparency framework, transparency both in terms of NDCs, and in terms of financing tools. The legal framework, the engagement of the right people, capacity building and knowledge sharing are key ingredients to make things happen," he added.

Gilberto Silva, Minister for Agriculture and Environment, Cape Verde, explained

"Africa has a great opportunity to develop while maintaining itself as a low-emissions continent.

"To strengthen transparency and implement the enhanced transparency framework at home, we have some needs but there are achievements at the administration level. We think this is a good time for the more consolidated construction of the enhanced transparency framework while taking advantage of the opportunity for capacity building," he concluded.

"Without transparency, the implementation of all actions, promises and commitments do not hold value," said Ovais Sarmad, UNFCCC Deputy Executive Secretary.

"What matters is not from where we start; but what matters is to take the steps that are necessary now. Special attention has to be placed on strengthening institutional arrangements and developing capacity and skills."

At the closing of the Africa Dialogue, Jigme, Manager of the Transparency Division at the UNFCCC said: "The high-level policy exchange has created a space for national experts to hear first-hand from ministers, senior policymakers, and regional and international leaders about their vision for implementing the ETF and the co-benefits that transparency can bring to their countries. This first Africa regional dialogue has set a clear policy direction for universal participation in the ETF, with the goal of all countries submitting their climate action reports by 31 December 2024, as per the deadline established in the Paris Agreement."

Henning Wuester, ICAT Director, said: "This is the year for Africa in the climate change process. Transparency is the backbone of the Paris Agreement. So it bodes well for the future of the Paris Agreement that this topic is discussed here in the heart of Africa, in a manner that resonates at the highest political levels. Transparency is an enabler; it is a service that will allow policy development to turn NDCs into a useful tool," he said.

2022 ICAT Partner Forum

In March, ICAT welcomed over 130 representatives from ICAT's 50+ partner countries, organizations and governance bodies to a virtual Partner Forum. Delivered over three days, the ICAT Partner Forum provided a space for interactive engagement, allowing ICAT's partners to share practical experience based on insights and learnings.

The Partner Forum highlighted important messages concerning transparency in NDC implementation, and allowed valuable knowledge andexperiences to be shared across ICAT's partners. The countries represented noted many common challenges, shared lessons learned, and innovative approaches and solutions. The knowledge gained from this event could help countries be inspired and learn from each other's success stories and solutions to obstacles, as well as to establish connections and networks for further peer-to-peer collaboration.

The main take-aways from the event were:

- Beyond meeting international reporting requirements, countries can draw a multitude of domestic benefits from transparency.
- Much has been achieved in setting up transparency systems, but passing from theory to practice remains a challenge where support is still needed.
- Data availability, data collection, QA/QC and preparation for input in inventories, reports, reporting software and integration in different tools all remain a significant challenge.
- Transparency and MRV systems are essential for properly implementing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and drawing all the relevant benefits.
- Several tools are available to assist with NDC implementation.
- Tools are helpful but rely on the availability, quality and formatting of input data.
- Adapting the tools to a country's context and needs is very important and support can be provided to that end.
- Examples of tools that can be beneficial for NDC implementation: GACMO (UNEP-CCC, ICAT), Transport Data Tool (ICAT), Guidance for Accounting for NDCs (PATPA, Oeko Institut), Transport sector climate action co-benefit evaluation tool, TRACE (NCI, ICAT), open data platforms for forestry and land-use (FAO), CCAC/ICAT ETF Guide to integrate air pollution into climate MRV (forthcoming).
- Institutional arrangements are essential for all aspects of NDC implementation (including planning, tracking and evaluation, mobilizing and tracking finance). Existing schemes can be utilized and further advanced and strengthened to define clear roles and responsibilities for the stakeholders involved.
- Establishing formal/legal arrangements, such as laws, decrees or MoUs that describe the

responsibilities of each stakeholder, the parameters and frequency of data collection, are important to ensure continuous engagement in data and MRV.

- Engaging and consulting all relevant stakeholders in the different stages of transparency processes, including the private sector, civil society, communities and subnational governments, is crucial for strengthening NDC implementation and building national ownership.
- Building and retaining capacity on the national levels and within the relevant institutions is of utmost importance but remains a challenge.
- Regional cooperation with experts from other countries as well as other peer-to-peer exchanges between countries are excellent opportunities.
- The ICAT Regional Climate Action Transparency Hubs in Central Africa and in Central Asia provide an opportunity for such regional exchange.
- Building long-term expertise can be a big challenge, requiring continuous and sustainable efforts.
- Transparency can be used both to assess and evaluate financial needs and resources available and accessible for NDC implementation and track financial flows.
- Defining the applicable climate finance taxonomy is essential. Taxonomies already developed by other countries and organizations can be very useful.
- Transparency and sound data can also be a leverage to approach financial institutions and help secure the large financial support needed for NDC implementation.

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ICAT Impact: Supporting Transformational Change

To achieve global climate objectives, action on climate must drive transformational change; and bring about systems change that involves multiple actors across multiple levels of society. In 2022, Costa Rica completed a project to assess the impacts of the ICAT project on its national climate monitoring system.

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To date, 27 countries confirmed the ICAT project contributed to transformational change in their country.

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Assessing transformational change impacts in Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, the ICAT project developed guidance for assessing the transformational change and sustainable development impacts of climate change actions.

Early in 2022, ICAT concluded a second phase of implementation in Costa Rica, developing guidance for assessing the sustainable development and transformational change impacts of climate change actions. Such guidance is developed with the goal of integrating monitoring of sustainable development and transformation change impacts in the National Climate Change Monitoring System (SINAMECC).

