

## **Support needed and received by non-Annex I Parties: What can we learn from their first Biennial Update Reports?**

Romain Weikmans



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# Support needed and received by non-Annex I Parties: What can we learn from their first Biennial Update Reports?

Romain Weikmans

## Abstract

How much climate finance has each developing country received? As basic as this question may seem, we currently do not have any satisfactory answers to it. This is highly problematic for several reasons. In addition to eroding trust in international negotiations on climate change, the current state of affairs means that it is impossible to meaningfully identify if there is any gap in the international support for climate actions and where those gaps are, in terms of geographic (country and region), thematic (mitigation, adaptation, etc.) or sectorial (agriculture, health, energy, etc.) allocations. It also means that it is extremely complicated to assess the extent to which climate finance help developing countries address mitigation and adaptation challenges in an equitable and efficient manner.

In this policy brief we try to understand whether or not the blurry image of *climate finance received* can be explained by the lack of compliance of developing country Parties toward transparency requirements agreed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We show that the lack of compliance is not the only reason for concern. Inadequate transparency requirements decided under the UNFCCC are also to blame. What are the most important challenges that need to be addressed? Will the Paris ‘enhanced transparency framework’ help address them? We discuss these issues in the last part of this brief, along with some policy recommendations for the Belgian Development Cooperation.

## Policy pointers

- For a variety of reasons, most non-Annex I Parties do not report information on climate finance needed and received in a timely and comprehensive manner.
- The Belgian Development Cooperation could support its partner countries in the tracking and reporting of support needed and received for climate action. This could be done bilaterally by supporting for example the establishment of national dashboards of climate finance received in partner countries. This could also be done multilaterally by contributing among others to the “Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency” established as part of the Paris Agreement.
- The Belgium Development Cooperation could make sure that Belgium actively supports (in the UNFCCC negotiations) the development of common accounting modalities for financial support needed and received.

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## **1. Introduction**

How much climate finance has each developing country received? As basic as this question may seem, we currently do not have any satisfactory answers to it. This is highly problematic for several reasons. In addition to eroding trust in international negotiations on climate change, the current state of affairs means that it is impossible to meaningfully identify if there is any gap in the international support for climate actions and where those gaps are, in terms of geographic (country and region), thematic (mitigation, adaptation, etc.) or sectorial (agriculture, health, energy, etc.) allocations. It also means that it is extremely complicated to assess the extent to which climate finance help developing countries address mitigation and adaptation challenges in an equitable and efficient manner.

In this policy brief we ask: why is it currently impossible to know how much climate finance each developing country has received? What can be done about it? We have already described elsewhere (see Roberts & Weikmans, 2017; Weikmans et al., 2017; Weikmans & Roberts, 2016; 2017) the many elements that impede the emergence of a clear picture of the landscape of climate finance *provided* and *mobilized* by developed countries. In this policy brief we go one step further and try to understand whether or not the blurry image of *climate finance received* can be explained by the lack of compliance of developing country Parties toward transparency requirements agreed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (section 2). We show that the lack of compliance is not the only reason for concern. Inadequate transparency requirements decided under the UNFCCC are also to blame (section 3). What are the most important challenges that need to be addressed? Will the Paris ‘enhanced transparency framework’ help address them? We discuss these issues in section 4, along with some policy recommendations for the Belgian Development Cooperation.

## **2. Non-Annex I Parties’ compliance toward UNFCCC transparency guidelines**

As per the decisions adopted in 2011 in Durban by the COP, non-Annex I Parties are expected to submit Biennial Update Reports (BURs) containing among others information on support needed and received (UNFCCC, 2011, Decision 2/CP.17, paragraphs 12-22). The COP decided that non-Annex I Parties, consistent with their capabilities and the level of support provided for reporting, should submit their first BUR by December 2014. Subsequent BURs shall be submitted every two years, either as a summary of parts of their National Communication (NCs) in the year in which the NC is submitted or as a stand-alone update report. Least developed country Parties (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS) may submit their BURs at their discretion.

Only ten (out of 154) non-Annex I Parties had submitted their first BUR by December 2014. As at 30 July 2017 – more than two years after the 2014 deadline – only 37 non-Annex I Parties had submitted their first BUR. These figures show that non-Annex I Parties are confronted with a variety of challenges in their reporting to the UNFCCC Secretariat (Ellis & Moarif, 2015; Gupta & van Asselt, 2017). These challenges may be related to capacity constraints, including the lack of established domestic reporting systems. They may be linked to the insufficiency of international support provided to help them in their reporting. The absence of or delay in reporting may also be explained by a lack of political willingness to report on climate finance needed and received.

