



Transparency of Action and Support under the Paris Agreement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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One of the key elements of the Paris Agreement is its “*enhanced transparency framework*”, set out in Article 13. Transparency of action and support is of crucial importance for the functioning of the Paris Agreement, as it can: help build trust and confidence among Parties; foster shared understandings by clarifying the information underlying Parties’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); help mobilise domestic support for stronger climate action and further support; improve efficacy of action through enhanced learning; and hold Parties accountable for implementing their actions and maintaining and increasing their levels of ambition.

This paper offers an analysis of some of the major questions raised by the Paris Agreement with regard to transparency, in the form of a commentary on Article 13 as well as other provisions of the Paris Agreement and Decision 1/CP.21 that pertain to the issue. On the basis of our analysis, we identify several areas where the Paris Agreement has left gaps in building a comprehensive and coherent transparency system, and offer recommendations (summarised in *Table 1*).

Table 1: Summary of Recommendations		
	Gaps	Recommendations
Crosscutting Elements		
Flexibility	Lack of clarity on key terms, such as “built-in flexibility” and “capacities”.	Parties to discuss practical options for flexibility in reporting and review in the development of modalities, procedures and guidelines (MPGs) for the transparency framework.
Relation with global stocktake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear how transparency framework outputs will serve as inputs into the global stocktake (Article 14). Unclear whether support needed will be considered in global stocktake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parties to specify what types of reports under Article 13 could serve as inputs into the global stocktake. Parties also to identify information on support needed as input into the global stocktake.
Relation with implementation and compliance mechanism	No explicit linkage between outputs of transparency framework and the functioning of the implementation and compliance mechanism (Article 15).	Parties to clarify in development of Article 15 modalities and procedures whether (and, if so, how) outputs of, and activities under, Article 13 would inform the implementation and compliance mechanism.
Relation with other elements of Paris Agreement	Unclear how transparency framework relates to REDD+ (Article 5), the mechanisms under Article 6, and loss and damage (Article 8).	In development of MPGs, Parties to identify linkages with elements of Paris Agreement not mentioned in Article 13, and align guidance where needed.
Transition from existing transparency system	Lack of clarity on the transition from existing systems of transparency to Paris systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parties to task the UNFCCC Secretariat to prepare a technical report on lessons learned from existing transparency processes so that Parties can identify what elements of existing processes could be maintained and what elements are no longer relevant. Parties to develop a roadmap to clarify the timing of the transition from existing transparency systems.
Transparency of action		
NDC guidance	Without further UNFCCC guidance for NDCs and accompanying information, tracking progress with implementing NDCs, and aggregating and comparing them, is very challenging.	Parties to provide further guidance for NDCs and accompanying information (under paragraphs 26 and 28 of Decision 1/CP.21) as soon as possible, to facilitate the development of the MPGs for the transparency framework.
Transparency of adaptation	Unclear what transparency of adaptation actions entails, especially if not supported by international finance. Which actions should be reported? How should they be measured?	Parties to develop further guidance for monitoring and evaluating adaptation actions (including guidelines for National Adaptation Plans).

Transparency of support		
Accounting for financial support received	Accounting modalities for financial support received are not contemplated.	Parties to consider developing accounting modalities for financial support received, for example under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice.
Support to least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS)	Discretionary reporting for LDCs and SIDS on support needed and received might impede the emergence of a clear picture of the international climate finance landscape.	Donors to provide significant support to LDCs and SIDS to help them increase the frequency and quality of their reporting on support needed and received.
Non-financial support	Lack of clarity on how to report on non-financial support (i.e. technology transfer and capacity building).	Parties to develop further guidance on how to report on non-financial support needed, provided and received to document fulfilment of Articles 10 and 11.
Use, impact and estimated results of support received	No specific mandate for work on how to report on the use, impact and estimated results of support received.	Parties to provide mandate to develop guidance on how developing countries can report on the use, impact and estimated results of the support received.
Capacity building for transparency		
Capacity building for transparency	Risk that the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency primarily focuses only on capacity building for transparency of mitigation action.	Parties and the Global Environment Facility to ensure that the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency also builds capacity for transparency of support and adaptation action.
Funding for the transparency framework	Unclear whether funding for the effective and sustainable functioning of the transparency framework is available.	Parties (with support from the Secretariat) to calculate possible (financial and human) resource requirements of functioning of the framework, and to guarantee sustainable funding.

Negotiations on the specifics of the Paris Agreement's transparency framework have only just begun. It would therefore be unrealistic to expect all of the above recommendations to be taken up at the 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP 22) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Marrakech in November 2016. Nonetheless, Parties need to lay a foundation in Marrakech by agreeing a work plan and schedule, to meet or beat the COP 24 (2018) deadline for developing a robust transparency framework. This is crucial for providing consistent and complete data for the first biennial reporting cycle, which is to feed into the first global stocktake in 2023. Linkages with other mandates and processes need to be identified, to avoid duplication of work and ensure coordination.

It will make sense to first focus on reporting guidelines, followed by the review modalities. The UNFCCC Secretariat could prepare a technical paper on the lessons learned from existing transparency processes under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, as well as from other international regimes. Parties could include workshops on concrete issues in the work plan, such as on the relationship between the transparency framework and the global stocktake, transparency of adaptation, and accounting for climate finance. Finally, it may be sensible to establish parallel but closely coordinated forums for discussing the modalities, procedures and guidelines for transparency of mitigation, adaptation and of support.