To develop the guidance documents, Costa Rica took the ICAT methodologies as a starting point. Supported by UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC), Costa Rica engaged in a thorough process of methodological development, using pilots, and stakeholder engagement, to create guidance documents tailor-made for the country.

Piloting of the methodologies focused on mitigation actions currently implemented in Costa Rica, in the mobility, forestry and waste sectors. It was conducted with the support of stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of such actions.

ICAT has worked with Costa Rica since 2016, and these results mark the end of the second phase of the ICAT project in Costa Rica. The project was led by the National Climate Change Directorate, and supported by Fundecooperacion para el Desarollo Sostenible, and UNEP-CCC.

Raising awareness

The project also developed training and communication material for the purpose of raising awareness and building capacity among key stakeholder and civil society.

An e-learning platform for capacity building on sustainable development and transformational change (called Aula Climatica) with courses, videos, and presentations on the topic was created.

ICAT also supported the organization of the first Climate Transparency Week of Costa Rica, with

Photo: Cosmic Timetraveler on Unsplash

the goal of sharing knowledge on various aspects of climate transparency, among others also sustainable development and transformational change.

Lessons learned

The project showcased how ICAT methodologies can be adopted by a country, tailor-made for its specific use, and applied for assessing sustainable development and transformational change impacts of climate actions.

Engaging stakeholders in the piloting of the methodologies was one of the keys to the success of the project, as it provided a room for testing the guides and receiving feedback. There were also significant benefits from the leadership of the Climate Change Directorate and Ministry of Environment and Energy, acknowledging the important link between climate, sustainable development, and transformational change.

Nevertheless, some barriers that may hamper the uptake of these assessment approaches on a large scale exist. For example, in relation to the knowledge, skills, and time required to carry out the analyses. An iterative process of piloting, stakeholder engagement, and methodology development can help reduce the time required for the assessment, create the necessary know-how, and inform the establishment of institutional arrangements, which can contribute to overcome these barriers. Such options will be further explored in future collaborations between Costa Rica and ICAT.

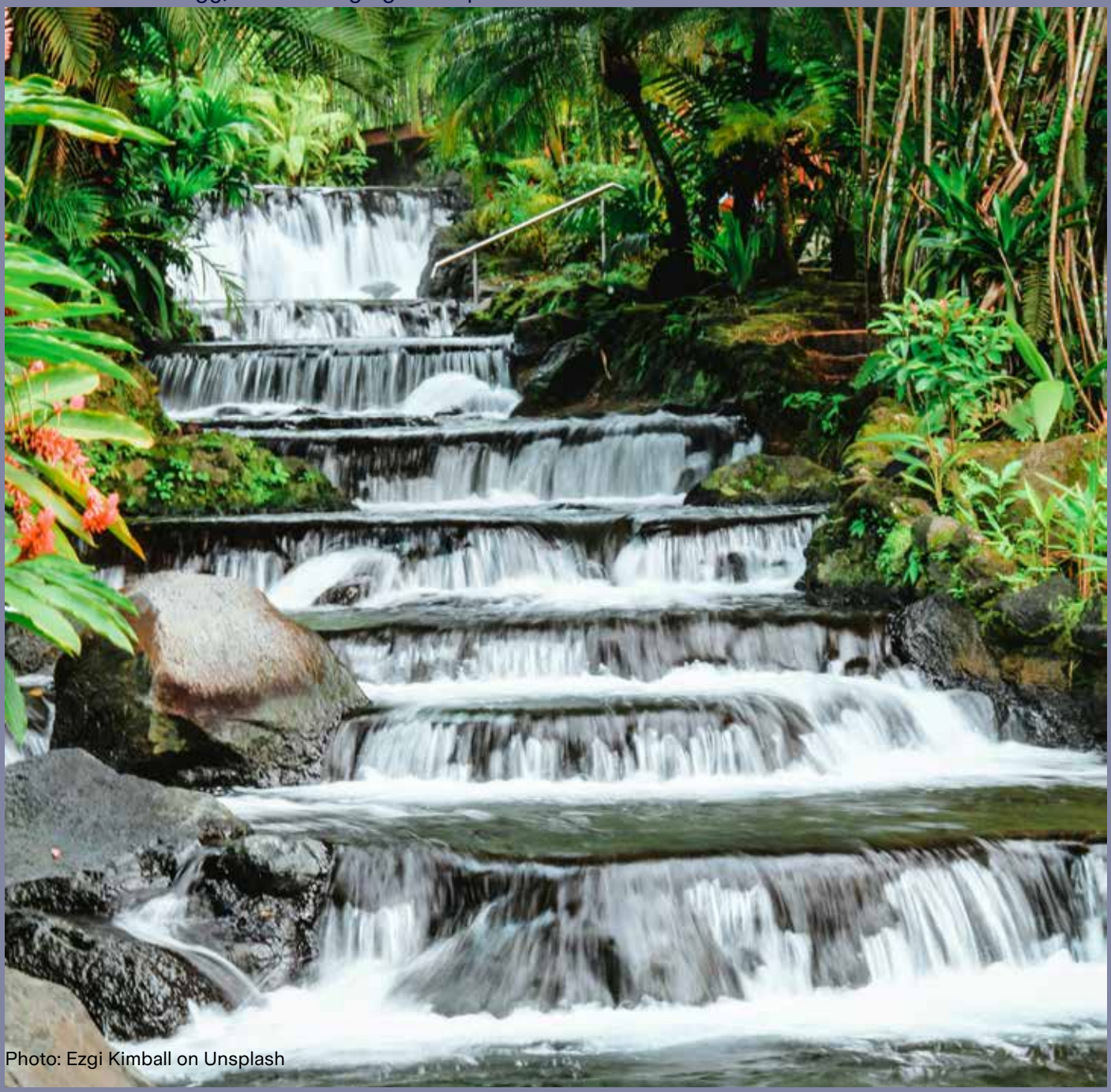

Photo: Ezgi Kimball on Unsplash

‘Great oaks from little acorns grow’ – how ICAT sows the seeds for transformational change

Photo: Ksenia Makagonova on Unsplash

Climate change is affecting every country on every continent, disrupting national economies and negatively impacting lives. Fundamental, radical changes are urgently needed to meet the global goals for climate and sustainable development.

