MASTER THESIS:

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CLIMATE TRANSPARENCY AS *DE FACTO* GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

Efforts to build climate reporting capacities of developing countries have proliferated since the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015. Both in practice and in mainstream scholarly literature these capacity building efforts have been framed as a neutral means of implementation. This thesis, on the contrary, argues that capacity building efforts *de facto* steer the type of transparency that is generated or promoted by developing countries. Drawing on document analysis of capacity building project proposals and semi-structured interviews, this thesis analyzes the 'who, what, and how' of emerging practice of capacity building for transparency. The notion of *de facto* governance is subsequently used to examine how the configurations of capacity building initiatives steer the scope and extent of information generated or promoted*,* with implications for the transformative potential of transparency in multilateral climate governance. This thesis finds that emerging capacity building efforts have a strong focus on building capacities to assess mitigation performance, while other important domains of reporting such as (local) adaptation, climate change impacts, loss and damage, and support are less prominent. Moreover, the focus is on generating detailed, quantified data. At the multilateral level, the focus on generating technical information about emissions and mitigation efforts gears towards facilitating accountability for performance of developing countries. Importantly, the focus on *performance* may be at odds with the facilitative and *learning*-oriented nature of account-giving processes under the multilateral transparency framework. Ultimately, this thesis highlights the need for continued critical examination of the transformative potential, including through the lens of performance and learning, of climate transparency in multilateral climate governance.

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List of Acronyms

BUR	Biennial Update Report
CBIT	Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency
COP	Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDC	Least developed country
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PIF	Project Identification Form (Project proposal for CBIT projects)
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries programme
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-DTU	United Nations Environment Programme and Technical University of Denmark partnership
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Chapter 1: Introduction

The main global governance instrument to address climate change is the 2015 Paris Agreement under the United Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2015). The Paris Agreement is based on a mechanism of voluntary pledges, to be updated every five years. While the pledges are voluntary and nationally determined, the Paris Agreement features a legally binding transparency framework. Moreover, this framework applies to all Parties to the UNFCCC. The hopes are that the transparency framework will increase accountability, trust, and environmental outcomes. The assumption of the transformative potential of the transparency mechanism has spurred a drive to optimizing its functioning through capacity building for climate transparency in developing countries. The most prominent capacity building initiative is the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT); other examples are the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency and the Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement. Additionally, there is a yet uncharted landscape of bilateral initiatives delivering capacity building for transparency. Capacity building is typically conceived as a neutral 'means of implementation' for provisions agreed upon at the international level.[1]

Existing research on capacity building for transparency has mostly focused on questions related to the *effectiveness* of capacity building efforts. This includes studies that try to make transparency capacity measurable in quantitative terms, as to assess whether capacity has actually improved over time, and to guide future resources more effectively (Finnegan *et al.*, 2014; Neeff *et al.*, 2017; Umemiya *et al.*, 2017; Prasad and Gupta, 2019). Other studies have tried to assess effectiveness and lessons learned through case studies (Damassa and Elsayed, 2013; Ito, 2016; Robinson, 2018; Dagnet *et al.*, 2019; Umemiya, Ikeda and White, 2019). The general observation is that despite hard effort and good intentions, sound results where capacity is sustained remain the exception rather than the rule. This body of literature has substantially contributed to the understanding of capacity building. However, there are also questions that are left unanswered by these studies. This has to do with the way these studies conceptualize the relationship between multilaterally negotiated outcomes and capacity building initiatives. The relation can be described, in short, as follows: Multilateral negotiations put forward certain transparency requirements, capacity building initiatives ensure fulfillment of these requirements ultimately resulting in information flowing back into the multilateral processes. The effectiveness then is measured in terms of how much information is provided to the multilateral processes. What this framing fails to acknowledge is that the scope of transparency is a politically negotiated compromise in the first instance. If so, are capacity building initiatives only helping to realize this politically negotiated scope; or do they go beyond it in specific domestic contexts? With these questions, it is clear that capacity building may be more than a 'means of implementation'.

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[1] For example, the UNFCCC capacity building sub-division is part of the 'means of implementation' division.

While being technical in nature and focus, they could generate political effects in terms of shaping the kind of transparency to be generated in specific contexts.

In my view, capacity building for climate transparency efforts deserve scrutiny through this political lens for three reasons. Firstly, the transparency mechanism operates in the highly political context of the UNFCCC, including contentious questions over responsibility, burden sharing, and the role of market mechanisms. Indeed, negotiations over the setup of the transparency mechanism have been said to be among the most fiercely debated issues during the COP21 (Winkler, Mantlana and Letete, 2017). Secondly, capacity building initiatives are typically framed within an asymmetrical power relation between developed donor countries and developing recipient countries. Finally, while capacity building for transparency is as old as the UNFCCC, it is only recently that efforts have been stepped up and new powerful initiatives emerged. Given their growing importance in multilateral climate governance, it is then important to examine if they are merely neutral 'means of implementation' to improve the functioning of the Paris Agreement's transparency mechanism or how they shape its interpretation, and thereby operationalization in practice.

Little research has been done on the political effects of capacity building for transparency, yet some starting points for analysis have been identified. Two exploratory studies found that capacity building efforts seem to focus more on greenhouse gas-inventory and mitigation reporting capacities than climate-change impacts, adaptation, and financial reporting capacities, which is surprising given that developing countries are typically more vocal on the latter issues in international negotiations (Martinez *et al.*, 2019; Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta, 2021). Based on a review of scholarly and grey literature, as well as of two major capacity building initiatives Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta (2021) highlight the strong focus of capacity building efforts on the development of greenhouse gas-inventory capacities. Similarly, a report by the UNEP-DTU Partnership (United Nations Environmental Programme – Technical University of Denmark) analyzing project proposals submitted to the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT), highlights that only very few projects target transparency on adaptation and climate change impacts (Martinez *et al.*, 2019). The same report further underscores that this is particularly "counterintuitive" in the case of African projects, where none of the fourteen countries included climate change adaptation or impacts in their project proposals (Martinez *et al.*, 2019, 12).

The focus on greenhouse gas-inventories in capacity building efforts, as described above, might be explained in three possible ways. Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta (2021) coined two possible explanations, first the transparency mechanism of the Paris Agreement distinguishes between mandatory and voluntary transparency requirements, of which mitigation and greenhouse gas-inventory belong to the former. While capacity building initiatives are not required to follow this distinction, in practice they might use it as a prioritization tool. Second, a possible global carbon

market mechanism (currently under negotiation) might require certain standards in terms of greenhouse gas-accounting for countries to participate, providing an impetus for developing countries to engage in greenhouse gas-inventory activities. As a third reason, the UNEP-DTU Partnership report (Martinez *et al.*, 2019), instead, points to a lack of guidelines and experience with transparency on topics such as adaptation and climate change impacts. Reporting on greenhouse gas inventories, for example, enjoys much more detailed guidelines.[2] In any case, the question remains open as to whether the focus on greenhouse gas-inventories crowds out development of other areas of reporting, such as adaptation, vulnerability, and finance, that may align closer to the needs and priorities of developing countries. While these initial perspectives shed some light on the matter, the rationales, and effects of capacity building for transparency initiatives remain to be empirically analyzed.

As mentioned above, the transparency mechanism is assumed to make up for the voluntary and bottom-up structure of the Paris Agreement, and facilitate accountability, trust, and environmental performance. The scholarly literature, however, is less optimistic about the current set-up of the transparency mechanism being able to achieve such transformative potential (Gupta and van Asselt, 2019; Weikmans, Asselt and Roberts, 2019). A crucial question here is to what extent transparency facilitates the resolution of pertinent political matters. In this light, transparency is not a binary condition but rather complex matter where the who, what, how and why of transparency arrangements determine whether transparency effectively addresses key political concerns (Gupta and van Asselt, 2019). From this vantage point, the political effects of capacity building initiatives on the transformative potential of transparency are a timely object of study.

Recently, Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta (2021) took a first step in conceptualizing and assessing how capacity building for climate transparency *de facto* steers the type of transparency being generated by countries and what effects this might have. While their work is a substantial contribution and lays the groundwork for more research in this field, they did not perform a detailed empirical analysis of capacity building initiatives. In other words, their work makes a compelling case that capacity building initiatives are not merely 'neutral means of implementation', yet it does not empirically assess what effects are being generated. This thesis aims to build on the work of Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta (2021) by generating empirical knowledge on how capacity building for climate transparency initiatives *de facto* steer the types of transparency being generated. This knowledge can inform the critical transparency literature by outlining how capacity building acts as an intervening factor that determines the transformative potential of transparency mechanisms. Beyond the scholarly literature, this thesis might generate knowledge that could help capacity building practitioners and donors in critically reflecting on the current set-up and approaches of capacity-building initiatives and the transparency mechanism in general.

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[2] For example, the 2006 IPCC guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories consist of five volumes and are available in all UN languages, accessible online at: https://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/2006gl/

Research aims and questions

This thesis aims to examine how capacity building for climate transparency shapes the type of transparency being generated by developing countries and the implications for the transformative potential of transparency in climate governance. This research aim consists of three objectives: to examine the 'who, what, how, and why' of capacity building for climate transparency; to assess the scope and extend of transparency being generated or promoted through capacity building; and, to explore implications for the transformative potential of transparency in climate governance.

Based on the research aim the following research questions can be formulated:

1. How does capacity building for climate transparency *de facto* shape the transparency being generated by developing countries?

    1.1 How have transparency and capacity building for transparency requirements and initiatives evolved over time within the political context of the UNFCCC?

    1.2 How is this capacity building for transparency being operationalized in practice (whose capacities are being built by whom, about what, and how)?

    1.3 How does this operationalization of capacity building shape the scope and extent of the transparency being (or to be) generated by developing countries?

2. What does this imply for the transformative potential of transparency in climate governance?

These questions go beyond the present literature by linking capacity building to the transformative potential of transparency. The questions do not assume that capacity building is a neutral means to facilitate transparency, nor that capacity building is the sole factor influencing the transformative potential of transparency. The questions build on the understanding that capacity building and transparency are complex processes rather than static qualities. The transformative potential of transparency is understood as contingent on the type of transparency generated, which in turn is potentially shaped by capacity building efforts. In other words, capacity building may, in yet to be clarified ways, *de facto* govern the transformative potential of transparency in the context of the Paris Agreement.

Question 1.1 focusses on how capacity building for transparency evolved in the political context of the UNFCCC. Transparency and capacity building are as old as the Convention itself and have a rich history. Understanding the history and the key (political) debates surrounding capacity building for transparency places the current capacity-building efforts in context and aids the interpretation of how capacity-building efforts are operationalized in practice, which is the topic of the next research sub-question.

Question 1.2 zooms in on capacity building, or in conceptual terms, the 'intervention'. It aims to unpack capacity building efforts and shed a light on what is beneath the label 'capacity building'. The 'who' element aims to map out both the subjects and the objects of capacity building. The 'what' question is concerned both with the thematic focus of capacities (e.g., capacity to operate greenhouse gas inventory software or climate vulnerability mapping software) and the kind of capacity building (e.g., technical vs institutional capacities). The 'how' question focuses on the process of capacity building, such as whether the approach is ongoing partnerships, or project based. Together these questions provide a comprehensive overview of how capacity-building efforts are operationalized in practice.

Question 1.3 turns to the type of transparency that results from the capacity building intervention as analyzed through the previous three questions. In particular, the effects on the scope and extent of transparency generated by developing countries will be examined.

The final question 2 then turns to the implications for the transformative potential of transparency in climate governance. This question pertains to the hoped-for outcomes of the transparency system at large such as accountability, trust, and enhanced environmental outcomes. This thesis will primarily focus on accountability, and briefly touch upon the aspect of environmental outcomes while trust will not be covered in the scope of this thesis.

I will approach the research questions in the context of the most prominent capacity building initiative, the CBIT. The CBIT is a good object of study for several reasons. Firstly, the CBIT is one of the most prominent capacity building initiatives. It is firmly embedded in the United Nations system as it was established and mandated by the UNFCCC (UNFCCC, 2015, 12) and is operated by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). Moreover, the CBIT has relatively large budgets available (typically 0.5 – 1.5 million USD) for capacity building in specific countries to implement capacity building projects. Secondly, the CBIT has a global coordination platform with a dedicated website that contains a detailed overview of all CBIT projects and links to documents, facilitating data collection. For these reasons I will focus my empirical analysis on the CBIT. Of course, the CBIT is not the only initiative concerned with capacity building for climate transparency. In fact, there are various bi- and multilateral capacity building initiatives. These will be discussed briefly in chapter 3 on the evolution of capacity building for transparency under the UNFCCC.

The thesis is organized as follows. In chapter 2, a critical interpretive analysis of existing literature explores the concepts of capacity building and transparency in detail. This chapter outlines an analytical lens that will be used in the remainder of this thesis. Chapter 3 presents the methods used to address the research questions. Chapter 4 answers sub-question 1.1 by providing a critical examination of the historical evolution of capacity building for transparency under the UNFCCC, drawing on literature, policy documents and interviews. Chapter 5 answers sub-question 1.2 by

presenting an empirical analysis of the who, what, how of CBIT projects through content analysis of CBIT project proposals supplemented by insights from semi-structured interviews with practitioners and policymakers. Chapter 6 answers research question 1.3 by focusing on the scope and extent of transparency generated in the context of capacity building efforts. Chapter 7 then examines the implications for the transformative potential of transparency in climate governance. These implications are distilled by critically examining and integrating insights from previous chapters, as well as additional insights from interviews. Chapter 8 will provide an integrated answer to the research questions and discuss the methodological and empirical contribution of this thesis. The final chapter will also link the empirical findings to current debates in the literature and climate policy debates.

Chapter 2: Conceptualizing capacity building for climate transparency as a form of *de facto* governance

This section conceptualizes capacity building for climate transparency as a form of *de facto* governance. It will do so by performing a critical interpretive analysis of scholarly and grey literature on the domains of capacity building, transparency, and climate politics.

The study of capacity building for climate transparency falls at the intersection of three relatively more developed fields of study. First, capacity building is a popular concept in the fields of development, public health, and business. Literature on the role of transparency arrangements in environmental governance constitutes a second body of literature. Finally, I will make use of literature examining the politics of climate change, within which transparency and capacity building are embedded. After having discussed these three areas I delve into the intersection of these domains to make sense of the sparse literature on capacity building for climate transparency.

Figure 1. Overview of bodies of literature related to capacity building for climate transparency
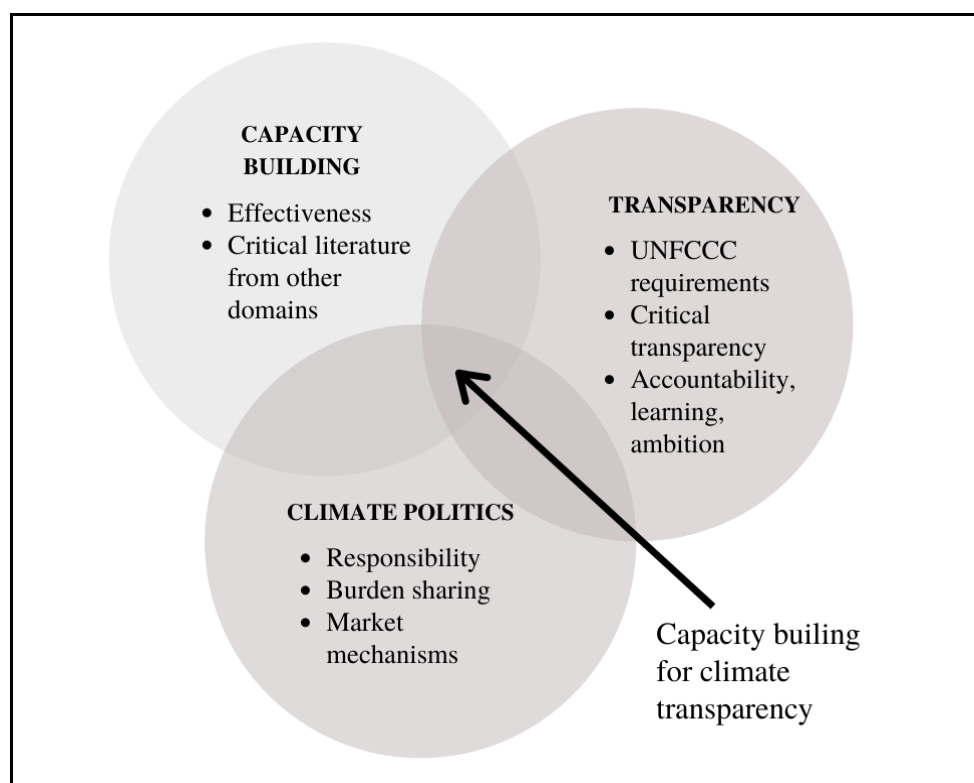
2.1 Capacity building

To understand what is meant with the concept of capacity building I start by outlining its history. This history has two parallel yet interacting story lines. Harrow (2010) calls these the 'empowerment' and the 'deficit' perspectives on capacity building. For the former story line, empowerment, I turn to the work of Eade (2007) who argues that capacity building can be traced back to the work on critical consciousness from Paulo Freire. Freire built onto Marxist and critical theory and argued that the poor needed to be made aware of 'how the system works' as to ultimately empower them to change the system (Schugurensky, 1998). However, in practice it might have been the system that changed the meaning of capacity building, rather than the other way around. Indeed, Eade (2007) argues that the notion of capacity building got co-opted by a neoliberal agenda that used it as tool to legitimize a reduced role for the state in providing social services. Or, in the words of Eade (2007, 632), capacity building became a buzzword in a 'pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps' neoliberal agenda.

Harrow (2010) traces the 'empowerment' interpretation of capacity building back to the concept of community development which started out as a marginal radical idea among workers. Harrow (2010) agrees that capacity building in the context of community development has lost some of its political edges but distinguishes its lineage from the 'deficit' interpretation of capacity building that emerged separately. To understand this 'deficit' interpretation, the second storyline, we need to discuss the context in which this emerged. This provenance is explained in three chapters of an edited book about capacity building in developing countries (Hilderbrand and Grindle, 1997, 3-5; Grindle, 1997, 31-32; Trostle, Sommerfeld and Simon, 1997, 63-64). In the 1950s and 60s many countries reached independence and the dominant narrative was that *institution building* was needed to set up basic democratic institutions. By the late 60s and early 70s, however, it became clear that these institutions were failing to fulfil their basic remits, so *institutional strengthening* got into fashion. During this time, the implicit assumption was that there was too little government and thus institutions should be built or enhanced.

Despite efforts to strengthen institutions, many countries were not performing well, suffered large foreign debts, and large proportions of populations lived in poverty. After many years of building institutions, the pendulum swung the other direction, and the interpretation was now that there was too much government. The new mantra of international development, as articulated in the Washington consensus (see Williamson, 1990), argued for reforms that delegate tasks and power from the government to the market. This focus on macroeconomic structures was reflected in the term *institutional development* which pointed to the building of macroeconomic structures conducive to free trade and decentralization by focusing not only on the state but also on the private sector and NGOs.

Throughout the 90s, criticism on the Washington consensus started to grow. Macroeconomic performance was disappointing and gains that were made did not seem to trickle down to the poorest. The response to these disappointing results was a focus on the need for *capable* states. This was an approach that seemed to resonate with many, yet for different reasons. Proponents of the Washington consensus argued that the reforms were ineffective because states lacked the capacity to properly implement them, thus capacity building was deemed a vehicle to implement government reforms (e.g. Santiso, 2004). Others saw a need for enhanced capabilities in light of (global) social and environmental challenges (Grindle and Hildebrand, 1995, 32). Indeed, the 90s boosted the first *human* development report (UNDP, 1990) and multiple landmark multilateral environmental agreements. Actively pursuing these human development and environmental objectives would require states to have certain capabilities, the reasoning went. Thus, *capacity building* became central to sustainable development as exemplified by the prominent role of capacity building in Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992, chapter 37), the 'The future we want' report (UN, 2012, chapters 2, 3, and 4), and the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015, target 17.9). In any case, the 'deficit' approach framed capacity as a static attribute needed to perform certain tasks or facilitate processes, be it for implementing democratic structures, public services, free trade arrangements or environmental agreements.

I now turn to efforts related to defining and operationalizing capacity building. Perhaps the most authoritative definition is that of Grindle (1997, 5), who defines capacity building as "a variety of strategies that have to do with increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of government performance". Grindle goes further to operationalize this into three categories: human resource development, organizational strengthening, and institutional reform Grindle (1997, 9). On another occasion, Grindle published an even more elaborate framework for dimensions of capacity as presented in table 1 below (Grindle and Hildebrand, 1995, 446). In this operationalization, capacity building stretches all the way from the training of individual persons up to institutions and macro structures. Grindle's framework will be used in chapter 5 to analyze what dimensions of capacity CBIT project proposals aim to build. Given the level of detail of Grindle's framework it forms a good basis for a coding scheme. Moreover, the breath of the framework allows for various types of capacity building activities to be classified under the framework. More detail will be provided in the methods section.

Table 1. Dimensions of capacity building (Grindle and Hildebrand, 1995, 446)

Dimension	Sub-categories	Aspects
Action environment	Economic	Growth, Labor market, International economic relationships and conditions, Private sector, Development
	Political	Leadership support, Mobilization of civil society, Stability, Legitimacy, Political institutions
	Social	Overall human resource development, Social conflict, Class structures, Organization of civic society
Public sector institutional context		Concurrent policies, Public service rules and regulations, Budgetary support, Role of the state, Management practices, Formal and informal power relations
Task network		Communication and interaction among primary, secondary, and supporting organizations
Organization		Goals, Structure of work, Incentive system, Management/leadership, Physical resources, Formal and informal communications, Behavioral norms, Technical assistance
Human resources		Training, Recruitment, Utilization, Retention

Keohane (1996) nuances Grindle's (1997) understanding of capacity, by emphasizing that capacity is intricately linked to 'concern', where 'concern' means the political priority that governments ascribe to the issue for which capacity is built. Grindle's and Hildebrand's framework also includes the political action environment and within that leadership support as an aspect of capacity building, but it is not featured very prominently in the framework. Keohane (1996) argues that political leadership and 'concern' are instrumental to capacity building.

Yet a different view on capacity building conceptualizes capacity building as a process of empowerment. On a normative rather than empirical note Eade (2007) described capacity building should be understood as "an approach to solidarity-based partnerships with an infinite variety of expressions". Another definition in line with the empowerment tradition is found in the work of Labonte and Laverack (2001, 114) who define capacity building as "a more generic increase in community groups' abilities to define, assess, analyze and act on health (or any other) concerns of importance to their members."

Thus, we have a spectrum of interpretations ranging from capacity building as a neutral tool to enhance performance, through capacity building that needs to wrestle with issues of concern on the recipient side, to a political capacity building where the recipient is empowered to better articulate and

advocate for their interests. Understanding this spectrum shows that caution is warranted when analyzing capacity building for climate transparency. Capacity building engenders both notions of increased *performance* and *empowerment* while historically and conceptually these are very different.

2.2 Transparency

Transparency may be a more common word than capacity building, yet its meaning is not more straightforward. In this section I will unpack the concept of transparency, starting with a short discussion on transparency in general and then moving to transparency in climate governance.

Divergence in understanding of transparency originates at a very fundamental level. In a comprehensive conceptual work on transparency, McCarthy and Fluck (2017) outline how positivists take as a starting point the existence of an objective independent reality, and that transparency simply describes the extent to which this reality is disclosed. While some hold this view, McCarthy and Fluck (2017) argue that this is not how transparency is typically used. They note that transparency also has an 'understanding' element. In other words, it matters how and in what context information is disclosed because this determines if and how the receiver makes sense of the information. In this context, McCarthy and Fluck (2017) propose a distinction between transparency-as-disclosure, focused on quantity of information, and transparency-as-dialogue, focused on the quality and interpretation of information. In sum, views diverge as to how much emphasis should be placed on context when examining transparency, with positivists understanding transparency as an attribute that describes the extent to which the reality is disclosed, while interpretivist understand transparency as a process in which information is negotiated in a context dependent manner.

I now turn to an overview of transparency in global governance. Florini (1998) defines transparency as the opposite of secrecy. She argues that globalization has led to an increasingly interdependent world where people want to have a say in what happens in other parts of the globe. In this context, Florini (1998) argues, transparency was the preferred way of enforcement, as opposed to coercion or surveillance. She coined this process regulation by revelation. Florini (1998) is on the positivist side of the spectrum where the emphasis is on the act of disclosing (as opposed to keeping secret).

Gupta (2008) looks at transparency in global environmental governance from a broad perspective and argues that transparency is part of a 'procedural turn' in environmental governance that represents a move from mandated outcomes to procedures. At the core of this procedural turn is the assumption that sound procedures, such as transparency, will lead to sound outcomes. Yet, Gupta (2008) argues that whether transparency will lead to the hoped-for outcomes depends on *who* is to be transparent about *what*, to *whom,* and to reach *what ends*? Based on a series of case studies Gupta (2010) argues that the procedural turn is characterized by on the one hand a democratization push with emphasis on rights and participation, and on the other hand a neoliberal push that emphasizes market-based solutions and soft environmental regulations for the private sector.

These rationales for transparency are further elaborated by Gupta and Mason (2016) who describe four rationales for transparency: democratization, marketization, privatization and technocratization. In the democratization rationale public actors may use transparency as a tool to better inform citizens and non-state actors and increase the legitimacy of decision-making processes. Transparency may also be used to facilitate or even create markets through the targeted disclosure of environmental information (marketization rationale). Private actors may also (selectively) disclose information to showcase good environmental practices to customers or avoid more stringent performance-based regulation (privatization rationale). Finally, transparency may also aim to generate data to feed into expert-driven rationalized decision-making processes (technocratization rationale). Taken together, this typology is an interpretivist notion of transparency, where the context is of key importance.

Transparency is widely assumed to be an enhancer of accountability, trust, and environmental performance. Yet, these links are contested in the scholarly literature. Zooming in on accountability, Gupta and van Asselt (2019) show that the link between transparency and state-to-state accountability is not straightforward, and they contend that the transparency framework reflects rather than transcends political contestations over responsibility. As the transparency mechanism of the UNFCCC is set up now, they see it near impossible to deliver meaningful accountability.

Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen *et al.*, (2018) agree that state-to-state accountability is limited, but they identify other promising pathways to hold states to account. In a similar vein van Asselt (2016) argues that non-state actors might use information that is publicly disclosed as part of the transparency mechanism to hold states to account. Weikmans, Asselt and Roberts (2019) analyzed the link between transparency and ambition levels. Importantly, they emphasize this link is contingent on a host of factors, including whether the disclosed information is timely, comparable, and complete. Thus, while in general capacity building is described as a crucial link in a seemingly straightforward cascade towards better environmental performance, the links between transparency and its goal of enhanced environmental performance remain contested.

Building on the previous paragraphs, one particularly interesting debate relates to the kind of accountability generated by transparency processes. A good starting point here is the work of Lehtonen (2005) as he analyzed the Environmental Performance Review system of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development through the lens of accountability and learning. Lehtonen (2005) understands accountability in the light of the New Public Management frame, that emphasized that governments should be held accountable based on *performance* measured by quantified indicators. Here the focus lies on compliance to certain standards of performance. A different kind of accountability concerns, accountability-for-learning. Lehtonen (2005) understands *learning* from the frame that global sustainability challenges are extremely complex and dynamic. *Learning* then is a collective reflexive exercise that is aimed at understanding *why* certain policies

work or do not work. In this context, learning is thus understood to be more than mere technical learning; there needs to be a component of reflection and bringing together different pieces of information and different actors. Finally, accountability could also be understood in an *empowerment* frame as elaborated on by Mason (2020). From an empowerment lens, accountability in the context of transparency is ultimately about the extent to which disclosed information empowers the accountability claimant to examine and alter the power structures that cause environmental harm.

Taking a closer look at the relation between transparency and accountability in multilateral contexts, it makes sense to disentangle accountability into its subcomponents of answerability and enforceability (Gupta and van Asselt, 2019). In a multilateral context, the focus of analysis is on the answerability component of accountability, as the enforceability component is largely out of reach in multilateral arrangements (Gupta and van Asselt, 2019; Gupta *et al.*, 2021). Through empirical analysis of face-to-face account giving processes under the UNFCCC Gupta *et al.* (2021) found that, in practice, answerability focusses on learning rather than compliance.[3] This learning is mostly technical in nature and related to development of greenhouse gas inventories, and one could thus question if this constitutes the type of learning Lehtonen (2005) had in mind when talking about collective reflexivity on complex sustainable development matters. The study by Gupta *et al.* (2021) indicates that the face-to-face account giving in UNFCCC processes is unlikely to generate accountability in the empowerment frame as put forward by Mason (2020). As mentioned earlier, enforceability is often out of league in multilateral settings, and, in practice, it is the powerful rather than the disadvantaged that engaged in questioning. For example, in sessions of the Facilitative Sharing of Views, the European Union and other developed countries asked most questions, while least developed countries asked only very few (Gupta *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, non-state actors are not allowed to engage in questioning. As such, this thesis will not focus on accountability in relation to empowerment, and instead pivot to accountability in relation to performance and learning.

