

Overview of the Climate Policy Progress in Southeast Asia: Taking Stock of the Countries' Submissions to the UNFCCC



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Contributing Authors:

Danize Marie Lukban, Climate Policy Analyst (Lead Author)

Danica Marie Supnet, Interim Director for Climate Policy

Reviewers:

Ms. Josefina Cobian (Program Manager for Global Intelligence, ClimateWorks Foundation)

Dr. Felino P. Lansigan (Climate Adaptation Advisor, Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities; and Professor Emeritus, University of the Philippines Los Baños)

Ms. Lourdes Tibig (Climate Science Advisor, Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities)

Mr. Yolando Velasco (Climate Finance Subdivision Manager, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)

Technical Editors:

Ira Dominique Guerrero (Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities)

Karmela Lea Gonzales (Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities)

Desdemona Diwata Espina (external editor)

Layout and Cover by:

Rosalie Agustin (Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities)

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Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BUR	Biennial Update Report
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CCC	Climate Change Commission
COP17	17th Session of the Conference of Parties
COP26	26th Session of the Conference of Parties
COP28	28th Session of the Conference of Parties
CVF	Climate Vulnerable Forum
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
iGST	Independent Global Stocktake
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GST	Global Stocktake
GST1	First Global Stocktake
LTS or LT-LEDS	Long-Term Greenhouse Emission Development Strategies
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NC	National Communication
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NPS	Non-Party stakeholder
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, plus the sustainable management of forests, and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
SEA	Southeast Asia
SB58	58th Sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WRI	World Resources Institute

Executive Summary

The first Global Stocktake (GST1) is a critical step in updating and ramping up the countries' targets and implementation plans to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C, especially for climate-vulnerable regions such as Southeast Asia (SEA). The processes in the GST emphasize submissions as part of the international cooperation of states to communicate and express their interests in consideration of their common but differentiated responsibilities.

This study takes stock of the status of the submission of national communications, particularly National Communications, Biennial Update Reports (BURs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and Long-term Strategy from SEA countries. It recommends further in-depth analyses to identify and bridge the global gaps in global commitments and country-level implementation.

These national reports are mechanisms for countries to document the implementation of their climate action strategies and outcomes, as stated in Article 12 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. They are integral communication mechanisms indicating the national commitment to adapt to and mitigate the persisting anthropogenic activities that exacerbate the rapid changes in climate cycles.

Key Outcomes: **Initial Submissions of** **Southeast Asian countries** **to the UNFCCC**

The submissions noted in this study were based on the number of submissions of the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as of April 2023, with Singapore communicating the highest number of Party submissions, followed by Thailand and Indonesia. Conversely, the countries with the lowest number of Party submissions were Brunei, Myanmar, and the Philippines. This initial stocktaking aimed to review the standpoint of submissions of SEA countries. The identified challenges, gaps, support, and recommendations will be further explored in succeeding studies.

In a 2023 report by the UNFCCC, the key findings of the GST technical dialogues emphasized that although great progress has been achieved, substantial work lies ahead. Despite the well-known gaps, the key findings from the best available science underscore existing and emerging opportunities and solutions to address the implementation challenges, including sharing and learning from best practices and recommendations for accelerating climate action implementation and support. Given the importance of these documents, we must recognize the challenges and opportunities that Parties and non-Party stakeholders can capitalize on as we move to the follow-up phase and updating of NDCs:

Although faced with limitations, countries with delayed submissions must act urgently, especially with the transition of the BUR to the Biennial Transparency Report and given the developments of the third NDC in the following years. The disparity between the timeliness and lack of submissions is a clear indication that governments in the SEA region face considerable reporting challenges because of numerous reasons, such as the incapability of government agencies to retrieve greenhouse gas inventory data and their limited technical expertise, with Pereira et al. describing many SEA countries' climate actions are adaptation-centric. The absence of submissions will pose challenges to identifying and bridging the global gaps in commitments and implementation, strengthening partnerships and opportunities, and obtaining support for developing and least developing countries.

Non-Party stakeholders (NPSs), also known as non-state actors (NSAs), play an essential role in translating GST outcomes into regional and national contexts and engaging governments in policy formulation toward their NDC updating. Although the guidelines on how NPS should engage in the follow-up period of the GST's formal processes remain unclear, their participation should still be strengthened at the regional and national levels to better support governments in various areas of climate action. The GST should make space for region-focused discussions, with governments and NPS working on the progress analysis of the countries' NDCs. Doing so can help countries in the region expand their ambitions and increase accountability and transparency among SEA governments.