ICAT is one of a growing number of actors that recognize that action on climate and development needs to be much more than supporting standalone projects and programmes. To meet these goals, we should all engage in work to drive transformational change – that is, systems change that involves multiple actors across multiple levels of society.

In April 2020, ICAT published its own Transformational Change Methodology to help governments and other stakeholders to assess the transformational impacts of their climate-related policies and actions. This methodology defines transformational change as ‘A fundamental, sustained change of a system that disrupts established high-carbon practices and contributes to a zero-carbon society in line with the Paris Agreement goals to limit global warming to 1.5 – 2°C and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2022) Much of the transformational change that ICAT is seeking to engender is therefore longer-term change that will only become evident after ICAT’s projects have ended. So how does ICAT monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its work to drive transformational change? And what has it achieved so far?

Since 2016, ICAT has supported more than 40 countries to build the transparency frameworks needed to take effective climate action and advance national sustainable development priorities. A focus on enabling transformational change through evidence-based policymaking, enhanced collaboration and knowledge sharing, with agile responses to individual country needs, remains a key ambition for a programme designed to reach beyond standard capacity building activities, encourage replication and facilitate institutional and policy change.

Measuring transformational change is not straightforward. It comes with key challenges, like how to best capture different, often country-specific, dimensions of transformational change, while ensuring measures remain sufficiently straightforward. ICAT’s Transformational Change Methodology provides a high-level framing of both the likelihood (very likely to very unlikely), and the outcome – i.e., the extent and sustained nature of

transformation – (major to negative).

ICAT's support is more likely to be transformational if at least one or more of the following six things are in place:

- Political will and local ownership
- Improved climate action transparency increases access to finance
- Improved knowledge and awareness of climate action transparency
- Increased capacity for climate action transparency
- Evidence of effectiveness is shared and replicated
- Activities are sustainable

All of these criteria are important to driving lasting change, but meeting any one of them can make a significant difference to the impact ICAT and its partners can have.

A recent independent evaluation of the ICAT programme, undertaken by Agulhas Applied Knowledge, found that ICAT's support is making good progress towards its ambitions – raising awareness, generating increased interest amongst policy-makers for climate action transparency, and helping to strengthen climate and sustainable development policies. The evaluation found that:

- Over 80 per cent of country stakeholders surveyed for the evaluation agree that ICAT support has helped to create an enabling environment for improved policy-making;
  Over 50 per cent of respondents report that ICAT support has contributed to stronger climate and/or sustainable development policies; and
- Over 55 per cent report that national actors are better equipped to leverage climate finance as a result of ICAT support.

As of October 2022, 22 of ICAT's partner countries, almost half, have already reported early signs of transformational change, including Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. This figure is expected to increase as more of ICAT's country projects come to a close.

In the Dominican Republic, for example, ICAT support has contributed to increased political will and local ownership, improved knowledge and awareness, and sustainability for climate action transparency. In October 2020, the parliament approved Decree 541-20 to enforce implementation of the country's new Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system for greenhouse gas emissions, developed under the ICAT project. ICAT workshops to sensitize national stakeholders to the MRV framework have greatly enhanced understanding of climate action transparency issues across different levels of government, civil society and the private sector. Furthermore, clarifying and agreeing institutional roles and responsibilities relating to climate action transparency has resolved uncertainties around role clarity and division of labour between all relevant stakeholders, including between the different government ministries.

In Nigeria, ICAT and its partners have improved knowledge and awareness of climate action transparency, identifying and engaging a range of sector stakeholders in the MRV process and defining the roles and responsibilities needed to maintain a functional MRV system. This has contributed to greater acceptance of the need for robust MRV to support improved climate action and, linked to that, greater access to climate finance. Nigeria shared its experience of working with ICAT during COP26.

In Sri Lanka, ICAT's support to strengthen MRV for the transport sector has had several positive impacts, including increased political will and local ownership, increased capacity for climate action transparency and sustainability. Consultation workshops organised under the project brought different stakeholders together to share existing knowledge and data, increasing awareness of decision-makers and technical experts on gaps in reporting and highlighting the need for an effective MRV system to track transport-related mitigation actions. The Ministry of Transport accepted full ownership of the project and has endorsed the design of the MRV system, laying the groundwork for other sectors to take a similar approach.

As these early signs of transformational change are identified, reported and shared, lessons learned can inform and encourage other partner countries to strengthen and accelerate their efforts to improve climate action transparency and, in turn, climate action. ICAT has recently launched two regional Hubs with the explicit purpose of sharing knowledge and learning within and between ICAT partner countries. These Hubs will build momentum and support for transparent climate action, enabling countries to increasingly do it themselves, as ICAT support enables countries to move from nourishing early signs of transformational change, to having multiple actors working across multiple levels for lasting, transformational change.

