

NDC TRANSPARENCY CHECK

METHODOLOGY

ASSESSING INFORMATION TO FACILITATE CLARITY,
TRANSPARENCY AND UNDERSTANDING (ICTU) OF
NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDCS)

17 September 2020



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BACKGROUND

The Paris Agreement was agreed in 2015 in Paris at the UNFCCC COP 21, and came into force a year later. Almost all countries are currently signatories of the Agreement¹. The Agreement has several key features, which can be explained in plain terms as:

- A set of global goals, including "...holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels", a global adaptation goal and a goal pertaining to financial flows;
- A process whereby countries submit every five years "Nationally Determined Contributions" (NDCs) to achieving these goals. NDCs consist of countries' targets to mitigate their GHG emissions, and in some cases, their adaptation and finance commitments / requirements;
- A process for countries to report on progress against the commitments contained in NDCs every two years;
- A process held every five years to evaluate collective progress against the global goals, called the global stocktake (GST). The GST then informs the next round of NDCs.

These features comprise a cycle of action and reflection – countries commit to actions in their NDCs; these actions are then reported on, and collective progress is reflected on every five years; then, in the next round of NDCs, countries take into account global progress against the goals. The level of mitigation ambition which Parties express in their NDCs is very important, but equally important is that the commitments in NDCs are expressed clearly and transparently. Without this transparency, the outcome of NDCs (in terms of emissions limitation/reduction) is not clear, and a) countries cannot be held to account for achieving their targets, and b) the contribution of NDC targets to the global goals of the Paris Agreement cannot be clearly assessed.

Transparency is an essential element of the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC 2015). The objective of this assessment is to establish a robust methodology to assess whether the communication of countries on the proposed mitigation in their NDCs is clear, transparent and understandable, in terms of the requirements set out in the Paris Agreement, its accompanying decision (1/CP.21) and the Annex to decision 4/CMA.1 which sets out the "information to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding" in its Annex 1 (henceforth "the Annex").

There are two key reasons why such an assessment is useful:

1. Within the legal framework of the Paris Agreement, although Parties will be legally obliged to provide the information listed in the Annex in their NDCs, there is no review or compliance process in the framework to assess whether they have done so, or to assess the extent to which they have done so. NDCs are not reviewed by any body or process under the Paris Agreement with a view to assessing this, and the compliance processes under the Agreement (defined in its Article 15, and further elaborated in decision 20/CMA.1), will only consider whether a Party has communicated an NDC or not².

Civil society organisations can therefore play an important role in providing a critical and independent assessment of the conformance of NDCs to the relevant guidance, and ensuring that countries are aware of information gaps in their NDCs.

2. Providing a critical assessment of the information presented in NDCs, and especially in relation to the clarity of the proposed mitigation outcomes, can help not only to provide additional clarity on mitigation goals and their underlying policies and measures, but also provide clarity on the likely collective outcome of mitigation efforts committed to in NDCs.

The quality of the information provided in an NDC is of interest to various audiences, including governments, policy-makers and civil society.

While the approach taken for this assessment is based on conformance with the Annex, this 'NDC Transparency Check' will aim to assess both:

1. Conformance of a country's NDC with the Katowice Rule Book, and;
2. The extent to which a country has provided additional information in relation to each element of the Annex which further enhances clarity, transparency and understanding.

Legally, the Annex is only binding from the second NDC³ onwards. However, Parties are "strongly encouraged" to apply the Annex to updated NDCs communicated in 2020⁴. Here, the assessment will be applied to existing NDCs (communicated mostly in 2015), mindful of the fact that provision of the relevant information was not a legal requirement at the time.

1 A possible exception is the United States of America, which is currently a signatory, but has started the withdrawal process from the Agreement, and is expected to withdraw formally in November 2020.

2 Paragraph 22 of the Annex to decision 20/CMA.1 provides for the compliance committee to consider initiating compliance proceedings against a Party for not submitting an NDC, but paragraph 23 prohibits the committee from considering any of the content of the NDC, thereby excluding from compliance procedures any questions as to whether the Party adhered to the information requirements contained in Annex 1 to decision 4/CMA.1.

3 What constitutes the second NDC is not clearly defined. Undoubtedly this will encompass NDCs communicated in 2025, but it may also include some NDCs communicated in 2020 (with a timeframe up to 2030, if their initial NDCs had a timeframe up to 2025).

4 A few Parties have already communicated updated NDCs, and at least one (Norway) has applied the Annex in doing so.

STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The method is structured in two parts, which should be read together. The first section outlines the assessment method, elaborating how to complete the table with the full assessment. The table is the second section. It is structured following the paragraphs and sub-paragraphs of the Annex to decision 4/CMA.1 (UNFCCC 2018a). The same structure is applied in the first section, though here headings have been slightly shortened for readability and to reduce length.

ASSESSMENT METHOD

The assessment table⁵ consists of four columns:

- The first column of the assessment table lists the elements of information to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding (ICTU), taken from Annex I to decision 4/CMA.1 (UNFCCC 2018a). 'Elements' in this method refers to sub-paragraphs in the Annex.
- For all elements of ICTU, indicate in the second column of the table whether the Party has included the element. The options are generally Yes / No / Partly / not applicable ('n/a'), with some variations, depending on the provision concerned. In some cases, elements are alternatives, e.g. a 1 b) OR 1 c) would generally be applicable to any specific country.
- The third column is a guide to identifying the elements necessary for conformance, and in some cases, what may constitute "enhanced conformance".
- The fourth column provides a location for qualified assessments (since most of the provisions are not straightforward) and recording the actual occurrence of the relevant elements in the NDC.

The assessment is aimed at assessing to what extent countries have provided information required in the Annex, and therefore, if a country has not explicitly stated a piece of information, in terms of this analysis it is deemed not to have provided it. For instance, if a country has a time frame to 2030, but has not stated that it is using a 10-year time frame, even though this can be inferred and noted in the fourth column, the country will be deemed not to have provided this information.

A PRELIMINARY STEP – IDENTIFYING THE KEY NDC TARGET OR TARGETS

A key challenge in analysing NDCs is identifying the key target or targets against which countries will track the achievement of their NDC. In some cases this is very simple, but in others it is much more complex, and the target or targets can be difficult to distinguish from information provided on policies and measures intended to achieve the NDC. Some NDCs have more than one target.

Furthermore, there are several types of NDC target which do not fall neatly into some of the ICTU categories below. For instance,

- the use of the term "reference point", which applies to a (usually quantitative) value in terms of which the target is defined (for instance, a 40% reduction from 1990 emissions levels, which is also referred to as a "base year", see below), does not apply either to a country such as South Africa which has stated its target simply as an emissions level in a particular year (emissions will be in the range 398-614 Mt CO₂-eq in 2025 and 2030), since there is no reference point in terms of which the target is defined.
- The same is true of a policy-based target which aims to reach a certain target by a certain year (for instance, reach a total installed capacity of 500 MW of wind power by 2025).

In these cases, we assume that the countries concerned would find that information requirements pertaining to the reference year are not applicable to them. This would mean that the whole of Section 1 would not apply to these countries. In the cases of countries which define their targets in terms of a Business as Usual trajectory, this is the reference indicator, and the full range should be provided as well as the value for the reference year.

⁵ Ref. Annex I.

A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION AND PRACTICE

It is a truism particularly in international negotiation processes that “constructive ambiguity” in the language of agreements often plays a vital role in reaching agreements, but simultaneously leads to difficulties in implementation.

Ambiguity and lack of clarity in treaty and decision language in the UNFCCC is most often resolved through practice, i.e. the practice of countries interpreting the language in order to implement relevant provisions. Since there are only very few examples so far of countries applying the Annex (up to May 2020), there are no established practices to go on.