Introduction

Article 12 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was established in 1992, urges all Parties to the Convention¹ to communicate their greenhouse national inventory of anthropogenic emissions; a general description of steps taken or envisaged to implement the Convention; and other information that each Party “considers relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention and suitable for inclusion in its communication, including, if feasible, material relevant for calculations of global emission trends,” while taking into account the common but differentiated responsibilities and specific national and regional development priorities, objectives, and circumstances. The 17th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP17) in Durban, South Africa, concluded that Annex I Parties² must submit biennial reports while Non-Annex I Parties, including Southeast Asian (SEA) countries, must submit Biennial Update Reports (BURs) as a summary of parts of their national communications “to enhance the reporting in national communications, including inventories from non-Annex I Parties, on mitigation actions and their effects, and support received.”

1 Parties are countries and states that have ratified the Convention and are represented by national governments and designated agencies in UNFCCC-related affairs (UNFCCC, n.d.). Parties are divided into three groups: Annex I Parties (industrialized OECD member countries, economies in transition, including Russian Federation, Baltic States, and other Central and Eastern European States), Annex II Parties (OECD members of Annex I but not economies in transition), and Non-Annex I Parties (developing countries). Least developed countries are provided special consideration under the Convention because of their limited capacities to adapt to climate change (UNFCCC, n.d.).

2 Annex I Parties are required to communicate the following: NCs (every 4 years), Biennial Report (first Biennial Report must be submitted by January 1, 2014, and every 2 years thereafter), National GHG Inventory (must be submitted by April 15 every year), and Strategies and Approaches for Scaling Up for Climate Finance (every 2 years). Additionally, Pre-2020 Cancun Pledges were one-time pledges submitted by Annex I and other Non-Annex Parties in COP16 in Mexico (Climate Watch, n.d.).



Pursuant to the Convention, National Communications (NCs) relay information on national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, mitigation measures, and adaptation strategies to be submitted within 3 years after entering the Convention and every 4 years thereafter or with the availability of financial resources in accordance with Article 4, paragraph 3. Meanwhile, BURs provide an update to the information relayed in the NCs and include constraints and gaps, means of implementation, and support needed and received. BURs were first due in December 2014 and were required to be submitted every 2 years thereafter. These submissions contain either a summary of parts of the national communication should the Party choose to submit the BUR when the NC is due, or as a separate update report when it does not coincide with the year for the NC submission.

In 2015, the Paris Agreement was adopted, signifying a critical juncture in history as the international treaty became the first legally binding agreement on climate change that recognizes climate change as a shared global issue and accounts for the collective responsibility of cutting down emissions by all Country Parties. Before the Agreement, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol was the first legally binding international treaty

that mandated developed countries to reduce emissions in accordance with the agreed country targets. Although both treaties are similar in nature, the Kyoto Protocol only requires action from developed countries, and excluded developing and other major carbon-emitting countries. By contrast, the Paris Agreement emphasizes all the countries' shared responsibility, regardless of their economic status, in setting their target emissions to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Countries ratifying the Paris Agreement are required to submit their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), which outline their proposed actions to reduce GHG emissions and build adaptation capacity and resilience while keeping in mind the goal to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C and prevent the increase to 2.0°C above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century. Once a Party to the Paris Agreement, INDCs are converted into NDCs, which serve as the foundational principle of the Party's commitment to implement climate action and the Global Stocktake (GST) to support in monitoring progress, identifying gaps and requirements for enhanced action and support, and collaborating on providing solution pathways.

Aside from NDCs, all Parties are encouraged to formulate and communicate their Long-Term Greenhouse Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS or LTS) by 2023, according to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, n.d.). As part of their common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities, Parties are urged to relay their Long-Term Strategies (LTSs) by the fifth session of the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement in 2023 (UNFCCC, n.d.). Parties to the Paris Agreement are also required to submit their first Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) by December 2024. BTRs should outline a greenhouse national inventory of anthropogenic emissions; information to track progress in implementing and achieving

NDCs; information on climate change impacts and adaptation; information on financial, technological transfer, and capacity-building support provided and mobilized, as well as needed and received, for developing countries; information on any support provided; and other information that Parties consider relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention and suitable for inclusion in their communications (UNFCCC, 2021).

Meanwhile, Parties under the Paris Agreement and the Convention that have yet to put forward their first BURs must submit them by December 2024, as the BTRs will supersede the BURs at the latest by the end of 2024, as presented in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1. Historical timeline of Communications submitted to the UNFCCC in relation to national strategies and GST processes³

1992	National Communications	Article 12 of the UNFCCC requires Parties to communicate information on their implementation of the Convention with the following elements: (1) national inventory of anthropogenic emissions, (2) a general description of steps taken by the Party to implement, and (3) other information considered by the Party relevant to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention.
1997	Kyoto Protocol	The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in December 1997, operationalizing the UNFCCC by binding 37 industrialized countries and economies in transition, as well as the European Union, to limit and reduce their GHG emissions according to agreed individual targets.
2014	Biennial Update Reports	As decided at COP17 in 2011, the first BURs from Non-Annex I Parties were due for submission by December 2014.