The discussion between accountability-for-performance and accountability-for-learning speaks to larger questions in climate governance. For institutionalists and supporters of integrated regimes, accountability to ensure compliance to performance standards is seen as key to success. These worldviews emphasize that climate change is a collective action problem where each Party is incentivized to free ride. Only if everyone joins an integrated regime where defaulters are held to account will the collective action problem be overcome. Without accountability-for-performance, free riding will occur and slowly deteriorate action, the supporters of comprehensive regimes contend. Yet, especially since the failure of the Copenhagen climate summit different voices have come to the fore. Frameworks like polycentric governance (Ostrom, 2010) or Sustainable Development

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[3] This study analyzed four sessions of the Facilitative Sharing of Views, in which developing countries present their climate reports, to which other countries can ask questions. These sessions are open to observers and recordings are made available through the UNFCCC website.

Diplomacy (Moomaw *et al.*, 2017) argue that climate action should not restrain itself to the slow processes of comprehensive regimes. These new frameworks consider the free rider problem as somewhat outdated. Sustainable Development Diplomacy points to mutual gains, creating solutions where no-one is incentivized to free ride (Moomaw *et al.*, 2017). And polycentric governance pleads for small-scale solutions where trust and social networks prevent from free riding (Ostrom, 2010). Moreover, these new frameworks abandon the idea of a 'pollution' framing of climate change altogether. Instead, climate action is considered an exciting path towards a new green economy with many co-benefits. From this vantage point focusing on *learning* makes more sense than focusing on *performance*.

In sum, transparency is a concept that can be interpreted and operationalized in very different ways, to meet very different ends, most notably *performance*, and *learning*. While the above only discussed the theoretical potential of transparency, many empirical questions remain. Is one dominant over the other? Can they be synergistic? Who pushes which approach, in practice? These are questions that are yet to be addressed in the realm of capacity building for climate transparency.

2.3 Climate politics

Capacity building and transparency play out in a context of high politics of climate change. Some of the most contentious topics are burden sharing, responsibility, and the role of market mechanisms. Burden sharing is based on the conceptualization of climate change as a collective action problem where abatement costs are local while benefits are global, such that all Parties are incentivized to free ride (Ostrom, 1990). Multilateral agreements and well-designed institutions were envisioned to overcome this challenge and make everyone better off.

Yet, in practice, it turned out particularly difficult to reach agreement over how the burden should be shared. The leading principle guiding burden sharing was stipulated in the UNFCCC as Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (UNFCCC, 1992). At the outset of the UNFCCC this principle translated into mandated emission reduction targets for developed countries under the Kyoto protocol (UNFCCC, 1997). Initially, developed countries had higher historic and current emissions and clearly more capabilities to invest in abatement. After the turn of the millennia developed countries started to demand action from developing countries and particularly from emerging economies such as China. Developed countries pointed to rising emissions and economic capabilities. Developing countries pointed to historic and per capita emissions, per capita economic indicators, and to disappointing abatement from developed countries. Moreover, climate impacts started to materialize adding discussions of adaptation and loss and damage to the debate.

These fundamental political questions resonated throughout the UNFCCC, including in transparency discussions. For example, Gupta and van Asselt (2019) argue that the transparency mechanism reflects rather than transcends these political issues. Klinsky and Gupta (2019) also note that over the

years there has been a trend from a focus on responsibility to capacity, whereby the funding of capacity building for developing countries by developed countries becomes a 'tamed' form of equity.

Another bone of contention is the role of market mechanisms. Under the Kyoto protocol developed countries could earn emission reduction credits by investing in abatement projects in developing countries. According to some (e.g. Eberle, Münstermann and Siebeneck, 2019) this was an attempt by developed countries to open the door to mitigation in developing countries. According to Stevenson (2020) these market mechanisms represent a form of 'bullshit' that gives the biggest emitters a way to not change their ways. Others (e.g. Stephan and Lane, 2015) have called market mechanisms under the Kyoto protocol ineffective, not reflecting environmental integrity, and importantly, contributing to human rights issues or even carbon colonialism.

Gupta and Mason (2016) have written about different rationales for transparency, marketization being one of them. In this context, transparency may facilitate market exchanges by making visible and tradable certain environmental aspects of actions. In the abovementioned example this would be emission reductions, as captured in greenhouse gas inventories. Here capacity building may be a vehicle to lay the groundwork for carbon market mechanisms in developing countries by building carbon accounting skills.

Capacity building for transparency plays out in the context of global climate politics. While scholars have covered ground on how capacity building and transparency link to global climate politics, many questions remain largely unanswered. This chapter so far discussed capacity building, transparency, and climate politics, I will now turn to a specific discussion on capacity building for transparency, that is at the heart of the three previous sections.

2.4 Capacity building for climate transparency

The scholarly literature on capacity building for climate transparency is still in its infancy and mostly very technical by nature. Most prominently, there is a small group of authors who develop approaches and methodologies that aim to (quantitatively) assess a country's capacity to adhere to the Paris Agreement's transparency guidelines, particularly the guidelines on greenhouse gas-inventory reporting. A few articles discuss case studies where the focus is primarily on *how* capacity can best be built. Literature examining the political effects of capacity building for transparency initiatives is marginal.

The emerging literature on capacity building for climate transparency can roughly be categorized into four main strands. First, a small but prominent set of studies aims to develop methods to *assess* greenhouse gas-inventory capacities in developing countries (Finnegan *et al.*, 2014; Neeff *et al.*, 2017; Umemiya *et al.*, 2017; Prasad and Gupta, 2019). The authors of these studies typically are practitioners. In these writings the emphasis is on quantitatively operationalizing 'what' capacities a

country needs to fulfil transparency requirements. The authors hope sound assessment methods will increase the overall effectiveness of capacity building and help guide resource allocation.

A second strand of literature is characterized by aiming to provide 'lessons learned' based on the analysis of case studies (Damassa and Elsayed, 2013; Ito, 2016; Robinson, 2018; Dagnet *et al.*, 2019; Umemiya, Ikeda and White, 2019). These works are primarily situated in the grey literature, written by practitioner organizations active in the field of capacity building for transparency. This part of the literature lays the emphasis on '<u>how</u>' capacities can best be built, typically in a more qualitative fashion.

Third, a body of literature discusses capacity building as part of a broader analysis of the transparency mechanism (Dagnet, Northrop and Tirpak, 2015; Khan *et al.*, 2016; Winkler, Mantlana and Letete, 2017; Wang and Gao, 2018; Aragon and Tshewang, 2019; Klinsky and Gupta, 2019; Weikmans, Asselt and Roberts, 2019). This, primarily scholarly, literature places the role of capacity building for transparency in a wider context. In doing so it also sheds light on the question of '<u>whose</u>' capacities are to be built.

Finally, critical literature on capacity building in the domains of international development and health promotion features discussions on capacity building. Of interests are works that provide deep reflections on the theory and practice of capacity building (Labonte and Laverack, 2001; VanDeveer and Dabelko, 2001; Eade, 2007). These authors see capacity building as a complex process that cannot easily be measured.

Measuring capacity is the main goal for studies developing assessment methods. These assessments are considered crucial in tracking progress and managing resource allocation. For example, (Umemiya *et al.*, 2017) recommend the establishment of a common global monitoring system for greenhouse gas-inventory capacities, to guide resources to where they are most needed. Similarly, Neeff *et al.* (2017) propose the use of their scorecard approach to advise investment allocation.

This thinking stands in stark contrast with critical literature on capacity building from the international development and health promotion domain, which considers it naïve to think of capacity building as a neutral tool to 'fix' a problem. Rather, capacity building is understood as a complex process that might 'replace rather than build local capacities' Eade (2007, 634). More precisely, Labonte and Laverack (2001) warn that capacity building risks reification. They eloquently explain that "capacity is presumed to exist as an unproblematic thing or property that can be monitored and measured, or at least tweaked to accomplish other goals. More rigorous work on these constructs argues that they describe social and organizational relationships, that is, they are dynamic qualities rather than static properties" (Labonte and Laverack, 2001, 112). Given these critical perspectives it seems worth it to take a closer look at exactly how the assessment studies operationalize capacity.

Typically, assessment methods start by subdividing capacity building into 'narrow' and 'broad' capacities. For example, Neeff *et al.* (2017) distinguish between 'technical' and 'functional' capacities. In a similar vein, Dagnet *et al.* (2019) separate 'specific' and 'governance' capacities. Narrow capacities point to a skillset to perform a specific task. Often these are made measurable in the assessments by defining certain criteria for submitted reports (e.g. was soil and climate stratification applied? (Neeff *et al.*, 2017) does it include times series inventories? (Umemiya *et al.*, 2017)).

The broad capacities refer to institutional arrangements such as legal mandates, organizational structures, structural resource allocation and so forth (e.g., is there a continuous improvement plan? Are there sustainable domestic resources for an expert team? (Umemiya *et al.*, 2017)). While in broad lines the different assessment methods are rather similar, there are also notable differences. First, three of the four methods are limited to capacities for greenhouse gas-inventory development (Neeff *et al.*, 2017; Umemiya *et al.*, 2017; Dagnet *et al.*, 2019). By contrast, Prasad and Gupta (2019) include six areas of reporting: greenhouse gas-inventory, National Determined Contribution and National Circumstances, Mitigation, Adaptation and Vulnerability, Means of Implementation, and other areas of reporting. In sum, the assessment literature leans heavily towards greenhouse gas-inventory.

Second, all authors take slightly different approaches in operationalizing capacity, especially with regard to the 'broad' capacities. The main question here is when do capacities become so complex or systemic that they fall outside the scope of capacity building for transparency? For example, Umemiya *et al.* (2017) include 'basic statistical and scientific capacity' as a category of capacities. The researchers further operationalize this category by looking at very general indicators for statistical capacity of a country, such as number of researchers per million inhabitants. They argue that this category is essential to, yet by no means limited to, climate transparency. Under this definition almost any activity that increases scientific capacity of a country could be dubbed capacity building for climate transparency. The other side of the coin is that international capacity building projects are unlikely to make any changes to the number of researchers per million inhabitants. By contrast, Neeff *et al.* (2017) use much less systemic indicators, in other words indicators that seem more modifiable by capacity building projects. Prasad and Gupta (2019) make another unexpected move by including political willingness into their operationalization. This is surprising since most authors see political willingness as a factor distinct from capacities (e.g. VanDeveer and Dabelko, 2001, 20; Robinson, 2018, 212; Gupta and van Asselt, 2019, 29; Weikmans, Asselt and Roberts, 2019, 12). The UNFCCC transparency agreement specifies that flexibility should be based on capacity constraints only, yet it does not specify whether political willingness is a valid constituent of capacity.

Given the divergent views on what capacities are needed to engage in climate transparency it is hardly surprising that the literature is also divided on how capacities should be built. One strand running

through the literature is whether capacity building should be project-based or more holistic. Other aspects include whether the focus should be on building organizational or individual capacities. Umemiya, Ikeda and White (2019, 2, italics added), for example, define capacity building support as "financial and technical assistance *in the form of international development projects"*. This definition includes the term *project* and thus limits the definition to specific forms of assistance.

In the past, the preparation of reports to the Convention often involved the hiring of international experts. This reliance on international consultants and the project-based, short term, consultant-driven nature of many capacity building projects has been highly criticized for harming local capacities (Khan, Mfitumukiza and Huq, 2020). Robinson (2018, 281) argues for capacity building in a 'deeper' sense geared to institution building, education and the development of systems. Similarly, Dagnet, Northrop and Tirpak (2015, 29) argue that "the capacity of individuals must not only be built and sustained, but there must also be an increased focus on building the capacity of the organizations and institutional arrangements that support them. This fundamentally requires a move away from the ad hoc, short-term project focus of many of the capacity-building activities".

Wang and Gao (2018, 261, italics added), take a different stance and argue that "institutional capacity will mainly be addressed *domestically"* and that international capacity building efforts should be targeted at technical capacities. This line of thought is also coined by Umemiya *et al.* (2017, 72, italics added) who mention that international capacity building might not be effective in improving *institutional* capacity because it "largely requires *internal* decision-making and coordination". In any case, the views on long-term, systemic approaches seem to be at odds with, be it implicit, assumptions about timelines. For example, Dagnet *et al.* (2019) mention that capacity building should be long-term oriented *and* that there is a short window of opportunity until 2024 to get countries ready for the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement. Four years does not really seem long term. Indeed, Wang and Gao (2018, 260) foresee a timeline of "decades" before capacities of all developing countries are built.

In terms of 'whose' capacity is to be built there are two main strands in the literature. The first, and most pronounced, is that capacity assessment methods should guide resources towards the places where the needs are the highest (Neeff *et al.*, 2017; Umemiya *et al.*, 2017). Still, this might not currently be the case, empirical research has shown that in Asia, those developing countries with lower existing transparency capacities are less likely to receive capacity building support (Umemiya *et al.*, 2017; Umemiya, Ikeda and White, 2019). A more critical view on 'whose' capacities should be built can be found in the broader transparency literature. In their paper analyzing the link between transparency and accountability, Gupta and van Asselt (2019) mention that those countries with lowest capacity, are typically also those least responsible for climate change and least capable to implement additional mitigation actions. In a paper on equity in climate governance, Klinsky and

Gupta (2019) take this even further and posit that the extensive focus on capacity building for developing countries might deflect attention from mitigation action from the biggest historical emitters. Moreover, Wang and Gao (2018), also taking equity as a vantage point, carefully note that some developing countries might have priorities such as poverty or health that take precedence over partaking in the transparency mechanism.

The short literature review shows that efforts are underway to develop elaborate methods to assess transparency capacities of developing countries. Most of these methods are limited to greenhouse gas-inventory capacities, thus representing only a limited scope. These methods are intended to measure effectiveness of, and resource allocation for capacity building initiatives. While empirical evidence remains limited, one cannot but wonder whether the choice of assessment indicators and methods will be a prelude to the scope of the transparency system: one predominantly targeted at greenhouse gas-inventories. Notwithstanding the importance of greenhouse gas-inventories, this could lead to a situation where much effort is being invested in developing unnecessarily extensive greenhouse gas-inventories for countries with relatively low emissions and capacities to mitigate. Also, this might come at the cost of, for example, information generated and disclosed on vulnerability and adaptation to climate change in those countries. Capacity building for greenhouse gas inventories seems to be very *performance* based. While this is not inherently wrong, it does beg the question of whether this will trump *learning* approaches.

2.5 Analytical lens

As outlined in the previous chapter, I am interested in the steering effects of the capacity building for transparency initiatives. Yet, capacity building initiatives are not formal spaces of governance, moreover, they do not claim or intend to be steering but rather claim to be a neutral means to achieve a goal. Thus, classical policy analysis tools are not fit for my purpose in this case. The concept of *de facto* governance as an analytical lens to study climate governance was developed by Gupta and Möller (2019). They understand *de facto* governance "as sources of governance that are unacknowledged and unrecognized" and yet have governance effects (Gupta and Möller, 2019, 481). It is important to note that this definition excludes both formal policy processes, as well as deliberate attempts by non-state actors to influence outcomes. Thus, lobbying and advocacy are not *de facto* governance. Instead, *de facto* governance is concerned with unintended steering effects. Gupta and Möller (2019) clarify that governance in this sense is an *emergent* system, where steering effects may emerge out of what seems to be a chaotic set of interactions.

Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta (2021) developed an analytical lens to study capacity building for climate transparency as *de facto* governance (see figure 2). In this framework capacity building is considered an *intervention*. The configurations of this intervention, or more specifically the *who, what,* and *how* of capacity building, in turn, generate certain effects. These effects are the *scope* and

extent of the transparency generated by the intervention. Scope is understood as the thematic focus, for example transparency on greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation, or climate vulnerability. Extent entails the amount, level of detail, and recency of information being disclosed. The scope and extent of climate transparency generated shapes the transformative potential of transparency, thereby capacity building for transparency *de facto* steers the impact of transparency in multilateral climate politics.

Figure 2. Capacity building for transparency as *de facto* governance: Intervention and effects (Figure from Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta, 2021)

Capacity building as intervention:

1. **Who** builds **whose** capacities?

2. **What** capacities are built?

3. **How** is capacity built?

De facto steering effects:

Shapes the **scope** and **extent** of the transparency generated...

... with implications for transparency's **transformative potential** in global climate
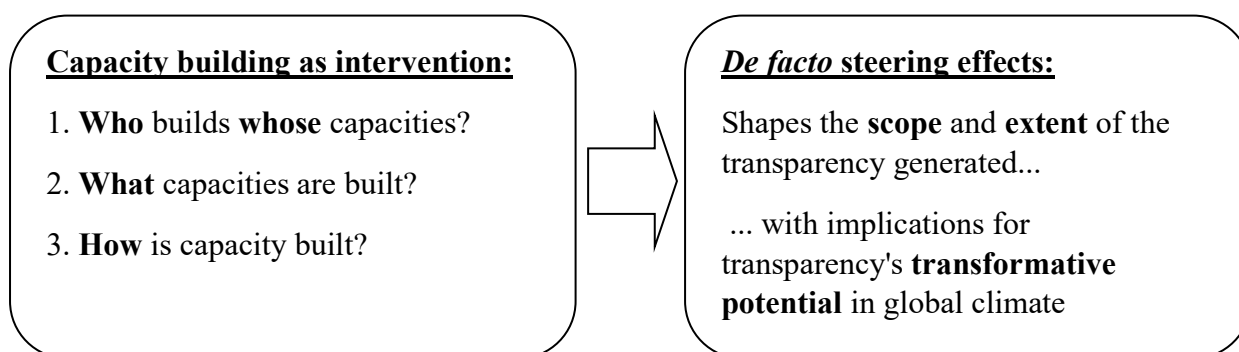
While the transformative potential of transparency can be understood to include accountability, trust, and environmental improvements, this thesis will primarily focus on accountability, and use the lens of performance and *learning* to comments on the type of accountability promoted (i.e., accountability-for-performance and accountability-for-learning). The concept of trust will not be covered by this thesis while the element of environmental improvements is touches upon briefly in the final chapters. Table 2 below further links the *performance,* and *learning* typology to capacity building and transparency and thereby provides a framework that bridges the different boxes of the analytical lens.

Table 2. Overview of key concepts and related climate governance goals (drawing on Mason, 2020)

Concepts	Transformative potential	
	Performance	**Learning**
Capacity building…	...to enhance the capacity to perform a narrow set of tasks	…to develop a deep understanding of the issue at hand
Transparency…	...to make visible progress or outcomes on a narrow set of indicators/tasks	…to make visible underlying reasons for certain outcomes; to inspire debate and deliberation

In conclusion, capacity building and transparency are broad concepts that have been interpreted differently over time and domains. The conceptual ambiguity around the concepts makes them analytically difficult to use. This chapter has critically assessed scholarly and grey literature in an attempt to clarify these concepts and create an analytical lens, as presented above. Capacity building for transparency has the potential to facilitate *performance* and *learning,* yet has this potential been realized in the past? Have some approaches been dominant over others? Chapter 4 starts by addressing these empirical questions through an analysis of the historical evolution of capacity building for transparency under the UNFCCC.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The previous chapter discussed several key concepts and presented an analytical framework for addressing the main research questions. This chapter will present and reflect upon the methodological tools used to gather empirical data to answer the research questions. The methods include a content analysis of CBIT project documents and semi-structured interviews with practitioners, policymakers, and experts in capacity building for climate transparency. Beyond these two primary analyses, this thesis will also draw on scholarly and grey literature, including practitioner documents such as donor statements and UNFCCC documents, to supplement the two above analyses. The methods are explained in more detail below.

3.1 Analysis of CBIT project documents

CBIT project documents provide an excellent data source to examine the emerging practice of capacity building for transparency and thus contribute to answering research question 1. These documents give detailed accounts of (planned) capacity building efforts and are publicly available. Moreover, these documents are rather uniform, allowing for a good comparison between documents. The following paragraphs will describe how primary documents were processed, coded, and analyzed.

3.1.1 Data sources

The primary data source for the content analysis is approved project identification (PIF) documents. PIF stands for project identification form and submitting such a document is a mandatory step in the process of applying for CBIT funding. PIF documents stipulate the general objectives and scope of the envisioned project, which form the basis for a full project proposal that is to be submitted in a second round. As such, PIF documents do not provide certainty that what is written in them will actually be implemented. In other words, changes might be made in the project proposal or in the actual implementation. Yet, the PIFs also have several advantages. Firstly, their availability; at the time of research, 67 projects had a PIF approved document; this number is less than half for the full project proposals. Thus, analyzing PIF documents allows to include a broader range of countries. Moreover, there are reasons to assume that the projects that have their full project proposal approved do not constitute a representative sample; these might be the 'champions' or 'first movers'.

Secondly, PIF documents follow a very clear format that is (almost) the same for all projects. This facilitates comparative analysis. Also, I am interested in the general meta-characteristics of emerging capacity building projects, and these documents provide exactly this information. In particular, the theory-of-change framework of the PIF is of value as it describes in a common format the envisioned outcomes of the project. In the remainder of the thesis, I will refer to the PIF documents simply as project proposals.

Table 3. Units analyzed: Projects, components, and outputs

Unit of analysis	Number of units analyzed	Examples of variables	Dataset
Projects	67	Continent Implementing agency	Annex A dataset 1 and 2
Project components	163	Dimension Thematic scope	Annex A dataset 3
Project outputs	699	Dimension Thematic scope	Annex A dataset 4

At the time of research, 67 PIF documents (initial project proposals) had been approved. These project proposals were the first unit of analysis and contained various variables such as the country, continent, total funding, and so forth (see Annex A, datasets 1 and 2). Each PIF document further contained project components, generic focal areas for the project, (see Annex A dataset 3) and project outputs, more detailed descriptions of outputs the project aimed to achieve (see Annex A dataset 4). In most instances, PIF documents specified the amount of funding to be dedicated to each component and output. As part of this thesis a coding scheme was developed to classify each component and output in terms of its thematic scope and dimension of capacity building. Coding of project components can be seen as an intermediary step; when project outputs did not specify the thematic scope or dimension, the thematic scope or dimension of the 'mother' component was used for all outputs under that 'mother' component. Variables of project outputs were used in the final analysis because these provide most detailed information.

Besides the CBIT project proposals, two other sources of data are used for analysis (see Annex A dataset 2). Firstly, a database that provides indexes and indicators for country's greenhouse gas inventory reporting capacity (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020). Of this database, the index variable representing the capacity of a country to compile and report a greenhouse gas inventory in the period 2008-2014 is particularly insightful as it is a proxy for the existing level of a country before engaging in the CBIT. While only this variable is used in this thesis, other more granular variables from the database of Umemiya *et al.*, 2020 were also extracted and linked to CBIT projects, for the purpose of completeness and future research. Secondly, the website of the CBIT global coordination platform is used for the self-assessment results of the country's reporting capacities. The resulting dataset (Annex A dataset 2) was subsequently used for analysis of levels of (self-assessed) reporting capacities of countries.

3.1.2 Data extraction and content analysis

Subsequently, data were extracted from the documents to construct four large tables in Excel (see Annex A). For the largest part, this was a one-to-one extraction; for example, the amount of funding could be directly extracted. For some variables, a form of coding had to be applied. For these variables, a coding scheme was developed iteratively, following principles of content analysis, meaning that pieces of information are coded based on the actual content of the data source. The most important coding schemes can be found in table A6 and A8 in Annex A. These coding schemes stipulate how keywords in project outputs in CBIT documents were coded into general categories. For example, table A6 is a coding scheme to code project outputs into dimensions of capacity building, using the framework of (Hilderbrand and Grindle, 1997, 36).

Much like every methodology, content analysis has its advantages and drawbacks. A key advantage of content analysis is that the process is transparent and reproducible. Moreover, content analysis can quantify information contained in documents, thereby facilitating descriptive and analytical statistics.

Importantly, content analysis also comes with a cost. Content analysis is poor in uncovering tacit information and relationships between pieces of information. As such, content analysis is often better at answering descriptive rather than 'why' questions.

While I am interested in 'why' questions, tacit information, and relationships between variables, the field of capacity building for transparency currently lacks a sound basis upon which to build such analysis. In other words, no clear overview of the 'who, what, and how' of CBIT projects exists in scholarly or grey literature. As such, content analysis seems an apposite choice, especially since this will be supplemented with interviews to place the outcomes of the content analysis in perspective and to explore 'why' projects are designed the way they are. The interview methodology will be explained below.

In this study, *all* project proposals were retrieved and analyzed, meaning that the sample equals the population. However, there are limits to the external validity. There may be temporal trends, meaning that the findings of this research cannot be assumed to apply for *future* capacity building projects.

Annex A contains a detailed description of how the project proposals were coded and turned into Excel tables. To gather more contextual data, document analysis was supplemented with semi-structured interviews, as is the focus of the next section.

3.2 Semi-structured interviews with practitioners, policymakers, and experts in the field of capacity building for transparency

Semi-structured interviews were organized and analyzed to gather insights on the emerging practice of capacity building for transparency and supplement document analysis. This section will present the methodology for the semi-structured interviews.

3.2.1 Selection of participants

Interviewees were selected through various avenues. Most importantly, all CBIT national focal points whose contact details were publicly available were sent an interview request. Furthermore, the (closed) LinkedIn group 'UN Climate Change Transparency' was scanned for potentially relevant participants. The researcher's network was also used to find interviewees. After initial interviews, a snowballing approach was adopted to solicit more interviewees. An effort was made to have a diverse set of interviewees in terms of affiliations (including government representatives, capacity building providers, and experts), and geographical scope (different continents, developed/developing countries).

A loose set of inclusion criteria was applied, namely that the potential participant had to be involved, currently or in the near past, as a practitioner, policymaker, or expert in the fields of transparency or capacity building in the context of climate change. Moreover, potential participants had to be comfortable to do the interview in Dutch, English, or French.

The template email that was used to invite selected participants for an interview can be found in annex B. The template was constantly reflected upon and adjusted as appropriate. The aim was to strike a balance between informing the participant while not giving too much away about the focus of the research. Also, efforts were made to keep the email short and succinct to improve response rates.

Participants were also sent an informed consent document with information about the purpose of the study and some provisions for the interview. The informed consent form can be found in annex C. Interviewees were requested to provide both a written and oral statement of consent. Out of 33 interviews three interviewees only provided an oral statement of consent.

In addition to interviews, this thesis also draws on field observations, including participation in the 2021 sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies of the UNFCCC, during a four-month internship at the Capacity-building sub-division of the UNFCCC from March till July 2021.

3.2.2 Overview of participants

Out of the 115 potential participants contacted, 33 were ultimately interviewed. The interviewees represent a broad range of affiliations as well as geographical scope (see annex F). Interviewees represent all continents except for Antarctica and Australia. Still, the geographical distribution is not even, with relatively more interviewees from Europe and Africa and relatively little from Asia. Moreover, Small Island Developing States are not represented among the interviewees.

In terms of affiliations, the largest group is CBIT focal points; mostly, these are people working for the national government. Almost all the major implementing agencies have been interviewed, except

for Conservation International and the Inter-American Development Bank.[4] In terms of intergovernmental organizations, representatives from the UNFCCC and the Global Environmental Facility were interviewed.

Table 4. Overview of interviewees' affiliations

Affiliation of interviewee	Number of interviewees
CBIT national focal points (recipient government)	10
Other government representatives	4
Agencies	9
Intergovernmental organizations	5
Other	5

Table 5. Overview of interviewees' country background

Country background	Number of interviewees
Developed	17
Developing	10
Least developed	6
Small Island Developing State	0

3.2.3 Interview design

Interviews were designed in a semi-structured format, designed to last 30-60 minutes. Interviews were designed for virtual format, primarily through the video-call function of Microsoft Teams. Some interviews were voice-only as preferred by the participant or due to connectivity issues. On some occasions, Zoom or WhatsApp was used, as per the preference of the participant.