As a result, in cases in which the specifications in the Annex are unclear or ambiguous, it has been interpreted ambitiously, i.e. in a way that

- a. it can be reasonably expected that countries will interpret them, and
- b. in a way that provides as much clarity, transparency and understanding as possible.

When updating this assessment methodology after the communication of NDCs in 2020, it will be important to take this experience into account.

COMPARABILITY AND OBJECTIVITY

Although the methodology seeks to provide objective criteria for this assessment which should result in two different assessors reaching the same conclusions, there are some areas of the assessment in which this is particularly difficult, especially in sections 6 and 7 on fairness and ambition. It would therefore be best practice when undertaking assessments, that assessments are thoroughly reviewed, and preferably undertaken by more than one assessor.

FURTHER AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

a) Adaptation

The scope of this methodology is confined to the mitigation component of NDCs. Since the majority of NDCs contain adaptation components as well, it would be useful in future to provide a similar assessment for adaptation components of NDCs. However, guidance on adaptation components of NDCs is provided in the form of guidance for adaptation communications as contemplated in Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, and contained in decision 9/CMA.1, and is of a completely different legal nature to the provisions on ICTU. Countries are not obliged to include an adaptation component in their NDCs, and are also not obliged to use the guidance for adaptation communications if they choose to do so. The assessment would therefore have to be of a very different nature, sensitive to national circumstances and to the different legal nature of the guidance. An assessment could possibly be developed drawing from the experience gained by the review of Annex I countries’ adaptation sections of their National Communications (contained in technical expert review reports), which attempts to categorise and summarise adaptation information on a thematic basis. This could be accompanied by an assessment of which additional information on adaptation could be included in future NDCs.

b) Support (incl. finance, technology, capacity building)

Even less guidance is provided on the support components of NDCs (generally included only by developing countries). A similar approach to that described for adaptation could be developed for support.

01 QUANTIFIABLE INFORMATION ON THE REFERENCE POINT

a) Reference or base year

Does the NDC specify a reference year? A reference year or base year is the year in terms of which an NDC target is defined; for instance a 40% reduction in relation to the year 1990 – in which case 1990 is the reference year (reference year and base year are often used interchangeably). In the case of a reduction from a Business as Usual target (for instance, a reduction of 35% compared to Business as Usual), the reference year is the same as the target year, since the reduction is expressed relative to a Business as Usual value in that year. In the case of an absolute emissions target (for instance, emissions will not exceed 600 Mt CO₂-eq in 2030), the concept of a reference point is not applicable, since the target is not defined relative to a reference point. In the case of the NDC consisting of policies and measures, in some cases targets may be expressed in relation to specific outcomes (30 MW of PV panels installed by 2030), or in relation to a reference year (an increase of 20% in the proportion of renewable electricity from 2010 levels). In the former case, a reference level is not applicable. In the latter case, a reference level is applicable.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	Reference year is included.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	There is more than one target and reference years are not provided for all of them.
<input type="radio"/> No	Reference year is not included.
<input type="radio"/> n/a	The NDC type does not provide for a reference year.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Reference year(s)	A reference year, including for reduction against a baseline / BAU, in terms of which a target is defined.
<input type="radio"/> Base year(s)	A year or years in terms of which a target is defined (for instance, 40% reduction by 2030 in relation to 1990 levels).
<input type="radio"/> Reference period(s)	A period (of more than one year) in terms of which a target is defined (for instance 40% reduction in relation to the average emissions level during the period 2000-2010).
<input type="radio"/> Other starting point(s)	<i>"Other starting points" should be elaborated further in the "information in NDC" column.</i>

b) Quantifiable information on the reference indicators

Identify whether the NDC includes a value for the reference indicator above (in 1(a)), or information which would lead to its quantification. Provision of the value itself is more transparent. If 1(a) is not applicable, then this is also not applicable. Values could be in GHG emissions terms (CO₂ or CO₂-eq), or in other terms (for instance, emissions intensity (emissions/GDP)), or in the case of developing countries which are not LDCs (to which Article 4.6 does not apply) who have stated their NDCs in terms of policies and measures, any reference indicators relevant to achievement of the stated policy goals. Attention should be paid as to whether the basis for determining quantification of the land sector has been provided (for instance, as reported in its inventory, or another accounting approach).

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	Quantified or quantifiable information provided. For the latter, clear guidance on how the reference indicator will be quantified.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	Applies to a BAU reference, in which the information for the rest of the BAU is lacking.
<input type="radio"/> No	No quantified or quantifiable information provided.
<input type="radio"/> n/a	If the target does not have a reference point.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Quantified – in CO ₂ or CO ₂ -eq, or in other emissions units	GHGs quantified in CO ₂ or CO ₂ -eq, or in other units - or instance, non-CO ₂ gases expressed in tons (rather than in CO ₂ -eq), or using an additional metric to GWP, or tons of short-lived climate forcers not covered by IPCC guidelines.
<input type="radio"/> Quantified – non-GHG units	For instance, for policies and measures – MW of added generation capacity.
<input type="radio"/> Quantifiable information provided – to quantify in CO ₂ or CO ₂ -eq	The country has provided information which would allow an analyst to quantify the value of the reference indicator, but has not provided the number itself (for instance, GHG emissions in 1990).
<input type="radio"/> Quantifiable information provided – to quantify in non-GHG units	To quantify in other units (for instance, MW of added generation capacity in relation to capacity in 2010).
<input type="radio"/> No quantifiable information	

c) Information on strategies, plans, actions

This provision applies to:

- LDCs and SIDS, who in terms of Article 4.6 may submit information on strategies, plans and actions as their NDC; and
- Parties that have chosen PAMs without quantifiable information, provide other information. These Parties still have the same legal obligation under Article 4.2 as other countries, that is to submit NDCs every five years. These countries may include these strategies, plans and actions in their NDC, and cite special circumstances

Completing 1c) is an alternative to 1 b), so the other cell would be marked n/a.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The country has provided reference points in relation to PAMs in their NDC.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	Some of this information has been provided.
<input type="radio"/> No	None of this information has been provided, but the country has an NDC which requires reference points for PAMs.
<input type="radio"/> n/a	Not applicable to NDC.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> The country has provided reference points for relevant quantified goals for specific PAMs.	For each PAM which requires one, the country has provided a reference point.
<input type="radio"/> The country has provided reference point for qualitative goals for PAMs with non-quantified goals.	For non-quantifiable PAMs (for instance, introduce a carbon tax), the reference point would usually be the starting point (for instance, there is currently no carbon tax in the country).

d) Target relative to the reference indicator

Identify whether the target is “expressed numerically, for example in percentage or amount of reduction”, as per the Annex of 4/CMA.1. For countries which have absolute targets, in GHG terms or others, and for countries which do not have quantifiable targets, this does not apply.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The target relative to the reference indicator is included.
<input type="radio"/> No	The target relative to the reference indicator is not included.
<input type="radio"/> n/a	Not applicable to the NDC’s target type (for instance in an NDC not defined in terms of a reference point).

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> % reduction from base year	For instance, 20% reduction from 1990 level.
<input type="radio"/> % reduction from BAU%	For instance, 22% reduction form BAU in 2030.
<input type="radio"/> Intensity reduction from base year	For instance, 45% reduction in GHG intensity from 2005 levels.
<input type="radio"/> Other	

e) Information on sources of data used

Identify the quality of the source of data used to quantify the reference point(s), and for enhanced conformance, how readily traceable it is. A clear source of the quantified or quantifiable information, e.g. a GHG inventory; next best would be a reference to other underlying data sources; and no clear source would be least transparent.