³ Submissions of National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and REDD+ to the UNFCCC are not included as NAPs are encouraged for Least Developing Countries (UNFCCC, n.d.) and REDD+ are communicated on a voluntary basis for developing countries to which they can receive results-based payments on emission reductions when they reduce deforestation (UNFCCC, n.d.)

2015 – 2016	Paris Agreement	The Paris Agreement was adopted at the 21st Session of the Conference of Parties in December 2015 and entered into force in November 2016. Countries aspiring to be Party to the Agreement were required to submit their INDCs. Once ratified to the Paris Agreement, INDCs are converted into NDCs, and Parties are then required to submit them every 5 years.
2020		Once Party to the Paris Agreement, Parties are required to submit new or updated NDCs every 5 years thereafter. Parties were requested to submit their new or updated NDCs and encouraged to communicate their LT-LEDS by 2020.
2023	First Global Stocktake (GST1) in 28th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP28)	Launched in 2021, GST1 is set to conclude in December 2023 at COP28. The expected decision from GST1 will reflect the collective progress of the Parties toward the goals of the Paris Agreement and serve as a guide for countries to update the next round of NDCs.
2024	Biennial Transparency Report and Biennial Update Report	<p>Under the Enhanced Transparency Framework, the BTR supersedes the BUR as an information reporting and reviewing requirement of the Paris Agreement.</p> <p>Submissions of first BTRs for developed countries were due as early as the date of the annual GHG inventory submission in 2022 while submissions for the first BTRs for developing countries must be relayed by the Parties to the Paris Agreement by December 31, 2024. Those that have yet to submit their first BURs must do so no later than the same date.</p>
2025	Third NDC Submissions	New and robust sets of NDCs are expected to be submitted by all Parties as supported by the GST1 inputs.
2050	Long-term Strategy	<p>Article 4, paragraph 19 of the Paris Agreement encourages all Parties to develop and communicate LT-LEDS with consideration of Article 2, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and the different national circumstances.</p> <p>LT-LEDS offers a significant opportunity for countries to outline their vision for achieving a low-carbon economy by 2050, and align their NDCs to ensure consistency and prevent lock-in of carbon-intensive practices, policies, and technologies.</p>