Two topic sheets were developed, one aimed at participants directly engaged with CBIT projects (see annex D), and another one for participants involved in transparency or capacity building at large (see annex E). The topic sheets were continuously reflected upon during the research and adjusted as appropriate. Moreover, for some interviews, additional questions were prepared as deemed appropriate, considering the background of the interviewee. The topic sheet was used as general guidance during the interview while leaving room to let the interview flow naturally and to explore topics initially unforeseen.

3.2.4 Transcription

Interview recordings were transcribed intelligent verbatim. Half of the interviews were transcribed manually, while for the latter half, the artificial intelligence-based transcription software Amberscript was used to generate a base transcript that was subsequently checked manually. Eight out of 33 interviews were not transcribed due to poor audio quality of the recording and time restraints.

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[4] These are the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environmental Programme, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

3.2.5 Data analysis

Initial coding was done inductively using Atlas.ti cloud software to assign codes to quotes. The process followed an iterative journey between notes in the margin, creating codes, bundling codes, and creating themes. This process balanced induction with deductive theorizing based on the conceptual framework. In this exercise of "zigzagging" (Thew, Middlemiss and Paavola, 2020, 5), themes were created as well as general insights and new questions, which were then subsequently confirmed or further explored by going back to the original transcripts.

3.2.6 Limitations

Selection bias

Of all the potential interviewees that were invited for an interview, only 25% responded and participated in the research. As such, there may have been a *volunteer bias* where those that responded are not representative of the study population. For example, it might be the case that those who are very active on transparency and ascribe great importance to the topic were more likely to volunteer to partake in an interview. Still, the relatively large amount, of interviewees coming from various backgrounds largely mitigate the risk of serious bias. Moreover, this type of bias is more dangerous in quantitative analysis, where dissident views might get lost in the process of averaging.

Respondent bias

The set-up of the interview needs to consider the fact that interviewees might frame their responses in a way they think fits the purpose of the research or links to what is socially desirable. In the case of this study, a problem may have been that CBIT project focal points wanted to present a good image of 'their' project. They may be afraid that critical notes might get published, perhaps with negative consequences for them. All interviewees were offered the opportunity to stay anonymous, but only very few wanted to be so. In some cases, it might even be that focal points wanted to actively promote their project or country as a best practice via this research.

Framing of questions and prompts

The interview guide was continuously reflected upon and improved over the course of the study. One important change that was made was that interviewees were asked about their view on the importance of transparency and capacity building. This question only asked half the story (the positive side) and might have left little room for interviewees to discuss any concerns as well. Later, interviewees were also explicitly asked about any concerns they might have related to transparency and capacity building.

Another point of reflection is that I may have inadvertently internalized categorizations of the UNFCCC parlance. For example, the categorization of greenhouse gas inventory, mitigation, adaptation, and support. This might, inadvertently, have prevented interviewees from discussing elements that fall outside this frame, such as transparency on loss and damage.

Data analysis

In qualitative data analysis a balance needs to be found between using existing frameworks top-down and grounding results in the actual data through bottom-up coding. Fortunately, the who, what, how why framework allowed many elements to be placed under this umbrella. A bigger risk is that, as mentioned above, I may have relied too much on existing categorizations of the UNFCCC to code the interviews. Especially the categorization of greenhouse gas inventory, mitigation, adaptation, and support were used to make sense of the text. While in most cases this corresponds with the inputs from interviewees, most of who are themselves part of the UNFCCC bubble, in other cases this might lead to overlooking important divergent information. The combination of top-down and bottom-up coding partially mitigates this risk of overlooking divergent viewpoints in the analysis.

Together the document analysis and the semi-structured interviews allow for a broad yet deep enough analysis of the emerging practice of capacity building for climate transparency. These analyses will be supplemented, by document analysis of practitioner documents including donor statements and UNFCCC policy documents to provide further context and depth to the analysis. Importantly, this thesis does not include an in-depth country case study, as the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions prevented this. Instead, more effort has been placed in analyzing the system at large drawing on empirical data from primary documents of CBIT projects and interviews with practitioners and experts in the field. The next chapter will address research question 1.1 and examine the evolution of capacity building for transparency under the UNFCCC.

Chapter 4: The evolution of capacity building for climate transparency under the UNFCCC

This chapter examines how capacity building for climate transparency has evolved under the UNFCCC. While the 2015 Paris Agreement reinvigorated capacity building for transparency initiatives, the effort to enhance transparency through capacity building is as old as the convention itself. Placing current capacity building initiatives against a three-decade long history of capacity building for transparency under the UNFCCC is crucial to better grasp the who, what, and how of current initiatives and their implications.

In the below analysis of the evolution of capacity building for transparency, I will focus on three elements. The first element concerns transparency and in particular an evolution of transparency provisions under the UNFCCC. The second element is capacity building in the context of the transparency provisions. Thirdly, I will also touch upon funding for the capacity building efforts. Through these three elements I aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the evolution of capacity building for transparency both in terms of the institutional set up and the main political debates. This section draws on scholarly and grey literature, as well as policy texts and draft negotiation texts. The section will also draw on semi-structured interviews with practitioners in the field.

I divide the evolution of capacity building for transparency under the UNFCCC in three phases based on development in multilateral transparency requirements. The first phase revolves around the original convention and its main transparency provision, namely, the National Communications. The second phase focusses on the first careful move to the introduction of Monitoring Reporting and Verification provisions for developing countries in the context of Biannual Update Reports, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries (REDD+) mechanism. The final stage is marked by the new Enhanced Transparency Framework as laid out in the Paris Agreement.

4.1 Reporting under the convention: National Communications

The 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change laid the institutional basis for how the international community would negotiate and address anthropogenic climate change (UNFCCC, 1992). Being a framework convention, the text did not include specified emission reduction targets or a quantified collective goal. However, the convention did specify several procedural actions. Article 12 of the convention, titled "communication of information related to implementation" specifies reporting obligations for member states (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 12). Table 6 below gives an overview of the scope of reporting outlined in article 12. In broad lines, all countries are required to communicate a greenhouse gas inventory and a general overview of steps taken to implement the convention. For developed countries, the national communication must, in addition,

include a detailed overview of mitigation policies and measures as well as an estimation of their emission reduction effect. Finally, developed countries must communicate measures taken to provide finance to developing countries, while developing countries may communicate project proposals to receive finance.

Table 6. Scope of reporting: Requirements under the Convention (table format from Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta, 2021)

	What information is to be provided (mandatory/optional) and by whom?
National Communications under the UNFCCC	*Communication shall include (mandatory categories of reporting):* 1. Greenhouse gas inventory 2. General description of steps taken/envisaged to implement the convention 3. Detailed description of mitigation policies and measures (only for developed countries) 4. Estimation of the effect that mitigation policies and measures will have on emissions (only for developed countries) 5. Details on measures taken to provide finance (only for developed countries) *Communication should include (optional category of reporting)* 1. Proposal of projects for financing. (only for developing countries)

The bifurcation in the reporting requirements reflects principle 1 of article 3 of the UNFCCC, namely that countries have 'common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities', and accordingly that developed countries should take the lead in combatting climate change (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 3). Article 12 further puts forward different timelines to submit National Communications, six months for developed countries, and three years for developing countries after the entry into force of the convention, while least developed countries can submit at their discretion (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 12).

The convention entails only minimal references to capacity building for transparency. The strongest reference can be found in article 12.7 which states that the COP shall arrange for the provision of "technical support" to developing countries in the context of the National Communication (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 12.7). Yet, the convention does not define technical assistance. The above notwithstanding, the convention does include references to capacity building that are indirectly related to reporting and transparency. Article 5 concerns the development of research and data collection capacities and mentions the importance of improving 'endogenous capacities' in developing countries (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 5). Similarly, Article 9.d articulates that the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and

Technological Advice shall provide advice on "ways and means of supporting endogenous capacity-building in developing countries" (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 9.d). In a more general scope, Article 6 requires countries to promote at the national level, "training of scientific, technical and managerial personnel" and to cooperate at the international level on the "development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national institutions" (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 6). These references show that capacity building was seen as important, yet they are scattered throughout the convention text and lack operationalization.

The convention provides rather strong texts on the provision of funding to developing countries for reporting activities. Article 4.3 of the convention states that developed countries *shall* provide additional and new funding to developing countries to meet the full costs of compiling and communicating National Communications (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 4.3). This point is reiterated in Article 12.7 which states that the Conference of the Parties *shall* arrange the provision of financial support to developing countries for the compilation and communication of the National Communications (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 12.7). Finally, Article 12.5 makes the three-year timeframe for developing countries to submit the first National Communication contingent on the availability of financial resources (UNFCCC, 1992, Art. 12.5). In sum, the convention sends a clear message that the financial burden of reporting obligations should not fall on the shoulders of developing countries.

Reporting on National Communications in practice

The above, overview discusses the convention text, but of course this does not ensure implementation in practice. How many countries actually submitted a National Communication at the initial round? And how about the quality of these documents? Interview data helps to shed light on these aspects as occurring in practice. According to an interviewee from UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), for example, the agreed timeframe of reporting National Communication was not met by many developing countries. Instead, the average time between submissions is about ten years for developing countries, instead of the requirement of four years. These elongated timeframes can be attributed to lack of capacities as well as lack of prioritization. The quality of National Communications also varied widely with no verification or quality control mechanism to guard for mistakes. One striking example is of a country that confused points and commas and thereby ended up as second biggest emitter on the respective continent while it was a tiny country. Also, National Communication reporting does not specify how *recent* reported data needs to be, with cases of 2000 data being reported in 2015.[5]

In terms of capacity building for National Communication reporting, it was not uncommon for the compiling of the report to be largely performed by international consultants. As noted by an interviewee:

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[5] Interview with UNDP employee, December 8, 2020.

> "I go to the country and when I leave there is no knowledge left, there is no understanding of how data is being generated and in the new cycle the country restarts from zero, because then [anonymized] is not answering their emails anymore, maybe they don't even have my email anymore and no one understands the data. Maybe I have been a bad consultant and just provided the final results and didn't provide the data that allowed me to get to those results. So, I was pretty much useless. And I saw that a lot, especially the first and second cycle of National Communications, full reliance on external consultants. Which, of course, is the antithesis of building capacities."[6]

In summary, under the umbrella of National Communications, the key word was *reporting*. By directly funding international consultants to write reports for developing countries, at least some information was submitted to the UNFCCC. One could even doubt if the consultant-driven approach merits the name capacity building. If anything, this type of type of capacity building would be very *performance* oriented. In this period developed countries were also setting up their systems to report, though not through the hiring of consultants but rather in a gradual learn-by-doing fashion.

4.2 New reporting requirements: Monitoring, Reporting and Verification

The period from 2007 till 2015 marked increased transparency requirements for both developed and developing countries. Essentially, the global community moved from a system of reporting to a system of monitoring, reporting and verification. As requirements became more demanding for *both* developed and developing countries in this period, many commentators speak of a convergence between requirements for developed and developing Parties. I would argue, however, that the system till 2015 had substantially more stringent requirements for developed Parties and that convergence only occurred after 2015, notably, not by enhancing the requirements for developing Parties, but rather by reducing stringency of transparency for developed countries. In showing this evolution, I begin with the period from 2007 to 2015.

I start with examining the new requirements for *developed* countries. To start, all the requirements under the convention as discussed above remained in place. However, two additional processes installed new requirements: The Kyoto protocol and the Biennial Reports. The first commitment period of the Kyoto protocol started in 2008. Developed country Parties were required to submit *annually* a greenhouse gas inventory. Moreover, this inventory was subject to expert review, where the reviewers had the power to make 'adjustments', if needed. This way there was effectively an element of verification with a form of enforcement. If countries did not agree with the 'adjustment' they could appeal to the compliance committee. Moreover, submitting the annual greenhouse gas

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[6] Interview with UNDP employee, December 8, 2020.

inventory was a prerequisite for eligibility to participate in the market mechanisms under the Kyoto protocol (for the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation mechanism see UNFCCC, 2005, 4, 2006, 6). Parallel to the start of the first commitment period of the Kyoto protocol, a new framework for monitoring, reporting, and verification was being fleshed out over a series of COPs between 2007 and 2011. For developed countries, this meant an additional reporting requirement namely, a Biennial Report. This Biennial Report is to contain a greenhouse gas inventory, quantitative economy-wide emission reduction targets, progress on achieving these targets, emission projections, and support given to developing countries (Winkler, Mantlana and Letete, 2017). Crucially, this report was subject to technical review *and* a multilateral assessment involving a question-and-answer dynamic.

In parallel to the above processes, guidelines were developed for a monitoring, reporting and verification system for *developing* countries, including Biennial Update Reports. These reports are to include a description of national circumstances, greenhouse gas inventory, mitigation actions, and support needed and received from developed countries (Winkler, Mantlana and Letete, 2017). For the greenhouse gas inventory additional requirements were installed, for example, data reported should not be less than four years old (UNFCCC, 2011, 11). Also, the report was to undergo technical review, and a process of 'facilitative sharing of views', a light version of the 'multilateral assessment' for developed countries.

In terms of capacity building for developing countries, the approach did not fundamentally change. The Global Environmental Facility maintained a leading role in channeling funds to draft reports. Countries could receive the negotiated amount of 352 000 USD for a Biennial Update Report (UNFCCC, no date), which was then typically used to hire a consultant to write the report. The Consultative Group of Experts remained a key player in providing capacity building through the development of training material, regional workshops, and technical advice upon requests (UNFCCC, no date).

With requirements evolving as follows, what has been the practice? In practice only very few countries submitted Biennial Update Reports, just like the number of submissions of National Communications was also much lower than it was supposed to be. Table 7 below shows the large discrepancy between the number of developing countries that should submit Biennial Update Reports (BURs) and those that actually did. To many in the international climate community this is a hard to digest reality. As will be discussed in chapter 4 on the practice of the CBIT, support providers have divergent perspectives on the limited number of Biennial Update Reports submitted. These perspectives include lack of political prioritization in developing countries, ineffective design of

capacity building efforts, problems with retention, as well as some critical perspectives such as "maybe we are just asking too much" and that it is fundamentally a slow process to build capacities.[7]

Table 7. Overview of Biennial Update Report submissions

Report	Number of submissions*	Possible number of submissions**	Possible number of submissions excl. SIDS/LDCs***
BUR1	63	154	78
BUR2	31	154	78
BUR3	13	154	78
BUR4	4	154	78

*Data as per 22 February 2021, based on UNFCCC online registry https://unfccc.int/BURs
**Data as per 22 February 2021, based on UNFCCC online registry https://unfccc.int/process/Parties-non-Party-stakeholders/Parties-convention-and-observer-states?field_national_communications_target_id%5B514%5D=514
*** LDCs and SIDSs (least developed countries and small island developing states) are given leeway to submit the BURs (Biennial Update Reports). List of LDCs according to UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list and list of SIDS according to UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States https://www.un.org/ohrlls/content/list-sids

Turning to developed Parties, most developed Parties have submitted all four Biennial Reports. Only Ukraine and the United States of America have not submitted their third and fourth Biennial Reports.[8] The Biennial Reports were to undergo multilateral assessment involving a question-and-answer dynamic, and developing countries made amply use of this opportunity to pose confronting questions to developed countries.[9]

As we have seen, the system of reporting posed new demands for transparency for both developed and developing countries, yet the processes were separated. This changed with the advent of the Paris Agreement, as will be discussed below.

4.3 Transparency under the Paris Agreement: The Enhanced Transparency Framework

4.3.1 High hopes for enhanced transparency

The adoption of the Paris Agreement marked another chapter in the evolution of transparency and capacity building. One of the most often recited rationale for enhanced transparency is that it would facilitate trust and confidence. Transparency makes visible what countries are doing and this allows others to verify if they keep their commitments. If commitments are implemented, this can solidify trust in future pledges. Yet, in practice it may not be this easy. Numbers can be fiddled with and

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[7] Interview with an employee from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, January 27, 2021.
[8] Based on UNFCCC databases, available at: https://cop23.unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/transparency-and-reporting/reporting-and-review-under-the-convention/national-communications-and-biennial-reports-annex-i-parties/biennial-report-submissions/third-biennial-reports-annex-i and https://unfccc.int/BRs, as per July 2021.
[9] Interview with a transparency negotiator from the Netherlands, January 27, 2021.

promises not implemented. The enhanced transparency framework is to make reporting more trustworthy and universal.

Beyond facilitating trust, the enhanced transparency framework is envisioned to foster enhanced ambition. Transparency might show policy makers the gap between pledge and reality and incentivize them to do more (Weikmans, Asselt and Roberts, 2019). Transparency is to facilitate, via the Global Stocktake, assessment of whether countries are collectively in line with Paris Agreement targets and if not, it is hoped to motivate countries to put forward more ambitious nationally determined contributions.[10]

> "It is very important to respect article 13, so that we report, we globally report, not only Papua New Guinea but all countries report and we see our progress, whether we are progressing to reach the climate goal, if not, then we have to negotiate to improve better."[11]

> "Without that foundation [climate reporting] the ratcheting framework and the way in which you are going to be enhancing ambition each time you have a global stocktake is not going to work"[12]

Enhanced transparency is also considered an approach to make better climate mitigation and adaptation decisions, thereby improving environmental outcomes. For example, by making visible the cost effectiveness of different mitigation options.[13]

Finally, some assume that climate transparency might have spill-over effects to create a 'culture' of transparency, including in policy domains beyond climate. Transparency is a concept that is particularly valued in democratic western cultures yet in some countries, transparency may not hold the same status. Here climate transparency may break the ice for more transparency on other domains. As noted by an interviewee from an eastern European country:

> "Starting with [climate] transparency, this kind of project is very good. And then it will create an atmosphere of being more transparent to other fields, such as ones that are really important."[14]

4.3.2 Negotiating enhanced transparency provisions

With the high hopes on the power of enhanced transparency it is no surprise that transparency was a topic of fierce debate in the runup to the Paris Agreement. Developed countries wanted to move

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[10] Interview with an employee of the Council on Energy, Environment and Water in India, January 4, 2021, and interview with a civil servant from Papua New Guinea, December 11, 2020.
[11] Interview with a civil servant from Papua New Guinea, December 11, 2020.
[12] Interview with an employee from the Global Environmental Facility, December 11, 2020.
[13] Interview with a civil servant from Papua New Guinea, December 11, 2020.
[14] Interview with an employee from UNDP, January 20, 2021.

towards a common transparency framework while developing countries, such as India and Brazil, argued for continued differentiation in transparency obligations (Gupta and van Asselt, 2019). The negotiations resulted in a common transparency framework, yet with built-in flexibilities for those who need it in light of their capacities. Moreover, least developed countries and small island developing states were given extra leeway to provide information at their discretion. Also, many sensitive topics were left vague, to be operationalized later. Some of these matters have been resolved in 2018 with the establishment of Modalities, Procedures and Guidelines. Other issues remain to be resolved, for example with regards to the details of the review process.

Developed countries insisted on a common review format, while developing countries note that developed countries may not backslide in terms of stringency of review compared to pre-Paris arrangements.[15] As such, it seems premature to call the transparency framework 'enhanced', in fact it might only be enhanced for developing countries while *reducing* requirements and stringency of review for developed countries. In any case, countries are to submit their first Biennial Transparency Reports, substituting the Biennial Reports and Biennial Update Reports, in 2024. The scope of these reports is elaborated in table 8 below. Importantly, these reports make a distinction between mandatory and voluntary elements. Greenhouse gas inventory and tracking of mitigation actions are mandatory for all, while information on climate change impacts and adaptation is voluntary. Reporting on support is mandatory for developed countries and voluntary for developing countries, a clear point of bifurcation thus remains.

Table 8. Scope of reporting under the Paris Agreement (Table from Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta, 2021)

	What information is to be provided (mandatory/optional) and by whom?
Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) *and* **Modalities, Procedures and Guidelines** for implementing the ETF	**Reports shall include** *(i.e., mandatory categories of reporting):* 1. Greenhouse gas inventory 2. Information necessary to track progress on Nationally Determined Contributions (<u>only mitigation</u> and adaptation actions with <u>mitigation co-benefits</u>) 3. Information on support provided and mobilized (only for developed countries) **Reports should include** *(i.e., recommended/optional categories of reporting)* 1. Information related to climate change impacts and adaptation 2. Information on support needed and received (only for developing countries) 3. Information on support provided and mobilized (by other than developed countries)

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[15] Interview with a transparency negotiator from the Netherlands, January 27, 2021.

4.3.3 Capacity building: Initial perspectives and emerging practices

The adoption of the enhanced transparency framework introduced more demanding reporting requirements for developing countries. In terms of capacity building, an important novelty is that the Paris Agreement specifies that funding for capacity building for transparency *shall* be provided on a continuous basis (UNFCCC, 2015, 31). This was subsequently operationalized through the Global Environmental Facility, which internalized capacity building for transparency into its programming of funds. Besides this official path, there are numerous other multi- and bilateral initiatives that focus on capacity building for climate transparency. But under this layer of renewed enthusiasm there are also signs of caution.

Interview data reveals various perspectives on the prospects of actually improving capacities through all this enhanced capacity building. As one interviewee noted,

> "We still haven't seen a huge improvement of reporting under the convention over the years, it has improved with certain countries but when you look at the overall and you are doing averages it is very hard to see that."[16]

Another interviewee compared capacity building to "pouring water in the sand, it remains wet for a while, and then dries up again".[17] Another compared new capacity building initiatives such as the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency and the CBIT with the Country Study Initiative from 1992, in which around 20 countries were given seed money to set up a greenhouse gas inventory team as well as access to newest tools and methodologies. This interviewee mentioned that fundamentally nothing has changed over the last three decades, simply that "some people do it more successfully than the others." [18]

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[16] Interview with an employee form the Global Environmental Facility, December 11, 2021.
[17] Interview with an employee from the UNFCCC, January 15, 2021.
[18] Ibid.

Table 9. Overview of capacity building for transparency initiatives

Initiative	UN mandate	Donors	Implementers	Magnitude of funding
Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency	Yes	15+ developed countries in first cycle, now structural in GEF cycles	GEF accredited agencies	~1-2 million per project
GEF BUR/NC support	Yes	Structural part of GEF cycles	GEF accredited agencies	352 000 for BUR 500 000 for NC TBD for BTR
Consultative Group of Experts	Yes	Structural in UNFCCC		
Initiative for Climate Action Transparency	No	Germany, Italy, CIFF, CW[19]	UNEP-DTU partnership, WRI, ISPRA, NCI, GHGMI[20]	
Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement	No	Germany, South Korea, and South Africa		
Global Support Programme		GEF	UNEP and UNDP	

Key: BTR – Biennial Transparency Report, BUR – Biennial Update Report, CIFF - Children's Investment Fund Foundation, CW – Climate Works, DTU – Technical University of Denmark, GEF – Global Environmental Facility, GHGMI – Greenhouse Gas Management Institute, ISPRA – Ministry of Environment of Italy, NC – National Communication, NCI – New Climate Institute, UNDP – United Nations Development Programme, UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme, WRI - World Resources Institute.
Note: data on funding and implementing agencies was not available for all initiatives. Therefore, some entries are left blank in the above table.

Importantly, different actors involved in capacity building may have different aims and understandings of capacity building for transparency. Some prominent aims of capacity building for transparency include: *complying* with international transparency provisions, improving domestic *decision-making,* attracting *finance,* and creating reporting material for international *political leverage.*

The dominant narrative is that the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement introduces new requirements for developing countries, yet they currently lack the capacity to *comply* with these new provisions, therefore capacity building is needed. An interviewee from the UNFCCC noted that many developing countries, if you ask them why they report, will tell they need to *comply* with international obligations.[21] Also, an interviewee from India noted that when approaching the

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[19] Source : https://climateactiontransparency.org/about/initiative-governance/
[20] Source : https://climateactiontransparency.org/about/
[21] Interview with an employee from the UNFCCC, January 15, 2021.

government their first question was, "what exactly are we obliged to report, show me the text".[22] Interview data suggests this focus on *complying* with transparency requirements also resonates in least developed countries, as illustrated by a comment from a civil servant from Zimbabwe;

> "We as a country, as a Party to the UNFCCC, as a Party to the Paris Agreement, we have obligations to report on our national inventories and all those things [..] I define capacity building in a technical perspective, building the capacity to collect information that is required for reporting to the UNFCCC"[23]

The advent of the enhanced transparency framework and mandatory reporting provisions for developing countries was also a main driver for agencies to get involved in capacity building for transparency, as illustrated by an interviewee from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO):

> "With the Paris Agreement and the enhanced transparency framework with the new modalities and procedures and guidelines where the greenhouse gases inventory become really a *shall* for all countries, that was sort of automatic that we started to provide the support for countries on the enhanced transparency framework".[24]

Another narrative is that transparency and reporting efforts can and should lead to improved domestic *decision-making*. In this context, climate data (particularly information on greenhouse gas emissions) is compared to economic data like the gross domestic product, which a country would want to be able to collect and interpret domestically to make informed policy decisions.[25] This could be for ex-post or anticipatory policymaking. In terms of anticipatory policy making some interviewees mentioned that data (emission trends and scenarios, for example) should be used to make informed decisions on the updating of nationally determined contributions.

Others look more concretely to the use of data to plan projects, for example for agriculture or infrastructure planning (e.g., based on climate change projections, should new types of drought resistant crops be subsidized to anticipate drought? Should roads be built further away from the shore to anticipate rising sea levels?). However, using data in this way may not be without problems; some scholars warn for a process of 'anticipatory ruination' where local communities are disadvantaged in the present in the name of anticipatory adaptation pathways (Paprocki, 2019).

This anticipatory style of project planning can also go for mitigation projects. For example, a hydro dam might not be the best option if the data shows there will not be enough water in the future to fill

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[22] Interview with an employee from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water in India, January 4, 2021.
[23] Interview with a civil servant from Zimbabwe, January 6, 2021.
[24] Interview with an employee from the FAO, January 15, 2021.
[25] Interview with an UNEP-DTU employee, December 9, and an interview with a UNDP employee, December 8, 2021.

the reservoir. Beyond anticipation, data can also be of value in evaluation of projects. For example, in Lebanon climate data was used to assess cost effectiveness of subsidies for mitigation actions by the private sector.[26]

Beyond using climate data for policymaking, developing countries hope that building transparency capacities will facilitate attracting international *finance*. International reporting represents an avenue to voice challenges and needs, upon which a donor or multilateral agency might respond.[27] In fact, the enhanced transparency framework invites developing countries to report on their support needs (UNFCCC, 2015, Art. 13, para. 10). However, a seasoned capacity building practitioner doubted this would be effective since decisions about funding are made elsewhere.[28]

Regardless of reporting to the UNFCCC, countries with a better transparency system might be more attractive for donors, because structures are in place to track impact of a project. Similarly, having more data available might put countries in a better position to write good project proposals. Moreover, private investors increasingly demand transparent climate data.[29]

Another way through which enhanced reporting capacities may facilitate access to *finance* is through participation in market mechanisms. To sell carbon credits, one needs to be able to prove that the credits represent reduced emissions. This is a sensitive topic. At the time of writing, Parties have not managed to agree on the operationalization of article 6 of the Paris Agreement, and reporting is one of the contentious topics. Developed countries insist on strict reporting requirements to ensure the integrity of emission reduction outcomes. However, Least Developed Countries fear that they will not have the capacity to meet the demanding reporting requirements and thus miss the opportunity to participate in these, potentially lucrative, market mechanisms. Large emerging economies such as China and Brazil hide behind the arguments of Least Developed Countries. The confounding aspect here is that in the negotiations these countries argue for low requirements, while once the requirements have been set, at whatever level, they want to make sure they are ready for it.[30]

Beyond attracting *finance*, countries may participate in capacity building for transparency to use the transparency system to realize *political leverage*. For example, Trinidad and Tobago seems to use good transparency performance to deflect attention from bad environmental performance, as exemplified by an interviewee:

> "So, Trinidad and Tobago, being blamed of being the biggest emitters in the Caribbean,
> they come out with a nice monitoring, reporting and verification structure, you know. So,
> in that regards it is seen as a country modelling the monitoring, reporting and verification

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[26] Interview with a UNDP employee / civil servant in Lebanon, January 18, 2021.
[27] Interview with a UNFCCC employee, January 15, 2021.
[28] Interview with an employee from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, January 27, 2021.
[29] Interview with an employee from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water in India, January 4, 2021.
[30] Interview with an employee from Perspectives, February 2, 2021.

system in the Caribbean or even in the whole region. I think those are the incentives, and obviously also they want to be politically correct and push the bigger countries to do the same. Like if Trinidad and Tobago can do this, why not other countries."[31]

Interestingly, Trinidad and Tobago does not only use good reporting to deflect attention from bad climate performance, there also seems to be an element of international pressure: 'If I report correctly, then the bigger countries should do so too'. Countries with limited reporting capacity may miss opportunities. An interviewee from India noted that the country is already doing a lot of climate actions that are simply not being reported, reporting these might give the country more political power internationally.[32]

On a more practical level it is important to assess what drives the donors to invest substantial resources in capacity building for transparency? Table 10 below shows an overview of excerpts from donor countries domestic justification of their funding. From these excerpts it seems like donors are mostly interested in the *mitigation* potential of transparency activities. In terms of scope, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Japan only mention greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation action reporting. Canada also notes adaptation and support, but they mention that *all* projects have components on greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation actions, while some include adaptation and support. This is partly at odds with the perspectives of recipient countries. In an analysis of country submissions to UNFCCC negotiations, Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta (2021) found that while developing countries emphasize the importance of capacity building for greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation reporting, they *also* argue for capacity building for adaptation and support. These countries also note that currently there are very limited tools and methodologies for adaptation and support reporting, while reporting on emissions enjoys much more detailed guidelines and tools.[33]

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[31] Interview with a UNEP-DTU employee, December 9, 2021.
[32] Interview with an employee from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water in India, January 4, 2021
[33] Interview with a scholar from the Free University of Brussel, February 25, 2021.

