

Submission to the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation - Contributions to and views on the workshops to be held in 2023.

Views on Workshop 7 on “Zooming out: Interfacing the GGA with other processes, including a specific focus/session on the GST process.”

July 13th 2023

Context and aim of the submission

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is pleased to provide its views on the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh (GlaSS) work programme on the global goal on adaptation (GGA), with a focus on the seventh workshop to be held on July 31-August 1-2 2023 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The progress made at the sixth workshop and SB58 is welcome, notably paragraph 7 of the draft conclusion of SB58¹ outlining possible structural elements to be considered for the GGA framework to be adopted at COP28, and the linked informal note² to informally capture the views expressed by Parties on this agenda item to date. The seventh and eight workshops of the GlaSS programme must build on the outputs of COP27 the SBs to allow the adoption of a GGA framework by COP28. In addition to the planned theme of the workshop on “interfacing the GGA with other processes”, the seventh workshop must provide space to continue discussions on the framework itself with a focus on the elements of the framework on the GGA found in paragraph 7 of the draft conclusion of SB58, and on potential targets under the GGA framework.

Parties must consider sequencing discussions to converge around key elements and principles, which will facilitate decisions about phrasing and texts. We outline below suggestions on the order and content to advance work towards the identification of targets under the GGA framework, including links with the Global Stocktake (GST). Ahead of COP28, Parties must work to recognise:

- The dimensions to conceptualise adaptation as a basis for targets;
- The methodological burden of different types of targets;
- The need for technical work after the strategic negotiations;
- The evaluative process for the GGA – such as the GST.

Definition of targets for the GGA framework

Targets for the GGA framework can support the mobilization of the political commitment requires to accelerate adaptation actions. While the examples submitted by Parties under different submissions are helpful in gaging the range of possibilities, developing globally relevant, representative and effective targets should consider the four following aspects.

¹ Draft conclusions proposed by the Chairs at SB58 https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sb2023_L04E_0.pdf

² Informal note on SBSTA 58 agenda item 5 and SBI 58 agenda item 11as part of the Draft conclusions proposed by the Chairs at SB58: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sb2023_L04E_0.pdf

a) Agreeing on dimensions to conceptualise adaptation as a basis for targets

Agreeing on the conceptual basis and the purpose of targets underpinning the GGA framework is a first step in determining what are the most important elements to capture to fairly represent the different adaptation realities and priorities of countries and communities across the world (Leiter et al, 2019).

Adaptation is complex and is unlikely to be able to represent appropriately and equitably all the adaptation priorities of countries globally in one single target. To date, decision 3/CMA.4 from COP27 and the draft SB58 decision provide a basis for considering the four dimensions of the adaptation cycle as the overarching framing through which to conceptualise progress on adaptation, namely: i) impact, vulnerability, and risk; ii) assessment; iii) planning and implementation; and iv) monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). Importantly, the adaptation cycle conceptualizes that support and means of implementation (MoI), in terms of finance, capacity building, and technology transfer, are key additional elements to the dimensions. Capturing MoI under each dimension, or as a dimension of its own, is crucial as it captures key enabling factors in ensuring adaptation occurs (Hickmann et al, 2022).

These dimensions mirror the adaptation policy cycle and support offered under the UNFCCC regime, hence echoing existing practices and systems embodied under National Adaptation Planning processes (UNFCCC, n.d.). As such, the four dimensions, along with MoI, represent a meaningful basis against which to determine targets under the GGA framework. This does not exclude the creation of an overarching target. Further elements to capture and understand progress include themes, and cross-cutting considerations³. Agreement on which themes and cross-cutting considerations will be necessary, yet the need to define targets for these secondary levels of the GGA framework is not. Capturing themes and cross-cutting indicators could be done under specific indicators, for example assuring accountability for gender equality and social inclusion under each dimension. Considering themes are not universal, this could be left to the discretion of countries to inform to reduce reporting burden.

b) Understanding the methodological burden of different types of targets

The scope and type of targets to be used under the GGA framework must be agreed by COP28. As part of this, the methodological and resource implications of targets need to be understood. Good practices in setting targets and indicators as part of monitoring, evaluation and learning systems points to the need to be pragmatic and embrace simplicity, with realistic and achievable targets to incentivise action (Bours et al, 2014; Dekens, 2021; Leiter et al, 2019). While being ambitious in what to measure can seem appealing, evidence from previous agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and from good practices in designing MEL systems show that overly complex, top-down sets of indicators do not improve data accuracy or capacities for assessments (Hickmann et al, 2022) (see Box 1).

³ To date, decision 3/CMA.4 outlines 10 potential themes, and at least seven categories of cross-cutting considerations

Box 1. How many targets are conducive to an effective GGA framework?