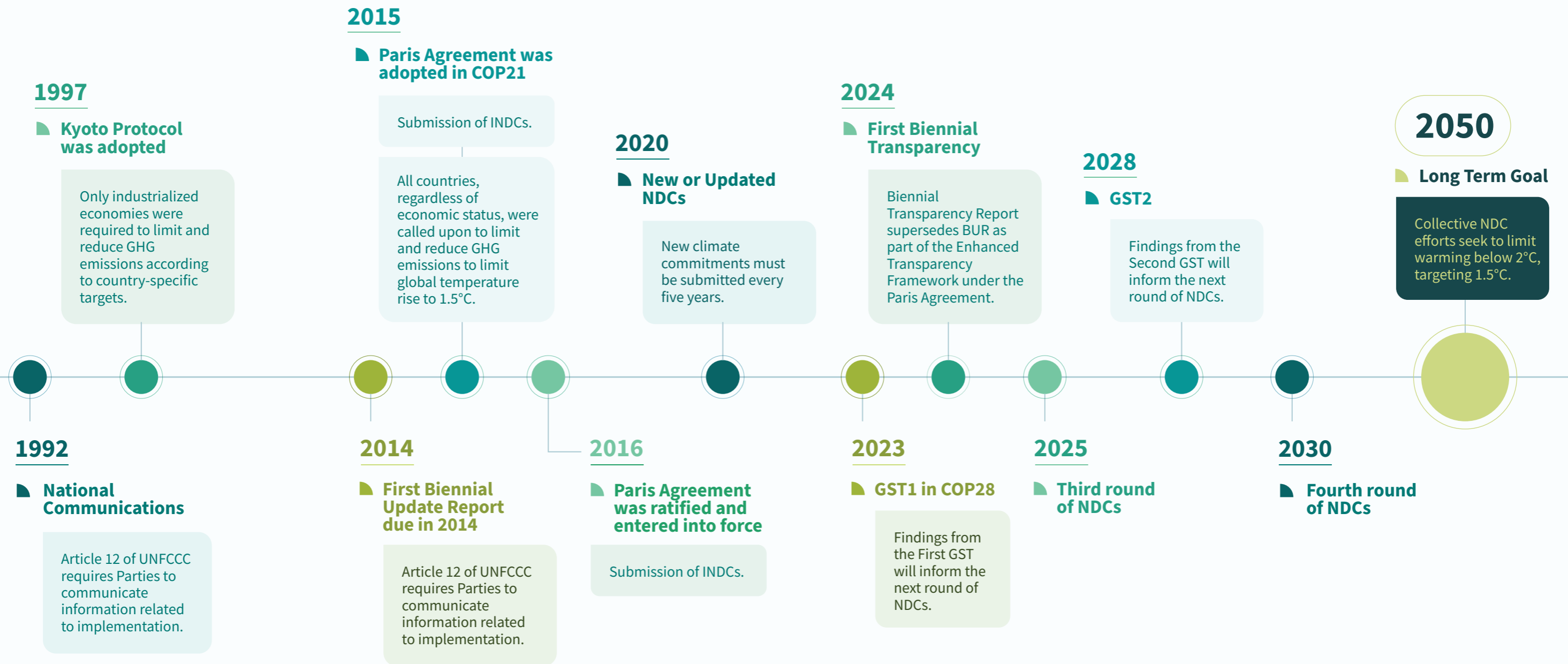


Figure 1. Historical timeline of the Submissions to the UNFCCC in relation to national strategies and the GST processes

Ahead of the First Global Stocktake (GST1) and the Importance of Submissions

The Global Stocktake follows the five-year cycle of NDC updating and is designed to take stock of the implementation of countries toward achieving the national commitments and long-term goals set out in the Paris Agreement. Within the two-year GST cycle, the process undergoes three main phases: (1) information collection and preparation, (2) technical assessment, and (3) consideration of outputs. Information collection and preparation for the first GST began at COP26 in November 2021 and culminated in June 2023, while the technical assessments and dialogues were conducted in June 2022 (TD1.1), November 2022 (TD1.2), and June 2023 (TD1.3).

Technical dialogues are developed with the participation of Parties, Non-Party stakeholders⁴, and experts sharing the best available science and analyzing inputs and issues on the three main GST thematic areas—mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation and support—while also taking into account considerations on equity, and loss and damage (UNFCCC, n.d.). In the third phase, consideration of the outputs aims to present key findings during the previous phases and propel the enhancement of international cooperation and national implementation amidst different political influences. Through the GST, more spaces for accountability and transparency are emphasized as climate action and sustainable development rely on the support and action of governments.

As the First Global Stocktake (GST1) is set to conclude at the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) in 2023, the outcomes are expected to contribute to ramping up climate commitments of the subsequent NDCs. This policy report aims to take stock of the ten Southeast Asian countries' submissions⁵ to the UNFCCC and provide an outlook of collective climate policy progress as a region. National Communications, Biennial Update Reports, Nationally Determined Contributions, and Long Term Strategies are only a few of the essential documents reviewed in this report, as they serve as valuable inputs to the GST processes by providing information on national greenhouse gas inventory, mitigation measures, vulnerability and adaptation assessments, and country-specific climate action commitments. It is important to note that the progress of the countries and the Southeast Asian region toward climate action as a national priority can be reflected in their level of engagement with the UNFCCC through submissions.

⁴ Non-Party stakeholders, composed of civil society organizations, the private sector, financial institutions, cities and subnational authorities, local communities, minorities, and indigenous people, play “a specific role in sharing experiences, cooperating in the implementation of national climate efforts, and catalyzing actions to strengthen mitigation initiatives” (Phillips, 2018).

⁵ Submissions are a very important element of sharing information, building understanding, and advancing work inter-seasonally in an open, transparent, and inclusive manner. The new submission portal of the UNFCCC aims to enhance the user-friendliness and efficiency in submitting and accessing the information and views from Parties as well as from non-Party stakeholders. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/parties-non-party-stakeholders/non-party-stakeholders/submissions/submission-portal#Submissions-and-statements-from-non-Party-stakeholder>