Table 10. Excerpts from government publications on their funding to the CBIT

Donor	Scope	Justification	Source
Canada	"All projects have components related to improving **GHG inventories** and transparency of **mitigation** actions. Some projects also include transparency of **adaptation** actions and of **support** needed and received."	"to help developing countries increase their capacity to **report transparently** their **greenhouse gas emissions reductions and their climate efforts**, in line with the enhanced transparency requirements laid out in the Paris Agreement."	Governmental website (Government of Canada, 2019)
The Netherlands	"This fund will finance activities that aim to ensure that sufficient knowledge and capacity is available in developing countries to record and report their **emissions**."*	"This is important as it makes visible what happens in the different countries. After all, **transparency and accountability** are the backbone of all **carbon pricing systems**, and elements need to be in place to minimize the potential for **fraud**."*	Annual report Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (Ministerie van infrastructuur en milieu, 2016)
United Kingdom	it is expected to result in: (i) increased understanding of **emissions and removals** and associated trends, at both the national and global level; (ii) an increased understanding of **abatement** opportunities; and (iii) an increased understanding of the effects of **mitigation** policies and measures.	"expected to result in **an increase transparency of global climate action** […] the expectation is that recipient countries will be able to engage in more **effective mitigation policy making** and that the international community will be better able to **calibrate and back up expectations in relation to countries' climate action**.	Business case report**
Japan	"CBIT is a fund to support capacity building relating to accounting for **greenhouse gas emissions** to secure transparency of **mitigation** measures for developing countries."	"transparency is essential **in developing countries where greenhouse gas emissions are rapidly increasing**."	Governmental website (Ministry of the environment, 2017)

*Original text in Dutch: "Uit dit fonds worden activiteiten gefinancierd die als doel hebben om te zorgen dat in ontwikkelingslanden voldoende kennis en capaciteit beschikbaar is voor het registreren en rapporteren van hun emissies." and "Dat is van groot belang, zodat duidelijk is wat er in de verschillende landen daadwerkelijk gebeurt. Transparantie en verantwoording vormen immers de ruggengraat van alle systemen van carbon pricing en deze zaken moeten op orde zijn om de kans op fraude en «windhandel» zo klein mogelijk te houden."
**This document analyzes the merits of the United Kingdom government providing funding to the CBIT. The document lacks important meta data; therefore, the source is given in this footnote instead of the bibliography. The document is available on: https://aidstream.org/files/documents/CBIT-Business-Case-December-2015-20190426090459.pdf

Another factor that may have motivated donors to support capacity building efforts is that it provided them an avenue to reciprocate the fact that developing countries accepted a common transparency framework. As an interviewee who works closely together with donors noted:

> "I think donors moved quickly because it was key to the buy-in form developing countries into this much more enhanced transparency framework in which they are expecting the participation of all countries at the same level and you no longer have the distinction between non-annex 1 and annex-1 Parties, of course notwithstanding flexibility options for least developed countries and small island developing states and so I think for them it was very important to say we really appreciate that you are coming along with us and we know that that is dependent on support and in addition to you know the regular requests for additional climate finance this was a very specific way in which they could say we appreciate you coming along and here is the support that we promised you."[34]

Table 11 below provides an overview of the pledges that were made by donor countries at the COP22, only a year after the negotiations in Paris. While it is laudable to see support being mobilized for capacity building for transparency, the question remains open as to whether this finance is truly additional, or whether it may in fact be (indirectly) diverted from other domains, such as support for adaptation action.

Table 11. Pledged funding for the CBIT during a joint statement at COP22

Country	Pledge*
Australia	$1.5 million USD
Canada	$3.8 million USD
Germany	$11 million USD
Italy	$4.4 million USD
Japan	TBD
The Netherlands	$1.1 million USD
New Zealand	TBD
Sweden	$3.4 million USD
Switzerland	$1 million USD
The United Kingdom	$13.5 million USD
The United States of America	$15 million USD
Belgium	$0.4 million USD
Total	$55.3 million USD

*Data based on donor statement published at COP22: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/web-documents/CBIT-donor-statement-COP22.pdf

The CBIT allows for individual countries to request funding for domestic capacity building. Figure 3 below provides a detailed overview of this application process. As shown, the process involves close cooperation and review rounds involving the recipient country, the agency, and the Global Environmental Facility. This process typically starts by a country reaching out to an implementing agency with the request to work together on an application, although implementing agencies and the Global Environmental Facility also do outreach themselves. Consequently, the agency works together with the country on a Project Identification Form that sets out the scope and the envisioned outcomes

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[34] Interview with an employee from the Global Environmental Facility, December 11, 2021.

of the project. Once this Project Identification Form is approved, possibly after several rounds of revision based on feedback from the secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility, the agency and the country compile an elaborate project proposal that explains in detail what activities will be carried out under the project. This project proposal also undergoes several internal and external review rounds before it is finalized.

The three key actors in this process are the recipient country, the implementing agency, and the secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility. Secondary actors may include domestic partners such as ministries or NGOs. The recipient country has, in theory, much discretion over the design of the project. Indeed, the recipient country government must explicitly endorse the Project Identification Form and the Project Proposal. At the same time the implementing agency and the secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility may be much more experienced with the process and may have considerable influence on the design of projects. A key question that remains is to what extent this facilitates or hinders recipient countries to put forward their domestic priorities. The subsequent chapter will take a close look at these matters and examine the CBIT in practice.

Figure 3. Overview of CBIT application process
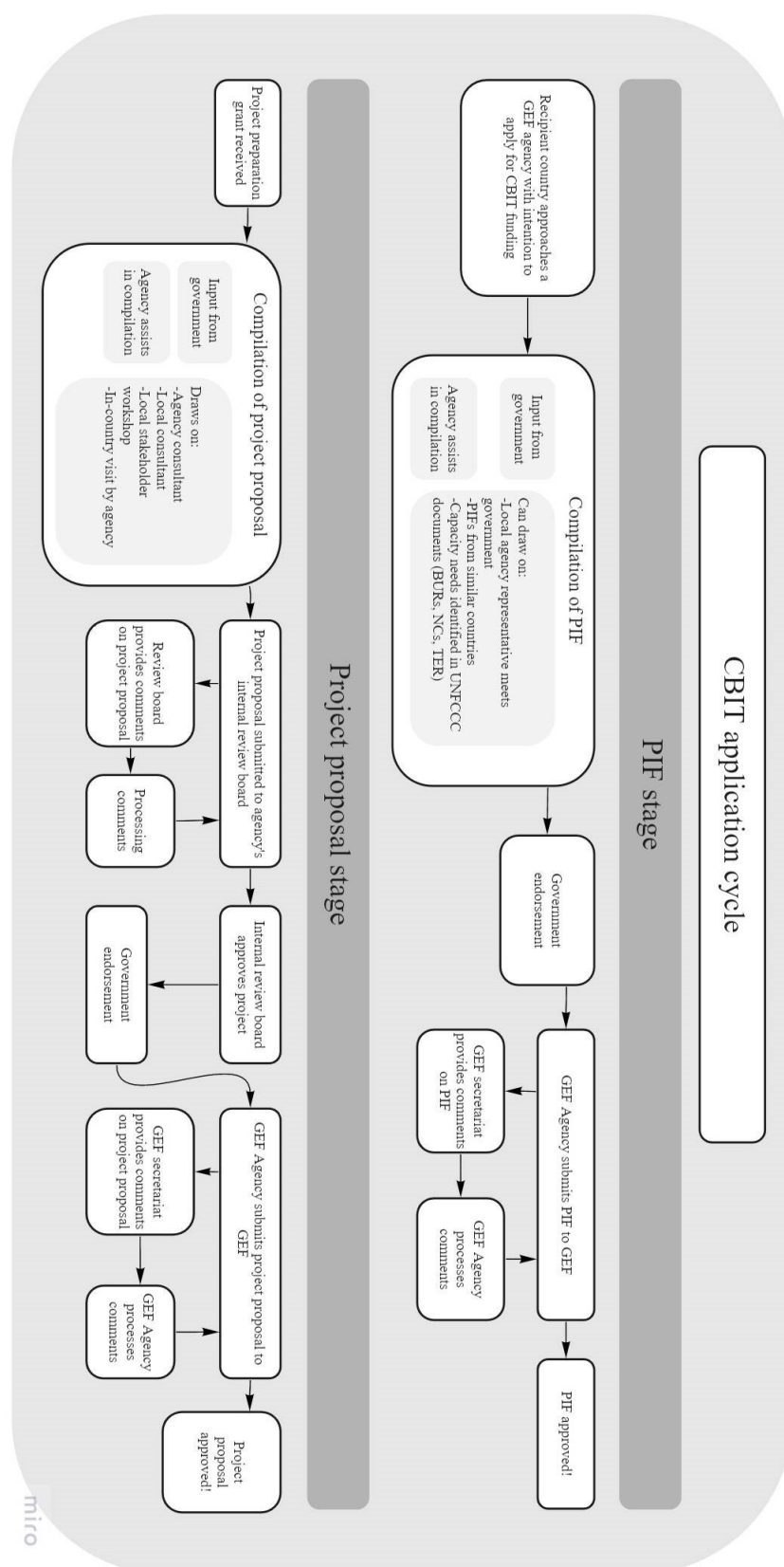
Key: BUR - Biennial Update Report, CBIT - Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency, GEF- Global Environmental Facility, NC – National Communication, TER – Technical Expert Review, PIF - Project Identification Form, UNFCCC - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

In sum, this chapter has shown that the past three decades have seen a steady increase in reporting requirements, especially so for developing countries. In practice, relatively few developing countries have adhered to reporting provisions. Capacity building has a long tradition under the UNFCCC. Yet, the approach of hiring external consultants to write National Communications and Biennial Update Reports has, according to some, not contributed to the building of capacities in developing countries. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement new capacity building initiatives have emerged. These new initiatives, at least rhetorically, place more emphasis on building capacities locally and sustainably. At the same time, there seems to be a mismatch between donor imperatives that see transparency as a tool to improve mitigation policies in developing countries, and developing countries calls to also pay attention to transparency on adaptation and support. Moreover, the tools and guidance on greenhouse gas inventories have steadily become more nuanced and elaborated, while guidance for reporting on adaptation and support lags behind. The subsequent chapter provides an in-depth empirical analysis of capacity building under the CBIT and aims to generate more clarity about some of these emerging questions.

Chapter 5: Capacity building for transparency in practice: An analysis of CBIT proposals

The previous chapter showed how capacity building for transparency initiatives proliferated in recent years. This chapter addresses research question 1.2 and examines capacity building for climate transparency in practice. The CBIT is main capacity building initiative and will serve as a case study. To analyze capacity building for transparency in practice three main categories of analysis are used, namely, the 'who', 'what' and 'how'. This chapter draws on interview data as well as document analysis of CBIT project proposals.

The CBIT was established under decision 1 paragraph 85 of the 21st conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (UNFCCC, 2015, Decision 1, para. 85). This decision explains that the CBIT is to build technical and institutional capacities of developing country Parties for meeting the enhanced transparency requirements as set out under the Paris Agreement. Decision 1 of the 21st conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC further stipulates that the aims of the CBIT are to: 'strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities', 'provide relevant tools, training, and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Agreement', and 'assist in the improvement of transparency over time' (UNFCCC, 2015, Decision 1, para. 86).

The CBIT is operated by the Global Environmental Facility and is essentially a fund where developing countries can apply for resources to implement projects. To apply for funding, developing country Parties need to work together with an accredited implementing agency to the Global Environmental Facility. Examples of important implementing agencies include the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

The CBIT, as of 15 April 2021, provided 121.6 million USD support to 73 countries (GEF, 2021, para. 2). Of these 22 are least developed countries, 11 are small island developing states, and 2 are both a least developed country and small island developing state (GEF, 2021, para. 12). For climate related capacity building this is a substantial amount of money. For example, the Paris Committee on Capacity Building that is tasked with ensuring that climate related capacity building gaps and needs are addressed has very little funds at its disposition. Having shortly introduced the CBIT, I now turn to an analysis of the 'who', 'what', and 'how' of this initiative.

5.1 What capacities are built in practice?

I first present and discuss the 'what' of capacity building for climate transparency, as emerging in practice within CBIT Project Identification Form proposals. The 'what' consists of two elements, what type of capacity is built, and capacity to be transparent about what. I start with the former.

To conceptualize different types or dimensions of capacity, I use the framework of Grindle and Hildebrand (1995, 446) as introduced in chapter 2. This framework presents five dimensions of capacity, from the micro to the macro level these are: Human resources, Organization, Task network, Institutional, and Action environment. This framework holds that capacity needs to be understood as a system in which all the above elements present a dimension of the capacity of the system to perform. The Human resources dimension refers to the capacities of individuals, the second dimension speaks to the capacity of an organization and its managerial structure, the task network relates to coordination among different organizations, the institutional dimension refers to policies, regulations and budget, and the action environment speaks to the larger social, political, and economical context within which the former dimensions are embedded, including leadership support, public awareness, and stage of development.

The CBIT received a clear mandate to focus on building *institutional* capacities. Indeed, the first aim of the CBIT, as expressed in decision 1 of the 21st conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC is to 'strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities' (UNFCCC, 2015, Decision 1, para. 86(a)). Chapter 3 showed that in general the climate community seems to agree that in the past the focus of capacity building has been too narrow and focused on technical capacities. Riddled by poor retention of capacities built, the mantra now seems to be to build 'institutional arrangements.' The idea is that building institutional capacities would allow countries to independently organize their reporting actions. However, the viewpoint that institutional arrangements are most important is not universal in the climate community and in practice capacity building spans all five dimensions.

Training <u>individuals</u> in specific technical skills for climate reporting remains an important pillar of capacity building. This is exemplified by a remark from an interviewee working at one of the major CBIT implementing agencies:

> "Capacity building means that you are going to a specific audience to develop a specific
> skill that they may need to internalize decisions coming from the UNFCCC process. So
> that is how we understand capacity building in this field"[35]

The same interviewee was critical to the involvement of universities in this process of training individuals, articulating that "You develop capacities of existing experts in the field, so you are not

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[35] Interview with UNEP-DTU employee, December 9, 2020.

working with schools or even universities."[36] Others disagree, to them universities can play a key role to increase the general pool of individuals with expertise. As mentioned by a civil servant from a developing country:

> "In terms of getting individuals attracted to the natural resource management field is somehow difficult. What is getting individuals attracted now to the field is now that under the national adaptation plan project just in 2018 that project was able to assist the government of Liberia in establishing a graduate program at the University of Liberia where in Master of Science program in environmental studies, climate change and biodiversity is now taking place. So that is to a large extent beginning to encourage people into the natural resource field"[37]

Capacity building at the <u>organizational</u> level focusses on using data for decision-making. The idea here is that data collection should not only result in a report to the UNFCCC but also find its way into national policy making. This capacity runs in multiple ways, the organization should be able to produce digestible reports, but also policy makers should learn how to integrate results in their work. Furthermore, the organization should gain capacity to manage data, often software is seen the primary vehicle to do so.

While managing data may be something that can be housed in climate or environmental department, much more challenging is to collect all the data in the first place. Managing this data flow is all about *coordination* between various stakeholders. In the words of the framework, there needs to be a strong <u>task network</u> to facilitate the interactions between stakeholders. Data is to be collected primarily by external stakeholders and is to flow via various paths to the climate team compiling the report. In practice, this is often a tremendous challenge. Some data is confidential, in some cases there is risk of privacy law violation, in many cases there are power imbalances and political considerations that prevent data flow. Here again software is envisioned to facilitate the process so that stakeholders can directly input their data to the system. Yet, this is also the realm of "institutional arrangements", which includes ministries signing memoranda of understanding about data sharing. Institutional arrangements sound technocratic while in practice they might be very political.

This brings us to the level of <u>institutional</u> capacities; in a way the institutional arrangements could be considered part of this category. When coordination becomes structurally embedded in the system we can speak of institutions. In some cases, this even goes as far as passing new legislation. Another element of the institutional context relates to the availability of financial resources for the climate reporting team, especially reliable and continuous resources, as raised by an interviewee:

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[36] Interview with UNEP-DTU employee, December 9, 2020.
[37] Interview with the CBIT focal point of Liberia, December 8, 2020.

> "Institutions involved [in transparency] do not get a strong mandate. And also, they are not able to secure necessary financial resources from the national treasuries. So that requires them to depend on external resources, which can sometimes be unpredictable. And then we know of cases where the whole work on transparency dies when the project cycle ends, so there is no sustainability"[38]

As will be discussed in the 'who' section in more detail, climate departments are often poorly funded internally and rely on external *ad hoc* support. It can be debated whether one calls budgetary support a constituent of (institutional) capacity or whether it is more of a circumstance. In following the framework of Grindle and Hildebrand (1995, 446), I see budgetary support as a constituent of institutional capacity.

In fact, Grindle and Hildebrand (1995, 446) explicitly introduce the social, political, and economic circumstances in their framework under the action environment. To them these are a crucial dimension of capacity. However, projects like the ones the CBIT supports it is mostly out of scope to address these types of factors. Still, there are some projects that do aim to create public awareness or instill political leadership support at the highest level. Others take a more critical stance and turn things up-side-down: Maybe the action environment cannot be changed through a capacity building project, rather the capacity building should be sensitive to the action environment. Like a seasoned capacity builder mentioned:

> "Even after spending so many years, their capacity is not improving. So, we have to admit that then it probably is not the fault of countries or anything. It may be us asking too much."

Document analysis of CBIT project proposals indicates that the lion share of CBIT funding is directed to project outcomes that aim to enhance human resource and organizational capacities. Table 12 shows the distribution of CBIT funding by dimension of capacity.

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[38] Interview with UNFCCC employee, January 15, 2021.

Table 12. Dimensions of capacity building: Project proposal outputs focus primarily on building organizational and human resource capacity

Dimension of capacity building*	Number of project outputs	Total amount of requested GEF funding for project outputs in million USD	Percentage of total requested GEF funding
Human resources	134	41.6	21%
Organizational	106	16.5	53%
Task Network	106	10.0	13%
Institutional	75	7.8	10%
Action Environment	5	1.6	1%
Undefined	20	0.5	2%
TOTAL	699	78.2**	100%

*These dimensions of capacity building are based on the typology as presented in table 1 (section 2.1) of this thesis, building on the work of Grindle and Hildebrand (1995, 446). The coding scheme used to classify capacity building project outputs along dimensions of capacity building can be found in annex A.
**This number only concerns funding particularly targeted at implementing specific project outputs. General project management costs, agency fees, and project preparation grants are not included in this total.

The above Table shows that while the CBIT has a strong mandate to focus on strengthening *institutions*, in practice the focus lies on providing technical trainings and tools for individuals and organizations. A key question is then to what extent this type of capacity building ensures retention of capacities built and whether this will lead to recipient countries becoming independent in their reporting efforts.

The conceptual and evolution chapter noted a narrative that capacity building should shift from *ad hoc* activities aimed at producing a specific report, by focusing narrowly on human resources and organizational capacity, to a more systemic approach with a focus on addressing institutional structures. The results of this analysis of CBIT documents have however shown that the lion share of the Global Environmental Facility funding has gone to strengthening organizational and human resource capacities. These capacities include the development of certain methodologies or country specific emission factors. In any case, the finding that much of the funding goes to human resources and organizational capacity seems to be at odds with the CBIT's mandate to build *institutional* capacities. While some projects include building legislation and creating novel institutions, this remains rather limited across the board. Even more marginal are outputs related to the broader social, political, and economic context. Only a hand full of outputs aimed to change the general action environment, mostly by means of raising awareness, either for the public or among high-level policy

makers. In sum, most of the CBIT funding goes to human resource and organizational capacities. These findings give a very general overview of how capacities are built, more granular analysis is needed to examine in more detail what methods of capacity building are used in practice. This could include training, peer-learning, learning-by-doing, university programs, installing equipment, and so forth.

Capacity to be transparent about what?

Having discussed what different types or dimensions of capacity building are implemented in practice, I now turn to the question of capacities to be transparent about what? In other words, the thematic scope of capacity building as it pertains to the main categories of reporting such as greenhouse gas inventory, mitigation, adaptation, vulnerability, and support.

The decision that established the CBIT mandates support to be provided for meeting transparency provisions as set out in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. As discussed in chapter 3, Article 13 on the enhanced transparency framework stipulates that developing countries *shall* provide information on greenhouse gas emissions and information for the tracking of Nationally Determined Contributions (mitigation component), and *should* provide information in relation to adaptation, climate change impacts, and support needed and received. This then formed the basis for the development of the CBIT's programming directions. The programming directions stipulate a non-exhaustive list of activities are eligible for CBIT funding. These activities include but are not limited to supporting national institutions, supporting the use of knowledge from transparency initiatives for policy making, assistance in various technical matters, and capacity needs assessment. An indication of the thematic scope of the programming directions is provided in table 13 below. The programming directions reference to transparency on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), greenhouse gas inventories, adaptation, and support, but not on impacts, vulnerability or loss and damage. However, the programming directions are not exhaustive.

Table 13. Thematic scope of the programming directions of the CBIT

Key word	Frequency*
NDC	3
MRV	2
Emissions	2
GHG	1
Adaptation	1
Support	1
Vulnerability	0
Loss and damage	0

*Based on paragraph 18 of the CBIT programming directions (GEF, 2016, para. 18).
**Occurrences of the word support were only counted when mentioned in the context of reporting on support provided or received. When support was used in a different context, for example 'the GEF supports gender equality', that is not related to reporting the word occurrence was not counted.
Key: GHG – Greenhouse gas, MRV – Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification, NDC – Nationally Determined Contribution.

While the programming directions do not express an explicit preference or prioritization between *shall* and *should* categories of reporting, they implicitly emphasize reporting on emissions and mitigation actions. Table 13 above illustrates this. Note that reporting on Nationally Determined Contributions, in the context of the enhanced transparency framework, is only mandatory for the mitigation component. In other words, Nationally Determined Contribution tracking is another way of saying mitigation action tracking. Similarly, MRV, monitoring reporting and verification, has historically been linked to emissions (reductions), especially in the context of market mechanisms like the clean development mechanism. These mitigation related terms feature more prominently in the programming directions than adaptation or support.

Similarly, how the Global Environmental Facility monitors its success of implementing the CBIT has a strong link to mitigation aspects. Success is measured through a results framework. This results framework consists of five indicators of which four are taken from the 'GEF-6 Climate Change *Mitigation* results framework'. These indicators have a strong *mitigation* focus. The first indicator concerns the number of 'tons of *greenhouse gas* reduced or avoided', the second indicator measures the 'volume of investment mobilized and leveraged by Global Environmental Facility projects for *low greenhouse gas* development', the third indicator concerns the quality of 'MRV (monitoring, reporting, and verification) systems for *emissions reductions'*, and the fourth indicator counts the 'number of countries meeting Convention reporting requirements and including *mitigation contributions*' (GEF, 2016, para. 29). The fifth indicator was newly created for the CBIT and facilitates a 'qualitative assessment of institutional capacity built for transparency-related activities under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement' (GEF, 2016, para. 31). Where adaptation and support still

featured in the programming directions the success indicators of the CBIT have no mention of these terms and put strong emphasis on mitigation elements. Still, recipient countries have, at least in theory, considerable flexibility to determine the focus of their CBIT project. This leaves the question open as to how these questions of the scope of capacity building play out in CBIT projects.

CBIT projects have a strong thematic focus on greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation. Figure 4 below shows the distribution of Global Environmental Facility funding by scope of capacity building based on document analysis and the coding of 699 project outputs that were classified in four thematic categories: greenhouse gas inventory, mitigation, adaptation, and support. Moreover, a distinction was made between funding provided by the CBIT and co-financing. Co-financing typically represents in-kind resources by the recipient country but can also be provided by the implementing agency or other donors.

Figure 4. Thematic scope of capacity building: Project proposal outputs primarily request funding for greenhouse gas-inventory and mitigation
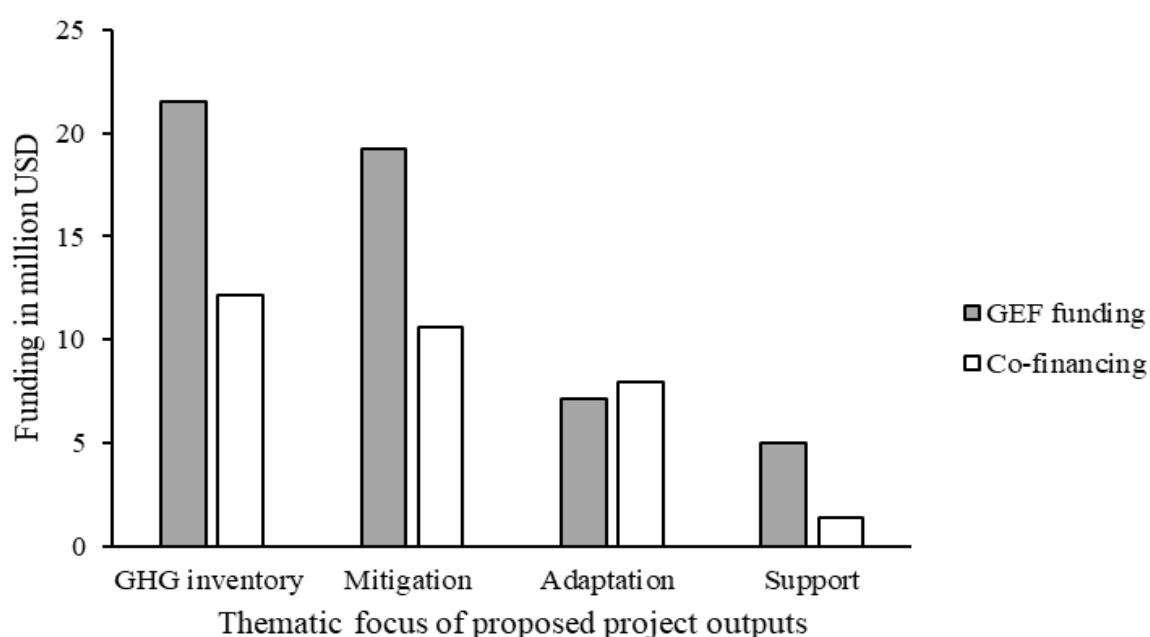
Note: This figure is based on analysis of outputs in CBIT project proposals (PIF documents). There was a substantial number of outputs for which the thematic scope could not be determined: 30.6 million for Global Environmental Facility funding and 20.2 million for co-financing.

As the figure shows, the thematic category that receives most funding is capacity building related to greenhouse gas inventory, followed closely by mitigation. Funding for adaptation and support is less than half of that for greenhouse gas inventory, with least amount of funding being allocated to transparency of support. Co-financing follows a similar trend, with the noticeable difference of adaptation. However, co-financing for adaptation is still less funded than greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation co-financing.

Three important footnotes need to be considered when interpreting these findings. First, many outputs did not contain a clear thematic focus and had to be coded as 'undefined', this concerned 30.6 million in Global Environmental Facility funding and 20.2 million in co-financing. Secondly, not all proposals specify funding allocation to the level of output, so in many cases the funding allocated to an output was simply calculated by dividing the funding over the number of outputs under that component. Finally, some outputs referred to multiple thematic areas, in this case the funding was assumed to be divided equally over the different thematic area. These caveats notwithstanding, a clear trend emerges in terms of funding allocation, with most funding being allocated to outputs relating to greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation, while a lot less funding allocated to adaptation and support.