Traceability refers to whether the source of data is readily found or not.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	Detailed data sources for reference indicators.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	References to sources, no detail / only some data sourced.
<input type="radio"/> No	No information.
<input type="radio"/> n/a	Reference indicators not applicable to NDC type.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

Source:	
<input type="radio"/> GHG inventory	Reference indicator(s) defined in terms of values found in the country’s GHG inventory.
<input type="radio"/> Reference to underlying data sources	Other sources including supporting technical reports (for instance, information on BAU projections).
<input type="radio"/> Other studies	
Enhanced conformance – traceability:	
<input type="radio"/> Source readily found	Whether the NDC provides references which allow easy access to the source material.

f) Updating values of reference indicators

Parties should indicate under what circumstances they plan to update their reference indicators. This would obviously have a potentially significant impact on their target. These may include the following:

- GHG inventory: Parties may change their reference levels as a result of GHG inventory recalculations.
- Parties may indicate that they intend to recalculate their BAU before, during or after the implementation period.
- Intensity: This may change as a result of recalculation of GHG inventory data, or as a result of recalculation / updating of a country's GDP or other economic data.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	Information is included.
<input type="radio"/> No	Information is not included.
<input type="radio"/> n/a	Not applicable to NDC type.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

GHG inventory

<input type="radio"/> How values may be updated	Information provided on whether recalculations will be taken into account.
<input type="radio"/> Information on when this may occur	When (during the NDC implementation period, or before, or afterwards) this may occur.

Baseline projections

<input type="radio"/> Information on whether the baseline will be updated, when and why	Whether the country intends to recalculate / update its BAU, and how and why.
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Intensity

<input type="radio"/> If, whether and how the country will update its intensity reference indicator	For instance, whether this will be as a result of GHG inventory recalculations?
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02 TIME FRAMES AND/OR PERIODS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

a) Time frame and/or period for implementation

“Time frame” here refers to the period between NDC targets. Most Parties took the initial view that this would be five or ten years, and there is an ongoing negotiation process to decide on a “common time frame”. “Period of implementation” corresponds to the time frame, and is the period during which implementation of the NDC target will be reported on. Most countries in their initial NDCs have not explicitly stated a time frame or period of implementation. For this part of the assessment, it is necessary for a country to have EXPLICITLY stated its time frame and start and end dates of its period of implementation. For most NDCs one can infer a time frame, in which case this can be noted in the “Information” column. Not all NDCs have time frames which are either 5 or 10 years, and not all NDC implementation periods begin on the 1st January and end on 31st December.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	Time frame and start and end date of period of implementation explicitly provided.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	Some of the above information provided.
<input type="radio"/> No	None of the above information provided.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Stated time frame of 5 years	The NDC explicitly contains the information that the NDC has a time frame of five years.
<input type="radio"/> Stated time frame of 10 years	The NDC explicitly contains the information that the NDC has a time frame of ten years.
<input type="radio"/> Other stated time frame	The NDC explicitly states that the NDC has another time frame.
<input type="radio"/> Start date:	The NDC explicitly contains the start date of the period of implementation.
<input type="radio"/> End date:	The NDC explicitly contains the end date of the period of implementation.

b) Whether it is a single-year or multi-year target, as applicable

A single-year target (most NDCs) is a target in which the achievement of the target is measured by an indicator for a single year (for instance, a 40% reduction in emissions compared to their 1990 level by 2030). A multi-year target is a target in which the achievement of the target is measured by the value of an indicator for more than one year. This may take the form of an emissions trajectory (an emission target for each year during the period of implementation) or an emissions budget for the whole

period of implementation, similar to the “assigned amount” in the Kyoto Protocol; for instance, emissions will not exceed a total budget of 2500 Mt CO₂-eq during the period 2021-2025. Some NDCs may consist of more than one single-year target, for different years (for instance, emissions will not exceed 600 Mt CO₂-eq in 2030, and coal-fired power will be phased out by 2028). This should be regarded as two single-year targets, and not a multi-year target. The difference lies in how implementation and achievement of these targets would be reported on. The Annex requires countries to explicitly state whether the NDC contains a single- or multi-year target (or more than one). For countries which do not explicitly state this, the inferred information on the target can be reported in the information column.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

Some NDCs contain more than one target, as above, or contain BOTH single-year AND multi-year targets (for instance, emissions will not exceed 600 Mt CO₂-eq in 2030, and cumulative emissions from 2021-2030 will not exceed 7000 Mt CO₂-eq).

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The NDC explicitly contain the information as to whether their target(s) is/are a single or multi-year target.
<input type="radio"/> No	The NDC does not contain this information.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Single-year target	The NDC <i>explicitly</i> contains the information that the target is a single-year target.
<input type="radio"/> Multi-year target	The NDC <i>explicitly</i> contains the information that the target is a multi-year target.

Some NDCs contain more than one target, as above, or contain BOTH single-year AND multi-year targets (for instance, emissions will not exceed 600 Mt CO₂-eq in 2030, and cumulative emissions from 2021-2030 will not exceed 7000 Mt CO₂-eq). In which case both the above are applicable.

03



SCOPE AND COVERAGE

a) General description of the target

The country should provide here a summary of the target which includes some detail. Further detail is contained in the provisions below.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The two elements below are described in the NDC.
<input type="radio"/> No	The two elements below are not described in the NDC.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Key goals of the target – emissions reduction/ limitation, intensity, BAU reduction, PAMs, mitigation co-benefits, in quantitative or qualitative terms.	Key goals of the target are clearly stated in the NDC.
<input type="radio"/> Time frame, period of implementation, target year(s).	At least one of these is provided.

b) Sectors, gases, categories and pools

This section should provide information on the coverage of the NDC. “Sectors” refer to the main sector categories in the IPCC 2006 GHG inventory guidelines (i.e. energy, industrial process and product utilization emissions (IPPU), agriculture, forestry and land use emissions (AFOLU), Waste and “other” – most countries do not bother to include “other”). Some countries opt to separate land use and agriculture emissions, rather than the joint “AFOLU” category. Coverage of gases refer to the group of seven gases (or groups of gases in the cases of HFCs and PFCs) required to be reported on in countries’ GHG inventories⁶. “Categories” refer to the categories used to classify emissions in each sector in the IPCC 2006 guidelines, and “pools” refer to carbon stocks, also defined in the IPCC 2006 guidelines. In their first NDCs, many countries do not explicitly provide this information. Some countries use terms such as “economy-wide” to indicate that all sectors are covered, and others refer to the coverage of their national inventories. In assessing conformance with this provision, only explicit mention of relevant sectors/gases/categories/pools should be considered. Other implied information can be reflected in the “information” column.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	Information on sectors, gases, categories and pools included in the NDC is explicitly provided.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	Some of this information is provided.
<input type="radio"/> No	None of this information is provided.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

This provision requires countries to include detailed information on which sectors, categories, greenhouse gases and carbon pools are included in the NDC. If a country’s NDC does not cover a whole sector (for instance, in “energy”, it covers emissions from the power sector, but not from the transport sector), information should be provided on which categories are covered / are not covered within each sector. More information on this can be found in the IPCC 2006 guidelines. It is very unlikely that NDCs submitted before COP 24 would contain the required level of detail on land use emissions specified in the Annex, but if countries provide explicit links to their GHG inventories, this level of detail can sometimes be found there. Nevertheless, the detail needs to be explicitly stated in the NDC.