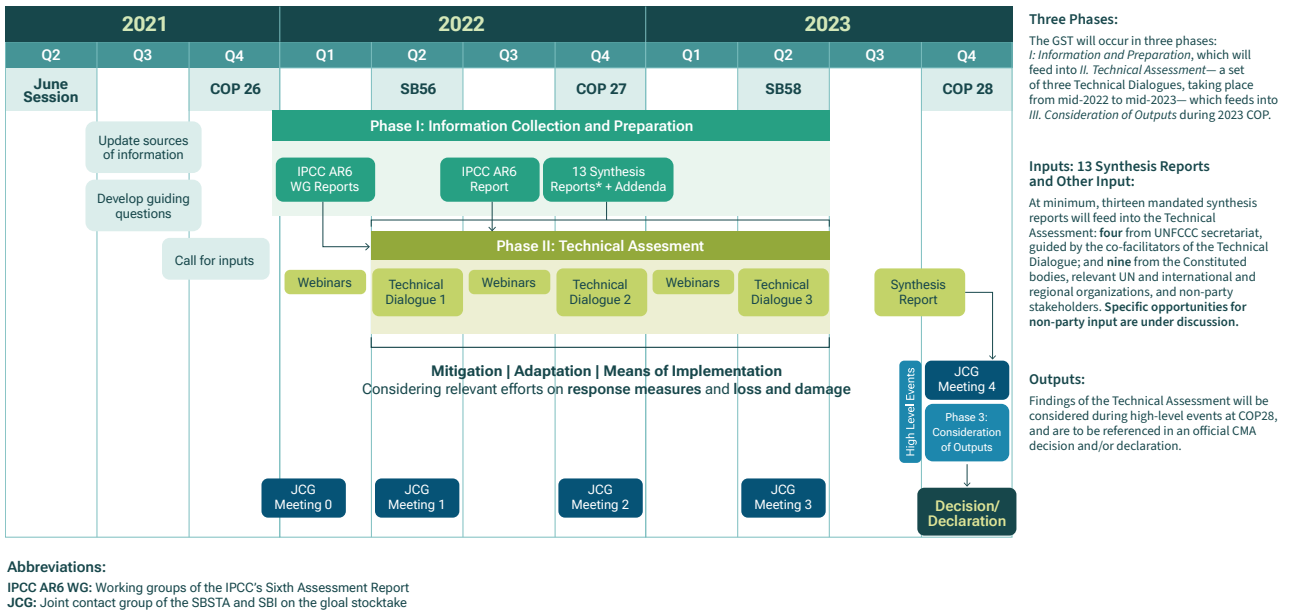


Figure 2. Overview of the Global Stocktake timeline⁶

A country’s engagement in international climate negotiations is influenced by numerous internal and external factors; a common observation is the pressing need for incentives for countries—developing economies in particular—to prepare their national reports to the UNFCCC beyond their obligation to the Convention, which may include access to financial support, national policymaking, institutional arrangements, and sociocultural influences. Although the Paris Agreement holds no legal mandate on a Party’s decisions for delayed communication or withdrawal from the Agreement, the current standing of UNFCCC submissions may reflect a country’s integrity and capacity to uphold international processes and treaties to which they have committed to communicate, implement, and report in the interest of realizing collective accountability and effective cooperation in a similar way in which the ASEAN was grounded upon. In this regard, the participation of non-Party stakeholders can provide additional and complementary support for governments in their implementation and reporting. Government partnerships with NPS are not an unconventional means for enforcing domestic measures, but the sense of urgency brought by climate change, the global COVID-19 pandemic, and decades of climate negotiations can further amplify maximizing potential partnerships and participation of NPS in helping develop a more robust set of NDCs, taking into consideration of the GST outputs.

6 The timeline was obtained from a presentation by Global Intelligence Director of ClimateWorks Foundation, Casey Cronin, during the Independent Global Stocktake Southeast Asia Inception Session in June 2022. Copyright 2022 of ClimateWorks Foundation.

Submissions of Southeast Asian countries to the UNFCCC

The documents submitted to the UNFCCC as of April 2023 were classified according to quantity and type. Among all the countries, Singapore had the greatest number of submissions, with five NCs, five BURs, two versions of its first NDC, and two versions of its first LTS. It was then followed by Thailand with four NCs, four BURs, three versions of its first NDC, and two versions of its first LTS and Indonesia with three NCs, three BURs, three versions of its first NDC, and one submission of LTS. Notably, countries with the lowest number of activities were Brunei and the Philippines, each with two NCs and one version of their first NDCs, and Myanmar with one NC submission and two versions of its first NDC.

While all countries have at least communicated National Communications and Nationally Determined Contributions, the disparity of engagement within the region is reflected in the lack of BUR submissions, which previews the implementation expressed in a country's NC, and understated development of Long-Term Strategy, which should serve as a mid-century sustainable vision and policy instrument for the country's commitment towards 2050 reduction goals.

Taking stock of the submissions to UNFCCC is just the first step in assessing a country's levels of engagement and political will to submit in a timely manner, as well as mirroring their cooperation in mitigating and adapting to a wicked problem like climate change. This policy report aimed to assess the documents communicated to the UNFCCC from a policy-based perspective as to the country's envisaged mitigation and adaptation actions, and the required information to implement pursuant to the goals of the Convention and the Paris Agreement.

The recently published report by the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) shows that members of the CVF, including four Southeast Asian countries, are fully compliant with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal on a fair shares basis (CVF, 2022). Revisions to the NDCs are not a mandatory requirement, however, updated versions to the initial NDCs can also mean that countries

aim for higher emissions reductions, closely monitored planning and implementation, and robust documentation of climate finance support according to a WRI analysis (IISD, 2022). Among the COP26 outcomes, it was requested that "Parties revisit and strengthen the 2030 targets in their NDC to align with the Paris Agreement temperature goal by the end of 2022" (CVF, 2022).

Submissions for long-term strategies are only encouraged, not mandated. Countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand have developed their LTS at an early stage and have shown clear indications of their commitment to working on sustainable solution pathways and achieving net-zero global emissions. Moreover, as stressed by the World Research Institute (WRI), the development of NDCs and LTS should not be regarded as distinct and separate processes, but rather as divergent and complementary policy instruments in the medium- and long-term.



