

Building Blocks for Country-Owned Climate Action

September 2024

As articulated in the Global Stocktake, we urgently need to close persistent implementation, finance, and ambition gaps at the national level through stronger collaboration among developing country governments, implementing and development partners, the private sector, and the whole of society to keep the goals of the Paris Agreement in sight. To achieve this, climate-development cooperation can no longer be driven by a top-down approach in which only a select number of developing countries are supported. Cooperation needs to be driven by developing countries owning and committing to ambitious climate action and partners providing coordinated and equally ambitious support.

Drawing on eight years of collective experience, the Partnership has identified key enablers for success—critical building blocks that support ambitious climate action at the country level through impactful and sustained collaboration. These building blocks are the foundation of the Partnership model, reflecting the complementary actions of countries and partners driven by country priorities and needs.

Developing and implementing ambitious NDCs remains the cornerstone of our mission. While NDCs are themselves a building block, all other building blocks serve to translate NDCs into actions, policies, and investments that accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement while achieving social and economic goals.

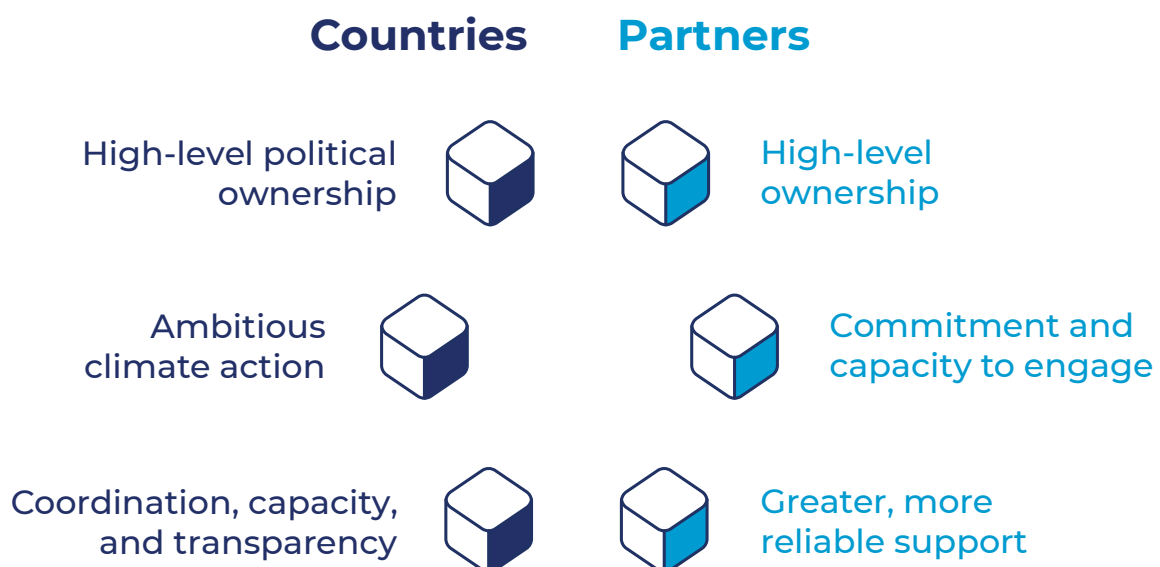
The first category of building blocks focuses on countries' enabling conditions, covering countries' high-level political ownership; commitment to ambitious climate action at the center of the development agenda, including clear implementation and investment frameworks grounded on strong policies, laws, and regulations; and coordination, capacity, and transparency. Some elements of these enablers are ultimately political decisions: A developing country's political ownership of the climate agenda, its climate ambition, and the initial allocation of governmental resources—even if limited—set the foundation for

country-driven climate action enabled by partner support. However, there is a broader set of enabling conditions that, with sustained partner collaboration, can allow countries to better position themselves to drive ambitious climate action and make investments needed to deliver on climate and development goals attractive to investors.

The second category of the building blocks spells out partners' responsibilities to match countries' efforts by strengthening their own enabling conditions for collaboration, emphasizing the importance of partners' high-level political ownership, commitment and capacity to engage collaboratively at the country level, and the need for partners to provide greater, more reliable, flexible, and timely support to countries.