Suggestion to date under informal note linked to the SB58 draft conclusions include various options for targets based on a combination of the adaptation cycle dimensions, MoI, and links or additional targets under themes. Yet it is unclear how the combination would be operationalised. The simplest option would mean defining four targets according to the adaptation cycle, with a potential additional one for MoI for a total of five. Indicators could further unpack further issues to assess under each dimension. In more complex options, targets under the dimensions of the adaptation cycle and under each theme would mean potentially identifying around 14 targets (4-5 dimensions + 10 themes), while a matrix of targets under each sector per adaptation dimension would entail identifying potentially around 40-50 targets (e.g.: 4-5 dimensions x 10 themes). The bureaucratic burden and time for finalising a set of indicators and methodologies for different options should be acknowledged.

High level targets must capture the direction for travel but do not necessarily need quantification, as the Sendai targets and the SDGs illustrate. Targets can be ambitious by being time-bound, yet can remain qualitative (Kumar, 2023). Capturing outcome-level that quantifying the resilience or vulnerability is appealing, however aggregation is methodologically complex and likely undesirable at the global level (Adaptation Committee, 2021). This is because such methodologies would require considerable resources and capacities to implement, adding reporting burden to countries and biasing the overview of progress in countries who implement less measurements. There will also be inherent biases in producing a global methodology that aim to capture varying local adaptation contexts and priorities, and to collect data according to such methodology.

For example, one must think of the sensitivity and suitability of obtaining representative data across cultures and contexts, particularly when it comes to ensuring inclusion of groups that face discrimination due to social and/or gender inequalities. The GGA must present a representative and fair picture of the progress on adaptation, which requires that outcomes are equitable for people of different genders and social groups, and that progress for one group or community does not lead to maladaptation for others. Last, complex methodologies would divert and narrow the aim of the GGA from accelerating adaptation actions to measuring adaptation. While external and expert assessments, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports and the United Nations Environment Program Adaptation Gap Reports, can be helpful to assess global progress, they rely on secondary information rather than doing empirical studies themselves.

Defining targets under the GGA framework cannot be carried out in isolation from identifying the roles and responsibilities of actors needed for collecting the required evidence. As such, approaches and methodologies under the GGA must strengthen national MEL systems to serve as key mechanisms for creating evidence. This, in turn, will inform national reporting and communications instruments and other sources of information.

c) Recognizing the technical work needed after strategic negotiations.

The definition of MEL frameworks for global agreements and frameworks most often takes years, with different bodies fulfilling specific roles. For example, The SGD's global indicator framework took nearly 2 years to develop (UNDESA, 2022); the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction's latest framework took 3 years (Kumar, 2023); and the CBD's Global Biodiversity Framework took over 4 years to negotiate and adopt (IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 2022).

In each case, agreement on overarching targets was done through negotiations and embedded in a resolution or decisions. A technical process follows the political decisions, as appropriate indicators require clearly articulated goals to be determined. This follows the proposition by certain Parties to identify follow up work, such as the creation of an ad hoc working group, or potential other mandates to constituted bodies such as the Adaptation Committee, the Least Developed country Expert Group, and the Standing Committee on Finance.

While targets can remain qualitative, indicators must provide measurable Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) attributes to ensure goals can be disaggregated. As such, one target may hold several indicators pertaining to different facets for its achievement. When possible, indicators can link or complement indicators from other agreements and frameworks, to reduce reporting burden. Table 1 shows examples of how a target and related indicators could be phrased. Yet as emphasized above, the substance and purpose of the GGA framework must first be in place before finalising specific wording for targets.

Further technical work will be needed to develop indicators and related methodologies that cover the scope of key issues under each target. For example, the Sendai Framework hold 38 indicators under its seven overarching targets. In the case of the GGA framework, two important technical questions to resolve will be how to link the indicators and methodologies assessing adaptation progress to mitigation progress; and how to ensure the data and evidence gathered allow assessment of gender and social equity in adaptation processes and outcomes, through disaggregation but also through dedicated indicators.

Table 1. Examples of structure and phrasing for a qualitative target and related SMART indicators

Example target for planning:
“Substantially increase the percentage of [people/areas] that are [included in/ considered by /covered by] an adaptation plan or policy that is grounded in climate risk assessments by 2030”
Example indicators for planning:
“Proportion of [population/area] per country that is covered by an adaptation plan, policy or strategy by 2030,” (link with SDG indicator 13.2.1 on “Number of countries with NDCs, long-term strategies, NAPs, and AdComs, as reported to the secretariat of the UNFCCC by 2030”)
“Percentage of local governments having a plan to act on climate adaptation – including early warnings by 2030” (link with Sendai indicator G-4)
“Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies by 2030 (link with SDG indicator 13.1.3)
“Total official international support (ODA plus other official flows) for national and sub-national adaptation planning and /or for climate risks assessments by 2030” (link with indicator Sendai indicator F-1)
“% of NDCs, long-term strategies, NAPs, and AdComs submitted to the UNFCCC that systematically integrate gender equality and social inclusion”

d) Identifying the evaluative process for the GGA – such as the GST.

While countries are responsible to communicate and report as comprehensively as possible on adaptation within their boundaries, global actors should be concerned with assessing the collective dimensions of adaptation progress. This means identifying specific bodies under the UNFCCC or other supporting institutions can lead on the analysis or review of the information provided under the GGA framework. As a global assessment, the GGA framework could contribute to additional work towards learning about enablers and barriers of progress, good practices and case studies, and the effect of external factors on adaptation progress.

