

Explainer

Tracking and reporting climate action by non-party stakeholders in the UNFCCC and beyond

November 2017

At the start of COP23, a proposed agenda item raised the issue of “MRV” —monitoring, reporting, and verification—for non-party stakeholders. While not adopted as part of the formal agenda, the topic will be the subject of informal consultations at COP23. *This explainer provides an overview of the issues at stake and the current state of efforts to track non-party climate action in the UNFCCC and in the broader climate action community.*

Why is it important to track and report on non-party stakeholder action?

Tracking and reporting climate action at all scales – including both parties and non-parties– is critical. Cities, states/regions, business, and other sub/non-state actors have become more important within the UNFCCC process through the Lima-Paris Action Agenda and now the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, and have been welcomed by parties at COP21 and COP22. It is now widely recognized that climate action by these actors makes an important contribution to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. For this reason, we need to know what actors have committed to, how they are progressing in achieving their goals, and how their experiences can help inform climate action more broadly.

What efforts are currently underway?

There is an enormous amount of work underway to track and report on non-party climate action at the individual actor level, and amongst communities and sectors of non-party stakeholders. Some actors are at the forefront of efforts to develop and deploy robust reporting procedures, in some cases exceeding the transparency of countries. Many such actors report and track their action through common platforms. For example, for the past decade, thousands of [companies have disclosed climate data to CDP](#), and [cities, states and regions](#), and other actors are increasingly tracking and reporting on their progress through their own initiatives and networks. These efforts help non-party stakeholders achieve their own climate goals, and are essential for establishing credibility with customers, investors, citizens, and other stakeholders.

Moreover, better data and tracking by non-state actors can help countries better understand their national positions. For example, the [Initiative for Climate Action Transparency](#) is developing methods and tools for countries to better understand and account for non-party climate action domestically. The [Global Covenant of Mayors](#) is developing a common reporting standard for cities. And the [Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures](#) has published new guidelines for reporting to investors. These ongoing efforts will promote methodological alignment over time.

At the UNFCCC, level, tracking and reporting form a [critical part of the mandate](#) of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action. To be part of the Partnership, initiatives must report annually on their progress. These updates, along with individual pledges by individual actors, are captured on the UNFCCC’s [NAZCA platform](#), recognized in the Paris decision text, which currently records over 12,000 commitments. At the same time, the High-level Climate Champions produce an annual Yearbook of Climate Action that summarizes progress and identifies successes as well as gaps. The first iteration of the Yearbook will be launched in the second week of COP23, and future iterations are expected to become significantly more robust as data and measurement methodologies improve. Finally, throughout the [Global Climate Action programme at COP23](#), non-party stakeholders will be explaining what they have achieved on their past commitments, even as they announce new ambition and identify opportunities for the future.

What more is needed?

As we aim to go further and faster, strengthening our transparency and reporting functions at all levels, party and non-party, is critical. At the same time, we need to make sure that tracking and reporting efforts enable strong, high-quality action from all stakeholders, and do not create further barriers to ambitious climate action. “One-size-fits-all” methodologies could limit the growing and diversifying groundswell of climate actions. *Key next steps include:*

1. Encourage non-party stakeholders who are not yet participating in NAZCA or the Marrakech Partnership, but who are aligned with the Paris Agreement, to become involved through one of NAZCA’s data partners so that their action can be recognized in the UNFCCC process.
2. Provide robust support to the NAZCA platform to improve its tracking functions and make the information easier for governments, non-state and subnational actors, analysts, and the wider public to use and understand.
3. Support Marrakech Partnership to deliver progressively stronger Yearbooks of Climate Action.
4. Participate in the Global Climate Action programme at COP23, and in subsequent COPs, to interact directly with non-party stakeholders, question them on their progress thus far and plans for the future, and seed new opportunities for further action.
5. Leverage existing initiatives to develop further methodologies to measure and aggregate the contributions of non-party stakeholders, and to help countries better account for such actions vis-à-vis the efforts of national governments.

Who we are: Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions

Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions is a series of dialogues that brings together organizations supporting climate action at all levels. Its objectives include:

Bringing the groundswell of climate actions from cities, regions, companies, and other groups to a higher level of scale and ambition;

Increasing efficient coordination among cooperative initiatives and sub- and non-state networks;

Improving analysis and understanding of “bottom up” climate actions;

Building a positive narrative of pragmatic, concrete action on climate change; and

Identifying opportunities for the groundswell of climate actions and the multilateral process to support and catalyze each other.

Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions brings together city and regional networks, company networks, cooperative initiatives, governments, international organizations, and researchers to discuss and advance these objectives. By convening the community of actors that make up and support the groundswell of climate actions, we seek to realize the full potential of this extraordinary innovation in global governance.