While submissions are fundamental components of the GST, the capacity to submit on time does not guarantee that the targets expressed in their reports, especially for NDCs and LTS, are indicative of the sufficiency of efforts to achieve the Paris Agreement goals. National development plans, strategies, and policies, envisaged in the National Communications, Biennial Update Reports, Long-term Strategies, and Nationally Determined Contributions, can provide a deeper outlook on a country's circumstances and priorities beyond what is currently communicated to UNFCCC. Albeit communicated, these documents can still exhibit an incomplete picture and an oversimplification of the real-world case, and in turn, constrain Parties to report accurate and factual information in a timely and effective manner.

Brunei, Myanmar, and the Philippines have faced challenges in communicating their BURs, of which the first submission was expected by 2014. In addition, SEA countries face difficulties in

reporting mitigation measures due to insufficient funding to support their implementation (The World Bank, 2014) and financial support to monitor the policy actions undertaken. The Climate Change Commission (CCC), the mandated climate government agency of the Philippines, also explained that a major hindrance to reporting is the lack of streamlining coordination between governmental agencies to report GHG inventory among sectors and involved stakeholders, especially adaptation-focused SEA countries. The lack of integrated institutional arrangement can be a recurring challenge for countries to maintain consistency in communicating their national actions to the international level. Southeast Asian NDCs and BURs showed that the need for international financial and technical assistance increasingly grows as developing and least developing countries are hampered by slow scientific and technological advancements, low foreign investments, and the increasing economic and non-economic loss and damage in the region.

The Philippines' First BUR Submission

In a stakeholders' meeting on the 19th of March (CCC, 2023), the CCC that the major challenge to BUR submission was data collection on national GHG inventory and results of mitigation actions. As the Philippines' priority is adaptation with mitigation as a co-benefit, the agency faced difficulties in acquiring data from various government agencies and sectors. Representatives of the agency mentioned that the country's priorities were then to develop the NDCs and publish the National Climate Change Action Plan Monitoring and Evaluation from 2011 to 2016. They initiated consultations in 2016, but developments were also hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with GST1 in COP28, the government agency expressed its intention to submit by the end of 2023.

Table 2. Timeline of Submissions from Southeast Asian Countries Reported to the UNFCCC⁷

	National Communications <i>(must be submitted every 4 years starting from the 3rd year of entering the Convention)</i>	Biennial Update Report <i>(must be submitted every 2 years from 2014)</i>	Nationally Determined Contribution <i>(must be updated every 5 years)</i>	Long-term Strategy <i>(not mandated but highly encouraged)</i>
Brunei	2 submissions (NC2 submitted in November 2017)	N/A	1 version (First NDC submitted in December 2020)	N/A
2015 (INDCs) → 2016 (First NC) → 2017 (Second NC) → 2020 (First NDC)				
Cambodia	3 submissions (NC3 submitted in September 2022)	1 submission (BUR1 submitted in August 2020)	2 versions (First update to the first NDC submitted in December 2020)	1 submission (LTS for Carbon Neutrality [LTS4CN] submitted in December 2021)
2002 (First NC) → 2015 (INDC) → 2016 (Second NC) → 2017 (First NDC) → 2020 ([1] First BUR; [2] First BUR Technical Annex; [3] 2020 GHG inventory Submission, National Inventory Report; [4] Revised first NDC) → 2021 ([1] Climate Change Strategic Plan; [2] LTS)				
Indonesia	3 submissions (Revised NC3 submitted in February 2018)	3 submissions (BUR3 submitted in December 2021)	3 versions (Second update to the first NDC updated in September 2022)	1 submission (LTS for Low-Carbon and Climate Resilience 2050 [Indonesia LTS-LCCR 2050] submitted in July 2021)
1999 (First NC) → 2010 (Cancun Pledge pre-2020 Target) → 2011 (Second NC) → 2015 (INDC) → 2016 ([1] First BUR; [2] First NDC) → 2018 ([1] Third NC; [2] Second BUR) → 2021 ([1] Revised first NDC, Addendum; [2] LTS; [3] Third BUR) → 2022 (Revised first NDC)				

⁷ Information contained in the table are referenced from ClimateWatch (n.d.) and UNFCCC (n.d.), as of April 2023.

