

Feedback on the five-year vision and plan for the Global Climate Action Agenda

SUBMISSION FROM THE MARRAKECH PARTNERSHIP WATER CONTENT GROUP

15 August 2025

On behalf of the Water Content Group of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (MPGCA)—comprised of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA), the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI)—we are pleased to contribute to the Climate Champions’ consultation on the five-year vision for the Global Climate Action Agenda (GCAA).

The first Global Stocktake (GST) explicitly recognized the importance of water and freshwater ecosystems for addressing the climate crisis. The GCAA’s role should be explicitly anchored in the GST so that non-Party stakeholder action can be included in the Paris Agreement’s core accountability process. Embedding GCAA outputs within the GST cycle would enhance their policy relevance, moving beyond COP-to-COP initiatives and positioning water action as part of the collective assessment of progress on mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation.

Water is not a sector—it is a systemic enabler of climate resilience. It underpins adaptation, mitigation, and implementation across all thematic areas of the Paris Agreement. Without integrating water into climate strategies, the goals of the Agreement will remain out of reach. From drought resilience and flood mitigation to ecosystem restoration and low-carbon transitions, water connects sectors, communities, and ecosystems.

The COP Water for Climate Pavilion, coordinated by SIWI and supported by over 90 organizations (of which all are in the MPGCA water content group, the Sharm El Sheikh Adaptation Agenda and working closely with the Climate Champions team) has demonstrated the growing momentum for water within the UNFCCC space. At COP28, water was formally recognized as a thematic target under the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience and three key initiatives were launched under the auspices of the Presidency with multi-stakeholder platforms. At COP29, the [Baku Declaration on Water for Climate Action](#) and the launch of the Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action reaffirmed water’s central role in climate governance and called for integrated approaches across NDCs, NAPs, and climate finance.

As we look toward COP30 and beyond, we urge the COP Presidency, MPGCA, UNFCCC, the Climate Champions and their teams to ensure that water is fully embedded in the GCAA’s governance, implementation, and tracking frameworks. In doing so, non-Party stakeholder water action can inform Party-led assessments, while GST outcomes provide for future priorities, strengthening the GCAA’s role as a bridge between Parties and non-Party Stakeholders and consolidating water resilience as a core element of global climate progress.

This submission reflects our collective experience and recommendations to strengthen the GCAA’s ability to deliver inclusive, impactful, and water-wise climate action. We also recommend that the review of the 5 year work plan be finalized once there is greater clarity on the process leading to the development of the Global Action Agenda and its activation groups launched by the COP30 Presidency.

This review needs to be aligned with the GCAA role within the UNFCCC system to ensure convergence and collaboration between non-state actor (NSA) action and Party-led negotiated processes and work plans, including the GST.

We thank you for the opportunity to contribute and look forward to continued collaboration in shaping a climate agenda that recognizes water as a cornerstone of resilience and transformation.

QUESTIONS

1. What should success look like for the GCAA in the next five years, and how can it be measured effectively?

Measurement tools:

- A tracking platform for commitments aligned with NDCs, NAPs, and the Sharm El Sheikh Adaptation Agenda. The development of the platforms for the activation groups and the tracking mechanisms must be aligned with the other official platforms and UNFCCC processes to maximize impact.
- Annual stocktake of progress on thematic-related targets (e.g., for water: restoration of wetlands, climate-resilient WASH coverage).
- Integration of water metrics into the Global Climate Action Portal and Yearbook of Global Climate Action, with clear linkages to GST reporting.

Governance recommendations:

- Establish a polycentric governance model that enables coordination across sectors, regions, and stakeholder groups.
- Ensure that water governance structures are embedded in climate decision-making frameworks, with clear mandates and accountability mechanisms.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities between the Climate Champions Team (CCT) and the Marrakech Partnership (MP) to avoid duplication and enhance collaboration; especially in the context of the launch of the COP Presidency Global Climate Action Agenda(s).
- Ensure that existing tools and campaigns are deepened, not replaced annually, to improve continuity, accountability, impact, and relevance to GST process

For the global water community specifically, success means that water is recognized and operationalized as a systemic enabler of climate resilience across all relevant global processes.

The GCAA should:

- Ensure water is fully integrated into climate mitigation and adaptation strategies across all sectors.
- Embed water resilience indicators within the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), including freshwater ecosystem health, climate-resilient WASH, just energy transitions, food and agriculture and transboundary cooperation.

- Institutionalize COP-to-COP continuity through platforms like the Baku Dialogue and the Water for Climate Pavilion.
- Scale climate finance for water-smart solutions, especially nature-based and locally- led adaptation, and ensure a prioritization for underrepresented groups, as well as informal and vulnerable communities and ensure a prioritization for underrepresented groups, as well as informal and vulnerable communities.
- Track progress through a dedicated water module in the Global Climate Action Portal/NAZCA, aligned with the Sharm El Sheikh Adaptation Agenda, and linked explicitly to the GST cycles to ensure water-related commitments inform Party-led assessments of global processes that water-related indicators and commitments are integrated into the Party-led assessment of global progress.