Sectors

<input type="radio"/> Energy	The country has included energy emissions (combustion and fugitive emissions) in the coverage of its NDC.
<input type="radio"/> IPPU	The country has included emissions from industrial process and product use in its NDC.
<input type="radio"/> AFOLU	The country has included emissions from agriculture, forestry and land use in its NDC. Countries may (sometimes as a result of using the 1996 IPCC guidelines, which define these as separate sectors) specify the inclusion of agriculture and land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) separately.
<input type="radio"/> LULUCF	The NDCs specified aspect separately from above.
<input type="radio"/> Agriculture	The NDCs specified aspect separately from above.
<input type="radio"/> Waste	The country has included emissions from waste in its NDC.
<input type="radio"/> Other	This is a catch-all category for any emissions which do not fall into the above categories. Many countries do not report any emissions in this category, so coverage of the above sectors may be considered as complete coverage.

⁶ In terms of the reporting guidelines for the Paris Agreement (18/CMA.1), developing countries have flexibility, if they lack the capacity to report on all seven, to report on a minimum of three gases (CO₂, CH₄, N₂O).

● Categories and sub-categories used for each sector above in the NDC	If the country is not including all the categories in a specific sector above, it should report which categories it is including.
Gases	
● Carbon dioxide: CO ₂	CO ₂ is included in the country's NDC.
● Methane: CH ₄	CH ₄ is included in the country's NDC.
● Nitrous oxide: N ₂ O	N ₂ O is included in the country's NDC.
● Perfluorocarbons: PFCs	PFCs are included in the country's NDC.
● Hydrofluorocarbons: HFC	HFCs are included in the country's NDC.
● Sulphur hexafluoride: SF ₆	SF ₆ is included in the country's NDC.
● Nitrogen trifluoride: NF ₃	NF ₃ is included in the country's NDC.
Pools See 2006 IPCC guidelines for guidance on carbon pools ⁷ .	
● Aboveground biomass	Aboveground biomass is included in the country's NDC.
● Belowground biomass	Belowground biomass is included in the country's NDC.
● Dead wood	Dead wood is included in the country's NDC.
● Litter	Litter is included in the country's NDC.
● Soil organic matter	Soil organic matter is included in the country's NDC.

c) Exclusion and inclusion of categories

The Annex requires countries to include information in their NDCs as to how “paragraph 31(c) and (d) of 1/CP.21” have been taken into consideration. Paragraph 31(c) requires all countries to “strive to include all categories of anthropogenic emissions and removals in their nationally determined contributions”, and once a category is included, to keep including it for subsequent NDCs; and paragraph 31(d) requires countries to provide an explanation for leaving out of their NDC any categories of emissions or removals. While countries cannot be expected to include information on this comparison for their first NDCs, enhanced conformance in this regard would be for countries to compare their current NDCs to their previous commitments under the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol in terms of coverage. Countries can however be expected to explain the exclusion of any categories. The explanation in the case of developing countries may include capacity issues. Developed countries are required in terms of Article 4.4 to have “economy-wide” targets, and explanations should be evaluated in this light.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	The country has provided a comparison with its previous NDC in terms of which categories are covered; the country has also provided an explanation for any categories which are excluded.
● Partly	One of the above.
● No	None of the above.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

● Comparison of categories of anthropogenic emissions and removal included in previous NDC and current NDCs.	The country has provided a comparison of the coverage of its NDC with previous commitments (its previous NDC or its previous commitment under the Convention or Kyoto Protocol).
● Explanation for the omission of any categories.	The country has identified categories which are not covered and provided explanations for the omission of these.

⁷ See Table 1.1 in Chapter 1 of Volume 4 of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for definitions and descriptions of carbon pools.

d) Mitigation co-benefits of adaptation actions

Identify whether the country has included in its NDC a) economic diversification plans and b) adaptation actions, that have mitigation co-benefits. If a country has not included these, this provision does not apply. This should not include actions or undertakings to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change; the actions or plans must have mitigation co-benefits.

Enhanced conformance would be quantifying the co-benefits, in units of CO₂-eq.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The country's NDC consists of mitigation co-benefits of adaptation actions, and the country provided detailed information of mitigation co-benefits per action.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	Some information provided.
<input type="radio"/> No	No information provided.
<input type="radio"/> n/a	Not applicable.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

Economic diversification

<input type="radio"/> Energy Efficiency	
<input type="radio"/> Renewable energy	
<input type="radio"/> Carbon Capture and Utilization/Storage	
<input type="radio"/> Utilization of gas	
<input type="radio"/> Methane recovery and flare minimization	
<input type="radio"/> Other	

Adaptation actions with mitigation co-benefits

<input type="radio"/> Water and waste-water management	
<input type="radio"/> Urban planning	
<input type="radio"/> Marine Protection	
<input type="radio"/> Reduced desertification	
<input type="radio"/> Other	

Mitigation co-benefits

<input type="radio"/> Stated – yes / no	
<input type="radio"/> Quantified	
<input type="radio"/> In t CO ₂ -eq	

04



PLANNING PROCESSES

a) Information on the planning processes

Countries are required to provide information in their NDCs on the “planning process that the Party undertook to prepare their nationally determined contribution”, and “if available”, on plans to implement the NDC, in the two following subsections:

i. Domestic institutional arrangements, public participation and engagement

This includes “engagement with local communities and indigenous peoples, in a gender-responsive manner”. Countries should explain what the institutional arrangements for developing their NDC were/are, and how their consultation processes were implemented. It is important to note that the Annex does not oblige countries to consult in any particular way with any specific constituency during their NDC development processes, or at all, but it does require countries to provide information on whether they have consulted and engaged and the extent to which they did. If information is available for implementation, this should also be provided. Enhanced conformance would be if the country explains how its planning helps to ensure that the objective of its NDC will be achieved, which would be a strong interpretation of Article 4.2. Countries should provide plans if they are available. Some countries may choose to indicate that these plans are not available.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	All of the information was included. Countries indicated that implementation information is/is not available and reported it/did not report it accordingly.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	Some of the information was included.
<input type="radio"/> No	None of the information was included.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

Domestic institutional arrangements:

<input type="radio"/> No information provided	No information is provided on institutional arrangements for the development of the NDC or for the implementation of the NDC.
<input type="radio"/> Some information provided	Basic information, including which parts of government are responsible for developing and communicating the NDC, and in terms of which policy / legislation / regulations; information on how the NDC will be implemented and which parts of government will be responsible for this.

<input type="radio"/> Detailed information provided	Detailed information on which functions in government are responsible for development of the NDC and what the involvement of other parts of government is, as well as detailed information on implementation.
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Public participation and engagement:

<input type="radio"/> No information provided	No information provided.
<input type="radio"/> Some information provided	Brief description of the public participation process in developing and implementing the NDC, which can include the information that there was little or no public participation.
<input type="radio"/> Detailed information provided	Detailed description of the public participation process, with the caveat above.

Information on stakeholder engagement:

<input type="radio"/> No information provided	The NDC contains no information on stakeholder engagement.
<input type="radio"/> Information on engagement with local communities provided	The NDC contains information on engagement with local communities during the NDC formulation process.
<input type="radio"/> Information on engagement with indigenous peoples provided	The NDC contains information on engagement with indigenous peoples during the NDC formulation process.
<input type="radio"/> Information on other stakeholder engagement provided	The NDC contains information on engagement with other stakeholders (for instance, business, civil society, labour, academia) during the NDC formulation process.

Does the country report on whether the NDC process was conducted in a gender-responsive manner?

<input type="radio"/> No information provided	No information on whether the NDC process was conducted in a gender-responsive manner.
<input type="radio"/> Some information provided	Some information on whether and how the NDC process was conducted in a gender-responsive manner.
<input type="radio"/> Detailed information provided	No information on whether and how the NDC process was conducted in a gender-responsive manner.