	National Communications <i>(must be submitted every 4 years starting from the 3rd year of entering the Convention)</i>	Biennial Update Report <i>(must be submitted every 2 years from 2014)</i>	Nationally Determined Contribution <i>(must be updated every 5 years)</i>	Long-term Strategy <i>(not mandated but highly encouraged)</i>
Laos	2 submissions (NC2 submitted in June 2013)	1 submission (BUR1 submitted in July 2020)	2 versions (First update to the first NDC in December 2021)	N/A
	2000 (First NC) → 2013 (Second NC) → 2015 (INDC) → 2016 (First NDC) → 2020 (First BUR) → 2021 (Revised first NDC)			
Malaysia	3 submissions (NC3 June 2018 with submitted errata in 2019)	4 submissions (BUR 4 submitted in December 2022)	2 versions (First update to the first NDC in July 2021)	N/A
	2000 (First NC) → 2011 (Second NC) → 2016 ([1] INDC; [2] First BUR; [3] First NDC) → 2018 ([1] Third NC, [2] Second BUR) → 2020 (Third BUR) → 2021 (Revised first NDC) → 2022 (Fourth BUR)			
Myanmar	1 submission (NC1 submitted in December 2012)	N/A	2 versions (First update to the first NDC in August 2021)	N/A
	2012 (First NC) → 2015 (INDC) → 2017 (First NDC) → 2021 (Revised first NDC)			
Philippines	2 submissions (NC2 submitted in December 2014)	N/A	1 version (First NDC submitted in April 2021)	N/A
	2000 (First NC) → 2014 (Second NC) → 2015 (INDC) → 2021 (First NDC)			

	National Communications <i>(must be submitted every 4 years starting from the 3rd year of entering the Convention)</i>	Biennial Update Report <i>(must be submitted every 2 years from 2014)</i>	Nationally Determined Contribution <i>(must be updated every 5 years)</i>	Long-term Strategy <i>(not mandated but highly encouraged)</i>
Singapore	5 submissions (NC5 submitted in November 2022)	5 submissions (BUR5 submitted in November 2022)	2 versions (Second update to the first NDC in November 2022)	2 versions of 1 submission (Charting Singapore's Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Future submitted in March 2020 and Addendum to Singapore's LT-LEDS submitted in November 2022)
	2000 (First NC)→ 2010 ([1] Cancun Pledge Pre-2020 Target; [2] Second NC)→ 2014 ([1] First BUR; [2] Third NC) → 2015 (INDC) → 2016 ([1] First NDC, [2] Second BUR) → 2018 ([1] Fourth NC; [2] Third BUR)→ 2020 ([1] Updated First NDC; [2] LTS; [3] Fourth BUR)→ 2022 (Revised first NDC)			
Thailand	4 submissions (NC4 submitted in December 2022)	4 submissions (BUR4 submitted in December 2022)	3 versions (Second update to the first NDC in November 2022)	2 versions of 1 submissions (Thailand's LT-LEDS (revised version) submitted in November 2022)
	2000 (First NC)→ 2011 (Second NC) → 2014 (Cancun Pledge Pre-2020 target) → 2015 ([1] INDC, [2] First BUR) → 2016 (First NDC) → 2017 (Second BUR)→ 2018 (Third NC) → 2020 ([1] Revised first NDC, [2] Third BUR)→ 2021 (First LTS) → 2022 ([1] Revised first NDC; [2] Second LTS)			
Vietnam	3 submissions (Revised NC3 submitted in April 2019)	3 submissions (BUR3 submitted in April 2021)	3 versions (Second update to the first NDC in November 2022)	N/A
	2003 (First NC)→ 2010 (Second NC) → 2014 (First BUR) → 2015 (INDC) → 2016 (First NDC) → 2017 (Second BUR)→ 2018 (Third NC) → 2021 ([1] 2021 GHG inventory submission, National Inventory Report; [2] Third BUR)→ 2022 (Revised first NDC)			

Toward the First Global Stocktake

The first Global Stocktake is a critical step in updating and ramping up countries' targets and implementation plans to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C, especially for a diverse region such as SEA. The processes in the GST emphasize the submissions as part of the international cooperation of states to communicate and express their interests in consideration of their common but differentiated responsibilities. NC, BUR, NDC, and LTS are integral communication tools that signal a national commitment to adapt to and mitigate the persisting anthropogenic activities that exacerbate GHG emissions and the rapid changes in the climate cycles⁸(UNFCCC, n.d.). This initial stocktaking aimed to review the standpoint of the submissions of the SEA countries and suggested conducive in-depth research to assess national commitments communicated to the UNFCCC and identify implementation gaps that can inform the next round of NDCs in support of the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.

In a 2023 report by UNFCCC, the key findings of the GST technical dialogues emphasized the need for substantial work despite the current progress. Regardless of the well-known gaps, the key findings from the best available science underscore existing and emerging opportunities and solutions to address these implementation challenges by sharing and learning from best practices and recommendations aimed at accelerating climate action implementation and support (UNFCCC, 2023). Given their importance, the challenges and opportunities that Parties and non-Party stakeholders can capitalize on should be recognized as we move forward to the follow-up phase and NDC updating.

⁸ The climate cycle, also called climatic oscillation, is a slowly varying change of climate about a mean that recurs with some regularity but is not necessarily periodic (American Meteorological Society, 2022).