ICAT Impact: Improved Reporting

The Paris Agreement requires countries to report transparently to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat about the implementation and achievement of their national climate-related objectives. ICAT works with countries to help them improve various aspects of their reporting.In 2022, Nigeria reported its reporting to UNFCCC was enhanced through the ICAT project; and ISPRA released a new guide to assist with reporting.

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To date, 8 ICAT partner countries confirmed the ICAT project resulted in improved reporting to UNFCCC.

Photo: Kris on Pixabay

Nigeria: Enhancing transparency systems in Africa's largest economy

The ICAT project in Nigeria focused on establishing MRV systems for NDC indicators, derived from an impact assessment of the country's existing policies and measures. This approach equipped Nigeria with reliable data to enhance its reporting to UNFCCC, and gave policymakers important monitoring tools allowing for effective policy implementation.

Nigeria has set ambitious climate goals: Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) targets which also seek to advance sustainable development – and could lead to billions in savings in the longer term – and a decarbonization objective for 2060. Transparency is a vital cornerstone to achieving these goals.

As Africa's leading oil producer, and with a rapidly increasing population, Nigeria faces a distinct challenge in meeting increased energy needs, while decreasing its carbon footprint. To address this, Nigeria's NDC targets outline a plan to cut emissions by 20% unconditionally and 47% conditionally by 2030, with a focus on the power/electricity, oil and gas, agriculture and land use, transport, and industry sectors.

"I do not think anyone in Nigeria needs persuading of the need for urgent action on the environment. Desertification in the North, floods in the centre, pollution and erosion on the coast are enough evidence. For Nigeria, climate change is not about the perils of tomorrow but what is happening today. Nigeria is committed to net-zero by 2060," said president Muhammadu Buhari at COP 26.

To support the Government of Nigeria, ICAT provided technical support on the development and rollout of robust Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems in line with the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement. The goal: to ensure that Nigeria can collect and manage the data needed to measure key policy impacts – like data on GHG levels – that help advance climate targets, mobilize green financing, and strengthen sustainable development.

An effective transparency system is crucial to plan implementation and track achievement of Nigeria's climate goals. Because it provides evidence to help identify what's needed, what is working – and what gaps may exist.

A sectoral approach

The project, a first-of-its-kind for Nigeria, followed a holistic approach in enhancing the transparency framework across three key sectors: oil and gas, transport, and agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU). The project focused on establishing MRV systems for the NDC indicators and then

Photo: Nupo Deyon Daniel on Unsplash

integrating these sectoral systems into an overarching national MRV system. The NDC indicators were derived from an impact assessment of the country's existing policies and measures. This approach not only equipped policymakers with important monitoring tools allowing for effective policy implementation, but also made available an estimate of the sustainable development benefits associated with the selected policies. Thus, for example, mitigation measures for the Nigerian road transport sector alone have been estimated to result in USD 41bn of economic benefits:

- Annual economic benefits of mitigation measures set out in the unconditional scenario rise to USD 5.7bn (NGN 2.4tr) by 2030;
- Cumulative quantified benefits over the NDC period are USD 41.2bn (NGN 17tr);
- Fuel savings account for the largest economic benefits, followed by reduced congestion and air pollution health impact.

"The ICAT project commenced with stakeholder consultations and review of policy documents, followed by a gaps and needs analysis for the focused sectors leading to the development of an overarching MRV Institutional Arrangement and development of NDC Indicators/tools for tracking the Paris Agreement and other climate actions going forward" said Dr Bala Bappa, ICAT Project In-Country Project Facilitator/National Coordinator.

This process led to the adoption of a series of reports and recommendations comprising proposed institutional arrangements for MRV systems and recommendations on measuring the country's NDC targets. The publications also underlined specific sectoral challenges – and the dedicated actions taken to help overcome these, including:

- The establishment of data sharing agreements within the AFOLU sector between the Department of Climate Change and relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies;
- In the oil and gas sector – an area that accounts for over half of the country's federally collected revenue – proposed institutional arrangements were designed to tackle key sectoral shortcomings, such as data flow and stakeholder engagement, ultimately creating a stronger foundation for the rollout of MRV systems.

"Despite the international COVID situation, this project has shown very good cooperation among stakeholders from the different sectors. National consultants have developed and validated the sectoral and overarching MRV system with national experts from the ministries, agencies, etc. to allow their applicability and efficiency in monitoring and reporting. The ICAT tool "TRACE" was applied to the road transport sector to estimate co-benefits of the NDC policies. All the work carried out through this project will ease the transition to a low carbon economy once the systems will be officially endorsed," said Julien Vincent (CITEPA), project manager for the ICAT Nigeria project.

Next steps

"ICAT is pleased to continue the collaboration with Nigeria. The first phase of the project has shown how data can support effective planning to enable ambitious climate targets that are in sync with the needs of the population," said Dr. Henning Wuester, ICAT Director.

Moving forward, ICAT and the Government of Nigeria are exploring further areas of work, including:

- Adding all missing sectors to the MRV framework so that it encompasses all relevant economic activities;
- Developing a framework to plan, measure and track a process that ensures a just transition of the economy, including that the needs of workers are taken care of, when climate policies are implemented.

Photo: Sheyi Owolabi on Unsplash

Assisting countries in moving to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for emission inventories

Photo: Maxim Hopman on Unsplash

Transparency is the backbone for the global climate change process, in particular the Paris Agreement. Accurate Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventories are the foundation of transparency, and the basis for effective climate policies and actions.