Figure 5. Thematic scope of capacity building in least developed countries and small island developing states
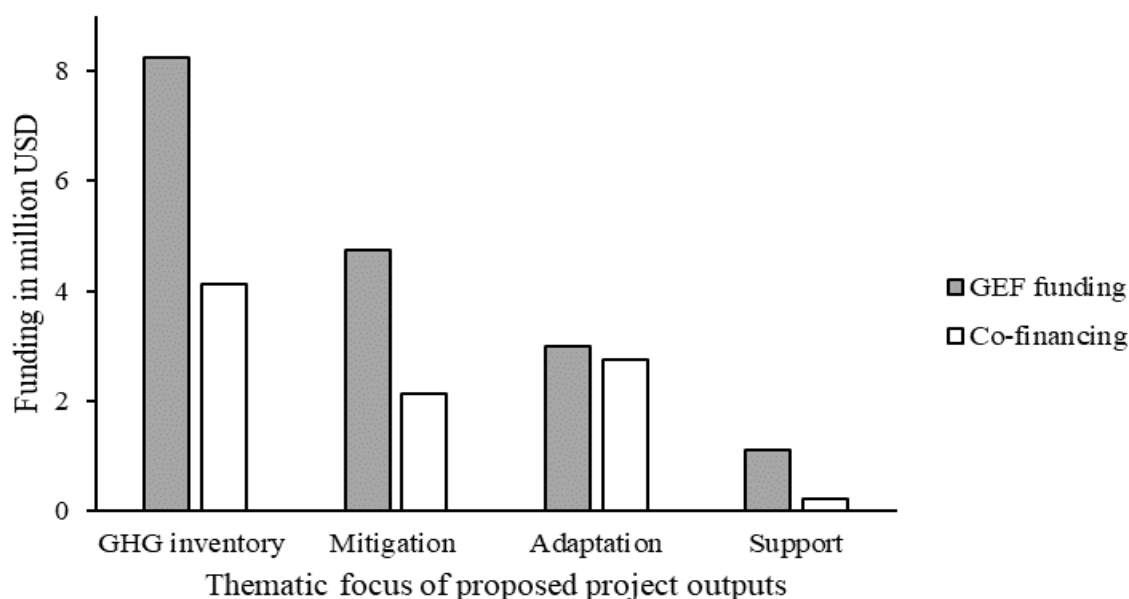
Taking the above finding together a picture emerges whereby the lion share of funding is devoted to building human resource and organizational capacity for greenhouse gas inventories and reporting on mitigation. This follows the line of prioritization of greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation reporting in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, the programming directions of the CBIT, and the success indicators of the CBIT.

Adaptation and support are priorities for developing countries, and the enhanced transparency framework even encourages Parties to report on these elements. In fact, it is in the line of expectations that developing countries will do so. For example, many developing countries also included an adaptation component in their Nationally Determined Contribution, even though this is not required. As an interviewee from the UNFCCC noted:

> "The general expectation is that most developing countries will, even though this adaptation and support are should, the expectation is that most will report it and simply because these two are very important areas of issue for them."[39]

If developing countries are planning on reporting on adaptation and support under the enhanced transparency framework, why are they then still directing most resources to greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation?

Beyond the prioritization of greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation reporting in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, and the programming directions and success indicators of the CBIT, another important factor is that there are limited tools and methodologies on how to report on adaptation and support. Moreover, while greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation action can be brought down to one metric, carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions, adaptation is more difficult to quantify. While support could be quantified to numbers, there remain various ambiguities over the definition of climate finance and the role of loans and the private sector. Adaptation is, moreover, context specific; meaning that adaptation action in a mountainous area may be incomparable to that in a coastal area.

A more radical and less universal explanation for the focus on greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation reporting may be that developing countries are reluctant to report on climate change impacts and adaptation because it may show that impacts are largely the result of poor governance and inadequate public service provision rather than climate change. Similarly, developing countries may feel hesitant to report on support received as they fear this will limit their discretion over how to use these resources.[40] Still, these types of strategic considerations are likely to be the exception rather than the norm. Indeed, developing countries may actually want to report on adaptation related matters "to gain recognition that in fact [developing] countries are confronted with impacts and that there is lot being invested to address and to adapt to adapt to those impacts."[41] Similarly, a briefing paper on the enhanced transparency framework for least developed countries emphasized that the enhanced transparency framework provides an '*opportunity*' to report on efforts to address loss and damage and thereby feeding it into the global stocktake (Aragon and Tshewang, 2019, 3). In sum, reporting could be used as an avenue to draw more attention to adaptation and climate impacts at the international level.

On a more practical note, implementing agencies may also provide another form subtle prioritization of greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation reporting. For example, the implementing agency UNEP requires the inclusion of greenhouse gas inventory and Nationally Determined Contribution tracking in every project, while there are no requirements to include capacity building activities for reporting

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[39] Interview with an employee of the UNFCCC, January 15, 2021.
[40] Interview with a scholar at the Free University of Brussel, February 25, 2021.
[41] Interview with an employee of the UNFCCC, January 15, 2021.

on adaptation or support (Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta, 2021). Moreover, implementing agencies may actively advise countries with limited experience in reporting to initially focus on building capacities to maintain a greenhouse gas inventory before venturing into adaptation reporting.[42]

Importantly, this is not to say that developing capacities to report on greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation is unimportant or straightforward. On the contrary, doing so requires an elaborate set of technical skills and institutional arrangements. Roughly speaking, building a greenhouse gas inventory needs two ingredients, activity data and emission factors. Activity data is the 'raw material' so to say, for example data on kWh electricity usage. Emission factors are the key to translate activity data into greenhouse gas emissions, they describe, for example, how much greenhouse gas emissions can be ascribed to one kWh of electricity usage. Governments can use a global database with default emission factors but having emission factors that are specific to a country will result in more accurate estimations of emissions. In other words, using default emissions can lead to over or underestimation of actual emissions. Developing country-specific emission factors is considered a very *technical* task. Collecting activity data is often described as a complex and demanding task. It involves the collection of data from various stakeholders, including powerful ministries and private actors. These stakeholders may not be willing to share the data that the inventory team requests.

Agriculture is a case in point here. In some countries, the data compiled by the climate department reveals that the agriculture and forest sectors are the largest source of emissions in the country, while in the same countries these sectors account for major shares of employment and revenue. An interesting case here are Latin American countries with a very powerful cattle and agriculture sector. For example, in Paraguay the relations between the climate department and the agricultural producers have been tense.[43] In particular, the producers were reluctant to provide data and constantly questioned the integrity of the greenhouse gas inventories put forward by the department. Yet, more recently it seems like the producer's strategy has changed; producers realize that more detailed calculations may lead to lower emission estimations. For example, a rough estimation would use global emission factors, while a more fine-grained approach uses country-specific emission factors. The lower this emission factor, the lower the total emissions.

The sensitivity of emission data from the agricultural sector is also experienced at the global level. The FAO not given a green light by its members to estimate the total global emissions from the agricultural sector until very recently.[44] Similarly, the release of a United Nations that suggested less meat intensive diets as a sustainability strategy, destroyed the trust of the producer sectors in the

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[42] Interview with UNEP-DTU employee, November 11, 2021.
[43] Interview with a civil servant from Paraguay, January 18, 2021.
[44] Interview with an employee at the FAO, January 15, 2021.

United Nations, and with that in the climate department (that is largely funded through multilateral means).[45]

Building capacity on greenhouse gas inventories can also provide inconvenient information about the attainability of previously communicated mitigation goals. Indeed, some countries only realized that they were overly ambitious when formulating their Nationally Determined Contribution once they started to collect data to compile their greenhouse gas inventory.[46]

The above examples show that building capacities for greenhouse gas inventories is an uphill battle that can become entangled in political battels with powerful stakeholders, such as the agricultural sector in Paraguay. These challenges notwithstanding, greenhouse gas inventory capacities are, on average, more developed than other thematic areas of reporting. Figure 6 below shows the average self-assessed capacity by thematic scope. CBIT countries report highest capacity for greenhouse gas inventory, followed by mitigation, adaptation and finally support, the same order as the funding allocation.

Figure 6. Self-assessed capacity in developing countries: Capacity to report on greenhouse gas inventory scores highest
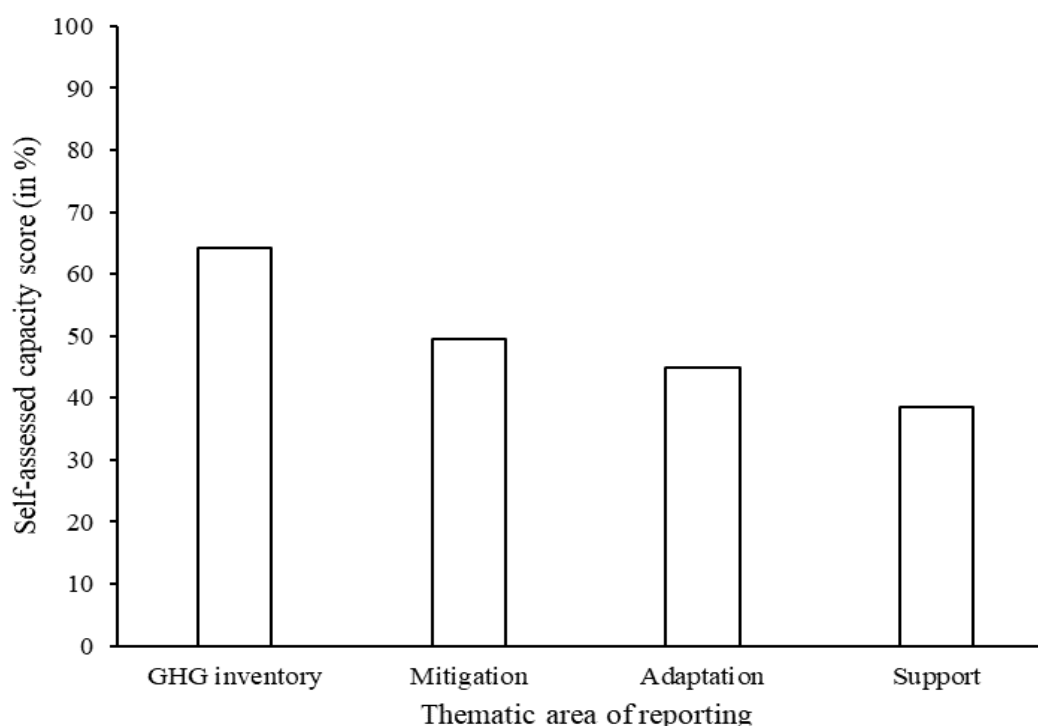
Note: This chart is based on 41 countries who submitted a self-assessment to the CBIT global coordination platform.

As funding is channeled to building the capacities on areas where countries report they already have highest capacities, the gaps in capacity between thematic areas may become larger; possibly resulting

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[45] Interview with a civil servant from Paraguay, January 18, 2021.
[46] Interview with an employee from UNEP-DTU, December 9, 2020.

in high capacity to report on greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation but low capacity to report on adaptation and support.

While capacities to report on adaptation and support may lag behind, these are at least formally recognized by the enhanced transparency framework and the CBIT. Building capacities to report on loss and damage is not even recognized as a possibility for CBIT projects to focus on. Similarly, there is little focus on building capacities to make visible the potential negative effects of implementing mitigation and adaptation projects and policies on development, the local community, and environment. For some countries, loss and damage and the impact of climate action on development may be very important themes but the system prioritizes and nudges towards the standard elements of greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation reporting.

In sum, the 'what' of capacity building for transparency under the CBIT is, in practice, focused on providing training and tools to allow climate departments to better report on greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation efforts. Having discussed the 'what' of capacity building for transparency I now turn to 'how' capacities are built.

5.2 How are capacities built?

The previous section examined 'what' capacities were built to be transparent about what. In this section we examine 'how' these capacities are built in practice.

Chapter 3 discussed how capacity building for transparency has historically been characterized by a project-based, consultant-driven approach. In such an approach, the necessary tools and trainings are parachuted-in to ensure that a report is delivered but with limited retention of capacities. The CBIT is explicitly mandated to support the strengthening of *institutional* capacities and support countries to improve over time (UNFCCC, 2015, Decision 1, para. 86). In practice, however, the CBIT still adopts a project-based approach with an important role for consultants from the implementing agencies. CBIT projects and their envisioned activities need to be described in detail before the start of the project. Also, the project has a timeline with a clear end date.

Document analysis of CBIT projects shows that CBIT project range in duration from 1 to 5 years, with 3 years being the most common project duration (see figure 7). A longer duration may indicate a more programmatic approach than short projects.

Figure 7. Project duration of CBIT projects
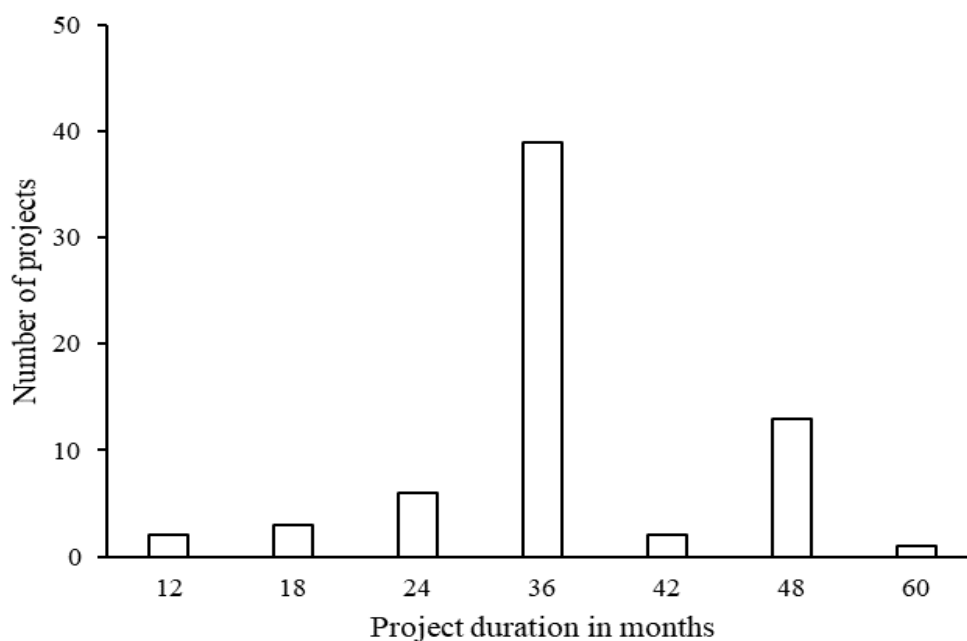
Interestingly, trend data shows that average duration and funding have increased over time (figure 8). While this data is merely descriptive it does indicate a trend towards longer projects. As mentioned above this may go hand in hand with a trend towards more elaborate projects that are better fitted to build lasting institutions.

Figure 8. Average CBIT project duration over time.
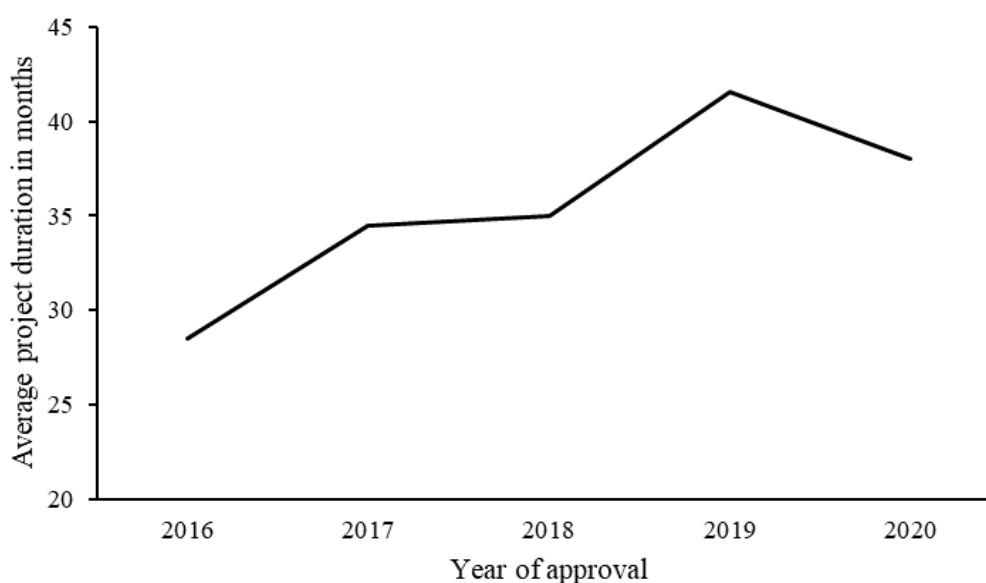
While project durations under the CBIT may be a substantial improvement compared to previous capacity building efforts, and may be increasing, three or even five years is still short to build lasting capacities. As an interviewee mentioned:

> "You do a basic report after two years, then for the next one you improve a bit, improve a bit and quality will come naturally. The way I look at it, quality is function of time."[47]

At the end of the day, capacity building under the CBIT still takes place in the context of a project, and this leaves the risk that after the project ends capacities evaporate. Also, the relatively limited duration limits the opportunity for recipients to learn-by-doing over an extended period. By the time a new project gets approved capacity may be lost leading to duplication of efforts and re-inventing the wheel. On the other hand, the project-based approach may be a strength as it allows for projects to be tailor made to specific capacity building needs, targeted at the right time, place and people. As one interviewee mentioned: "Capacity building is an art rather than a science".[48]

Another important element is how project funding is managed. The CBIT provides developing countries a structural way of accessing funds for building their climate transparency capacities. Importantly, the CBIT funds medium to large sized projects typically in the order of one to five million USD. This are substantially larger sums of money than is available in funding through the Global Environmental Facility for the writing of a report (National Communication or Biennial Update Report). These larger sums of money allow for the building of more institutionalized capacities rather than hiring in one consultant to do the job.

At the same time, the funding structure of the CBIT also has its limitations. Importantly, all funds need to go through an implementing agency, where the implementing agency is the ultimate authority over these funds. This means that CBIT funds cannot be used to pay civil servants of the recipient country directly. As a result, additional personnel are typically hired under the flag of the implementing agency rather than under the relevant government department. This is not just a payroll issue because this way the person operates under the institutional context of the implementing agency and build capacities may not be properly transferred to the government department. Moreover, salaries might be substantially higher for the implementing agency than the government department making it less likely that the personnel trained under the implementing agency will later join the government.[49] The channeling of funds through an implementing agency in some cases results in inefficient use of funds and lack of retention of capacities, as mentioned by a civil servant from a developing country:

> "A big percentage of funds was spent on management of the project and not strengthening of institutions. There was a lack of sustainability in the project implementation since external entities were implementing the project. When the project

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[47] Interview with a UNFCCC employee, January 15, 2021.
[48] Interview with a UNFCCC employee, January 6, 2021.
[49] Interview with a UNDP employee, January 20, 2021.

closed, the teams whose capacity was built did not go on to implement and support the proposed processes"[50]

An alternative approach to providing funding would be to transfer funds directly to the recipient government departments. However, the current funding regulations do not allow for this. These regulations were subject to negotiation and the United States was particularly adamant on ensuring that all funding is managed through implementing agencies.[51] I will return to this topic in the 'who' section because this has bearing on government-agency dynamics.

Applying for funding takes a lot of time, effort, and capacity. Some countries have less than a hand full of people working in the climate department and writing proposals can easily drain attention that could have been devoted to other tasks. As an interviewee from an international organization mentioned:

> "I also think that after a certain point if you spend all your time applying and applying
> for funding and carrying out projects, at what time are you actually focusing on the work
> and the domestic needs?"[52]

The CBIT provides a new avenue for developing countries to access funding for building capacities. However, the CBIT is specifically focused on building capacities for transparency. There is no equivalent fund to build capacities to undertake climate actions, such as local community support and adaptation, with funding for these matters being hard to find.[53]

While the Paris Agreement stipulates that support for capacity building for transparency shall be provided on a continuous basis (UNFCCC, 2015, Art. 13.15), developed countries are building a case that support should be reduced at some point because the capacity that is built in terms of data collection can also be used for domestic policy ends, and thus should be paid for by the country itself.[54] This may actually affect the trust among developing countries that support will be available in the long run, limiting the appetite to invest in building lasting institutions.

There is a whole landscape of support providers on the topic of transparency. Coordination between them could be improved. Particularly, some countries are crowded with projects while others remain unserved. Moreover, duplication of work is a recurring problem, with various support providers serving a concentrated group of countries. As an interviewee from the UNFCCC notes "at the end of the day every donor wants to see a successful project."[55]

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[50] Written response from a civil servant from Uganda to interview questions, February 1, 2021.
[51] Interview with a civil servant from the Netherlands, January 27, 2021.
[52] Interview with an employee from the Global Environmental Facility, December 11, 2021.
[53] Interview with a civil servant from Jamaica, January 22, 2021.
[54] Interview with a civil servant from the Netherlands, January 27, 2021.
[55] Interview with an employee from the UNFCCC, January 15, 2021.

Beyond supporting national projects, the CBIT also supports a hand full of global and regional projects. The global and regional projects typically focus on developing tools and methodologies and facilitating exchange between countries. One strategy is to create regional hubs where countries can share common challenges and search for solutions. The regional initiatives may develop into robust long-lasting institutions that could retain capacity over time in a region. Whether this promise is fulfilled remains to be seen.

In sum, the CBIT organizes capacity building support differently from the previous report-based funding, but it does not fundamentally break with the project-based and implementing agency-driven approach. Capacity building support is still contained in the form of projects which, even though they may span multiple years, have a clear end date where the funding and support leave, requiring the government department to start a new cycle of applying for projects. Similarly, the funding is controlled by the implementing agency and additional personnel are hired under the flag of the implementing agency. This leads in certain cases to unnecessarily high management costs and does not institutionalize the acquired capacity in the government department. As this section has shown questions over who builds whose capacity, and who manages the funding are important topics. These will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

5.3 Who builds whose capacities?

We now turn the element of 'who'. This includes three sub-questions, who builds capacity? Whose capacities are built? And, who decides about capacity building projects?

5.3.1 Who builds capacity?

Implementing agencies are the primary actors that provide capacity building, and as the name suggest, implement projects. For CBIT projects there are only a hand full of implementing agencies. Of these, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), agencies that have traditionally played an important role in assisting developing countries in writing National Communication and Biennial Update reports, are responsible for the largest part of CBIT funding. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is rather new in the field of climate transparency, yet it is responsible for 15% of CBIT funding. Conservation International, a large non-governmental organization, has a rather small amount of total funding, yet it works together with many Least Developed Countries, particularly in Africa. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) is involved in a few projects in Latin America, while the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office (FECO) is only involved in a CBIT project in China.

Implementation agencies may provide additional co-financing for CBIT projects. This means that the implementing agency mobilizes funds that are additional to those provided by the CBIT. Co-financing can also be provided by the recipient country, this is typically in-kind financing, or by external donors. Importantly, co-financing is voluntary and not required to receive CBIT funding. Typically,

most project costs are covered by CBIT funding. However, the FAO is an exception as it's projects on average are for the majority funded through co-financing. This may indicate that the FAO as implementing agency takes a very proactive role in the project, as it has a lot of 'skin in the game.' FAO also typically engages in projects that are very close to its core business: agriculture and forestry.

Table 14. Funding by agency: Historically large provides of capacity building for transparency dominate the landscape

Agency	Number of projects	Funding in million USD	Percentage of total funding
UNEP	29	41.4	39%
UNDP	17	30.1	29%
FAO	12	15.7	15%
CI	6	12.9	12%
IADB	2	3.5	3%
FECO	1	1.9	2%

Note: Funding concerns requested Global Environmental Facility funding as indicated in CBIT Project Identification Forms, excluding co-financing.
Key: CI – Conservation International, FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FECO - Foreign Economic Cooperation Office of China, IADB - Inter-American Development Bank, UNDP – United Nations Development Programme, UNEP – United Nations Environmental Programme.

Zooming in on the implementing agencies, it becomes clear that capacity building providers are mostly staffed with individuals with a technical background. Typically, these people have a background in statistics, mathematics, economics, or a specific thematic field of knowledge such a forestry. In a way this is not surprising since an important activity for these agencies is to assist countries in writing National Communications and Biennial Update Reports. To do so the people need to have very specialized knowledge. Yet, with the CBIT moving more into the direction of building more systemic capacities there seems at times to be a mismatch between the capacity builders and the type of capacity that is being built, as illustrated by an interviewee who works for an implementing agency: "Although we are a more technical people we are dealing a lot with the institutional arrangement part."[56] The technical background of most of these people might be explained by the fact that most of these people started their career in the field of greenhouse gas inventories.

In some cases, the line between capacity builder and receiver becomes extremely blurred. For example, one interviewee was hired to work for an implementing agency for the duration of the CBIT project with the idea that she/he would become civil servant in the ministry after the project finished. However, this person mentioned not to have the intention to work for the ministry upon completion of the project, due to poor career prospects in the respective ministry.

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[56] Interview with an employee from the FAO, January 8, 2021.

In other cases, lines are even more blurred. One interviewee noted how he has two email addresses, one from the implementing agency and one from the ministry, and two offices, again one in the ministry and one in the implementing agency.[57] Also, it seemed very common for individuals to move jobs between agencies and ministries, in both directions. While mobility is high, there is still a sense of a 'community' of people mostly originating around a group of "number crunchers" working in the greenhouse gas inventory sphere.

> "I think we are always considered the kind of the nerds, the number crunchers. [..] I love it. Like you really see the same people year after year, maybe in a different country, and the slightly different context, but I think that the community is real [..] I feel like it is a very good group, a very solid group over the years, which is nice."[58]

Importantly, this group is not only having a strong sense of community but is also "usually less political because it's the number crunchers and things like that."[59] However, the constituency of this changing. Those who were involved in the writing of the initial transparency guidelines under the convention are now retiring. Moreover, transparency and reporting are becoming more mainstream, attracting attention from new actors, beyond just the number crunchers.[60]

Talking about the transparency community, the Consultative Group of Experts is an important actor in the UNFCCC landscape that provides capacity building for reporting to developing countries. The Consultative Group of Experts consists of 24 members of which fifteen are from non-Annex I countries (developing countries), six are from Annex I countries (developed countries) and three members are from international organizations.[61] This composition gives a clear majority and decision-making power to members from developing countries. This is different than, for example, the Standing Committee on Finance (another constituted body at the UNFCCC) which has ten members from Annex I countries and ten members from non-Annex I countries.[62]

During the May-June 2021 Subsidiary Bodies sessions developed countries proposed to review the composition of the group as to make it more inclusive.[63] This would mean that developed countries get more say in the decision making. Moreover, developed countries would like the Consultative Group of Experts to serve not only developing countries but also allow developed countries to make use of capacity building efforts, if appropriate. This would, in their view, fit better with the

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[57] Interview with an employee from UNDP, January 18, 2021.
[58] Interview with an employee from the UNFCCC, January 11, 2021.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] As per the webpage of the Consultative Group of Experts in July 2021: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/consultative-group-of-experts-cge/members-of-the-cge
[62] As per the webpage of the Standing Committee on Finance in July 2021: https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/constituted-bodies/standing-committee-on-finance-scf/members
[63] Field observations in the May-June 2021 session of the Subsidiary Bodies.

commonness of the enhanced transparency framework.[64] Developing countries were hesitant to do this and emphasized that the composition of the group was outside the scope of the agenda item. In the end, the composition of the group was identified as a key outstanding issue as captured in an informal note by the co-facilitators of the session.[65] The issue will be further discussed at the 26th Conference of the Parties, and the outcome will have bearing on the extent to which developing countries remain in control of the direction of capacity building efforts undertaken by the Consultative Group of Experts.

In sum, capacity is built by an ecosystem of people who move fluidly between government and agencies. Most of the people in this ecosystem have a rather technical background originating from the greenhouse gas inventory field. Yet, new winds are blowing through this landscape. The old guard who laid the groundwork for greenhouse gas inventories in the 90s is retiring and transparency is becoming more mainstream, slowly attracting a more diverse group of people to the field. Importantly, the line between those who build capacities and those who receive capacity building is not rigid, as we will see in the next section.

5.3.2 Whose capacities are built?

The question of whose capacities are built in practice can be analyzed at the level of countries and individuals. What countries do in practice receive capacity building, and on a more micro level, whose capacities are built?