To which extent do those non-Annex I Parties that have submitted at least their first BUR comply with the specific guidelines that have to be followed by BURs? In order for us to answer this question, we reviewed the report of the technical analysis of each BUR. These technical analysis are conducted by international teams of technical experts in accordance with the modalities and procedures contained in the annex to Decision 20/CP.19 (UNFCCC, 2013). The technical analysis only aims at identifying the extent to which the elements of information on support needed and received that are supposed to be reported<sup>1</sup> by non-Annex I Parties are included in their BURs. The results of these technical analysis are then presented in summary reports, that are made available online<sup>2</sup>.

The results of our review are presented in table 1. The 32 non-Annex I Parties included in this table are those for which a technical analysis of their first BUR was available as at 8 July 2017. Our results show a concerning picture, where only two non-Annex I Parties fully comply with UNFCCC transparency requirements on support needed and received. Ten Parties score less than half of the maximum score possible. The blurry image that we currently have of the landscape of climate finance needed and received is not only due to the failures of some non-Annex I Parties to report to the UNFCCC in a timely manner. It also is the result of a relative lack of compliance of some non-Annex I Parties in following UNFCCC transparency guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> The guidelines that have to be followed by BURs in terms of the information to be provided on support needed and received are contained in UNFCCC (2011, Annex III of Decision 2/CP.17, paragraphs 14-16): “§14. Non-Annex I Parties should provide updated information on constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity-building needs. §15. Non-Annex I Parties should also provide updated information on financial resources, technology transfer, capacity-building and technical support received from the Global Environment Facility, Parties included in Annex II to the Convention and other developed country Parties, the Green Climate Fund and multilateral institutions for activities relating to climate change, including for the preparation of the current biennial update report. §16. With regard to the development and transfer of technology, non-Annex I Parties should provide information on technology needs, which must be nationally determined, and on technology support received.”

<sup>2</sup> [http://unfccc.int/national\\_reports/non-annex\\_i\\_parties/ica/technical\\_analysis\\_of\\_burs/items/10054.php](http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_parties/ica/technical_analysis_of_burs/items/10054.php)

**Table 1. Non-Annex I Parties' compliance toward climate finance transparency requirements**

R a n k	Non-Annex I Party	BUR1 submitted by December 2014	Extent to which the elements of information are included					Total score
			Constraints and gaps	Related financial, technical and capacity-building needs	Financial resources, technology transfer, capacity-building and technical support received	Technology needs, which must be nationally determined	Technology support received	
1	Namibia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
1	South Africa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
3	Viet Nam	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	5.5
4	Andorra	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
4	Armenia	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
4	Chile	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	5
4	Ghana	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
4	India	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
4	Moldova	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
4	Thailand	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
11	Azerbaijan	✗	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	4.5
11	Brazil	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	4.5
11	Colombia	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	4.5
14	Argentina	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	4
14	Indonesia	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	4
14	Tunisia	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	4
17	Bosnia and Herzegovina	✗	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗	✓	3.5
17	Lebanon	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	3.5
17	Mexico	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✗	3.5
17	Montenegro	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✗	3.5
17	Serbia	✗	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✗	3.5
17	Uruguay	✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓/✗	✓	3.5
23	Paraguay	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	3
23	Peru	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	✗	✓/✗	3
25	Costa Rica	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓	✗	✗	2.5
25	Malaysia	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓	✗	✗	2.5
27	Israel	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	2
28	Macedonia (F. Y. R. of)	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✗	✗	2
29	Mauritania	✗	✗	✓	✓/✗	✗	✗	1.5
30	Korea (R. of)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	1
30	Morocco*	✗	✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✗	✗	1
30	Singapore	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	1

Notes: ✓: Yes; ✗: No; ✓/✗: Partly. The total score of each Party is calculated by adding up the score obtained in each column (✓ = 1; ✗ = 0; ✓/✗ = 0.5). The non-Annex I Parties included in this table are those for which a report of the technical analysis of their BUR was available on the [UNFCCC website](#) as at 8 July 2017. The following non-Annex I Parties are those that submitted a BUR that had not yet been considered for a technical analysis as at 8 July 2017: Ecuador, Georgia, and Jamaica (for their first BUR); Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Namibia, Singapore, and Tunisia (for their second BUR). \*Partner country of the Belgian governmental cooperation.