In 2015, the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) was established as part of the Paris Agreement. Three years later, the Modalities, Procedures and Guidelines for the ETF were adopted as part of the Paris Rulebook. In this context, the 2006 IPCC guidelines were adopted as the mandatory basis to be used by all Parties in elaborating their Greenhouse Gas Inventories – a key component of the ETF.

At Glasgow, during COP26, new Common Reporting Tables for Greenhouse Gas Inventories were adopted, and a new reporting software is set to be developed by the UNFCCC Secretariat by June 2024. The implementation of these requirements poses a number of challenges, particularly for developing countries which may have limited capacity, and limited experience in GHG inventory efforts. A recently published report, prepared by the Istituo Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA) as an implementing partner of ICAT, aims to address some of these challenges and assist countries in moving towards the 2006 IPCC Guidelines to prepare for meeting the new reporting requirements under the Paris Agreement.

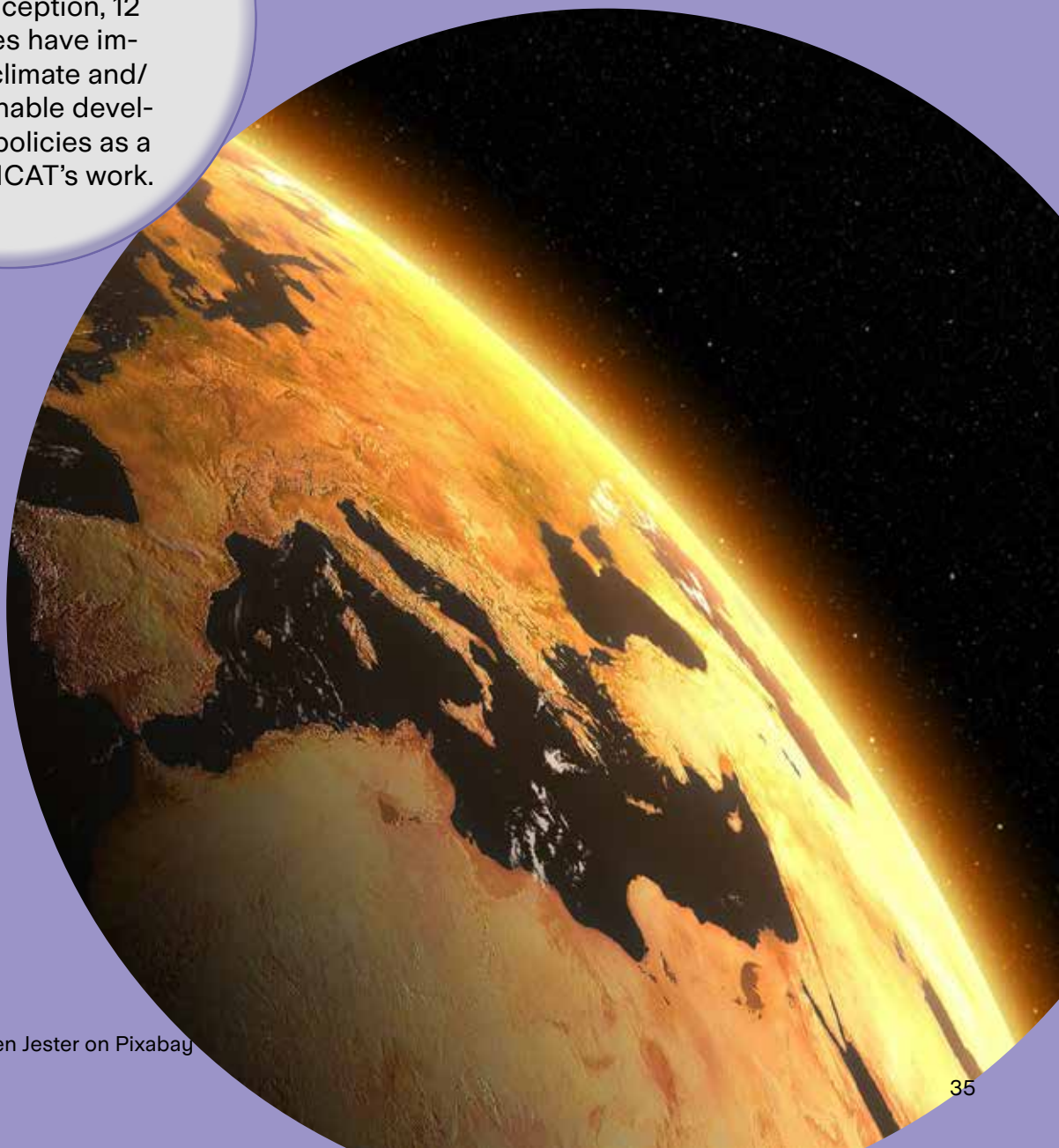
The report is structured into four modules: (1) Energy, (2) Industrial Processes and Product Use, (3) Agriculture Forestry and Other Land Use, and (4) Waste. Each module is organized by the reporting categories agreed upon in the newly adopted CRTs. The report was developed in the context of some ICAT country projects and uses the practical experience of supporting countries to overcome challenges to set out a guide that can help GHG inventory practitioners to advance more easily.

ICAT impact: Informing Policy Making

Transparency frameworks provide vital information to government policy makers to inform their decision making. In turn, this can result in new policies, improved policies, and/or enhanced policy implementation on climate and sustainability. Supporting evidence-based policymaking is a key objective of ICAT. The ICAT project in Fiji provides an example of a new policy as a result of an enhanced transparency framework.

12

Since inception, 12 countries have improved climate and/or sustainable development policies as a result of ICAT's work.