Implementation plans:

<input type="radio"/> No information provided	No information is provided on a) whether implementation plans are available (and the status of the development of such plans), and/or b) the plans themselves.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some information provided 	Information is provided on the availability of implementation plans (and/or the status of the development of such plans), and some information is provided on the plans themselves, if available.
<p>Enhanced conformance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detailed information on how implementation plans will achieve the objectives of its NDC. 	Information is provided in detail on how the country plans to implement its NDC, and corresponding detailed information on how planned policies and measures will achieve the country's NDC target(s).

ii. Contextual matters, including relevant national circumstances, best practices and “other contextual aspirations and priorities acknowledged when joining the Paris Agreement”

“Contextual matters” include national circumstances relevant to the NDC, best practices identified, and experience gained in relation to the development of the NDC in the country concerned. National circumstances relevant to the NDC are often cited by countries in the context of fairness and ambition, and may include historical legacies (for instance economies traditionally dependent on coal), development challenges including poverty alleviation, and resource endowments (renewable and otherwise). “Other contextual aspirations and priorities” identified by the country when joining the Paris Agreement are possibly but not necessarily limited to any statement by the country concerned accompanying its ratification of the Paris Agreement. The latter has some legal standing, but any other aspirations and priorities remembered afterwards have much less standing.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	All the information in the list below is provided.
● Partly	Some of the information in the list below is provided.
● No	None of the information in the list below is provided.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

Inclusion of relevant national circumstances:

e.g. geography, climate, economy, sustainable development and poverty eradication

● No information provided	No information provided on national circumstances relevant to the NDC.
● Some information provided	Some information provided on national circumstances relevant to the NDC.
● Detailed information provided	Detailed information provided on national circumstances relevant to the NDC.

Best practices and experience shared:

Reporting on best practices and experience related to the preparation of the NDC;

● None	
● Some	
● Many	

Information provided on other contextual aspirations and priorities acknowledged when joining the Paris Agreement:

● Yes	
● No	

b) Specific information applicable to Parties

This applies only to regional economic integration organizations (REIOs) which have decided to act jointly in submitting and implementing their NDCs, and the European Union is currently the only REIO that is a Party to the Paris Agreement which has indicated that it and its member states will do this. For all other countries, this section is not applicable, unless new REIOs join the Agreement and indicate that they will act jointly in this way. Such groups of Parties are obliged to communicate to the Secretariat the terms of their agreement to meet a joint target, including “the emission level allocated to each Party within the relevant time period”.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	The NDC of the REIO contains the terms of the agreement in terms of which the target will be reached collectively, including the emissions level allocated to each country.
● Partly	Some of the information above.
● No	Not provided.
● n/a	Not applicable to the country (at the moment, any countries other than those in the EU).

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

● Terms of the agreement to act jointly.	Description of the terms of the agreement setting out how the reio and its member states will jointly fulfil the NDC target.
● Emission level allocated to each Party within the relevant time period.	The national emissions target which each member state will be expected to achieve in terms of the above agreement.
Enhanced conformance: ● Detailed description of the basis for burden-sharing within the REIO.	Detailed description of how targets are/were allocated to each member state, and any other relevant information.

c) How preparation of the NDC was informed by the global stocktake

The Paris Agreement contribution cycle is designed around a cycle of action (NDCs and their implementation) and reflection (the Global Stocktake (GST)). The GST is designed to assess progress against the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement contained in Article 2 (as well as other goals). Article 4.9 obliges countries to take the assessment of the GST into account when communicating their next NDC. If global ambition is too low, each country should aim to address this in their next NDC. This provision requires countries to report on HOW they have taken the GST into account. Countries should therefore provide information on how they have considered this when determining their NDC targets. Until the first GST in 2023, countries cannot take this into account, but in their 2020 NDC updates, they can take into account the NDC synthesis paper produced by the UNFCCC Secretariat, which does show that global ambition is very likely to "...be inadequate to keep global warming to well below 2 °C above preindustrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels", and also the conclusions of the 2017-18 Talanoa Dialogue, which served the function of a "proto-GST". Since the GST will rely on a similar synthesis paper to the Secretariat's initial paper, countries should consider this in a similar way when drafting their NDCs / NDC updates.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	The country has included an account of how the most recent GST has been taken into account, or the how the UNFCCC Secretariat's NDC synthesis paper has been taken into account.
● No	No information provided.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

● Information on how the previous global stock-take (GST) informed the NDC.	The country has referenced the most recent GST and its conclusions on collective mitigation ambition in terms of the long-term goals of the Paris agreement in relation to its NDC target (for NDC submitted after the first GST in 2023).
● Consideration of the Secretariat's synthesis paper in the 2020 update.	The country has referenced the UNFCCC Secretariat's synthesis paper in relation to its NDC target.

d) Response measures and specific projects for mitigation co-benefits

This provision applies only to countries which have submitted NDCs which consist of mitigation co-benefits of adaptation action and/or economic diversification plans:

i. How the economic and social consequences of response measures have been considered in developing the NDC

Refer to planning processes and items under 3 d), above

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	The NDC contains information on how economic and social consequences of response measures have been considered in developing the NDC.
● No	No information provided on this.
● n/a	Not applicable.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

● The NDC contains information on how the economic and social consequences of response measures have been considered in developing the NDC.	The country's NDC contains information on impacts of response measures, and how these impacts have been taken into account in developing the NDC.
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ii. Specific projects, measures and activities to be implemented to contribute to mitigation co-benefits

The country should include information on specific projects, measures and activities – separately for those adaptation projects with mitigation co-benefits and economic diversification. The lists of possible adaptation plans that yield mitigation co-benefits and economic diversification actions are given in the sub-paragraph. They are not mutually exclusive, and others can be included (in which case note if 'other' is explained in the nationally determined contribution).

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

- Yes
- No
- n/a

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

Mitigation co-benefits:

The NDC contains information on specific projects, measures and activities for adaptation which mitigation co-benefits in:

<input type="radio"/> Energy resources	
<input type="radio"/> Water resources	
<input type="radio"/> Coastal resources	
<input type="radio"/> Human settlements	
<input type="radio"/> Urban planning	
<input type="radio"/> Agriculture and forestry	
<input type="radio"/> Other	

Economic diversification:

Specific projects, measures and activities for economic diversification actions in sectors:

<input type="radio"/> Manufacturing and industry	
<input type="radio"/> Energy and mining	
<input type="radio"/> Transport and communication	
<input type="radio"/> Construction, tourism	
<input type="radio"/> Real estate	
<input type="radio"/> Agriculture and fisheries	
<input type="radio"/> Other	

05 ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

a) Accounting guidance

Parties are required to account for their NDCs, which means that they should compare the value of their chosen indicators in the target year, and in the years leading up to it, to the target level specified in their NDC, taking into account the use of Article 6 mechanisms, for which they should perform corresponding adjustments. For emissions-based targets, some countries may choose to use inventory-based methods, whereas others may choose to account for the land sector separately, using either the Kyoto Protocol accounting framework or possibly a REDD+ approach. Some Parties with emissions budgets (multi-year cumulative targets) may choose to use Kyoto Protocol-like accounting approaches to match emissions with their targets. This provision requires countries to describe their accounting approach in general methodological terms; provisions dealing with specific provisions of accounting are below.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The NDC contains a general description of how the NDC will be accounted for, including a detailed description of how the land sector will be accounted for.
<input type="radio"/> No	The NDC does not contain the above information.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> A general description of the accounting approach.	The country provides a clear description of how its target will be accounted for – how the values for the chosen indicators will be estimated and compared to the target values.
<input type="radio"/> Detailed description of how the country will account for the land sector in its NDC.	A description of how specifically the land sector will be accounted for – see also 5(c) and (e) below.