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Although faced with limitations, countries with delayed submissions should act with urgency, especially with the transition of BUR to BTR and developments of the second NDC in the following years.

Southeast Asia houses states and communities that are critically vulnerable, particularly to slow-onset events (USAID, n.d.). The disparity between the timeliness and lack of submissions clearly indicates that governments in the region experience serious challenges in reporting due to various reasons, such as the incapacity of government agencies to retrieve GHG inventory data and their limited technical expertise as the climate actions of many SEA countries are adaptation-centric (Pereira et al., 2022). Aside from the Party submissions, only one submission with a SEA focus was reported by the iGST SEA Hub to the GST inputs, suggesting the limited awareness of SEA countries about the GST processes.

As pressing as it is for countries to update and report their progress to the UNFCCC, commitments toward implementing these measures must be equally valued to mirror the actions at the international level to the local and most affected communities and peoples. An NDC synthesis

report of all 192 countries confirmed that an approximately 16% increase in global GHG emissions is expected in 2030 relative to the 2010 levels, which can push the global temperature to 2.7°C by the end of the century (UNFCCC, 2021). In recent years since the Paris Agreement, progress on climate action has been alarmingly slow and insufficient against the scale of global ambitions. The absence of submissions will pose challenges to identifying and bridging the global gaps in commitments and implementation, strengthening partnerships and opportunities, and obtaining support where they are most needed in developing and least developing countries.

Non-Party stakeholders, also known as non-state actors, play an essential role in translating GST outcomes into regional and national contexts and engaging governments in policy formulation toward their NDC updating.

Although clear guidelines on how the NPS should engage in the follow-up period of the GST formal processes are still lacking, their participation should be strengthened at the regional and national levels to better support governments in various areas of climate action. The regional perspective of SEA is presented below.

Key priorities of non-state actors (NSAs) in Southeast Asia for the Global Stocktake (GST)

Submission of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC) and Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) to the third technical dialogue of the first GST.

The Independent Global Stocktake (iGST) Southeast Asia (SEA) Hub aims to champion a purposive Global Stocktake (GST) that empowers non-state actors (NSAs) in the region to actively participate in analyzing and assessing the progress of achieving the Paris Agreement's goals.

The active participation of NSAs contributes to the collective global representation of information to be assessed in the GST. We present the regional perspective of Southeast Asia below:

Countries in the region **share similar and complementing adaptation and mitigation actions** in facing climate change-related impacts. This includes challenges in the fields of:



Energy transition



Forestry and land use



Ecosystem-based adaptation



Agriculture



Disaster risk reduction



NSAs play a vital role in **translating GST outputs into regional and national contexts**, which can help specify concrete action and support for countries in Southeast Asia.



Beyond 2023, the GST should **make space for region-focused discussions, with governments and NSAs working on the Nationally Determined Contributions' (NDCs) updating process.** This can help countries in the region increase their ambition.



Participation of NSAs in ASEAN summits and other SEA-related discussions can help **increase accountability and transparency among Southeast Asian governments.**



Engaging NSAs in policy formulation can **better equip government leaders to represent their nations' diverse adaptation and mitigation needs.**



Looking ahead to the second GST, the SEA Hub and other NSAs can engage with the development of **follow-up mechanisms on how the first GST influences NDC implementation in the region.**



The SEA Hub **officially launched in May 16, 2023**, calling for urgent and significant delivery of Paris climate commitments to help communities, especially the most vulnerable, survive and thrive amid the climate crisis. Representatives from the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Timor-Leste, and Laos gathered in Manila from May 16-18 to establish the Hub and lay down their action plans for Southeast Asia.



Access the Hub's full submission



More information about the SEA Hub



For more information, you may reach out to:
Danica Marie Supnet, ICSC: danica@icsc.ngo
Akibi Tsukui, IGES: i-gst@iges.org.jp, tsukui@iges.or.jp

Figure 3. Submission of iGST Southeast Hub to the first Global Stocktake

Based on recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and expert contributions from the region, NPS can play an active role in translating research and the best available science into actionable policy recommendations in updating their NDCs and outlining concrete and diverse adaptation and mitigation needs of each country. During the SB58 side event organized by the iGST, ClimateWorks Foundation Director for Global Intelligence Casey Cronin reiterated that the GST is more than just an assessment; it also serves as a springboard for building a safer world. While most of the countries are preparing for the outcomes of GST1,

the climate action strategies and outcomes beyond 2023 are even more crucial.

The period after the GST, 2024–2025, will be a critical window to translate and tailor the outcomes of GST1 into concrete action plans conveyed in the next round of NDCs. The GST should integrate region-focused discussions, with governments and NPS working on the progress analysis of their countries' NDCs. Doing so can help expand the ambition of countries in the region and increase the accountability and transparency among SEA governments.



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