### **3. Reporting approaches used by non-Annex I Parties for climate finance received**

The relative lack of compliance of some non-Annex I Parties toward UNFCCC transparency requirements identified in the former section is not the only element that impedes the emergence of a clear picture of climate finance received. The weaknesses of UNFCCC guidelines that have to be followed by non-Annex I Parties in their reporting of information on climate finance received are also to blame. There is currently no common format for reporting information on financial support received<sup>3</sup>, nor is there a common methodology to assess the financial support received. The result of this lack of specific guidance is that Parties decide what to report on an individual basis, as can be observed in their first BURs. For example, the time periods over which the finance is reported as received vary widely (UNFCCC SCF, 2016) – other examples are summarized in table 2.

In addition, the UNFCCC guidelines do not require information on underlying assumptions, definitions and methodologies used in generating the information reported on climate finance received (UNFCCC SCF, 2016, p. 31). As observed by the the UNFCCC SCF (2016, p. 91), countries often use different definitions of climate finance, and of adaptation and mitigation activities. This means that it is extremely complicated to meaningfully compare the amount of climate finance received by each non-Annex I Party. Added to the problems of partial and/or opaque reporting, the multiple accounting approaches used by Annex II (see AdaptationWatch, 2016) and non-Annex I Parties mean that it is impossible to compare the total support provided and received. These problems are further exacerbated by the absence of project-level data that underlie Annex II and non-Annex I Parties' reports, making it extremely difficult to understand what types of projects and programmes are being supported, and how this support is being provided.

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<sup>3</sup> By contrast, a “Common Tabular Format – CTF” has to be used by Annex II Parties in their reporting of information to the UNFCCC Secretariat on climate finance provided.

**Table 2. Reporting approaches used by some non-Annex I Parties for financial support received**

Non-Annex I Party	Reported in tabular format				Allocation channels									Sectors		Financial instruments							Other		
	Per project or activity	Per donor	Per thematic area <sup>i</sup>	Only headline figures	Top donors	Bilateral	Multilateral	Multilateral financial institutions	Multilateral climate change funds	Specialized United Nations bodies	GEF	Private foundations	Private sector	Thematic <sup>i</sup>	Economic <sup>ii</sup>	Grant	Concessional loan	Loan	National budget	Result-based payment	Leasing	ODA/non-ODA	Status of finance <sup>iii</sup>	Domestic finance flows	Co-financing
<b>Argentina</b>		✓			✓						✓														✓
<b>Armenia</b>	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓															
<b>Brazil</b>		✓				✓	✓				✓														
<b>Chile</b>	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓									✓		
<b>Colombia</b>		✓				✓		✓	✓	✓			✓												
<b>Ghana</b>	✓					✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
<b>Indonesia</b>		✓				✓		✓		✓					✓		✓						✓	✓	
<b>Lebanon</b>		✓			✓	✓		✓	✓																
<b>Malaysia</b>	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓															
<b>Mauritania</b>	✓					✓		✓		✓			✓		✓		✓				✓				
<b>Mexico</b>				✓									✓	✓	✓		✓								
<b>Montenegro</b>		✓			✓					✓	✓				✓		✓								
<b>Morocco*</b>	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓								✓	
<b>Paraguay</b>		✓				✓		✓		✓	✓				✓										
<b>Peru</b>	✓					✓		✓	✓				✓		✓	✓						✓			✓
<b>Moldova (R. of)</b>	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓								
<b>South Africa</b>	✓					✓		✓	✓				✓		✓		✓					✓		✓	✓
<b>Thailand</b>	✓					✓				✓	✓		✓												
<b>Tunisia</b>	✓					✓				✓	✓		✓												
<b>Viet Nam</b>			✓										✓											✓	

Source: Weikmans and Roberts (2017); Data extracted from UNFCCC SCF (2016: 32-33 and 103-105).