b) Accounting for PAMs or strategies

In addition to the general accounting approach detailed above, countries which have chosen to include policies and measures in their NDCs should provide additional information on accounting for the implementation and achievement of these, which will possibly involve metrics other than GHGs. Countries which include PAMs in their NDCs should therefore include detailed information on how they intend to account for these.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	Detailed information is included on how the country intends to account for implementation and achievement of its PAMs in its NDC.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	An overview is provided only.
<input type="radio"/> No	No information on accounting for PAMs.
<input type="radio"/> n/a	Country's NDC target does not include PAMs.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> No information provided	No information provided on how PAMs will be accounted for.
<input type="radio"/> Some information provided	Overview of how PAMs will be accounted for.
<input type="radio"/> Detailed information provided	Detail on accounting for all relevant PAMs, and how specific indicators will be estimated.

c) Existing methods for emissions and removals

This provision requires countries to reporting in their NDCs on how they have drawn on existing methods and guidance under the Convention (the UNFCCC). The guidance in Annex 2 of 4/CMA1 on accounting provides for countries to draw on methods and guidance “under the Convention and its legal instruments”, which would include the Kyoto Protocol. This is particularly important when it comes to accounting for land use emissions.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The country has provided detailed information on the use of existing methods and guidance under the Convention, including the information that such methods will not be used.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	The country has indicated whether these will be used or not, but without further detail.
<input type="radio"/> No	No information has been provided on this.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

● The country has specified that they will use existing methods and guidance.	The NDC indicates explicitly which existing guidance will be used – these could either be REDD+ accounting methods or accounting methods from the Kyoto Protocol.
● The country has specified that they will not use existing methods and guidance.	The NDC indicates that such guidance will not be used.
● The country has not provided any information on this.	No information has been provided on this.

d) IPCC methodologies and metrics

Countries should identify which IPCC methodologies (1996 or 2006 guidelines, or other IPCC good practice guidance) and common metrics (which values for global warming potential (GWP) have been used – from which IPCC assessment report?) have been used in their accounting.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	Both sets of information below were provided.
● Partly	One of the sets of information was provided.
● No	No information was provided.
● n/a	The NDC target is not expressed in GHG emissions terms, and contains no relevant information on GHG emissions.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

● The country has specified in their NDC whether they have used 1996 or 2006 IPCC guidelines for estimating emissions and removals, and/or other IPCC guidance.	The country has included information on which IPCC guidelines were used in estimating emissions when formulating the NDC (including the use of IPCC best practice guidance).
● The country has specified which GWP values it is using (from which IPCC assessment report).	The country has indicated which IPCC report the GWP values used are sourced from.
● The NDC target is not expressed in GHG emissions terms, and contains no relevant information on GHG emissions (not applicable).	The country does not have a target, which is expressed in GHG terms, or a target indicator, which has a GHG component.

e) Sector- and activity-specific assumptions

These subcategories apply mainly to the land sector, although there may be other cases in which countries report other sector-specific assumptions. This section would not apply to countries which have excluded the land sector from their NDC.

i. Natural disturbances on managed lands

Countries should include information in their NDCs on how they have estimated emissions and subsequent removals from natural disturbances on managed lands in relation to their NDC targets.

ii. Harvested wood products

Countries should include in their NDCs how they have estimated carbon stored in harvested wood products in relation to their NDC targets.

iii. Age-class structure in forests

Countries should include in their NDCs how they have approached age-class structure in forests in relation to their NDC targets.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided in each of the above:

● Yes	Information on the approach has been included in the NDC.
● No	Information on the approach has not been included in the NDC.
● n/a	Not applicable because the NDC does not include the land sector.

f) Other assumptions and methodological approaches

Identify whether any other assumptions and methodologies, not already included above, are included in the NDC, or not. For example, a country that has chosen an intensity target may report on GDP.

i. Reference indicators, baseline(s) and/or reference level(s)

Countries should provide detailed information on reference indicators, for instance in the case of an intensity target, details on how the reference intensity (for example, for the year 2005) was calculated, using what data sources etc. For reference emissions levels, details should be provided for where the emissions level was derived from (usually the country's GHG inventory) and what methodology was used to estimate emissions levels. This also applies to reference levels for sector-specific targets. For targets defined in terms of a reduction from a Business as Usual emissions projection (baseline), detailed information should be provided on how the BAU trajectory was calculated, including methodologies/models, data sources and assumptions. This does not apply to NDCs without quantitative targets, and it also does not apply to NDCs which contain targets which are absolute emissions levels.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	The country has provided detailed information as required, which would allow a reader to calculate the reference level / replicate the baseline calculation.
● Partly	The country has provided some information, but not sufficient information to calculate the reference level / baseline or other reference point.
● No	No information has been provided.
● n/a	Not applicable to NDC type.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

If the Party has chosen a mitigation target relative to a reference level, including emissions reference levels, base years, intensity targets etc:

● Method for estimating the reference level	For instance, whether the country will use its GHG inventory, including for the land sector, to estimate the reference level.
● Sources of data, as applicable	For instance, the GHG inventory, or other national sources of data.

If the Party has chosen a mitigation target relative to a baseline scenario:

● Base year	The base year from which the BAU projection is calculated.
● Key assumptions (GDP, population, etc)	Key drivers for the projection, as applicable.
● Methodology (analytical tool) and	This would include energy modelling / emissions modelling frameworks, as applicable, and accompanying assumptions and references.
● Resulting projection at least up to the end year	Projections from the base year at least as far as the target year.
● Data sources	With references.

ii. Assumptions and methodological approaches for non-GHG components

Assess whether the country has provided assumptions and methodologies for non-GHG components of their NDC, and whether these are quantified in a manner in which mitigation outcomes are clear. Other NDCs may be quantifiable, but require additional assumptions to understand mitigation outcomes; and others not quantifiable. For many NDCs, this is not applicable.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	The NDC contains a detailed account of its non-GHG targets, including all relevant assumptions and methodological approaches.
● Partly	The NDC contains some of this information.
● No	The NDC contains none of this information.
● n/a	The NDC does not contain non-GHG components.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

● Quantified in a manner where mitigation outcomes are clear.	For cases in which a third party would be able to clearly quantify mitigation outcomes contained in the NDC.
● Quantifiable, but requiring assumptions to understand mitigation outcomes.	In cases in which a third party would require additional information in order to quantify mitigation outcomes.
● Not quantifiable	Mitigation outcomes are not quantifiable.

iii. Climate forcers with no IPCC guidelines

Some NDCs include climate forcers such as black carbon, which have no corresponding IPCC guidelines for their estimation, and are not included in countries' GHG inventories under the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement. Countries are obliged by this provision to include additional information on how these are estimated as part of the NDC.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	The NDC contains the information listed below.
● No	The NDC does not contain the information listed below.
● n/a	The NDC does not contain climate forcers which do not have corresponding IPCC guidelines.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

● The NDC includes black carbon, and includes information on how it is estimated.	The NDC target contains black carbon, and also either a methodology for estimating black carbon, or a reference to a methodology for its estimation, with reference to relevant national information sources.
● The NDC includes other short-lived climate forcers, and information on how these are estimated.	Same as above for other short-lived climate forcers not included in IPCC guidance.

iv. Further technical information

Identify whether any further technical information is included in the NDC, and/or would be required, or not. This is applicable to NDC in which further technical information would be required for clarity and transparency which is not catered for in other provisions. For countries whose NDCs would be sufficiently transparent if they provide all the ICTU specified, this is not applicable.

g) Intention to use voluntary cooperation under Article 6

“Internationally transferred mitigation outcomes” (ITMOs) are mitigation actions which occur in one country, which are transferred to another country to help it meet its NDC target, under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. The precise form that these will take is still under discussion. If ITMOs are transferred, the host country (in which the mitigation occurs) may NOT count the reductions towards its NDC target, and must account accordingly.