Starting at the country level, the CBIT programming directions include two prioritization principles. First, prioritization is given 'based on demonstrated responsiveness to Paris Agreement transparency requirements under Article 13' (GEF, 2016, para. 26). Furthermore, prioritization is given to 'those countries that are in most need of capacity-building assistance for transparency-related activities, in particular small island developing states and least developed countries' (GEF, 2016, para. 26). Interestingly, these two priorities may often be at odds. The programming directions do not provide guidance as to which of the two priorities is more important. Also, how does this play out in practice?

Table 15 gives an overview of aggregated CBIT funding by continent. Africa is the largest receiver of CBIT funding in terms of aggregate USD of funding received, followed by the Americas, Asia, and finally Europe. Out of all funding 31% has gone to small island developing states and least developed countries. At the first glance, this indicates that CBIT funding has effectively flowed to countries that are in most need for capacity-building assistance, such as the large chunk of funding that has gone to small island developing states and least developed countries.

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[64] Interview with a civil servant from the Netherlands, January 27, 2021.
[65] Paragraph 3 of the informal note mentions the constitution of the group as a key outstanding issue: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/CGE%202021%20in-session.pdf

Table 15. Funding by continent: Projects and funding are geographically balanced

Continent	Number of projects	Funding in million USD	Percentage of total funding
Africa	23	35.2	33%
America	19	30.4	29%
Asia	17	27.3	26%
Europe	4	5.2	5%
Global	4	7.5	7%

Note: Funding concerns requested Global Environmental Facility funding as indicated in CBIT Project Identification Forms, excluding co-financing.

However, the above notions are very broad brushed and may miss variations in terms of levels of capacity to report in different countries on the same continent or country group. In other words, not all small island developing states are equally in need for assistance for reporting. The question is thus still open as to whether the CBIT mainly served countries with high existing capacities or low? Did the CBIT serve the 'usual suspects' with a good track record of submitting reports or did it also reach those countries that have up to now limited experience with reporting?

To answers these questions an indicator is needed to capture the level of reporting capacity of a country *before* the start of the CBIT project. Fortunately, Umemiya *et al.*, 2020 created just such a metric. Without going into too much detail (see annex A for more information) they created an index (GHG capacity score) that ranges between 0 and 1 that captures the average level of capacity to report on greenhouse gas inventory for almost all developing countries over the period 2008-2014. 0 means no capacity to report and 1 means excellent capacity to report. This index contains technical, institutional and context capacity. Combining this data with information on CBIT projects provides insights into whether the CBIT managed to reach those countries with least capacities to report.

Figure 9 below shows the distribution of countries by their level of capacity to report. The dark bars represent non-CBIT developing countries, the light bars represent countries which received or are in the process of receiving CBIT funding (countries that at the minimum got approval on their project identification form). Figure 9 shows that CBIT countries are skewed to high existing capacities. The mean existing capacity score of non-CBIT countries is 0.26 (out of 1) that of the CBIT countries is 0.31 (out of 1). In other words, countries engaged with the CBIT have on average higher existing reporting capacities than countries that are not.

Figure 9. Engagement with the CBIT and reporting capacity: Over-representation of countries with high levels of existing capacity
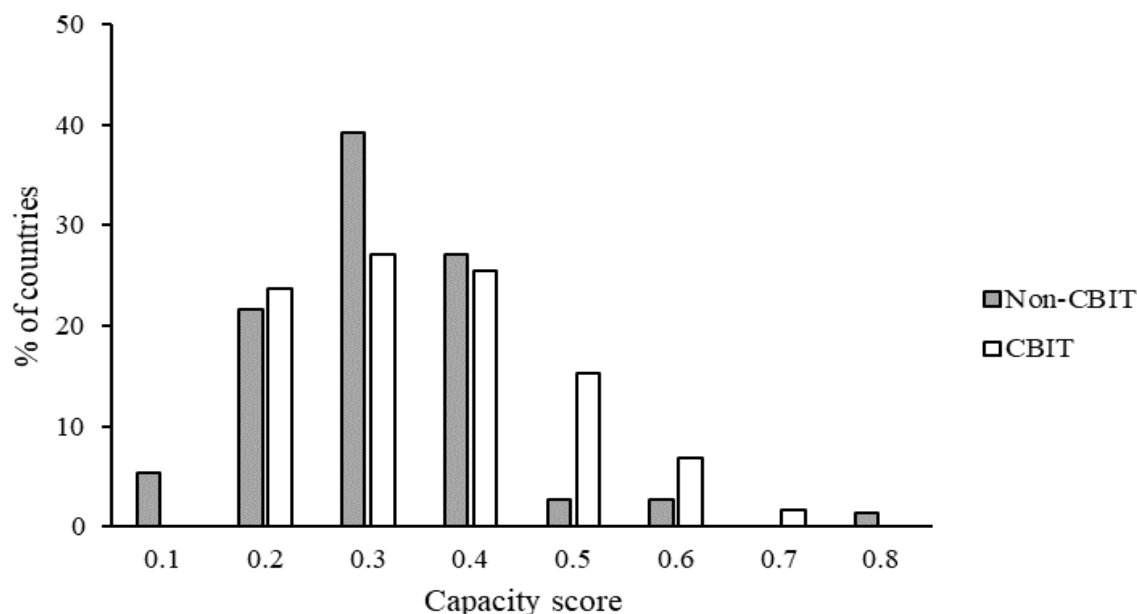
This figure uses a database (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020) containing indexes for the capacity of countries to compile greenhouse gas inventory reports. The score ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating highest capacity. Importantly, these capacity scores represent capacity in the period 2008-2014, and are thus informative of the existing level of capacity *before* countries engaged in CBIT projects. The above figure compares countries that have engaged with the CBIT (through the submission of a Project Identification Form) with countries that did not. The x-axis shows the capacity score, and the y-axis shows the percentage of countries with a particular level of capacity (disaggregated by engagement with the CBIT). The above figure shows that a relatively higher percentage of countries engaged with the CBIT have scores of 0.5 or higher than countries that have not engaged with the CBIT. Note: Capacity scores are grouped and rounded up to nearest decimal place.

One explanation for the relative over representation of countries with high existing capacity scores is the first-movers effect, whereby countries that are historically transparency champions were ready to use their network and capacity to quickly avail to the new opportunities the CBIT funding had to offer. Figure 10 indicates that such a process may have happened. Countries that got their project identification form approved in 2016 had an average capacity score of 0.36 and by 2020 this number has fallen to 0.26. A key remaining question is whether this trend will continue, or whether countries with high capacities will soon apply for their second project while other countries may never take their turn.

Figure 10. Existing levels of reporting capacity of countries engaging with the CBIT over time: 'First movers' have relatively higher levels of existing capacity
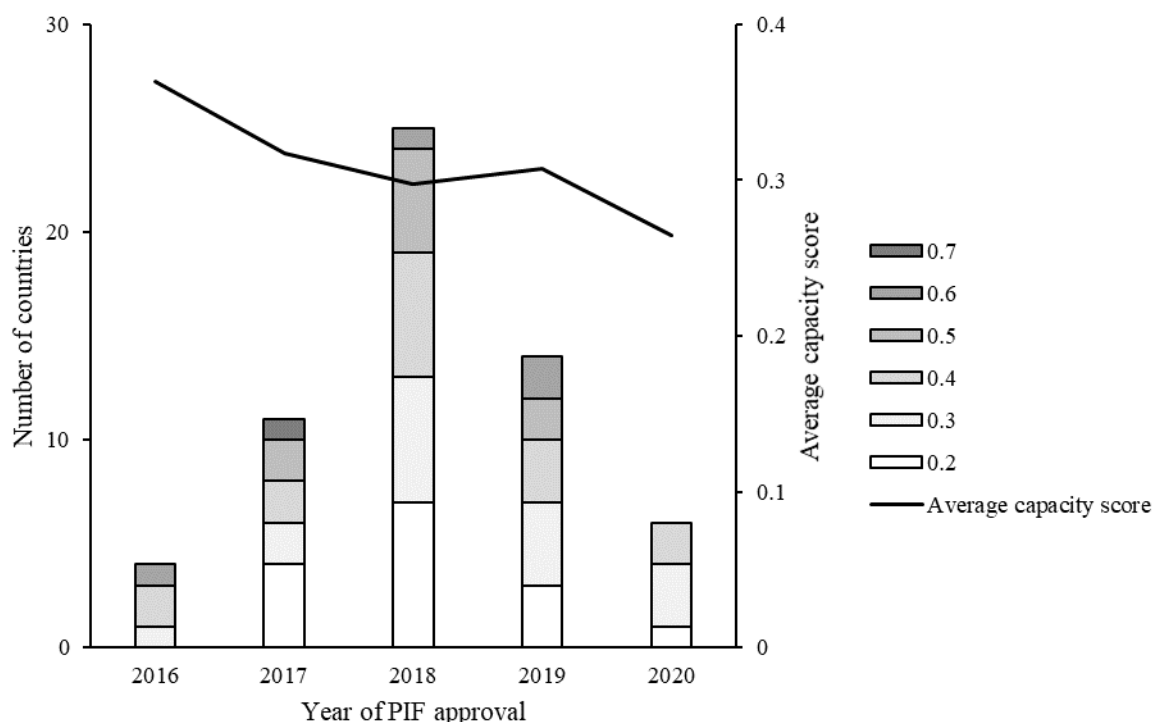
The above figure draws on a database (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020) containing indexes for the capacity of countries to compile greenhouse gas inventory reports. The score ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating highest capacity. Importantly, these capacity scores represent capacity in the period 2008-2014, and are thus informative of the existing level of capacity before countries engaged in CBIT projects. The above figure shows the average level of existing capacity of all countries engaging with the CBIT in a given year (using the year of Project Identification Form approval) as the solid line, to be read in combination with the right x-axis. To supplement this average, the distribution of countries disaggregated by their capacity scores and year of engagement. Note: Capacity scores are grouped and rounded up to nearest decimal place.

In general, CBIT funding is surprisingly balanced geographically, and a substantial amount of funding has gone to least developed countries and small island developing states. This may indicate good accessibility of funding and a swift application process. However, analysis of the 'existing capacities' of CBIT countries calls for nuance of this claim. Countries with higher capacity participate in the CBIT first while those with lower capacity took longer to get their projects approved. The above provided a brief overview of which countries received CBIT support. But it is equally important to zoom in on capacity building efforts and examine at the micro level whose capacities are built.

Following on the section above, I start the exploration of whose capacities are built at the level of individuals. Just like the international capacity building community for transparency is somewhat of technical bubble, this seems to be reflected at the local context in countries. For example, in Mexico inventory reports are created by the National Institute of Ecology that is institutionally separate from the Ministry of Environment (SEMARNAT), with the latter overseeing climate policy.[66]

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[66] Interview with a former civil servant from Mexico, January 29, 2021.

"Sometimes we have two different parallel worlds, you know we have statistical people that produce data and then we have a completely detached people in the Ministry of Environment that need to relate with the data provider, create agreements for this flow of information and that is where is so far the bottleneck of capacity."[67]

While common in the public sector, it is also worthwhile to note that civil servants that work on compiling the transparency reports may have little connection to high-level government officials in the Ministry of Environment or other relevant entities. The technical civil servants may be rather ambitious and want to improve their reporting, but high-level officials may hold a different view.

"I think they [civil servants making the inventory] are very passionate about what they do. It's maybe sometimes the support above them where they start losing it, where they can't actually go that next step."[68]

"As a technical expert and having worked with the with the greenhouse gas inventory, I would say that we have all the all the experience all the knowledge in order to set up very quickly things and to move forward. But politics is not always like that. Because at the end this is taken by the politics."[69]

As described above one could see the technical people as part of the wider reporting community and thus on close terms with the capacity building providers. The bottle neck is considered the policy makers. As discussed in the 'what' section above, policy makers are important for two reasons. First, policy makers determine budget allocation, legislation, and institutional structure. For consistent reporting all these elements play an important role. For example, in Eswatini the minister of Public Services had to be involved to ensure that personnel that was supporting the CBIT project (under CBIT funding managed through the implementing agency) will be hired as civil servants after the end of the CBIT project.[70]

In many cases, however, domestic political support for climate reporting cannot be mustered. As a result, climate departments in developing countries are in some cases largely staffed by people on temporary contracts, contingent on international support. For example, Jamaica only has three permanent staff members in its climate department with 12 members being employed through ad hoc projects.[71] Similarly, the climate reporting teams of Brazil and Paraguay lean heavily on international support.[72] While there is nothing inherently wrong with the provision of international support for

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[67] Interview with an employee from the FAO, January 15, 2021.
[68] Interview with a UNFCCC employee, January 11, 2021.
[69] Interview with an employee from the FAO, January 8, 2021.
[70] Interview with a civil servant from Eswatini, January 18, 2021.
[71] Interview with a civil servant from Jamaica, January 22, 2021.
[72] Interview with a civil servant from Paraguay, January 18, 2021, and interview with a civil servant from the Netherlands, January 27, 2021

climate departments, this may create difficulties to retain capacities due to the high turn-over of staff on temporary jobs.

Secondly, political leverage is needed for data collection. While the technical staff can have the skills for calculations, a substantial amount of data will need to be collected from other ministries and external stakeholders. For various reasons, not all stakeholders are equally willing to share data with the inventory team. These reasons may include confidentiality in relation to competition, fear that the data will be used to regulate, or the data may be seen as a form of power or politically valuable means of exchange between ministries. Moreover, private entities may have incurred costs to gather the data themselves with the intention to use it for private gain, and thus be hesitant to just give this data away.

To navigate these challenges political clout is needed, which the inventory team typically lacks. Worse still, even the entire Ministry of Environment might lack the political clout. A seasoned capacity building provider shared what may happen when a Minister of Environment approaches the Minister for Agriculture for data: "Hey Minister of Environment, you are like my 'junior brother', why should I give you the data?"[73]

Two approaches to this challenge seem to be explored. Firstly, circumventing parts of the data collection. Under the name of capacity building support providers leverage the power of satellite data and remote sensing to create 'analysis ready data' that can flow directly into the models of the technical people. Currently only a few satellites are equipped to measure carbon dioxide and methane concentrations from space; these are the Japan's 'GOSAT' sensor and the 'Orbiting Carbon Observatory' satellite from NASA (Hsu *et al.*, 2020). However this number is expected to triple by 2030 (Hsu *et al.*, 2020). For example the European Union is funding the development of a fleet of miniature satellites that can measure greenhouse gas concentrations (Witze, 2018). The National Institute for Environmental Studies in Japan wrote a guidebook on how satellite data can be used for greenhouse gas inventories (Matsunaga and Maksyutov, 2018).

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[73] Interview with an employee from UNDP, December 8, 2021.

Figure 11. Example of the use of satellite data for reporting of greenhouse gas emissions: Global anomalies in carbon dioxide concentrations (figure from: Matsunaga and Maksyutov, 2018, 68)
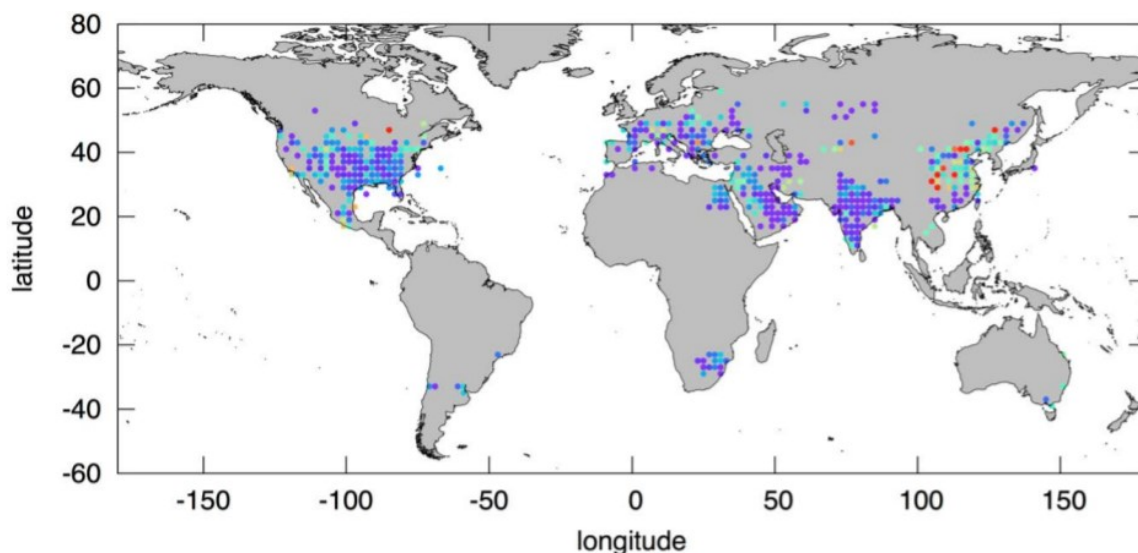
This figure shows elevated carbon dioxide concenrations based on satelite data. The shading runs from light blue (least elevated) to red (most elevated). Locations without colored circles indicate no significant elevation compared to the global mean. Local carbon dioxide concentrations are a proxy for carbon dioxide emissions.

As figure 11 above shows, these satellite-based methods already allow for the creation of powerful maps of where greenhouse gasses are emitted. However, the technology is still under development and more accurate observations are needed (Hsu *et al.*, 2020). Also, these satellites are designed and launched for scientific purposes rather than measuring compliance with climate targets (Witze, 2018). Nevertheless, if remote sensing becomes more and more central to transparency in a multilateral context this has important bearing on capacity building. Rather than building local capacities to manage climate data, highly specialized agencies and research groups may be in control of remote sensing data and presenting this as 'analysis ready data' to ministries and policy makers in developing countries, thereby implicitly removing ownership over the data, and the narrative it presents, from domestic actors.[74]

The other approach to deal with unwilling policy makers is to make these policy makers object of capacity building efforts. While the involvement of policy makers is born out of a need as described above, it is also emerging in relation to the ambition to use data for policy making. This may involve the training of policy makers on how to use climate data for policy making. Yet, once the policy makers start to move forward proactively this does not always seem to be appreciated by the technical staff. An interesting case here is Mexico, historically the National Institute of Ecology is responsible for greenhouse gas inventories. Not long ago the Secretariat for Environment and National Resources (the Ministry of Environment) submitted a proposal to the CBIT for a capacity building project.

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[74] Personal communication with a member from the remote sensing group of Wageningen University, April 8, 2021.

Interestingly, the Global Environmental Facility insisted that the National Institute of Ecology be included in the proposal. The Secretariat for Environment and National Resources would like to gain more ownership of the development of the greenhouse gas inventory and gain a deeper feeling for it so that the climate department can better use it for policy making. Yet the National Institute of Ecology was very skeptical of this idea and wanted to remain in charge.[75]

Finally, it is worth noting dynamics between federal and state governments in certain contexts. Ultimately, the federal government submits reports to the UNFCCC, and it is also the federal government that applies for CBIT funding and receives capacity building. But state governments may be the ones who need to collect the necessary data.

The above paints a picture of whose capacities are built in practice. The receivers are still those who focus on the technical tasks of compiling inventories and crunching the numbers. These people may be inside or out outside the government department.

5.3.3 Who decides?

Emerging practice also suggests that the technical people typically decide about capacity building projects and the compilation of reports, while high-level policy makers decide in transparency negotiations and on how reported data will be used nationally.

> "There will be always this mismatch. Capacity building in the country for so long has always been requested by the technical people. We need support to understand how to talk with policy makers."[76]

> "Those working on the practicalities [of reporting] want more than the politicians and the negotiators"[77]

> "In a lot of countries, this [compilation of reports] is done by, you know, your scientists, nerds who are like, oh, data and calculation and guidelines. And sometimes I think this is where the stumbling block comes in because like senior policymakers are like, well, what's the point?"[78]

The technical people asking for capacity building are typically more ambitious than high-level policy makers. For example, in Thailand the initial proposal for a CBIT project in Thailand included greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation tracking for a broad range of sectors, including energy, industry, waste, and agriculture and forestry. However, at the next stage of project proposal development senior policy makers from all but the agriculture and forestry sectors were not willing to

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[75] Interview with a former civil servant from Mexico, January 29, 2021.
[76] Interview with an employee from UNEP-DTU, December 9, 2021.
[77] Interview with a civil servant from the Netherlands, January 27, 2021.
[78] Interview with an employee from the UNFCCC, January 15, 2021.

be included in the project. As a result, the project remained narrow in scope and only focused on the agriculture and forestry sector.[79]

A similar dynamic can be discerned at the international negotiations. For example, in the negotiations about the review process, senior negotiators from developing countries insisted that the technical review could not make any recommendations about how reporting could be improved. This despite explicit calls from technical people from the same countries, who are involved in the writing of the reports, to have the review provide recommendations and advice on how to improve reporting.[80]

In sum, one should take care not to talk about countries as a single agent, but rather as a combination of agents all with their own aims and agendas. While capacity building projects may be in the hands of the technical people, the international transparency negotiations involve senior negotiators with, at times, different views on matters related to transparency.

This chapter has provided an empirical account of 'what', 'how' and 'who' of capacity building for climate transparency in practice. This analysis shows that capacity building efforts privilege greenhouse gas and mitigation tracking over capacities to report on adaptation and support, even in least developed countries and small island developing states. The analysis further shows that capacity building continues to be project-based with important roles, including the management of funds, for external implementing agencies. Importantly, capacity building efforts struggle with tensions between the technical people in the climate change departments that compile reports and senior policy makers who have the upper hand in determining funding allocation for these departments as well as in international negotiations where transparency provisions are developed. Having examined capacity building in practice, the next chapter will take a step back and discuss the implications for the scope and extent of transparency to be generated by countries.

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[79] Interview with a former employee from UNEP-DTU, November 11, 2021.
[80] Interview with a civil servant from the Netherlands, January 27, 2021.

Chapter 6: Emerging capacity building practice shaping the scope and extent of transparency

In this chapter I turn to the effects of capacity building in terms of scope and extent of transparency generated or promoted. This chapter will draw upon findings from previous chapters to perform a critical interpretive analysis to shed a light on the implications of emerging capacity building practices.

6.1 Scope of climate transparency generated

The preceding chapters have examined capacity building in practice by looking at the who, what, how and why. An important starting point here is that the capacity building *community* largely has its roots in reporting on greenhouse gas inventories. Some of these roots go back to capacity building initiatives for greenhouse gas inventory reporting in the 1990s. Since greenhouse gas inventory reporting requires detailed technical skills, this community has a strong bias towards quantitative skills. An interviewee even called it a community of 'number crunchers.'[81]

The Paris Agreement enlarged the scope of reporting and consequently the capacity building community started to take up these other domains such as adaptation and support as well. But the people remained largely the same. It is important to note that this community includes both capacity building providers and capacity building receivers. In practice, this community is fluid and people move jobs between providers and receivers continuously. As such, the receivers on the government end have become very socialized into the thinking and doing of the capacity building for transparency community. This results in a sort of 'group think' on a quest for ever more transparency and accuracy of estimation, where the need for this becomes an assumption rather than a concept of continuous reflection.

While the Paris Agreement allows for capacity building on all the domains (both mandatory and voluntary) the largest capacity building initiative, the CBIT, has dedicated most of its resources to capacity building for greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation. Subsequently, this narrow scope results in countries getting much better systems and data on greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation than the other domains. Moreover, there is a dominant narrative on the importance of mainstreaming the use of data into policy making. As such the capacity building initiatives are also influencing the scope of decision-making. Those elements that have not been made visible, such as local socio-environmental impacts, may then also be underrepresented in the decision-making process.

At the international level, quality of reporting on greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation action can be expected to be relatively higher than for adaptation, climate change impacts, and support.

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[81] Interview with a UNFCCC employee, January 11, 2021.

Reporting on areas such as loss and damage or socio-environmental impacts of climate actions (response measures) is even less likely to be of high quality as these are marginalized in both formal transparency requirements and in the practice of capacity building for transparency.

Importantly, emerging practice of capacity building for climate transparency suggests a rather homogenous approach towards transparency. Reporting on greenhouse gas inventories is privileged across all regions and levels of development. Even in least developed countries and small island developing states capacity building activities for greenhouse gas inventory reporting receive most funding. Yet, countries are different and so are their needs. As mentioned by an interviewee:

> "For small island developing states and least developed countries I seen no value added of tracking their emission [...] it should be not so much based on the Paris Agreement, it should be more needs-based. It should be more targeted to their own development needs. Their own priorities and they are different from the formal requirements."[82]

In sum, emerging practice of capacity building for transparency privileges building capacities for developing greenhouse gas inventories. Tracking mitigation action in the context of nationally determined contributions follows suit. Capacity building for reporting on adaptation, climate impacts and support receives less attention, and it can be expected that this will have bearing on the quality of reporting on these topics under the enhanced transparency framework. Especially since these domains also suffer from a lack of methodologies and guidelines. Reporting on loss and damage and socio-environmental impacts of response measures are even less prominent in emerging practice of capacity building, while in fact these are important topics for certain countries. The Paris Agreement introduced a prioritization in areas of reporting by making greenhouse gas inventories and nationally determined contribution mitigation tracking mandatory while leaving adaptation and support as voluntary categories. This trend is continued in capacity building initiatives making it very plausible that this trend will also be reflected in the scope of reporting under the enhanced transparency framework.

6.2 Extent of climate reporting

The extent of transparency refers to the amount of information that is disclosed, its level of detail, as well as the frequency. As shown in chapter 4, developing countries do not have a particularly good track record when it comes to submitting reports in a complete and timely manner. For example, only four out of 154 developing countries managed to submit their biennial update report biennially, as per February 2021. There are mixed signals as to what this picture will look like under the enhanced transparency framework. Importantly, reporting under the enhanced transparency framework is mandatory while reporting biennial transparency reports was voluntary. Moreover, the previous chapters have shown that capacity building efforts for transparency have increased in recent year. But

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[82] Interview with a former employee from UNEP-DTU, November 11, 2021.

previous chapters also highlighted various challenges to retaining capacities built, such as high turnover of staff. Also, biennial reporting would require an ongoing system of data collection, interpretation, and reporting, while in practice many countries still seem to operate in an *ad hoc* approach that is linked to multilaterally funded time-bound projects. Overall, it remains to be seen to what extent developing countries will manage to submit their biennial transparency reports in full and on time.

Zooming in, a few trends on various aspects of the 'extent' of reporting can be discerned. As discussed in previous chapters, certain areas of reporting enjoy better and more elaborate tools, methodologies, and guidelines for reporting than others. While this may seem a very technical topic, which it is, it is also a profoundly political exercise. Formal UNFCCC guidelines are negotiated line by line and set out how reports should be compiled. Beyond formal guidelines there are numerous organizations that develop various tools and methodologies related to climate reporting. Formal guidelines can facilitate the comparability of data while tools and methodologies can facilitate the collection of data and the drafting of reports. Although it should be noted that new more elaborate guidelines can also come with more demanding data collection requirements. The level of detail and number of guidelines, tools and methodologies follow a pattern that surfaced before. Greenhouse gas inventory reporting enjoys by far the most elaborate guidelines, stipulating in detail how and what countries should report. And, for example, the Common Reporting Tables make this data very comparable. Guidelines on reporting on mitigation follow suit, while reporting on adaptation, climate change impacts and support remains less developed.

Capacity building further exacerbates the unequal availability of tools, methodologies, and guidelines. The lack of guidelines and procedures is mentioned as a justification to shy away from capacity building on adaptation, climate change impacts, support, and loss and damage, even though these might be more relevant for a given local context. This way the outcomes of meta-level political contestations get projected on very local contexts, resulting in odd situations where some of the Least Developed Countries prioritize reporting on greenhouse gas inventory above adaptation. Also, greenhouse gas inventory reporting knows many levels of detail, with every step the accuracy improves a bit. The general assumption seems to be that the more detailed the better. Or "are we asking too much?" wonders a seasoned capacity building practitioner.[83] This divergent view stipulates that for some countries it may be sufficient to have very rough estimations, for example based on basic economic indicators and population estimates, with no added value of more granular data. Worse still, it is not implausible that in some countries a fixation on improving the accuracy of greenhouse gas inventories may deflect limited resources from other domains of climate action.[84]

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[83] Interview with an employee from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, January 27, 2021.
[84] Interview with an employee from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, January 27, 2021.