2. How can the GCAA facilitate direct and impactful engagement between Parties and NPS to support implementation efforts at both national and sectoral levels, in order to advance the full delivery of the GST, NDCs, and NAPs?

The GCAA must create structured spaces for co-creation and dialogue between Parties and NPS, particularly to support the implementation and follow-up of the GST outcomes:

- Co-create agendas through inclusive platforms like the Water for Climate Pavilion, SAA, and the MPGCA Water Thematic Group, and connect them to different relevant constituted bodies, mandated work programmes or events according to expertise (e.g., Global Goal on Adaptation, Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, Adaptation Committee).
- Enable continuity through COP-to-COP dialogues (e.g., Baku Water Dialogue, Freshwater Challenge), ensuring sustained engagement, follow-up and feedback loops.
- Support regional champions and thematic days (e.g., Water Day at COP30) to elevate water in national climate strategies.
- Bridge gaps by aligning NPS expertise with Party-led processes (e.g., UAE-Belem Work Programme on Indicators, GST synthesis reports), with national processes (e.g., NDCs, NAPs) through technical support and policy dialogues.
- Facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration through the Marrakech Partnership and the Climate Champions Team's water workplan pillars, to ensure that activities like the COP30 activation groups are well integrated and in line with existing non-State actor spaces.

Governance recommendations:

- Reinforce the original mandate of the MPGCA to bridge NPS and Parties (which is yet to be fully realized), specifically in the context of the next GST cycle.
- Create institutional pathways for NPS to contribute to official UNFCCC processes, including input into NDCs, NAPs, GST dialogues, and COP Presidency initiatives.
- Ensure that leadership forums and coordination meetings translate into actionable outcomes with clear follow-up mechanisms and links to Party-led processes.

By positioning itself as a vehicle for NPS to respond to the GST signals, the GCAA can ensure that non-State actor knowledge, expertise, and solutions directly inform Party-led processes and national climate strategies. This approach ensures that non-state expertise informs policy and accelerates implementation.

3. How can the GCAA promote an inclusive and equitable engagement, in particular from underrepresented groups and regions?

Governance recommendations:

- Engage Indigenous Peoples, youth, and marginalized groups through targeted partnerships and meaningful representation in dialogues. Within each thematic area of the MPGCA, hold at least one focal point position for an indigenous or locally-led organization. Alternatively, add indigenous advisors (Indigenous High Level Champion?) who can work with the thematic groups to incorporate their perspectives and activities within each group's workplan.
- Promote locally-led solutions and community-based resource governance, especially in transboundary and high-risk regions.
- Ensure representation of underrepresented groups in decision-making bodies and advisory panels of the MPGCA / CCT.
- Work with the thematic groups to showcase rights-based approaches to climate governance, recognizing customary and indigenous water rights.
- Ensure that their outputs are channeled into official UNFCCC working groups (e.g., Adaptation Committee, Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform) and decision-making processes.

4. What improvements can be made to ensure better transparency, reporting and follow up of the GCAA, including in existing tools such as the Global Climate Action Portal (a.k.a NAZCA) and the Yearbook of Global Climate Action?

Governance recommendations:

- Build on existing tools and campaigns rather than launching new ones annually, to ensure continuity and measurable impact.
- Clarify the benefits of involvement in the MPGCA, and assess its effectiveness in connecting NPS contributions to GST and Party-led processes under **the** UNFCCC
- Strengthen reporting mechanisms that reflect the contributions of NPS and their alignment with Party-led climate goals.
- Establish a transparent monitoring framework with clear roles for Parties and NPS
- Ensure open access to data and reporting tools to support accountability and shared learning.
- Ensure that governance structures for the GCAA are designed to interface effectively with the GST, creating a two-way flow in which non-Party stakeholder actions on water inform GST assessments, and GST outcomes guide priority areas for non-Party action.

Water-specific recommendations:

- Develop a dedicated water tracking module within the Global Climate Action Portal, aligned with the CCT Water Workplan and the new initiatives under the activation groups and granary platform of solutions, and then linked to the GST processes
- Include water-specific indicators in the Yearbook, (e.g., NbS implementation, WASH resilience, and freshwater ecosystem restoration), connecting them to GST and GGA reporting
- Create feedback loops between COP outcomes, GST signals and non-state actor commitments, ensuring visibility and accountability.
- Leverage digital tools and real-time data (e.g., smart water systems, remote sensing) to enhance transparency and reporting.

These enhancements will strengthen accountability and visibility of non-State actor climate action by creating explicit links to the GST, ensuring that non-Party stakeholder contributions are reflected not only in the Global Climate Action Portal and Yearbook, but also in GST technical dialogues and synthesis reports, thereby increasing their relevance to Party-led decision-making.

Signed by:

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Annexes

Feedback sent on the proposed new Governance of the MPGCA. We would appreciate understanding how it will be addressed in the next 5 year plan

From: Maggie White <maggie.white@siwi.org>

Sent: Tuesday, 17 December, 2024 17:27

To: GCA <GCA@unfccc.int>

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Subject: FW: FW: COP 29 - In-person Marrakech Partnership meeting - 12 Nov 2024

Dear GCA and CCT team,

I hope you are well and recuperated from COP29 for most and COP16 for some.