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Fiji Achieves Climate Change Act with ICAT support

Fiji made history when it enacted the Climate Change Act of 2021. This legislation formalizes Fiji's national commitment to the Paris Agreement and response to escalating climate risks.

The Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI), through Fiji's ICAT project, provides technical support to improve Fiji's measurement, reporting, and verification capacity for estimating agriculture sector GHG emissions. With GHGMI's support, Fiji is establishing an institutional MRV system for the agriculture sector, including steps to align this system with their Climate Change Act and the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement.

Fiji, like many other small island developing states, faces challenges when it comes to planning, implementing, and monitoring climate action such as limited staff in key government ministries, difficulty accessing financial resources, and geographic and technological obstacles to improving capacity. To overcome these gaps, it is necessary to enhance institutional, human, and technical capacities. The Fijian government has embraced the support provided through the ICAT project to enhance capacity.

To implement Fiji's ICAT project, GHGMI is providing technical support and training to build national experts' capacity and strengthen the governance structures and processes to improve agriculture sector MRV within the national GHG inventory. The technical support and training are centred on the transparent, accurate, consistent, complete, and comparable reporting principles that are core to improving MRV and reporting outcomes from the national GHG inventory.

Fiji's Climate Change Act of 2021 recognizes that cross-sector coordination and collaboration must be part of the institutional arrangement to support the national inventory development process. The Act provides clear mandates to the Minister, the Director of Climate Change, and the National Climate Change Coordination Committee ("the Committee") who will govern Fiji's national response to climate change. The Committee is established under Fiji's Climate Change Act to facilitate intra-governmental cooperation on climate action. The Act also provides for the integration of climate change within all government sectors through the appointment of focal points within each ministry, who must report bi-annually to the Director of Climate Change on the implementation of the Act within their ministries.

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Regional Hubs for Regional Solutions

ICAT's Regional Climate Action Transparency Hubs in Central Asia and Central Africa bring together countries in the two regions to share climate transparency knowledge and expertise, ultimately increasing their capacity to act on climate change and to build their transparency frameworks closely aligned with national priorities.

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Regional Hub Activities Launched

In 2022, ICAT launched the activities of two Regional Climate Action Transparency Hubs in Central Africa and in Central Asia. The Hubs bring together countries in the two regions to share climate transparency knowledge and expertise, ultimately increasing their capacity to act on climate change and to build their transparency frameworks closely aligned with national priorities.

The approach of the climate transparency hubs follows the experience of a Measurement, Reporting and Verification Hub created by the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI) in the Caribbean region in 2017–2018.

For ICAT, the concept of a regional transparency Hub neatly aligns with three of the key ideas behind ICAT's work: maximizing impact by working hand-in-hand with local partners; building on national experiences; and encouraging peer-to-peer exchange arising from those experiences. From this foundation, ICAT's work builds national capacity that stays relevant to its context and supports local experts in creating networks to share their experience. The results achieved by the climate Hub will become a well-understood public asset that is used for regional and national purposes.

The recent launch of the work plans for the two transparency Hubs – Central Africa in March and Central Asia in September 2022 – is the result of years of planning and close cooperation. The newly established Hubs will become a vital element of ICAT's work to support developing countries in building the transparency frameworks needed to take effective climate action and advance their national climate change priorities. In addition, the Hubs will help countries in the two regions to meet the heightened reporting demands of theParis Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework.

For countries that have joined the Hubs – 11 in Central Africa and 5 in Central Asia – a joint effort offers the opportunity to explore synergies and benefit from peer-to-peer exchange, ultimately helping their climate transparency actions to become more effective.

Both Hubs will have a strong focus on capacity building. This will allow them to become regional centres of expertise, while at the same time building the capacity of climate experts to help their own country governments and eventually become trainers of trainers.

While the two new Hubs share a purpose and many specific goals, there are also some important differences between the climate-related challenges facing the two regions.

What will the Hubs do?

Central Africa

The Central Africa Hub is hosted by the Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS) at the Central Africa Climate Prediction and Application Centre in Douala, Cameroon. The Hub supports the 11 ECCAS Member States – Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe – in their efforts to build and improve sustainable and comprehensive transparency frameworks, by fostering a cooperative approach that will bring together the 11 ECCAS countries and technical partner institutions and actors supporting transparency efforts in the region.

The Hub's specific objectives will include:

- Creating a centre of expertise on transparency of climate action
- Assessing the needs and priorities of each country
- Strengthening capacity in the Congo Basin
- Creating a network of experts and country managers
- Disseminating tools and guidelines to support transparency
- Supporting the mobilization of resources.

The Hub has identified several priorities for the Congo basin countries. These include establishing strong transparency systems and institutional frameworks for transparency activities, training national experts in the use of systems and tools, improving data collection procedures and platforms, and strengthening stakeholder engagement. Specific activities will also develop systematic analyses to assist decision-makers and assess progress in energy decarbonization, forest protection and agricultural diversification.

At COP27, held in Egypt in November 2022, ECCAS and ICAT presented initial results from the gaps and needs analysis of the Central Africa Hub. The Hub's coordinator, Mr Gervais Itsoua, described the various types of support offered by the Hub, and highlighted that the work plan had been updated following feedback received from all 11 countries. This collaborative process ensures that ongoing support will be fully adapted to the specific needs and goals of each country. Throughout, a focus on transparency will enable countries to design and monitor effective climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, in a manner that will also help attract donors and investors.