While the guidelines impact the scope, they also impact the approach to transparency. Capacity building is a domain of number crunchers that like the rigidness of guidelines and procedures. A such, this might result in very technical and technocratic reporting, where a critical, reflective attitude on the merits and limitations of the data seems to have no place. Admitted, making this argument is walking a tight rope, an open-ended qualitative approach focused on insights and key messages rather than numbers could be misused. Indeed, the lack of guidelines has made the reporting on support provided a 'muddle' (Weikmans and Roberts, 2019). But even seemingly rigid numbers might be 'muddled' with too, or more importantly, draw attention away from domains where numbers are unavailable.

In sum, capacity building efforts further entrench detailed reporting on greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation action and limited transparency on climate change impacts and adaptation and support. Topics such as loss and damage and socio-environmental impacts of response measures are even less likely to be reported on in good quality. On a larger scale, it remains to be seen if all the capacity building for transparency efforts will result in reports being delivered in full and on time as challenges with building reporting capacities persists. The capacities that are built point to generating information with a focus on the detail, the nitty-gritty, the number, as opposed to overall insights and perspectives. The next chapter will build on these findings and examine what this means for the transformative potential of the enhanced transparency framework.

Chapter 7: Capacity building and the transformative potential of transparency

In the previous chapter the effects of capacity building on the scope and extent of transparency generated were discussed. This chapter addresses the question of how capacity building for climate transparency impacts the transformative potential of transparency. This analysis will build on the framework as introduced in chapter 2. This framework identifies two overarching categories of the transformative potential of transparency. First, transparency has the potential to improve *performance*. Performance is understood as the capacity to meet targets efficiently. Here transparency is to make visible progress or outcomes on a narrow set of tasks and indicators that allow for actors to get (one dimensional) feedback on their efforts. Second, transparency may instigate a process of *learning*. Making visible the underlying reasons for outcomes can inspire debate and deliberation. In such a frame transparency is about developing deep understanding of the issue at hand. In such a system genuine dialogue is important, as well as room to explore the why and how of outcomes.

Of course, reality seldomly conforms perfectly to typologies, yet they may still facilitate understanding and discussion. Based on the preceding chapters I argue that capacity building initiatives contain both elements of *performance* and *learning*, but with a privileging of performance.

The vast majority of capacity building efforts are targeted at generating transparency on a very narrow scope, creating greenhouse gas inventories and a set of numbers needed to make mitigation efforts quantifiable. As the United Kingdom mentioned in their 'CBIT business case' donor statement: "The expectation is that recipient countries will be able to engage in more effective mitigation policy making".[85] Effective mitigation policy making seems to be defined merely in terms of amount of greenhouse gas emissions reduced and cost effectiveness. The notion that mitigation needs to be balanced against sustainable development needs seems not to be prioritized in capacity building for transparency.

A similar process of putting the greenhouse gas emission data in isolation might happen at the international level as well. While generating comparable numerical data at the global level certainly has it perks, it may also tell a single story. The numbers may imply comparability between countries while in reality these countries are actually very diverse, and context is needed to make sense of these numbers and interpret them to see who is doing a fair share. For example, greenhouse gas inventories typically present production-based emissions and do not capture consumption-based emissions.

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[85] This document analyzes the merits of the United Kingdom government providing funding to the CBIT. The document lacks important meta data; therefore, the source is given in this footnote instead of the bibliography. The document is available on: https://aidstream.org/files/documents/CBIT-Business-Case-December-2015-20190426090459.pdf

This focus on numbers, experts, and the technical is what Clarke and Flannery (2020, 173) call the post-political condition, where:

> "Technocratic-managerialism depoliticises decision making by replacing public debate with collaboration amongst technocrats and framing environmental problems as arising from data and knowledge gaps. Technocratic managerialism aggrandises experts and data in decision making so that they become the focus of policy interventions, often leaving pressing issues unaddressed".

This may be an apt description of the direction that is pushed by capacity building for transparency efforts. Interestingly, similar trends have been documented in the context of carbon accounting for the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries programme (REDD+). Under this program, some scholars argue, carbon accounting and the related process of 'standardization, simplification, and commensuration' can render invisible local realities and values of forests other than carbon stock (Gupta *et al.*, 2012). A similar trend where the focus on indicators that show *performance* on a one-dimensional indicator renders invisible local realities and contextual differences can be discerned in novel capacity building for transparency initiatives as well.

Previous chapters have shown that the focus of capacity building for transparency is directed at generating ever more detailed greenhouse gas emission data. This data is subsequently argued as key to make more effective mitigation policy. In other words, the push is to make climate policy a domain of 'technical managerialism' based on a narrow set of quantitative indicators, both nationally and internationally. This is further illustrated by the tendency to generate systems that automate processes of data management and the production of analysis ready data through remote sensing and satellite data, as discussed in chapter 5. While the use of narrow quantitative indicators is not a problem *per se*, it has the potential to tell a single story if not combined with other data or if not critically interpreted and understood by local policy makers. The risk is that the fixation on generating ever more detailed emission data may deflect attention from key (political) issues including adaptation, support, and loss and damage, as well as fossil fuel subsidies, unsustainable consumption patterns and the unjust burden of climate change that is falling on the shoulders of the worlds' poor. These are matters that are most likely not made visible through the enhanced transparency framework, crowded out by the standardized technical reports produced by the capacity building community to keep track of mitigation *performance*.

While a focus on *performance* may be dominant, it is not uncontested. Countries may also leverage capacity building opportunities and the enhanced transparency framework to further their own aims and *learn* how to deal with the various challenges that climate change poses in the localized context. Moreover, the focus on greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation tracking is not universal. New methodologies for making visible climate impacts, adaptation action, support needed and received and

even loss and damage are being pioneered (e.g. Puig *et al.*, 2019). By generating information on a wide range of topics, new potential for *learning* can be unlocked. For example, in finding solutions for adapting to climate change in ways that are cost effective, support the most marginalized and are in line with biodiversity targets. Yet, also in these domains learning is not self-evident. Tendencies to express and aggregate everything in terms of cost effectiveness run deep. Further in-depth case studies can shed a light on how these dynamics develop. In any case, if transparency on these topics manages to find its way to the enhanced transparency framework and the global stocktake it may enrich deliberations there with viewpoints that go beyond mitigation.

Another interesting trend is that some countries place strong emphasis on collaboration with sub-national stakeholders. For example, Georgia in their CBIT project places municipalities at the heart of its transparency strategy.[86] Enhanced dialogue between the capital and subnational stakeholders in the context of climate change may facilitate learning in the sense that national level actors get a better understanding of local realities. However, it is not self-evident that this learning will materialize. Stakeholder participation can also be 'choreographed' with limited room for divergent perspectives (Clarke and Flannery, 2020, 173). Here too, further empirical analysis is needed to examine the extent to which (sub-national) stakeholder engagement leads to processes of learning.

As discussed in previous chapters, there is a strong narrative on using data generated for reporting also for domestic policymaking. If policymaking draws on data and climate reporting does that constitute learning? It depends. *Learning* requires data that is supplemented with contextual information to foster understanding and deliberation. If data is simplistic and one-dimensional it can show the policy maker whether progress towards a specific target is on the mark. This may motivate the policy maker to reflect on the effectiveness of previous policies and the need for change. At the same time, the policy maker may be too fixated on the one target and indicator and fail to see, and learn from, the bigger picture. Policy can be based on myriad social, environmental, economic, and other factors. And climate policy is no exception. However, as shown in previous chapters, capacity building for transparency, is increasing the availability and salience of emission data. Domestically this may have the consequence that, indeed, performance is improved on mitigation action, yet at the cost of other domains such as the social and environmental.

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[86] Project proposal from Georgia to the CBIT. Available at:
https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/ceo-georgia.pdf.

Figure 12. An example of the climate data for policy making narrative: Screenshot from the website of the Initiative from Climate Action Transparency

Source: https://climateactiontransparency.org/ accessed on July 29, 2021

Domestic practices culminate at the international level where emission data is also most salient and available. This emissions data may help to assess *performance* on the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement, yet it may deflect attention from the process of *learning* how to collectively deal with climate challenges.

This is not a plea to stop capacity building. In certain cases, capacity building has the potential to be an important puzzle piece in dealing with climate change. For climate mitigation and adaptation implementation efforts some information may need to be collected and made visible to facilitate *learning* on the complexities of implementing climate mitigation and adaptation action. A more inclusive, holistic form of capacity building that places the priorities of the recipient center stage might facilitate the generation of transparency that is relevant and facilitates both processes of *learning* and *performance.* Importantly, capacity-building needs may not be related to transparency but rather to implementing climate mitigation and adaptation actions locally.

Looking at the potential of transparency to generate accountability, the above indicates that capacity building activities may steer this accountability to be of an accountability-for-performance type. More specifically, the focus is on *mitigation* performance of developing countries. Importantly, the Paris Agreement does not talk about accountability, and certainly not about who should be held accountable about what, against what standards by whom. Nevertheless, these are pertinent issues that implicitly shape multilateral climate politics. Making visible mitigation performance by developing countries then is a small push in the direction of increased accountability for mitigation action. Yet, making

visible is not sufficient for accountability. Accountability is relational, and, at the very least, requires a deliberative element containing question and answer dynamics or other means to assess if a certain standard has been met. Indeed, the transparency framework includes a process whereby countries present their climate reports and take questions from other countries. For developing countries these sessions are called Facilitative Sharing of Views. A study by Gupta *et al*. (2021) found that, in practice and intend, these sessions are about accountability-for-learning rather than accountability to assess compliance against standards of performance. Questions posed in these sessions were generally polite and cooperative and did not venture much further than inquiries to what the country learned from drafting the report and any lessons learned that could be relevant for others. In terms of what the learning focused on, this was primarily related to learning how to better compile greenhouse gas inventories and climate reports in the future (Gupta *et al*., 2021). Admitted, the above-mentioned study concerned sessions that took place in 2016 and 2017 and it is not self-evident that these results can be extrapolated to future sessions. Sessions of the enhanced transparency framework in which countries discuss their transparency reports (Facilitative Multilateral Consideration of Progress) will only commence after 2024. A key question that remains is how generated information will interact with multilateral processes of discussing this information. Of particular importance is the Facilitative Multilateral Consideration of Progress, scheduled to commence after 2024, but other processes such as technical reviews and the Global Stocktakes are also of interest. Importantly, the performance-oriented transparency pushed for by capacity building initiatives may be at odds with the facilitative and learning oriented set up of multilateral processes such as the Facilitative Multilateral Consideration of Progress.

Looking at the potential of transparency to lead to improved environmental outcomes, this thesis has shown that it is important to consider what 'improved' means. Through a performance lens, improved means better results on a one-dimensional outcome, such as mitigation. From a learning lens, improvements speak to qualitative advances in managing complex sustainable development challenges that consider various dimensions of the socio-economic and ecological domains. The predominant focus on building capacities to generate quantified emission and mitigation data, point to a furthering of the *performance* interpretation of improved environmental outcomes, as has also come to the fore in above discussions on the use of this data for national policy making. In any case, there are many steps and contingencies in the cascade between transparency and environmental improvements, and additional research is needed to further untangle these relationships.

In conclusion, capacity building *de facto* governs the transformative potential of transparency to a narrow focus on mitigation for developing countries. For developed countries, the enhanced transparency framework is not really enhanced in terms of reporting on emissions and mitigation, in terms of review it might actually be a step back. By making emission data of developing countries available and salient this also becomes the most governable element. More specifically it risks

becoming an isolated number. Data on climate change impacts, adaptation, support, and sustainable development are marginal. While the sustainable development goals push for a holistic approach to sustainable development, capacity building for transparency efforts *de facto* push for climate policy making to be based on mitigation *performance*. As capacity building for climate transparency efforts continue to expand, future research must assess to what extent capacity building facilitates holistic climate policy making that balances mitigation efforts with sustainable development objectives.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

By analyzing the evolution and emerging practice of capacity building for transparency in developing countries, this thesis has shown how capacity building initiatives *de facto* shape the scope and extent of transparency generated or promoted, with implications for the transformative potential of transparency in multilateral climate governance. This final chapter will provide a short summary of the main stages of analysis, provide reflections on theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions, and provide final remarks.

Chapter 4 examined the evolution of capacity building for transparency under the UNFCCC. This analysis showed how transparency requirements for developing countries have steadily increased over the past three decades. In 2015, the Paris Agreement introduced the enhanced transparency framework, making reporting on greenhouse gas inventory, mitigation action, and support provided mandatory for developing countries while reporting on adaptation, climate change impacts, and support received is voluntary. Importantly, the analysis of the evolution of capacity building for transparency has shown a potential mismatch between donors who largely focus on capacity building for transparency to foster *mitigation* action in developing countries, and recipients who have historically been advocating for reporting on adaptation and support received. In this context, new capacity building initiatives for transparency have emerged.

Chapter 5 showed how recent and upcoming capacity building efforts reinforce the historical trend of a privileging of building reporting capacities related to compiling greenhouse gas inventories and tracking mitigation action rather than building capacities for reporting on climate change impacts, adaptation, or support. This trend even holds in least developed countries and small island developing states. While in theory recipient countries have discretion over the design and focus of capacity building efforts, analysis of practice suggests that recipient countries are malleable and that implementing agencies directly or indirectly pre-empt the design and scope of projects. Indeed, implementing agencies manage the project funding and organize the hiring of staff. Moreover, lines between government staff and implementing agencies are blurred, with high job mobility between government departments involved in climate reporting and various implementing agencies, leading to the emergence of a 'community' of technical expertise with historical roots in greenhouse gas reporting.

Chapter 6 discussed how emerging practice of capacity building for transparency suggest that the *scope* of transparency to be generated by developing countries for the enhanced transparency framework will focus on greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation tracking, potentially deflecting attention from reporting on adaptation, climate change impacts, support and loss and damage. At the same time, it remains to be seen how effective capacity building efforts will be in terms of supporting

countries in submitting their biennial transparency reports in full and on time, in other words the *extent* of information provided. Emerging practice suggests that the information that will be provided can be expected to be technical, quantitative and with a focus on the detail, especially in the context of greenhouse gas inventories, while information that presents and comprehensively interprets larger trends may be limited.

Chapter 7 discussed how capacity building for transparency then *de facto* governs the transformative potential of transparency by placing attention on mitigation action in developing countries. By making visible first and foremost quantitative data on greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation action this also becomes the most governable element. The risk is that data is treated in isolation, rendering invisible the local context and circumstances. While the sustainable development goals argue for integrated approaches to tackling climate change and development, the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement might lose this holistic perspective and fixate on narrow interpretations of a country's *performance* in terms of mitigation. As such, there may be little room to comprehensively present, reflect and deliberate on the story and context behind the data. Reflecting and deliberating on rich contextual information is what can instigate a process of *learning*. While some countries may find ways to facilitate learning, analysis of capacity building initiatives points to a privileging of transparency that is focused on collecting quantitative information, aggregated into indicators that measure emissions and mitigation success. A strong focus on mitigation *performance* may at the multilateral level deflect attention from key issues, like support and loss and damage. Addressing these key issues may be what is at the core of facilitating accountability, trust, and enhanced ambition. Ultimately, capacity building for transparency initiatives may *de facto* push for climate policy making to be based on a one-dimensional understanding of mitigation *performance*, rather than a holistic effort that takes into account local context and circumstances as well as a broad range of social, economic, and environmental considerations.

Interestingly, the finding that accountability-for-performance is privileged is, at first glance, at odds with the facilitative and learning-oriented dynamics in face-to-face account-giving sessions of the UNFCCC (Facilitative Sharing of Views) (Gupta *et al.*, 2021). This leaves open the question as to what will happen in the Facilitative Multilateral Consideration of Progress sessions under the enhanced transparency framework after 2024 where both developed and developing countries are to present their climate reports. This thesis indicates a privileging of generating information fit to facilitate accountability-for-performance of developing countries. The question that remains is whether this information will, in practice, face questioning and dialogue geared towards performance. If discussions become increasingly focused on assessing whether countries meet their targets, a question that remains is to what extent this is directed to developed and developing countries, respectively, and whether this questioning will take into account fair-share and differentiated responsibilities. Moreover, it remains to be seen what the scope of this questioning on the

performance of countries will be, and if questions on topics beyond mandatory categories of reporting, such as adaptation, also receive attention. If questions remain in the domain of learning, a key question is whether these continue to be technical and focused on compilation of reports and inventories, or whether these will become more substantial, and if so, whether they will go beyond mitigation to also include adaptation and other categories of voluntary reporting. Cautiously extrapolating current trends, a likely scenario is that the reports and inventories become ever more detailed and contain increasingly quantified data in the domains of emissions and mitigation, yet that the face-to-face account-giving remains a polite exercise, with attention remaining focused on learning how to compile ever more detailed and accurate reports.

At the multilateral level the transformative potential may strand in a mismatch between generated information (focused on performance) and actual account-giving sessions (focused on learning). At the domestic level, the largely emission and mitigation related information that is gathered may lead to national policies being designed with a narrow orientation on mitigation performance. The focus on quantification may render less prominent qualitative approaches that take into account a rich diversity of data in making climate policy.

This thesis has used the notion of *de facto* governance and the analytical lens put forward by Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta (2021) to study the politics of capacity building for climate transparency. The notion of *de facto* governance allows to look beyond formal negotiations and policy making to identify processes and practices that subtly yet substantially steer directions that are pushed and privileged. This is both a strength and a weakness of taking *de facto* governance as a central lens through which to analyze emerging capacity building practices. *De facto* governance is a concept that has originally been used to study domains that are not (yet) subject to formal governance. Examples of these include nanotechnology (Rip, 2010) and geoengineering (Gupta and Möller, 2019). Climate transparency is a rather different case since reporting provisions are subject to formal governance. Indeed, multilateral negotiations discuss the transparency provision line by line. At the same time, the transparency provisions leave room for interpretation and focus being placed on certain elements. For example, certain transparency provisions are voluntarily, keeping the question open as to how much attention will be placed on these elements. Even mandatory reporting requirements are subject to flexibility provisions and open for interpretation since all occurs at the multilateral level with no strict enforcement provisions in place.

Applying the notion of *de facto* governance does not mean formal policy making processes should be ignored. On the contrary, this thesis has shown how formal processes and provisions interact with *de facto* forms of steering. For example, prioritizations made in formal provisions may be reinforced through processes of *de facto* governance as has been shown in the case of allocation of CBIT project funding towards the mandatory reporting provisions of the enhanced transparency framework:

greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation reporting. At the same time, *de facto* steering may also influence formal policy making. For example, the proliferation of tools and methodologies for greenhouse gas and mitigation reporting developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as well as other initiatives and non-state actors, helps to build a stronger case that these areas of reporting can be made mandatory, as there are precedents that the tools have been successfully applied. In any case, the *de facto* governance lens motivated to look beyond formal policy processes and critically examine the 'who, what and how' of capacity building initiatives. Importantly, the analytical lens is open ended and motivates to explore unanticipated forms of steering.

This thesis has further developed the analytical lens put forward by Konrad, van Deursen and Gupta (2021) by introducing the notions of *performance* and *learning* to assess the directions that are pushed with regards to the transformative potential of transparency, and in particular the potential to generate accountability. Here accountability can be of two kinds, accountability-for-performance, with a focus on compliance with performance standards, and accountability-for-learning, with a focus on using disclosed information and subsequent dialogue as a means for collective reflection. This conceptualization proved useful in integrating empirical findings and reflecting on their implications for (multilateral) climate policy at large. The notions of *performance* and *learning* are conceptually distinct (yet in practice not necessarily mutually exclusive) and provide analytical value in assessing the transformative potential of transparency.

This thesis has drawn upon practitioner documents and semi-structured interviews. This has provided data that is well suited to make observations on emerging practice of capacity building for transparency at large. This thesis did not feature in-depth case studies and no field research was possible. As such, the thesis lacks detailed insights on how capacity building projects are implemented in practice. While some information was gathered through interviews, a detailed case study could bring to light better how envisioned project outcomes materialize in practice. Still, this thesis has been able to shed a light on some realities of project implementation. For example, content analysis of CBIT project proposals has shown that the lion share of funding goes to activities related to greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation, something that could not be shown from individual case studies alone.

Further empirical work, including (comparative) in-depth case studies, could further interrogate cases where countries walk deviant paths and organize capacity building such that processes of meaningful *learning* materialize at the domestic and international level. Since the enhanced transparency framework will only be in full swing by 2024, empirical analysis into what information is included by developing countries in their actual biennial transparency reports will need to wait. Yet, reports are

not written overnight, and current capacity building efforts lay the groundwork for what will later be reported.

Ultimately, this thesis contributes to ongoing scholarly debates on the role and merit of transparency in multilateral climate governance. Several scholars have shown that it is not self-evident that the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement will deliver enhanced accountability (van Asselt, 2016; Ciplet *et al.*, 2018; Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen *et al.*, 2018; Gupta and van Asselt, 2019), and climate ambition (Gupta and Mason, 2016; Weikmans, Asselt and Roberts, 2019). Some scholars argue that the transformative potential of transparency can be unlocked by ensuring information is "comparable, complete and timely" (Weikmans, Asselt and Roberts, 2019, 8), followed by the notion that capacity building initiatives are pivotal in realizing this (Winkler, Mantlana and Letete, 2017; Weikmans, Asselt and Roberts, 2019). This thesis has shown that capacity building initiatives are not merely neutral means to improve the quality of information that flows into the transparency system but reinforce and shape the type of information generated.

Taking another step back it is not self-evident that enhanced reporting is desirable in all countries. Especially for least developed countries with negligible emissions and small environmental departments resources may be better invested elsewhere, such as capacity building for implementing adaptation action, rather than reporting on it. Similarly, for some countries the costs of generating ever more detailed greenhouse gas inventories may outweigh the benefits of having such data, especially in countries with low emissions and limited means to implement climate measures anyway. Emerging capacity building practice privileges technical experts and the generation of quantitative data related to mitigation performance in developing countries. While this may seem as a 'no-regret' situation, time and resources in climate departments and multilateral climate governance are limited. At the domestic level, climate departments may spend their time reporting on rather than implementing climate policies. Moreover, these policies risk being overly mitigation focused, potentially deflecting attention from holistic assessments of local context and sustainable development considerations. At the international level, seemingly comparable data, detached from its local context, may deflect attention from interpretations of this data, such as whether efforts of the biggest emitters and most endowed countries represent a fair share. Similarly, the focus on greenhouse gas inventories and mitigation data may render less visible crucial topics such as adaptation, climate change impacts, support and loss and damage.

Transparency, in theory, has the potential to promote *performance* and *learning*, both of which are desirable and needed in addressing the complex yet urgent challenge that is climate change. However, practice is unruly, and transparency may in fact deflect attention from the most pertinent issues. This thesis has shown that capacity building initiatives reinforce a trend of increased focus on generating information to assess in detail one-dimensional *mitigation performance* from developing countries,

while other important domains of reporting such as (local) adaptation, climate change impacts and support are rendered less visible, limiting the richness of information needed to instigate processes of *learning*. At the multilateral level, the focus on generating technical information about emissions and mitigation efforts gears towards accountability for performance of developing countries. Importantly, the focus on *performance* may be at odds with the facilitative and *learning*-oriented nature of account-giving processes under the multilateral transparency framework. Ultimately, this thesis highlights the need for continued critical examination of the transformative potential, including though the lens of performance and learning, of climate transparency in multilateral climate governance.

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Annex A: Methodology for the creation of CBIT project datasets

Dataset 1: CBIT projects

Table A1. Methodology dataset 1: CBIT projects

	Data source: Approved PIF documents and meta info on CBIT website[87] **Sample/population**: All approved PIF documents available on CBIT and/or GEF website up to 1 December 2020[88] **Purpose of analysis**: Provide a general descriptive overview of CBIT projects **Questions this database aims to answer**: How are GEF CBIT funds spread geographically? How are GEF CBIT funds spread over GEF agencies? What is the average project duration? What is the average GEF funding? What are the most common executing agencies? What is the balance between GEF funding and co-financing? What is the average waiting time to PIF approval after submission? **Unit of analysis**: One approved PIF document **Data collection timeframe:** 1 November 2020 - 19 February 2021			
	Variable	**Categorization**	**Unit / format**	**Comments**
	PIF id	NA	Integer Primary key	For database building purposes
	Weblink to PIF document	NA	Text	Not for analytical purposes, only for quick reference
	Weblink to CBIT project page	NA	Text	Not for analytical purposes, only for quick reference
Who?	Country	NA	Text	Use spelling as on CBIT website
	Region detailed	Based on classification CBIT: Eastern Africa, Middle Africa, Northern Africa, Western Africa, Southern Africa, Caribbean, Central America, South America, Southern Asia, South-Eastern Asia, Western Asia, Eastern Asia, Melanasia, Southern Europe, Global. Extract data from CBIT website.	Text	Retrieved from CBIT website under tab 'project details'
	Region	Derived from above classification: America, Africa, Asia, Europe, Global	Text	

[87] https://www.cbitplatform.org/
[88] https://www.thegef.org/projects

	LDC	Yes / No (global projects count as no)	0/1	Based on: https://unctad.org/topic/vulnerable-economies/least-developed-countries/list
	SIDS	Yes / No (global projects count as no	0/1	Based on: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids/list
	LDC or SIDS	Yes / No (global projects count as no	0/1	Based on above two rows
	Implementing agency	NA	Text	Use abbreviated form (e.g., UNDP)
	Executing agency	NA	Text	Use spelling as on CBIT website
	Executing agency category	Ministry economics, Ministry environment, Ministry planning, Ministry sustainable development, Ministry agriculture, Ministry energy	Text	Coded all ministries that had 'environment' in the name, or that were a department that is part of a ministry with 'environment' in the name, as 'Ministry environment'. Else used the first term in the ministry name. Always write in this format: Ministry with capital and the second term decapitalized. If the agency is a department, then search for the ministry this department is part of and use that to code.

If the executing agency is not part of a ministry/government than use the name of the agency (e.g., FAO). |
How?	GEF project funding	NA	USD	
	GEF project agency fee	NA	USD	
	Project preparation grant	NA	USD	
	Project preparation grant agency fee	NA	USD	
	Total project preparation grant	NA	USD	Project preparation grant + Project preparation grant agency fee
	Total GEF funding	NA	USD	GEF project funding + GEF project agency fee + Total project preparation grant
	Co-financing amount	NA	USD	
	Grand total funding	NA	USD	Total GEF funding + Co-financing amount
	GEF cycle	6, 7	Integer	Mentioned in the title of the PIF. Shows whether funding is drawn from GEF 6 or 7 cycle.
	Source of funding	CBIT TF, GEF TF	Text	CBIT Trust Fund or GEF Trust Fund. Based on GEF CBIT Progress report: GEF/C.57/Inf.06

			Indicates whether funds are drawn from CBIT Trust Fund or GEF Trust Fund
Project duration	NA	Months	
Date of submission PIF	NA	DD/MM/YYYY	
Date of approval PIF	NA, extract from CBIT website if needed	DD/MM/YYYY	If not mentioned on PIF, based on CBIT website
Month approval PIF	NA	DD/MM/YYYY	First day of the month of approval based on 'Date approval PIF'
Year approval PIF	NA	YYYY	Year of approval based on 'Date approval PIF'
Wait time	NA	Days	Date of approval minus date of submission
CEO ED approved	Yes/no (1/0)	0/1	Based on CBIT website
Project size	Normal and large	Text	If Total GEF funding > 2 million then large, else normal

Note: Rows in bold are used for analyzes presented in chapter 5 of this thesis. Other variables were included in the database for exploratory analysis and may be used for future research.