This provision requires countries to provide information in its NDC on whether it intends to participate in Article 6 activities (as a host, or as a user of ITMOs), and whether it plans to use ITMOs to achieve its mitigation target or not. Enhanced conformance consists in stating the extent to which the NDC target depends on the use of ITMOs.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	The country has provided information on its intended participation in Article 6 activities, including whether it intends to use ITMOs to meet its NDC target.
● No	The country has not provided this information in its NDC.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

● Information on whether the country intends to participate in Article 6 activities during the NDC implementation period.	This should include information on whether the country plans to use ITMOs to achieve its target as well as information on whether the country intends to participate as a host country in co-operative arrangements in terms of Article 6 (to host mitigation activities, the outcomes of which will be transferred).
● Information on whether the country intends to use ITMOs to achieve its NDC.	The NDC contains information as to whether the country intends to meet its target by buying emissions reductions via international emissions trading mechanisms set up in terms of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, or whether it will achieve its target through domestic reductions only.
Enhanced conformance	
● The extent to which the target depends on use of ITMOs.	The provision of quantitative information indicating to what extent the country plans to depend on ITMOs to achieve its NDC.

06 FAIRNESS AND AMBITION

a) How the Party considers its NDC is fair and ambitious

Countries are required by this and the following provisions in this section to provide information on how it considers its NDC to be a) fair (a fair contribution to the global mitigation effort in the light of its national circumstances), and b) ambitious (Article 4 requires each country's "highest possible ambition"). Claims for fairness contained in countries' NDCs should be supported by objective sources, in-country or international – in other words, evidence that others support the claim, and/or the claim is a result of more than just the subjective assessment of the country itself. Similarly, for claims of ambition, there should be reference in the NDC to a technical assessment which assesses mitigation potential and places it in the context of national circumstances.

It is important to emphasise that the goal of this assessment is to assess to what extent countries have provided the appropriate information, and not to assess whether the NDC itself is fair or ambitious.

This particular provision requires countries to provide an account of how they consider their contribution to be fair. Detailed fairness and ambition considerations are addressed in the next provision.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

Fair	
<input type="radio"/> Yes	The NDC contains an explanation of how the Party considers its NDC to be fair.
<input type="radio"/> No	The NDC does not contain any explanation of how it considers its NDC to be fair.
Ambitious	
<input type="radio"/> Yes	The NDC contains an explanation of how it considers its target to be ambitious.
<input type="radio"/> No	The NDC does not contain any explanation.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Inclusion of grounds for why the NDC target is fair.	The NDC contains grounds for whether the NDC target is a fair contribution. The grounds are assessed in more detail below.
<input type="radio"/> Inclusion of grounds for why the NDC target is ambitious.	The NDC contains grounds for whether the NDC target is an ambitious contribution. The grounds are assessed in more detail below.

b) Fairness considerations, including reflecting on equity

Does the NDC include fairness considerations, including reflecting on equity, or not? And are these considerations supported by evidence?

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The NDC contains a detailed explanation on why the NDC is a fair contribution to the global mitigation effort, substantiated by references to the proposed mitigation effort in the NDC in relation to national and international analyses in the equity literature (for example, the Climate Reference Equity Calculator, Climate Action Tracker or others).
<input type="radio"/> Partly	The NDC contains references to indicators (for instance per capita emissions) referred to in the equity literature, but not to any detailed equity analyses in the literature.
<input type="radio"/> No	The NDC does not contain any explanation as to why it is a fair contribution.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

The country has provided in its NDC:

<input type="radio"/> References to equity analyses by international experts.	These should include references to published sources.
<input type="radio"/> References to equity analyses by in-country experts.	These should include references to published sources.
<input type="radio"/> References to indicators found in equity literature.	These could include references to per capita emissions compared to global averages required, or to emissions intensities compared to required global trends etc.
<input type="radio"/> References to the application of preferred equity indicators to other countries.	These should include the consideration of the consequences of a specific equity approach for other countries.

c) How the Party has addressed Article 4, paragraph 3, of the Paris Agreement

Article 4.3 of the Paris Agreement requires that a) each NDC is a progression on the last NDC; b) that each NDC will reflect a country's "highest possible ambition", taking into account common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

i. Progression:

Identify whether the country claims that the mitigation target in the current NDC is more stringent than the target in the previous NDC. This is obviously not possible before countries submit their second NDCs, but a comparison between countries' Cancun / Kyoto Protocol targets and their NDCs could be made in their NDCs, and has been by a number of countries. Several other shifts between NDCs could also be considered progression for developing countries, including moving from another kind of target to an economy-wide absolute emissions target, and including more sectors in the target.

Enhanced conformance would be a numerical statement of how much more stringent the mitigation target is.

ii. Highest possible ambition

Countries should provide grounds for claims that their NDC target constitutes the "highest possible ambition". Identify whether the country has referred to a national analysis of mitigation potential or not, and provided an explanation as to what level of mitigation potential the country has decided on.

Assess highest possible ambition, referring to 6 a above, where highest puts mitigation ambition in the context of global efforts to pursue 1.5 °C, and high: well below 2 °C.

iii. CBDRRC-ILONDC

Identify which components of the term "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances" (CBDRRC-ILONDC) are used in the NDC in relation to fairness and ambition: the full term; first part; truncated; second part; or not used.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

Progression:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The country has provided a clear assessment as to why its current NDC is a progression on the previous NDC or other target, which provides detailed grounds for why it is more ambitious, including a quantitative analysis with references to mitigation potential analyses.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	The country has provided a comparison but no assessment.
<input type="radio"/> No	The country has provided no information on progression.

Ambition:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The country has provided evidence in the form of references to relevant analyses which demonstrate The country has provided evidence in the form of references to relevant analyses which demonstrate that the NDC target is aligned with the Paris Agreement goal of "Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels", including in terms of equity; and that it represents its "highest possible ambition" (Article 4.3) in mitigation terms, including references to national mitigation potential analyses.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	The country has provided a comparison, but not detailed information.
<input type="radio"/> No	No information provided.

Common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The country provides an explanation of its level of ambition in terms of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	The country provides one of the above.
<input type="radio"/> No	No explanation provided.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

Progression:

<input type="radio"/> The NDC contains a statement that the mitigation target in NDC is more stringent than the country's previous NDC or emissions target under the Convention or Kyoto Protocol.	The NDC refers to its previous target (NDC or target under the UNFCCC or KP), and asserts that its NDC target is a progression on this.
<input type="radio"/> If a developing country, the target type has changed to an economy-wide absolute emissions target, and/or more sectors have been included in the target.	For developing countries, the country has moved from, for instance a target based on a BAU projection to an absolute emissions target.
<input type="radio"/> An assessment of progression is provided, with reference to mitigation potential analyses.	A detailed assessment of mitigation ambition is provided, with references to detailed mitigation potential analyses.

Highest possible ambition, referring to 6(a) above:	
● A reference to ambition in terms of the 1.5 °C limit.	The target is clearly related in the NDC to the global limit of 1.5°C.
● A reference to ambition in terms of the “well below 2 °C” limit.	The target is clearly related in the NDC to the “well below 2 °C” target. For NDCs submitted before December 2015, this could be a reference to a 2 °C limit.
● A reference to a national mitigation potential analysis.	
● An explanation in terms of national circumstances for the level of ambition chosen, with reference to the national mitigation potential analysis.	See the above section on national circumstances as well. Countries may list constraints on mitigation ambition related to development challenges.
Common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances (CBDRRC-ILONDC) – Terms used:	
● Explanations of ambition in terms of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.	Countries should provide a link between their mitigation ambition and their responsibilities and capabilities.
● Explanation of ambition in terms of national circumstances.	
● None	

d) How the Party has addressed Article 4, paragraph 4, of the Paris Agreement

Article 4.4 is one of the only instances in Article 4 in which a clear distinction is made between developed and developing countries. Developed countries are required to “take the lead by undertaking economy-wide absolute emissions reduction targets”, whereas developing countries are to “continue enhancing their mitigation efforts” and to move to economy-wide emissions limitation or reduction targets over time.

i. Developed country NDC

Assess whether the NDC states explicitly that it shows leadership through economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets, and in other ways (for instance technology development, provision of support, etc.), or not.

ii. Developing country NDCs

Identify whether the NDC refers to enhancing their mitigation efforts, or not.