As per Article 7.14 of the Paris Agreement, the GST provides a function for the review of progress on the GGA. While the outputs of the first GST are still to be determined, the GST is primarily concerned by the assessment of progress, and challenges and gaps (see Figure 1). As such, the GGA framework must incentivise the communication and reporting of the status of adaptation progress nationally and sub-nationally, along with challenges and gaps. Reinforcing national MEL systems to produce such data should be a key objective of the GGA framework. Further information on opportunities, solutions and good practices along with enabling factors can support a more robust assessment of adaptation by the GST.

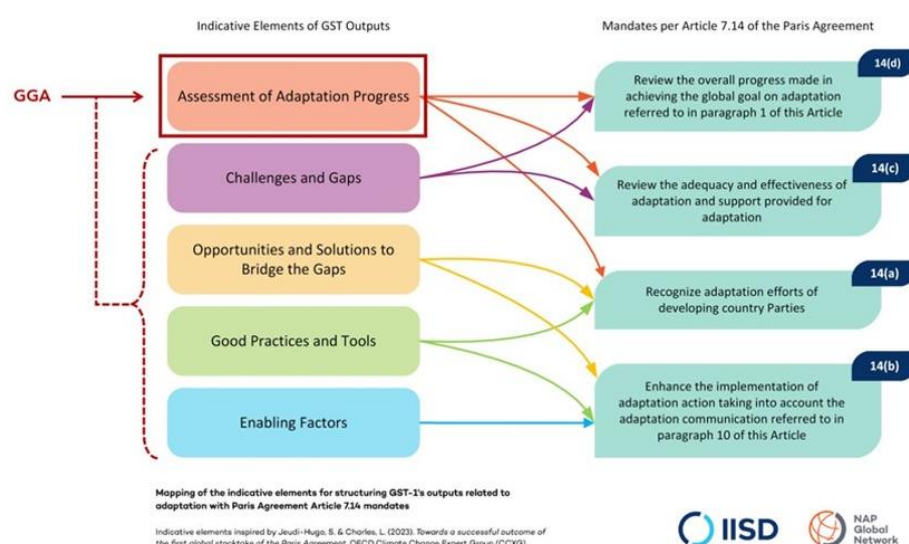


Figure 1. Mapping of the indicative elements of the GST-1's outputs related to adaptation with the Paris Agreement Article 7.14 mandates.

Recent IISD resources

[Next Steps for Defining a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Systems for the Global Goal on Adaptation by COP28.](#) See as submission to the sixth GlaSS workshop [here](#).

[Last Call for the Global Stocktake - What you need to know on adaptation before the Technical Dialogue process ends at SB58 in Bonn](#)

Contact: Emilie Beauchamp

ebeauchamp@iisd.org

Lead, MEL for adaptation – Resilience Program

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

References:

Adaptation Committee. (2021). Approaches to reviewing the overall progress made in achieving the Global Goal on Adaptation (AC/2021/TP/GGA). United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/AC_TP_GlobalGoalOnAdaptation.pdf

Bours, D., McGinn, C., and Pringle, P. (2014) Guidance note 2: Selecting indicators for climate change adaptation programming. SEA Change Community of Practice and UKCIP. <https://www.ukcip.org.uk/wp-content/PDFs/MandE-Guidance-Note2.pdf>

Dekens, J. (2021). Simplicity in crafting effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems for national climate adaptation. NAP Global Network. <https://nappglobalnetwork.org/2021/12/crafting-effective-monitoring-evaluation-systems/>

Hickmann, T., Biermann, F., Spinazzola, M., Ballard, C., Bogers, M., Forestier, O., Kalfagianni, A., Kim, R. E., Montesano, F. S., Peek, T., Sénit, C.-A., van Driel, M., Vijge, M. J., & Yunita, A. (2022). Success factors of global goal-setting for sustainable development: Learning from the Millennium Development Goals. *Sustainable Development*, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1002/SD.2461>

IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin (2022). United Nations Biodiversity Conference - OEWG 5/CBD COP 15/CP-MOP 10/NP-MOP 4. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://enb.iisd.org/un-biodiversity-conference-oewg5-cbd-cop15>

Kumar, A. (2023). Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Goal, Targets and Metrics. Presentation at the Sixth Workshop under the Glasgow – Sharm el-Sheikh programme on the global goal on adaptation. June 4 2023. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/UNDRR%20Presentation_Sendai%20Framework-GGA6%20%281%29.pdf

Leiter, T., Olhoff, A., Al Azar, R., Barmby, V., Bours, D., Clement, V.W.C., Dale, T.W., Davies, C., and Jacobs, H. 2019. “Adaptation metrics: current landscape and evolving practices”. Rotterdam and Washington, DC. www.gca.org

[UNDESA] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2022). SDG Indicators. Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202023%20refinement_Eng.pdf.

[UNFCCC] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (n.d.). Introduction: Adaptation and Resilience. <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/the-big-picture/introduction>