Table A2. Additional notes on methodology for dataset 1 based on problems experienced during data extraction

Problem	Response
Submission date only mentions month	Take the first day of that month
Date of PIF approval not always clear on the PIF document	Retrieve from CBIT website
"Ministry of Planning and Development of Trinidad and Tobago"	Many ministries oversee multiple domains. For clarity of the "Executing agency category" variable only the first keyword is used, so in this case Ministry planning
https://www.cbitplatform.org/projects/capacity-building-initiative-transparency-cbit-global-coordination-platform has two implementing agencies and executive agencies.	Take the first of the named agencies. The vast majority of projects only have one agency.
https://www.cbitplatform.org/projects/strengthening-argentinas-transparency-framework-ghg-inventories-and-mitigation has PIF submission date after approval date	Leave the approval date as a NULL value.
Some PIF documents are unavailable on the CBIT and GEF websites	Email a request for the document to the relevant CBIT focal point.
Some countries have multiple submission dates, how to deal with this in coding the variable "Date of submission PIF"? For example, Cuba: Submission Date: 19 December 2017 Resubmission Date: 1 March 2018 Resumission Date: 11 May 2018	Always take the latest submission

Dataset 2: Existing capacities

Table A3. Methodology dataset 2: Existing capacities

<table>
<tr>
<td colspan="5">
Data source: CBIT website[89] and GHG inventory capacity database (Umemiya <i>et al.</i>, 2020)
Sample/population: All countries who got their PIF approved before 19 February 2021.
Purpose of analysis: Provide a general descriptive overview of the existing capacities of countries participating in CBIT projects.
Questions this database aims to answer: How does the allocation of CBIT funding relate to the 'existing' level of (GHGI) capacity of countries? What is the profile of CBIT countries in terms of existing capacities? How does the thematic existing level of capacities relate to what capacities are built? How do countries participating in the CBIT assess their own reporting capacities?
Unit of analysis: One country.
Data collection timeframe: 1 November 2020 - 19 February 2021
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Categorization</td>
<td>Unit / format</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PIF id</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Integer Foreign key</td>
<td>For database building purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Use spelling as on CBIT website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What?</td>
<td>Date self-assessment</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>DD/MM/YYYY</td>
<td>Refers date when test was made. Round to first of the month. Based on CBIT website. Note: Self-assessment is not available for all CBIT countries. Note: If two assessments are provided take the data from the first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-assessed capacity reporting national greenhouse gas inventory</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>Percentage. Based on CBIT website. Note: If two assessments are provided take the data from the first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-assessed capacity reporting progress made in implementing NDCs</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>Percentage. Based on CBIT website. Note: If two assessments are provided take the data from the first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-assessed capacity reporting on climate change impacts and</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>Percentage. Based on CBIT website. Note: If two assessments are provided take the data from the first.</td>
</tr>
</table>

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[89] https://www.cbitplatform.org/

adaptation			
Self-assessed capacity reporting financial, technology transfer, and capacity-building support needed and received	NA	Integer	Percentage. Based on CBIT website. Note: If two assessments are provided take the data from the first.
ghgi_capacity_1	NA	Float	Normalized 0-1 scale. Index for GHG capacity of a country in period 1997-2007. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
country_context_1	NA	Float	Normalized score representing socio-economic context capacity of a country in period 1997-2007. From Umemiya and White database.
insti_structure_1	NA	Float	Normalized score representing institutional capacity of a country in period 1997-2007. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
tech_knowledge_1	NA	Float	Normalized score representing technical capacity of a country in period 1997-2007. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
ghgi_capacity_2	NA	Float	Normalized 0-1 scale. Index for GHG capacity of a country in period 2008-2014. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
country_context_2	NA	Float	Normalized score representing socio-economic context capacity of a country in period 2008-2014. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
insti_structure_2	NA	Float	Normalized score representing institutional capacity of a country in period 2008-2014. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
tech_knowledge_2	NA	Float	Normalized score representing technical capacity of a country in period 2008-2014. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
ghgi_capacity_3	NA	Float	Normalized 0-1 scale. Index for GHG capacity of a country in period 2015-2019. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
country_context_3	NA	Float	Normalized score representing socio-economic

				context capacity of a country in period 2015-2019. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	insti_structure_3	NA	Float	Normalized score representing institutional capacity of a country in period 2015-2019. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	tech_knowledge_3	NA	Float	Normalized score representing technical capacity of a country in period 2015-2019. Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	ghgi_capacity_latests	NA	Float	Some countries do not have a 2, or 3 score (because they did not submit recent reports), this variable is created to get the most recent score, thus 1, 2, or 3 from the variables specified above.
	country_context_latest	NA	Float	Some countries do not have a 2, or 3 score (because they did not submit recent reports), this variable is created to get the most recent score, thus 1, 2, or 3 from the variables specified above.
	insti_structure_latest	NA	Float	Some countries do not have a 2, or 3 score (because they did not submit recent reports), this variable is created to get the most recent score, thus 1, 2, or 3 from the variables specified above.
	tech_knowledge_latest	NA	Float	Some countries do not have a 2, or 3 score (because they did not submit recent reports), this variable is created to get the most recent score, thus 1, 2, or 3 from the variables specified above.
	ghgi_applied_index_1	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	promptness_1	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	transparency_1	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	accuracy_1	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	completeness_1	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	timeseries_1	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	recalculation_1	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	kca_ua_1	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	ghgi_applied_index_2	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
	promptness_2	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).

transparency_2	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
accuracy_2	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
completeness_2	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
timeseries_2	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
recalculation_2	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
kca/ua_2	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
ghgi_applied_index_3	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
promptness_3	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
transparency_3	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
accuracy_3	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
completeness_3	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
timeseries_3	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
recalculation_3	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).
kca_ua_3	NA	Float	Extracted from (Umemiya *et al.*, 2020).

Note: Rows in bold have been used for analyzes presented in chapter 5 of this thesis. Other variables were included in the database for exploratory analysis and may be used for future research.

Dataset 3: Project components

Table A4. Methodology dataset 3: Project components

	Data source: Approved PIF documents **Sample/population**: All approved PIF documents available on CBIT and/or GEF website[90] **Purpose of analysis**: Provide a general descriptive overview of thematic focus of projects and dimension of capacity. **Questions this database aims to answer**: How is the balance between different thematic elements in PIF CBIT documents? How is funding spread over different thematic areas? How is the balance between different dimensions of capacities in PIF CBIT documents? **Unit of analysis:** One project component **Data collection timeframe:** 1 November 2020 - 19 February 2021			
	Variable	**Categorization**	**Unit / format**	**Comments**
	Component id	NA	Integer Primary key	For database building purposes
	PIF id	NA	Integer Foreign key	For database building purposes
	Component	NA	Text	Not for analytical purposes, only for quick reference
Who?	Country	NA (Use spelling as on CBIT website)	Text	
What?	Dimension	Action environment, Institutional, Task network, Organizational, Human resources	Text	Coding methodology described below.
	Crosscutting	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	GHG inventory	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	Mitigation	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	Climate change impacts and adaptation	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	Support needed and received	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	Other	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
How?				
	GEF funding	NA	USD	
	Co-financing	NA	USD	

[90] https://www.thegef.org/projects

Table A5. Coding scheme for thematic scope of project components.

Categories	Coding key
Crosscutting	Crosscutting
GHG inventory	Emissions
	GHG emission inventory
	GHG inventory
	Removals
Mitigation	Mitigation
	Emission-reduction activities
	Climate actions
	Results of climate interventions
	NDC implementation
	NDC
Climate change impacts and adaptation	Adaptation
	Resilience
	Vulnerability
	Climate change impacts
Support needed and received	Support
	Means of implementation
	Support for implementation
	Support for NDC
	Support received
Other	Public climate expenditures
	Financing for institutions, local communities, and businesses

Table A6. Coding scheme for dimension of capacity for project components and outputs. Dimensions of capacity based on (Hilderbrand and Grindle, 1997, 36).

Dimension	Sub-categories	Sub-sub-categories	Coding key
Action environment	Economic	Growth	Awareness raising policy makers, permanent inter-ministerial body for high-level leadership, public awareness
		Labor market	
		International economic relationships and conditions	
		Private sector	
		Development	
	Political	Leadership support	
		Mobilization of civil society	
		Stability	
		Legitimacy	
		Political institutions	
	Social	Overall human resource development	
		Social conflict	
		Class structures	
		Organization of civic society	
Public sector institutional context		Concurrent policies	Institutional arrangements, long term strategy, domestic MRV system, mainstreaming gender, regulations, laws, financial mechanism, national mandate, legal, legislation, government financing, governance, government operating structure, institutionalized, institutional, institutions, policies
		Public service rules and regulations	
		Budgetary support	
		Role of the state	
		Management practices	
		Formal and informal power relations	
Task network		Communication and interaction among: • Primary organizations • Secondary organizations • Supporting organizations	Information sharing, knowledge sharing, peer exchanges, experience sharing, national coordination mechanism, interminesterial coordination framework, interoperability, network of partners, public engagement, dissemination, national platform
Organization		Goals	Technical deliverables, methodologies, guidelines, tools, procedures, emission factors,
		Structure of work	

		Incentive system	hardware and software, Information management system, technical capacities, archiving, database, indicators, reports submitted, national roadmap, action plan,
		Management/leadership	
		Physical resources	
		Formal and informal communications	
		Behavioral norms	
		Technical assistance	
Human resources		Training	Training, workshop, learning, peer exchange, on-the job learning, coaching, mentoring, capacity building activities, capacities built of [set of persons]
		Recruitment	
		Utilization	
		Retention	
Undefined			When no other category is applicable

Note: When one component contains keywords of different categories it is the researchers' judgement to determine which one is mentioned most prominently. If about equal, the one occurring first is used.

Dataset 4: Project outputs

Table A7. Methodology dataset 4: Project outputs

	Data source: Approved PIF documents **Sample/population**: All approved PIF documents available on CBIT and/or GEF website[91] **Purpose of analysis**: Provide a general descriptive overview of thematic focus of projects and dimension of capacity. **Questions this database aims to answer**: How is the balance between different thematic elements in PIF CBIT documents? How is funding spread over different thematic areas? How is the balance between different dimensions of capacities in PIF CBIT documents? **Unit of analysis:** One project component **Data collection timeframe:** 1 November 2020 - 19 February 2021			
	Variable	**Categorization**	**Unit / format**	**Comments**
	PIF id	NA	Integer Foreign key	For database building purposes
	Component id	NA	Integer Primary key	For database building purposes
	Output id	NA	Integer Primary key	For database building purposes
	Component	NA	Text	Not for analytical purposes, only for quick reference
	Output	NA	Text	Not for analytical purposes, only for quick reference
Who?	Country	NA (Use spelling as on CBIT website)	Text	
What?	O Dimension	Action environment, Institutional, Task network, Organizational, Human resources, Undefined technical output, Undefined	Text	Coding methodology the same as for project component analysis as described in table A6.
	O Crosscutting	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	O GHG inventory	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	O Mitigation	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	O Climate change impacts and adaptation	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	O Support needed and received	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.
	O Undefined	Yes / no (1 / 0)	Integer	Coding methodology described below.

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[91] https://www.thegef.org/projects

How?	C GEF funding	NA	USD	
	C Co-financing	NA	USD	
	O GEF funding	NA	USD	If PIF disaggregates funding by output, this is used directly. Else, the component funding is divided over the number of outputs nested under the respective component to arrive at the funding for the output.
	O Co-financing	NA	USD	If PIF disaggregates funding by output, this is used directly. Else, the component funding is divided over the number of outputs nested under the respective component to arrive at the funding for the output.
	O Weighted GEF funding	NA	USD	O GEF funding divided by the number of thematic scopes of the component. (e.g., Output has 10 000 O GEF funding and concerns Mitigation *and* adaptation, the O weighted GEF funding is 5000)
	O Weighted Co-financing	NA	USD	O Co-financing divided by the number of thematic scopes of the component.

Table A8. Coding scheme for thematic scope of project outputs

Categories	Includes
GHG inventory	Emissions
	GHG emission inventory
	GHG inventory
	GHG data
	Carbon accounting
	2006 IPPC guidelines
	Activity data
	Emission factors
	Land use classes
	Activity data
	Removals
Mitigation	Mitigation
	MRV
	Low carbon strategy
	Projections
	Emission-reduction activities
	Climate actions
	Results of climate interventions
	NDC implementation
	NDC
	Reporting on sustainable energy
Climate change impacts and adaptation	Adaptation
	M&E
	Resilience
	Vulnerability
	Climate change impacts
Support needed and received	Support
	Means of implementation
	Support for implementation
	Support for NDC
	Public and private expenditures
	Expenses
	Technology transfer
Crosscutting	Crosscutting, Mainstreaming gender issues, sharing best practice,
Undefined	If no other category is applicable

Note: This coding scheme directly builds on the coding scheme for project components as described in table A5, but this scheme includes more keywords to capture the extra level of detail of outputs as compared to components.

Annex B: Template email invitation for interview

Subject: Interview, student doing thesis research on capacity building for transparency

Dear [insert title and name],

I hope this email reaches you well.

[Insert short introduction, e.g. I came across your profile on the CBIT website where you were mentioned as project focal point.]

For my master thesis at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, I am currently doing research on capacity building for climate transparency and the CBIT. My master thesis research feeds into a larger research project led by Prof. Aarti Gupta on the role of transparency in climate governance (https://trans-gov.org/). It would be very valuable for me to hear your experiences and perspectives on capacity building for transparency.

Would you be available for an interview sometime in January? For example, on [insert proposed dates]? The interviews typically last 30-45 minutes. Interviews are in personal capacity, and participants will be anonymized unless agreed otherwise.

Please let me know if you have any more questions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Max van Deursen

M.Sc. Student - Climate Studies, Wageningen University

Annex C: Consent form for participation in research

Statement of Consent for Participation in Research

I hereby accept to participate in a research project in the form of being interviewed. The interview will be conducted by Max van Deursen, from Wageningen University in The Netherlands. The project is supervised by Professor Aarti Gupta from the same university and Susanne Konrad. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about capacity building for climate transparency, and that it is undertaken as part of Max van Deursen's university degree.

1. My participation in the project involves being interviewed. My participation in this interview is likely to require approximately 45 minutes.

2. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid or in any way remunerated for my participation.

3. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate at the outset, or withdraw during the interview, the researcher will not share the information I provided up until that point with anyone.

4. I understand that if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview, I have the right to decline to answer any question, or to end the interview.

5. The interviewer will take notes during the interview. The interviewer may also ask for my consent to having the interview recorded; if I provide such consent, the interview will be recorded.

6. Confidentiality.

   A. I understand that the researcher will ask for my consent on whether to be identified by name in this research and its resulting written work, including possible publication(s).

   B. If I decline to offer this consent, my confidentiality will be respected. This implies that subsequent uses of records and data will protect the anonymity of me as an individual and of institutions with which I am associated. I understand, however, that the student's supervisor may have access to notes, a possible recording or a transcript from the interview, in order to assist the student in the analysis.

Beyond this, no other person will have access to the notes, recording or transcript.

7. I understand that the plans for this study have been reviewed by the student's supervisor.
8. I understand that should I have any questions subsequent to the interview regarding the research or the uses to which my statements will be put, I can contact the student and/or the supervisor. Their contact details are given at the bottom of this form.
9. I have read and understood the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____ _____

Printed Name of Participant   Signature of the Student

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For further information subsequent to participating, the participant may contact the student and/or his/her supervisor. Their contact details are given below.

1. Student:

Max van Deursen

Dijkgraaf 4-9A01, 6708PG, Wageningen

[Email deleted for privacy reasons]

2. Supervisor:

Professor Aarti Gupta

Hollandseweg 1, 6706KN, Wageningen

[Email deleted for privacy reasons]

3. Co-supervisor

Susanne Konrad

[Email deleted for privacy reasons]

Annex D: Topic sheet for interviewees involved in CBIT projects

Introduction

1. Small talk

2. Explaining the interview and consent

         i. Purpose / goal of the interview

Let me first introduce myself, my name is Max, and I am currently doing my master thesis at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. For my thesis I am doing research on capacity building for climate transparency and the CBIT. It would be very valuable for me to hear your experiences and perspectives on capacity building for transparency.

         ii. No obligation to answer

         iii. Ask if participant has any questions

         iv. Ask for consent to start recording

         v. Ask if it agree to be identified by name and organization?

3. Start the recording (if consent is granted)

4. Could you please introduce yourself and your organization?

Body

T1. Conceptual

1. How would you define 'capacity building'?

2. What is your view on the importance of transparency in the context of the UNFCCC? Do you also have any concerns related to transparency?

3. What is your view on the importance of capacity building for transparency? Do you have any concerns related to capacity building for transparency?

T2. Process

T2.1 Initiation

1. Could you describe how CBIT projects are initiated?

2. For countries: Why did you decided to initiate a CBIT project?

3. For agencies: Based on your experience, to what extent do initiators already have a predetermined view on what capacities they want to build?

T2.2 Drafting the project proposal

1. How are CBIT proposals developed?

2. What are the roles of different stakeholders in the process of developing proposals?

T2.3 Project implementation (if applicable)

1. What is your view on the project duration and available funding?

2. What were challenges and best practices in project implementation? Why?

T3. Content

1. What type of capacities does the project aim to build? Why?

2. What are the main activities that the project undertakes? Why?

3. How about the sustainability of capacities built?

T4. CBIT structure

1. In your view, does the CBIT represent a major improvement, minor improvement or no improvement compared to capacity building activities before CBIT?

2. In your view, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the CBIT?

3. In your view, how easy or difficult is it to access CBIT funding?

Closing

1. Ask if the participant wants to add anything

2. Thank the participant for participating

3. Stop recording

4. Ask if participant would like to receive the final thesis

Annex E: Topic sheet for interviewees not directly involved in CBIT projects

Introduction

1. Small talk

2. Explaining the interview and consent

   i. Purpose / goal of the interview

Let me first introduce myself, my name is Max, and I am currently doing my master thesis at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. For my thesis I am doing research on capacity building for climate transparency and the CBIT. It would be very valuable for me to hear your experiences and perspectives on capacity building for transparency.

   ii. No obligation to answer

   iii. Ask if participant has any questions

   iv. Ask for consent to start recording

   v. Ask if it agree to be identified by name and organization?

3. Start the recording (if consent is granted)

4. Could you please introduce yourself and your organization?

Body

T.1 Transparency

4. What is your view on the importance of transparency in the context of the UNFCCC? Do you also have any concerns related to transparency?

5. What is your view on the past and current level of reporting by developing countries?

6. What is your view on the links between article 13 and other articles of the Paris Agreement?

T.2 Capacity building

7. What is your view on the importance of capacity building for transparency?

8. How would you define 'capacity building'?

9. What are the main challenges and prospects of capacity building for transparency?

T.3 CBIT

10. What is your view on the role of the CBIT in capacity building for transparency?

11. How does the CBIT relate to previous capacity building efforts?

12. What is your view on the main drivers for countries to participate in the CBIT?

Closing

5. Ask if the participant wants to add anything

6. Thank the participant for participating

7. Stop recording

8. Ask if participant would like to receive the final thesis

Annex F: Interviewee list

Table F1. Overview of interviewees

Affiliation*	Country	Interview method
Consultant - Perspectives Climate Group*	Germany	Virtual interview, February 2, 2021
General Manager - Papua New Guinea Climate Change and Development Authority, CBIT focal point for Papua New Guinea *	Papua New Guinea	Virtual interview, December 11, 2020
Staff – Sub-directorate of Transparency, General Directorate for Climate Change Policies, Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico*	Mexico	Virtual interview, February 8, 2021
Anonymous	Anonymous	Anonymous
Project Officer - Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia, CBIT focal point for Liberia *	Liberia	Virtual interview, December 16, 2020
Programme Officer - MRV, ETF, NDC, long-term decarbonization, mitigation and transparency, UNFCCC*	Germany	Virtual interview, May 28, 2021
Programme Officer - Transparency Sub-division, UNFCCC*		Virtual interview, January 15, 2021
Research Manager – Climate and Energy, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies*	Japan	Virtual interview, January 27, 2021
Global Advisor – Climate Transparency, United Nations Development Programme*	Italy	Virtual interview, December 8, 2020
Associate Economist - United Nations Development Programme*	North Macedonia	Virtual interview, January 20, 2021
Negotiator – Delegation of the Netherlands to the UNFCCC*	The Netherlands	Virtual interview, January 27, 2021
Staff – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*	Greece	Virtual interview, January 8, 2021
Senior Climate Change Officer – Mitigation sub-division, Climate Change Department, Ministry of Water and Environment, CBIT focal point for Uganda*	Uganda	Written communication, February 1, 2021
Staff - National Office for Climate Change and REDD +, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, CBIT focal point for Madagascar*	Madagascar	Virtual interview, January 7, 2021
Associate Engineer – United Nations Development Programme*	North Macedonia	Virtual interview, January 20, 2021
Manager – Transparency sub-division, UNFCCC*	Bhutan	Virtual interview, January 15, 2021
Manager - UNFCCC*	Bulgaria	Virtual interview, January 6, 2021

Coordinator - Climate Change Programme, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, CBIT focal point for Eswatini*	Eswatini	Virtual interview, January 18, 2021
Programme Officer – ETF coordination, Transparency sub-division, UNFCCC*	United States	Virtual interview, January 11, 2021
Staff – Global Environmental Facility, World Bank*	United States	Virtual interview, December 11, 2020
Officer – Climate Change, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*	Italy	Virtual interview, January 1
Staff – United Nations Environment Programme*		Virtual interview, December 9, 2020
Senior Officer – Mitigation Division, Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, CBIT focal point for Jamaica*	Jamaica	Virtual interview, January 22, 2021
Officer – Climate Change, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*	Italy	Virtual interview, December 16, 2020
Scholar – Free University of Brussels*	Belgium	Virtual interview, February 25, 2021
Senior Coordinator – World Resources Institute, former staff transparency division Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and former CBIT focal point for Mexico*	Mexico	Virtual interview, January 29, 2021
Director - Inventory and Reports Division, National Directorate of Climate Change, Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development*	Paraguay	Virtual interview, January 18, 2021
Staff – Council on Energy, Environment and Water*	India	Virtual interview, January 4, 2021
Former staff – United Nations Environment Programme and Technical University of Denmark Partnership*	Germany	Virtual interview, November 11, 2020
Staff - Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, CBIT focal point for Zimbabwe*	Zimbabwe	Virtual interview, January 6, 2021
Advisor and Manager – United Nations Development Programme, CBIT focal point for Lebanon*	Lebanon	Virtual interview, January 18, 2021
Staff – Directorate of Environment and Climate, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, focal point to the UNFCC, CBIT focal point for Benin*	Benin	Virtual interview, December 14, 2020
Negotiator – Delegation of Malawi to the UNFCCC*	Malawi	Virtual interview, February 3, 2021

*Interviewees participated in personal capacity. Their contributions do not reflect the standpoints of the institution. Affiliations are only given to illustrate the background of interviewees. Some interviewees had multiple affiliations, the primary affiliation in the context of this study is provided.
Key: CBIT – Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency, UNFCCC – Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, IGES - Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, UNDP – United Nations Development Programme, FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, GEF – Secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility, UNEP, United Nations Environmental Programme, CEEW - Council on Energy, Environment and Water.

Annex G: CBIT PIF documents analyzed

Table G1. Overview CBIT PIF documents analyzed

No.	Country	PIF document available at:
1	Jamaica	https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/PMISGEFDocuments/Climate%20Change/Jamaica%20-%20(10014)%20-%20Strengthening%20Jamaica%C2%B4s%20Capacity%20to%20meet%20transpare/PIF_CBIT_Jamaica_final_May.docx
2	Cameroon	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/10446cbit-cameroonunep-pif20201009clean.pdf
3	Global	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/08-03-17pifrequestdocumentrevisedsn2.pdf
4	Thailand	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pifthailand20190902.pdf
5	Honduras	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/05-30-18pifrequestdocumentsnclean0.pdf
6	Chile	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/05-19-17msppifrequestdocumentrevised.pdf
7	Papua New Guinea	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/msprevised0.pdf
8	Trinidad and Tobago	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/10596cbit-ttunep-pif20200525.pdf
9	Zimbabwe	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/10429cbit-zimbabweunep-pif20200707.pdf
10	Global	
11	Madagascar	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/20180212gefid9948ci-cbitmadagascar3rdrevision.pdf
12	Ghana	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/ghanacbitpif04052017.pdf
13	Bahamas	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/10427cbit-bahamasunep-pif20200710.pdf
14	Benin	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pifbenin20190924.pdf
15	Uganda	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/20170427gefid914cbitpifuganda-revisedclean.pdf
16	Panama	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/05-29-18msppifrequestdocument0.pdf
17	Paraguay	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pifparaguay20191014.pdf
18	Antigua and Barbuda	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/cbitantiguaandbarbudapif07march180.pdf
19	Global	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/11-04-16pifrequestdocument0.pdf
20	Serbia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/revisedpifcbitserbiaresubmission24april20180.pdf
21	North Macedonia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/5-30-18-revpifdoc.pdf
22	Liberia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/20171031gefid9923cbitpifliberiaresubmitted.pdf
23	Uruguay	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/mspapprovalrequest.pdf
24	Global	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/msppifdocumentcbitphase2a.pdf
25	Sri Lanka	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/srilankacbitpif07-05-2018.pdf
26	Argentina	https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/PMISGEFDocuments/Climate%20Change/Argentina%20-%20(9955)%20-%20Strengthening%20Argentina%E2%80%99s%20Transparency%20Framework%20o/12-20-17_MSP_PIF_Request_Document.pdf

27	Dominican Republic	https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/PMISGEFDocuments/Climate%20Change/Dominican%20Republic%20-%20(9869)%20-%20Strengthening%20the%20capacity%20of%20the%20Dominican%20Republ/CBIT_DOMINICAN_REP__PIF_21May2018.pdf
28	Togo	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/cbittogopif30may18.pdf
29	Fiji	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/msppifdocument10449fiji-cbitunep-pif20200324.pdf
30	Peru	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/09-20-17pifrequestdocumentrevised.pdf
31	Mongolia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/mongoliacbitmsppif15may2017.pdf
32	Côte d'Ivoire	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/6128cbitcotedivoirepif18oct20173rdsub-1.pdf
33	Rwanda	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/20180306gefid9997cigefcbitrwandaresubmitted0.pdf
34	Mexico	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/06-06-18msppifrequestdocumentfinal.pdf
35	Sierra Leone	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/sierraleonecbitpif20180531.pdf
36	Azerbaijan	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/5-30-18-pifdoc.pdf
37	Eswatini	https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/PMISGEFDocuments/Climate%20Change/Swaziland%20-%20(10002)%20-%20Capacity%20Building%20for%20Enhanced%20Transparency%20in%20Cli/PIF_MSP_CBIT_Swaziland_9March18.pdf
38	Costa Rica	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pif-costa-rica.pdf
39	Georgia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/revisedcbitpif29may20180.pdf
40	Regional	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pifcomesa20190613-1.pdf
41	China	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pifchina20190629.pdf
42	Burkina Faso	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/burkinafasopifcbit31052018.pdf
43	Cambodia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/cambodiacbitmsppif15may20170.pdf
44	Guatemala	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/msppifdocument6436gef20720pif20cbit-guate2002-07-201920english20ver20final0.pdf
45	Maldives	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pifmaldives20191015.pdf
46	South Africa	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/11-04-16msppifrequestdocument0.pdf
47	Nicaragua	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/fsppifdocumentpifcbitnicaragua2320octoberofp20corrected-1.pdf
48	Namibia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/msppifdocumentgef7cbitpifnamibiamarch2027.pdf
49	Morocco	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/6212pifcbitmoroccoresubmissinmay230.pdf
50	Montenegro	https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/PMISGEFDocuments/Climate%20Change/Montenegro%20-%20(10021)%20-%20Strengthening%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution%20(/3-7-18_-_PIF_and_PPG_Doc.pdf
51	Lebanon	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/10-27-2017revisedmspapprovalrequest.pdf
52	Lao People's Democratic Republic	https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/PMISGEFDocuments/Climate%20Change/Lao%20PDR%20-%20(10039)%20-%20Strengthening%20Lao%20PDR's%20institutional%20capacity%20to/Lao_PDR_CBIT_PIF_Resubmission_290518_clean.docx
53	Kenya	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/11-04-16msppifrequestdocument1.pdf
54	Indonesia	https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/GEFProjectVersions/18fbc0d0-cea3-e911-a82d-000d3a365662_PIF.pdf
55	India	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/fsppifdocument6404cbitundp20india20pif26th20aprilclean0.pdf

56	Mauritius	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/msppifdocument6433cbit20pif20-20mauritius201420june2020190.pdf
57	Malawi	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pifmalawi20190710.pdf
58	Haiti	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pifhaiti20191002.pdf
59	Ethiopia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/6208pifcbitethiopiafinalcommentsmarch70.pdf
60	Bangladesh	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/bangladeshcbitpif14may2018revised.pdf
61	Equatorial Guinea	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/pifequatorialguinea20190625.pdf
62	Cuba	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/5-29-2018piffaocbitfinal0.pdf
63	Colombia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/msppifdocument6266gef20720pif20cbit20colombia20resubmission20nov2016202018-1.pdf
64	Bosnia and Herzegovina	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/05-04-2018pifresubmission03052018.pdf
65	Armenia	https://www.cbitplatform.org/sites/default/files/projects/documents/msppifdocument6332cbit20armenia20pif20final1520nov0_1.pdf
66	Afghanistan	
67	Mauritania	https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/GEFProjectVersions/41f043ed-1ff8-e911-a84a-000d3a375321_PIF.pdf