Central Asia

The Central Asia region faces increasing vulnerability to climate change, as warmer temperatures and more volatile weather patterns disrupt ecosystems and increase the frequency of extreme droughts, floods, heat waves and forest fires. Headquartered in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and hosted by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), the Central Asian Hub covers five countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. CAREC and GHG-MI, as technical lead, will cooperate in the operation of the Hub.

The five Central Asian countries share many of the challenges arising from climate change, such as a lack of coordination between organizations involved in transparency work, a lack of robust data quality assurance and quality control systems, and a lack of experience in using dedicated tools for adaptation and mitigation. They also have many ecological and geographic similarities and share a common language (Russian). There are also significant differences (economic, for example) between the countries. However, these variations mean that the five countries have developed experience and expertise in different but potentially complementary ways. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have expertise in adaptation, for example, while Kazakhstan is experienced in developing inventories.

The Hub has identified several priorities:

- Preparing Central Asian States to effectively achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, including meeting transparency requirements by
- Increasing the human and institutional capacity of Central Asian States, which will help them to achieve transparency requirements
- Generating data, reports, knowledge sharing products and processes that influence policy making to enhance the effectiveness of national climate policies.

As in Central Africa, the Hub will also aim to establish a regional network on climate action transparency and become a centre of expertise, with national and regional experts.

Crucially, the Hub aims to deliver strong and tangible results, which will allow it to become sustainable after the period of ICAT funding. The presence and participation of country and regional experts, and an established system of strong cooperation, will help to ensure this sustainability. As part of the focus on transparency, data that the Hub is able to share – for example, on emission profiles – will be shared.

What next?

In September 2022, the Central Asia Hub brought together a working group to identify the priorities for each of the five countries. These priorities were then presented at an inception workshop

with stakeholders from across the region. The stakeholders then adopted an ambitious six-part workplan to guide the work of the Hub over the period of ICAT funding. At the same time, the team will continue to actively seek out opportunities for collaboration to support the future sustainability of the Hub.

Various working groups will be established, comprised of national stakeholders and other climate experts. Country representatives will lead working groups in different areas, depending on their expertise; for example, Tajikistan will lead in adaptation and Kyrgyzstan on climate finance. The working groups will develop recommendations for national governments that will eventually be used as the basis for policy briefs. In 2023, the Central Asia Hub plans to press forward with capacity building actions by holding five workshops/trainings for regional stakeholders.

In Central Africa, the Hub has led consultations to assess the gaps in operationalizing climate action transparency among stakeholders. The initiative has been welcomed by Heads of State in the region, including President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, H.E. Félix Tshisekedi Tshilombo, who highlighted ECCAS's work on the preservation of the environment and the fight against climate change.

In December 2022, country focal points met in Limbé, Cameroon, to develop both their country-specific transparency improvement plans and the Hub's action and 2023 work plan. The meeting was successful in bringing together country representatives and decision-makers to agree the next steps for the Hub:

- The workshop was viewed as a starting point for the train-the-trainer approach at the national level.
- It was acknowledged that each country requires a different process in developing the individual country work plans; more consultations will be required in 2023.
- Countries appreciated seeing the results of the gaps and needs analysis and now have a better understanding of their goals. Discussions around data needs and institutional arrangements revealed that there are some issues which all countries struggle with and others that are relevant to the individual country context.
- A detailed work plan for 2023 is being prepared.

The Central Africa Hub will act as a focal point for expertise and advice; helping to identify and articulate key gaps for specific countries; creating a network of experts and officials from ECCAS Member States through working groups, trainings and peer-to-peer exchange activities; and increasing human and institutional capacity in the Congo basin region or enhanced transparency.

Over the next two years, the Hubs aim to complete their work plans in a manner that will help them to become independent, sustainable operations. Success in this will mean a significantly improved understanding of transparency requirements and opportunities, including trained staff; substantial improvement of national mitigation and adaptation indicator data that track progress on climate actions; and a boost to the capacity of transparency and mitigation and adaptation experts.

As well as the benefits already mentioned, the Hubs will offer improved opportunities for engagement and professional growth, build political support up to the highest levels of government, and involve all relevant stakeholders in a joint effort.

Photo: Olia Glade

The ICAT Toolbox

ICAT has developed, and collaborated with partners to roll-out, a suite of practical, open-source tools and methodologies to provide effective support to the transparency efforts of countries around the world.

27

27 countries have applied ICAT tools or methodologies since their publication

Photo: © UNOPS/John Rae

Three ICAT guides available in Spanish

ICAT, with the support of Libelula, has translated three of its policy assessment guides into Spanish, to enable Spanish-speaking countries to use the methodologies more easily and effectively.

The ICAT methodologies now available in Spanish are are on non-State and Subnational Action; sustainable development; and transformational change.

To improve the outreach of these new resources in Spanish, ICAT and Libelula held a series of webinars so that interested parties can gain a deeper understanding of the use, applicability and value of the guides. Each translated guide had an introductory webinar, followed by a deep-dive session to explain the content of the guide and a peer-to-peer session on its practical application.

ICAT's assessment guides aim to help policymakers and other users assess the impacts of countries' climate policies and actions. They can play a critical role in supporting effective policymaking, processes to prepare and implement Nationally Determined Contributions, and to prepare for reporting under the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement.

Read the Spanish-language guides at https://bit.ly/3RiPLWF

New capacity building modules for ICAT's forestry and agriculture assessment guides

Capacity building modules already exist to complement the Sustainable Development, Stakeholder Participation and Transformational Change guides, and now a new set of modules, developed by the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI), is available for the Forestry and Agriculture guides.