When these two halves—countries' enabling conditions and partners' responsibilities—come together, they result in strengthened collaboration, driven by countries' priorities and needs, with partners providing support to countries both to develop individual building blocks and to pursue programmatic, ambitious climate-development cooperation.

Countries ultimately set their context-specific pathways to advance climate action: They define when and how to put different building blocks in place and what form the collaboration frameworks should take, including "country platforms." The role of the Partnership is to help secure support for countries, at every—or any—stage, as they accelerate climate action, empowering them to lead conversations with partners and make their case for long-term investment in their national transitions. The Partnership is fully flexible in our approach, from supporting countries to strengthen specific building blocks to a comprehensive approach to scale up technical assistance and finance to drive national transitions.



Countries' Enabling Conditions

- 1. Countries' high-level political ownership:** The country needs to own the NDC process at the highest political level, positioning it as the guiding mechanism for a whole-of-economy climate action that drives sustainable development from the local to national level. This includes whole-of-government (WoG) engagement of finance, planning, environment, line ministries, and subnational governments. Additionally, the country needs to ensure clarity and continuity during election cycles, providing all stakeholders the confidence to plan and execute based on the government's fixed climate commitments.
- 2. Commitment to put ambitious climate action at the center of the development agenda:**
 - a. Ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions:** The cornerstone for climate action is a country's NDC, as the vehicle that communicates the country's climate ambitions across its development agenda in a unified manner and the primary accountability mechanism for Parties' progress towards the shared goals laid out in the Paris Agreement. NDCs need to be guided by the country's development priorities and plans and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). NDCs also need to reflect the highest possible ambition based on national circumstances, be informed by the outcomes of the Global Stocktake, and aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement. They must send a powerful signal for the direction of travel, instilling confidence and attracting investment to finance the transition. NDCs should be informed by the best available data and developed through WoG and whole-of-society (WoS) approaches, including strong consultation processes that incorporate contributions from all stakeholders to generate broad societal engagement and facilitate a just transition. NDC targets should be fully aligned with the country's Long-Term, Low Emissions Development Strategies (LT-LEDs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
 - b. NDC implementation planning¹** encompasses any planning process that translates the country's climate ambition into clearly prioritized actions across its development agenda. An NDC implementation plan outlines how a country will deliver its NDC by defining cross-cutting and sector-specific outcomes, activities, performance metrics, and specific roles and responsibilities for all relevant stakeholders—aWoG and WoS approach to implementation. It should establish priorities and timelines for implementing an NDC's targets; specific policy, regulatory, and/or legal developments needed to implement the NDC; and projects/programs to be financed. NDC implementation plans should serve as the guiding tool for partners interested in supporting policy reforms, institutional strengthening, capacity building, and project-related investments in the country. Governments can demonstrate ownership and allocate governmental resources

¹ NDC implementation and investment planning refer to the national-level planning process a country follows to define its NDC implementation and financing actions. They are not prescriptive terms. Plans will take different forms and be published under different names in different countries.

by driving WoS consultations to develop these plans, adopting them as official government policy and formally designating key responsible government ministries and agencies.

- c. NDC-aligned investment planning is critical to unlocking public and private, domestic, and international finance for the national transition. It can happen jointly or sequentially with implementation planning and should include theme/sector-specific financing needs. NDC-aligned investment plans outline priority programmatic investment needs and their climate rationale, map funding sources and gaps, identify opportunities to strengthen the enabling environment and deploy financing mechanisms, include project pipelines, and appropriately target the mobilization of finance from various sources. Guided by a clear direction of travel based on the NDC and clear priorities laid out in the implementation plan, investment plans can significantly speed up the sectoral and cross-cutting transitions proposed in the NDCs. Countries actions under Building Blocks 2d and 2e progress based on inputs from strong investment planning, facilitating more targeted allocation of public funds and policy, regulatory, and legal reforms to spur investment based on programmatic priorities identified in NDC implementation plans.
- d. Mainstreaming climate into development planning and budgeting: Governments can demonstrate ownership of the country's climate priorities by ensuring targets and measures outlined in the NDC, and accompanying implementation and investment plans, are fully mainstreamed into national, sectoral, and subnational development plans and budgets, and by designating human resources across government to ensure this integration happens. This requires strong engagement with the ministries of planning and finance, sectoral ministries, and subnational governments.
- e. Policies, regulations, and laws that drive the climate transition: Country-owned climate action is made possible by supportive policies, regulations, and laws, which create the proper conditions for all stakeholders to take actions in line with the NDC. As outlined in NDC-aligned implementation and investment plans, countries can pursue economy-wide and sectoral legislative and administrative reforms to enable climate action across society.