Assess whether “economy-wide emission reduction or limitation targets” are included in the current NDC; or if not, whether an indication is given of moving to this form in the next NDC; or whether timing is not stated.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

● Yes	Developed countries refer to and substantiate leadership; developing countries provide grounds for “enhanced mitigation” and a timetable for moving to an economy-wide emissions-based target.
● No	No information.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

Developed country NDCs:

● Reference to leadership via economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets.	This could also include leadership in other respects, including technology development and support provision.
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Developing country NDCs:

● Reference to enhancing their mitigation efforts.	
● Timing to move to an economy-wide emission reduction or limitation target indicated.	

e) How the Party has addressed Article 4, paragraph 6, of the Paris Agreement

Identify whether NDCs of LDCs and SIDS address fairness and ambition in strategies, plans and actions communicated, or not. For countries other than LDCs or SIDS, this is not applicable.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

FOR LDCs and SIDS - Fairness and/or ambition addressed in strategies, plans and actions:

● Yes	Fairness <u>and</u> ambition are addressed.
● Partly	Fairness <u>or</u> ambition are addressed.
● No	Fairness and ambition are not addressed.
● n/a	Country is not a SIDS and / or LDC.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

NDC of LDCs and SIDS:

● Fairness addressed in strategies, plans and actions communicated.	
● Ambition addressed in strategies, plans and actions communicated.	
● Neither of the above.	

07 CONTRIBUTION TO UNFCCC ARTICLE 2

a) The NDC’s contribution to the UNFCCC’s Article 2

Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (‘the Convention’) states the ultimate objective of “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (UNFCCC 1992). The second sentence states that such stabilization should be achieved “within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner”. Countries should therefore include in their NDCs a reference to Article 2 of the Convention in relation to their mitigation ambition, which they should also report on in terms of the objectives of the Paris Agreement’s enhanced transparency framework as set out in its Article 13.5.

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	All the information below is contained in the NDC.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	Some of the information below.
<input type="radio"/> No	None of the information below.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> The NDC refers to Article 2 of the Convention in relation to mitigation ambition.	The NDC contains an explicit mention of Article 2 of the UNFCCC in relation to its NDC target.
<input type="radio"/> The NDC contains information on how it contributes to the reduction of emissions in terms of Article 2 of the Convention.	The NDC explicitly links its NDC target to the objectives set out in Article 2 of the UNFCCC.
<input type="radio"/> The NDC contains information on how natural sinks are being maintained and enhanced.	The NDC contains information on what policies and measures are being pursued to maintain/enhance natural carbon sinks.

b) The NDC’s contribution to the Paris Agreement’s Articles 2.1(a) and 4.1

Article 2.1(a) of the Paris Agreement emphasizes the importance of “...holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels”. Article 4.1 qualifies these by stating that “Parties aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, recognising that peaking will take longer for developing country Parties, and to undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with best available science..”, and that Parties would also strive to “achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by source and removals by sinks” in the second half of this century. This provision therefore requests countries to explain in their NDCs how their NDCs are contributing to a) global peaking and b) reaching net zero emissions⁸, in the context of Article 2.1(a).

INCLUDED IN NDC?

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> Yes	The NDC contains all of the information below.
<input type="radio"/> Partly	The NDC contains some of the information below.
<input type="radio"/> No	The NDC contains none of the information below.

CATEGORY OF ASSESSMENT

The following options are provided:

<input type="radio"/> The NDC contains a reference to the peaking year – either when it occurred or when it is projected to be.	This can include some description of the country’s long-term planned emissions trajectory.
<input type="radio"/> For countries whose emissions have peaked, the NDC provides grounds for the NDC target being consistent with “rapid reductions thereafter”.	Defined as above in relation to mitigation potential analyses or other sources, as to what constitutes “rapid reductions” in the national context.
<input type="radio"/> The NDC contains a reference to a national policy goal of net zero emissions, and by which year.	A reference to a long-term goal of climate neutrality.
<input type="radio"/> The NDC contains a clear link between the Paris Agreement’s Article 2.1(a) and the country’s NDC.	The NDC clearly links the NDC target to the Paris Agreement.

8 “Net zero emissions” is a shorthand for the ‘balance’ of emissions and sources and removals by sinks in Article 4.1. In this context this would include all greenhouse gases. In most contexts, “net zero” refers to the IPCC’s Special Report on 1.5 °C¹ finding concerning the need to reach net zero CO₂ emissions around 2050 globally, which is less ambitious than a net zero goal for all emissions.

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GLOSSARY

Business As Usual: a GHG emissions trajectory for a country, usually based on no further climate policies being implemented. Used to indicate the effect on GHG emissions of implementing climate policies

AR: Assessment Report – A series of reports produced periodically by the IPCC to assess the latest climate science

CBDRRC-ILONDC: Common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances

COP: Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC

CP: Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC

CMA: Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement

GHG: Greenhouse Gas

GWP: Global Warming Potential – the common metric used to convert tons of other greenhouse gases into CO₂-equivalent (for instance, if methane has a GWP of 25, it implies that 1 ton of methane has the same global warming impact as 25 tons of CO₂, over a specific time period (usually 100 years))

GST: Global Stocktake, held every five years in terms of Article 14 of the Paris Agreement

ICTU: Information for clarity, transparency and understanding

IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

ITMO: Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcome – a transaction in which one country transfers its mitigation outcomes (usually in tons) to another country, which can then count the ITMO towards its NDC. A reference to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which deals with market mechanisms (commonly referred to as international carbon markets).

Katowice Rule Book: a series of decisions taken at COP 24 held in 2018 in Katowice, Poland, which set out in detail how countries should implement the Paris Agreement

LDC: Least Developed Country

NDC: Nationally Determined Contribution

PA: Paris Agreement

PAMs: Policies and Measures

REIO: Regional Economic Integration Organisations, such as the European Union

SIDS: Small Island Developing States

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Authors

Andrew Marquard, Harald Winkler (University of Cape Town)

For comments, please contact Andrew Marquard (andrew.marquard@uct.ac.za) and Sebastian Wegner (International Secretariat of Climate Transparency; swegner@governance-platform.org)

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The Energy Systems Research Group at the University of Cape Town combines modelling of energy and economic systems with policy analysis and field-based research, to generate and enhance knowledge of energy systems at sectoral, regional, national and sub-continental scales, focused on South Africa and the SADC region. The group in its current format evolved out of the 2019 restructuring of UCT's Energy Research Centre and holds a combined experience of over 70 person-years.



Climate Transparency is a global partnership with a shared mission to stimulate a "race to the top" in climate action in G20 countries through enhanced transparency. It convenes partners from Argentina (Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales), Australia (Climate Analytics), Brazil (CentroClima/COPPE UFRJ), China (Energy Research Institute), France (The Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations), Germany (Germanwatch HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform, NewClimate Institute), India (The Energy and Resources Institute), Indonesia (Institute for Essential Service Reform), Japan (The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies), Mexico (Iniciativa Climática de México), South Africa (Energy Research Center/University of Cape Town) and the UK (Overseas Development Institute).

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