The modules provide didactic presentations on key content from the respective ICAT guides in a self-paced format, incorporating quizzes, exercises, examples, and templates to facilitate interactive learning, designed to give users the opportunity to go through them in a focussed and modular way. Action buttons give the choice to merely focus on a few parts or methodological steps of interest, or to explore examples and experiences on the exact topic in which a user is interested.

The format and accessibility of the capacity building modules – each developed as a 4-part powerpoint slidedeck – means that they can be used and tailored to training sessions and workshops in countries or used by other stakeholders by simply downloading them from the ICAT toolbox.

Read more about the modules at https://bit.ly/3wIvUXH

Engagement at events

ICAT and its partners embrace the opportunity to engage with our stakeholders at key climate events across the globe. Whether talking about what ICAT offers to countries, one or more of the methodologies in the ICAT toolbox, or sharing in-country experiences, finding opportunities for in-depth engagement is always appreciated.

Photo: Thomas on Pixabay

Enhancing transparency around NDCs for benefits beyond reporting

Photo: UN Climate Change

At UNFCCC's SB56 in Bonn, ICAT hosted a side event on the benefits of climate reporting beyond meeting international reporting requirements. The event was co-hosted with Ministries from Germany and Georgia, the Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement and the Information Matters project.

Building effective national transparency systems is fundamental to support NDC implementation and enhancement. This event provided a platform for exchanging experiences from developing countries with the development and implementation of transparency systems to comply with international reporting requirements while addressing national priorities. The event presented results achieved and lessons learnt by countries supported under the IKI- funded project Information Matters and ICAT. The event further provided an opportunity to discuss future capacity needs.

The event recording and agenda are available on the ICAT website.

ICAT at COP27

ICAT actively participated in the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), in Sharm el-Sheikh, co-hosting and participating in a series of events, showcasing ICAT's offer of support and impact and promoting the overall transparency agenda.

In view of the focus on NDC implementation, ICAT used the forum provided by COP27 to highlight the importance of transparency in helping countries realize their climate ambitions. With a reference to the new ICAT tools and methodologies (such as the Guides on Transparency for Article 6 Cooperative Approaches, the methodology for tracking climate finance and the methodology for tracking just transitions), ICAT used its presence at the COP to inspire countries to enhance and expand their transparency frameworks towards effectively implementing their NDCs.

Transparency to Drive Inclusive Climate Action and Mobilize Finance

This official COP27 event was organized by Nigeria, CCAP and ICAT. It explored how countries were developing their transparency frameworks to enable inclusive and transformational climate action, employing forward-looking approaches, with a focus on just transitions and climate finance.

Featuring high-level remarks from H.E. Mohammed H. Abdullahi, Minister of Environment of Nigeria and H.E. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development of Belize, and a panel discussion with senior experts from Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa, the event demonstrated that transparency could be key for developing countries to meet their national targets and international commitments.

"Beyond the Paris Agreement, Nigeria has committed to net-zero emissions by 2060, in line with the Global Energy Transition Plan and the Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy; and as part of Nigeria's Transparency enhancement effort, the country's GHG [greenhouse gas] mitigation assessment has been expanded to cover 11 pollutants in total including short- lived climate pollutants," said H.E. Mohammed H. Abdullahi, Minister of Environment, Nigeria.

"Without transparency, the implementation of all actions, promises and commitments of the Paris Agreement will not hold the desired value. We as developing countries must be ready to be transparent so that all stakeholders know our climate finance needs, how much we received, how we have used it and the gaps in climate finance.", said H.E Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management of Belize.

And he emphasized that "Transparency on climate finance is important for all to build mutual trust."

Several speakers emphasized the important domestic benefits and the key role of transparency

for NDC implementation, climate finance mobilization and just transitions and gave examples on how this played out in their countries.

Messages from the event included:

- Countries increasingly recognize the value of building and enhancing their national transparency frameworks.
- Both climate finance and just transition processes need strong stakeholder engagement, and clarity and transparency of all underlying data and information is critical for stakeholders.
- For climate finance, international accountability is very important, and this also requires consistency of definitions where ICAT can make a useful contribution.
- Just transition processes are more focused on the national level and tracking needs to encompass aspects like measuring unemployment, the creation of jobs and other social indicators.

Several speakers highlighted the important role of ICAT in helping to institutionalize transparency, creating national coherence across the economy and the broad ownership of international commitments that was the basis to ensure compliance. Some countries were targeting a full national monitoring and evaluation framework to cover all climate activities. Those that are already advanced in their transparency efforts strongly recommended other countries to begin and not shy away from starting simple, and then improve over time.

Several speakers recommended the ICAT tools as a basis for building the capacity needed at the national level.

Other events

ICAT also co-organized and/or participated in numerous other events. Details of the events, as well as recordings of most of them, are available on the ICAT website.

- ICAT/Peru side-event: Article 6 Implementation and its integration to the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of Article 13
- ICAT/WRI side-event: How to integrate Just and Gender Inclusive Transition Strategies into next generation NDCs and LT LEDS
- ICAT/CAREC side-event: Regional cooperation on climate action transparency in the Central Asian region
- ICAT/ECCAS side-event: Challenges and Benefits of the Hub for Climate Transparency in Central Africa: First Results
- ICAT/UNEP-CCC side-event: Enhancing transparency in adaptation
- Rwanda side-event: Readiness to Enhanced Transparency Framework under Paris Agreement
- Partnership to Strengthen Transparency for co-Innovation (PaSTI) side-event: Shedding a light on GHG emission in supply chain in Asia
- Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) sid-event: Domestic Climate Finance Mapping and Planning: Challenges and Opportunities

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