3. Coordination, capacity, and transparency:

- a. Whole-of-government engagement refers to policy approaches that effectively leverage a government's full capacity, i.e., ministries, departments, or similar bodies directly or indirectly involved in climate change responses. Governments establish WoG institutional arrangements for climate action through: 1) mandates to national ministries and subnational governments regarding climate action and 2) inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms at the cabinet and technical levels to sustain a WoG approach.

- b.** Whole-of-society engagement describes policy approaches that include representatives from civil-society, academia, the private sector, various identity groups, or other groups at various stages of consultation or other processes, such as implementation and tracking). WoS engagement depends on active and influential coordination and consultation mechanisms that include all relevant categories of stakeholders to drive just transitions. These require high-level and technical points of contact within government, partner institutions, civil society organizations, private sector representatives, and other entities to maintain continuous and robust engagement with these mechanisms.
- c.** Dedicated capacity: The country should commit dedicated capacity within key ministries and across government to drive climate action. This ensures the country can exercise its ownership of the climate agenda, drive decision-making processes, actively mobilize climate finance, and coordinate WoG and WoS approaches effectively.
- d.** Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL): The country should implement MEL solutions tailored to track, assess, guide, and help address gaps in NDC implementation. This includes establishing and strengthening national tools and processes to measure how climate action contributes to sustainable development and for measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) to support participation in the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF).

Partners' Enabling Conditions

- 4. Partners' high-level ownership of the climate agenda:** Partners need to own the NDC process at the highest political levels, continuously reinforcing its centrality in guiding bilateral engagement with countries at the political and technical levels, programming decisions, and operations. This includes WoG, whole-of-institution engagement, with partners nominating senior points of contact for climate action, publicly reinforcing countries' commitments to climate action, aligning relevant strategies with countries' commitments, and mainstreaming this alignment into their internal operations.
- 5. Commitment and capacity to engage collaboratively at the country level:** Partners need to allocate dedicated capacity to in-country collaboration, including by transparently designating staff with decision-making authority to engage in country-owned coordination mechanisms, share up-to-date information, and lead regular follow-up with countries and partners.
- 6. Greater, more reliable support:** Partners, including multilateral development banks, must significantly increase the volume and predictability of support available to the country, targeting technical assistance to strengthen these building blocks and deliver priority actions identified in the NDC, the NDC implementation plan, and NDC-aligned investment plans. Partners use technical assistance to strategically unlock project financing by them directly, and from other sources, including by bolstering the enabling environment for NDC investments and supporting early-stage project development.

Outcome of the Building Blocks: Strengthened Collaboration

As noted above, countries and partners can leverage the building blocks to more effectively channel the support necessary to deliver national transitions. Collaboration can take two forms:

- › Countries and partners can collaborate to strengthen individual building blocks in a flexible manner as needs arise, in line with the Partnership's regular Country Engagement process. This process involves mobilizing support for time-bound requests, and/or for the development and implementation of multi-year, cross-sectoral NDC implementation plans.
- › Countries and partners can collaborate to strengthen all relevant building blocks in a systematic and comprehensive manner and create the foundation for the development of sector-specific or thematic programmatic packages of technical assistance and finance to deliver portions of their NDCs. Partners would support all countries demonstrating high levels of ownership, ambition, and governmental resource allocation through this complementary approach, but the scope and scale of their support would evolve as developing countries strengthen their building blocks over time.

The NDC Partnership is prepared to serve as a trusted neutral broker, continuing to mobilize early-stage support for countries to strengthen their building blocks while also facilitating more complex support packages for countries ready to accelerate their national transition. Everything we do aims to empower countries to spearhead in-country coordination around their climate agendas, putting conditions in place for them to demonstrate the profound opportunity their national transitions represent to all stakeholders.