Note: <sup>i</sup>E.g., mitigation, adaptation; <sup>ii</sup>E.g., energy, transport, agriculture; <sup>iii</sup>Received or approved. Parties are shown in alphabetical order. The twenty non-Annex I Parties included in this table are those that had submitted their BURs as at 30 June 2016 and that provided summary information on financial support received during a certain period of time. In total, thirty-two non-Annex I Parties had submitted their BURs by 30 June 2016. Twelve of these thirty-two non-Annex I Parties do not appear in this table because they indicated financial support received only for some projects, activities, sectors or donors, or did not include quantitative financial information at all in their BURs. \*Partner country of the Belgian governmental cooperation.



#### 4. Conclusions and policy recommendations

Observers have pointed out the multiple benefits of greater transparency as it matters to preserve the base of public support for aid; helps donor nations to more effectively evaluate their aid programs; is necessary for recipient country citizens to be able to hold their governments accountable over any discrepancies between aid received and aid spent; and helps recipient countries improve national strategic planning in the face of climate change (see for example Ghosh & Kharas, 2011; Weikmans, 2015). The blurry picture of support needed and received for climate action in many developing countries means that opportunities are lost among others in terms of addressing possible duplications of donors' efforts or reducing the risks of corruption around climate finance.

There are at least two sets of challenges that need to be addressed to allow the emergence of a clearer picture of international climate finance needed and received:

- 1) ***Frequent reporting by non-Annex I Parties is the first condition that would permit a comprehensive picture of the landscape of climate finance needed and received to emerge. However, as described above, few non-Annex I Parties have submitted their first BUR so far.***

Out of the 14 partner countries of the Belgian governmental cooperation<sup>4</sup>, only one country (*i.e.*, Morocco) has submitted its first BUR to the UNFCCC Secretariat. As shown in Table 1 above, the first BUR submitted by Morocco lacks several elements of information on support needed and received that are supposed to be communicated as per Decision 2/CP.17, paragraphs 12-22 (UNFCCC, 2011).

- There is a pressing need to understand why many non-Annex I Parties have not yet submitted their first BUR to the Convention Secretariat. Similarly, we need to understand why some countries fail to comply with UNFCCC guidelines when preparing their BURs. If the main reasons are linked to capacity constraints, more international support should aim at building capacities to track and report the support needed and received. If reporting is hampered by a lack of political willingness, incentives to report in a timely manner should be identified and promoted.

With the exceptions of Tanzania and the Palestinian Territory, the other partner countries of the Belgian governmental cooperation are LDCs and may therefore submit their BURs at their discretion.

- Under the Paris “enhanced transparency framework”, LDCs and SIDS are still allowed to submit their BURs “at their discretion” (UNFCCC, 2015, Article 13.10; Decision 1/CP.21, para. 90). This provision is necessary to protect these countries from heavy reporting duties. However, discretionary reporting might impede the emergence of a

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<sup>4</sup> The partner countries of the Belgian governmental cooperation are Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, the Palestinian Territory, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda (as listed in the Royal Decree of 26 January 2004).

comprehensive picture of the international climate finance landscape (van Asselt et al., 2017).

The Belgian Development Cooperation could support its partner countries in the tracking and reporting of support needed and received for climate action. This could be done bilaterally by supporting for example the establishment of national dashboards of climate finance received. This could also be done multilaterally by contributing to the “Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency” established as part of the Paris Agreement<sup>5</sup>.

**2) *A second challenge identified in this policy brief concerns the lack of comparativeness between the information on support needed and received contained in BURs. The lack of specific guidelines on how to account and report on climate finance needed and received has given rise to a plethora of approaches used by non-Annex I Parties***<sup>6</sup>.

The Paris “enhanced transparency framework” aims at dealing with the issue of accounting modalities for climate finance provided and mobilized (UNFCCC, 2015, Decision 1/CP.21, para. 57). However, the accounting modalities that are currently being negotiated in this regard will not applied to climate finance needed and received (van Asselt et al., 2017).

- This is a gap that deserves immediate attention: For a comprehensive transparency framework to emerge, it will be necessary to also develop common accounting modalities for financial support needed and received.

The Belgium Development Cooperation could make sure that Belgium actively supports (in the UNFCCC negotiations) the development of common accounting modalities for financial support needed and received.

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.thegef.org/topics/capacity-building-initiative-transparency-cbit>

<sup>6</sup> Note that a similar problem is apparent in the various ways that Annex II Parties report on the support provided and mobilized for climate action in developing countries (see Weikmans & Roberts, 2017).

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