I had promised in the meeting we had on the 18.11, that the water content group of the MPGCA would send in written comments to the new governance structure of the GCA and interactions with HLC and CCT. I am sorry for this late reply since it has been non stop for some of us post COP29 and then COP16 for others. I also wanted to ensure that I could gather inputs from the different members of the group. Please see below what was expressed in the meeting and some additional points and ideas from the water content group.

We look forward to further engaging with you on this topic in the coming days and in 2025 and to furthering the great work that the GCA and CCT are doing with the different members of the MPGCA in the climate space. I was delighted to also see how the Riyadh Action Agenda got traction and attention at COP16. Interconnecting the 3 Rio conventions through NSA actions is of utmost importance and urgency.

Please see our feedbacks below as contributions to an ongoing dialogue that we want to be as constructive as possible to ensure successful actions and impact for all.

- Good with simplifying the processes and regrouping them
- Good with a leadership forum, but it should not replace the action day events. We still need to focus on the themes and 90 min is already reducing it too much. Also how will the outcomes and recommendations of the leadership forum be translated, who will receive them? What are the next steps after the forum takes place. Let's create something new that is impactful and not another layer between the Partners and the Parties, which has been a major shortcoming of the MPGCA over the past 8 years. How

do we ensure to better connect the work of the MP partners to the Parties (or enhance ambition / better convene stakeholders)? Wasn't that one of the major goals of the R2Z / R2R, how to they land in the new set up and are not made redundant.?

- The Coordination meetings as described are a good way forward but they will not necessarily enhance cross collaboration across the themes. We also need to collaborate around actions. I would push for joint action event sessions at the Inter sessions and at COP. Ie we could have dedicated action events for the theme and one that addresses a nexus between different themes. Enabling the thematic coordinators to work more together throughout the year. We need to create more cross collaboration across the MPGCA groups
- Ad hoc working groups : great way to cover new priority themes or focus areas /stakeholders – but same question – what will happen with the outcomes and recommendations? Let's not create more working groups and stretch ourselves thinner especially if we don't know what the impact/influence will be. If we do focus on a specific area, ie gender, Indigenous peoples, health, informality... is there a way that this work can be delivered to the official UNFCCC working groups on the topics? Could it be better clarified what is expected from the Ad Hoc Working Groups
- We also have a lot of tools and campaigns launched – can we build on them and go deeper within them instead of creating new ones each year. It is difficult to ensure reporting and accountability and showing impact if we are creating new processes/tools/reporting mechanisms each year/new mandate for a HLC.
- Let's work with fewer tools but better so we can be more ambitious. Build on the existing instead of stretching ourselves thin and making less impact. Let's identify areas for collaboration across sectors and stakeholders within a given scope to make a bigger impact with shared resources.
- Assess the Benefits of Involvement in the Marrakech Partnership: With the expansion of engagement opportunities and activities, it is essential to clarify the unique value of participating in this process and assess the impact of the partnership.
- Clarify the Relationship Between the MP Team and HLC Team: There is a need to define the specific responsibilities and tasks of each team to avoid overlap and ensure effective collaboration. Establishing clear roles will enhance accountability and streamline operations within the partnership.
- Reaffirm the Main Mandate of MPGCA: Originally intended to connect non-state actors with parties, there are concerns that this objective has not been fully realized or has become diluted. It is crucial to revisit and strengthen this mandate to ensure that the partnership effectively facilitates meaningful engagement between stakeholders.
- A concern we have is with the lack of interaction with the HLCs. Since COP27 there seems to be a growing disconnect between the HLCs and the MP. We have never met Razan and Nigar has been completely absent (apart from the 2 minutes she spent in the Water Action Event and she did not even attend the session). We used to meet regularly in person with the HLC where we were able to present our topics, initiatives, and key issues. We felt that we were a part of the same group. Lately it has felt that the Champions are championing their specific agendas and not curating for the NSA. We feel that it has

created a separate structure that pooled resources away from the GCA instead of working with it.

In general, we feel that the MPGCA has delivered on convening/converging NPS and enhancing ambition and urgency but not enough on bridging between parties and NSP. So how can we cross fertilise better across the UNFCCC working groups and give input to key themes at the COPs. One of the mandates of the MPGCA is to BRIDGE between parties and NSP.

In the new governance structure, I don't see where and how this is enabled. For exemple ,

The unique role of the MPGCA as stated in the document *'encourage NPS to accelerate climate action and enhance ambition, which will support national governments to reach the goals of the Paris agreement : be one of the formal links of NPS with the UNFCCC processes and promote a new inclusive multilateralism.* is still of great value and needs to be fulfilled with more ambition and action. The NPS don't need encouragement to accelerate climate action and enhance ambition, they are very motivated. But they need more means and pathways to be able to undertake this with the governments. We need the MPGCA and HLC to facilitate and improve the connection of NPS with UNFCCC processes and give a strong platform and means to realise an inclusive multilateralism