



SMARTS Analysis of UN Climate Summit Commitments

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon invited world leaders from all levels of government, finance, business, and civil society to a historic Climate Summit on 23 September, 2014 with the goal of **galvanizing climate action**. He asked these leaders to bring bold initiatives and commitments to the Summit that will reduce emissions, strengthen climate resilience, and mobilize political will for a meaningful climate agreement in 2015. With such diverse leaders making commitments, comparability across sectors presents a challenge, yet certain initiatives were notably stronger than others. In an effort to enable some degree of cross-comparison among initiatives, NRDC has undertaken a ranking of multi-stakeholder initiatives based on criteria we considered indicative of the **“robustness” of initiatives** based on a **SMARTS scale** (Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Resource-Based, Time-Bound, and Scaled-Up/New). The higher initiatives rank on the scale, the more robust they are considered.

Through this comparison, we found that many of the multi-stakeholder commitments were rated positively under five of the criteria. In general, most initiatives were specific, measurable, ambitious, resource-based, and scaled-up/new; however, only about **half of commitments were time-bound** and **34% had a monitoring and evaluation framework in place**. This insight is important because it shows that while many of the commitments sound impressive, a large majority **lacked an explicit framework** to accountably implement their respective commitments.

This analysis details the methodologies used in conducting this research. It goes on to explain the key findings of the research and list specific examples of both strong and weak commitments. Finally, the report gives specific recommendations to make the existing commitments stronger moving forward and to inform future initiatives in the lead up to COP21 in Paris and beyond.

Understanding the SMARTS Criteria

The SMARTS criteria are a set of specific ranking categories often utilized in project management and performance evaluations. Instead of vague commitments, the SMARTS criteria sets trajectories that will **provide structure, work toward an objective, and estimate the attainability of the goal**. The criteria are used in this report to rank **35 initiatives** and are represented as follows:

- **Specific:** details what needs to be done and by whom
- **Measurable:** achievements or progress can be measured (quantitatively or qualitatively)
- **Ambitious:** aims to achieve high aspirations
- **Resource-Based:** specifies resources designated to achieve the goal
- **Time-Bound:** establishes a timeline to meet the end goal
- **Scaled-Up/New:** builds significantly on an existing initiative or creates a new one

Findings

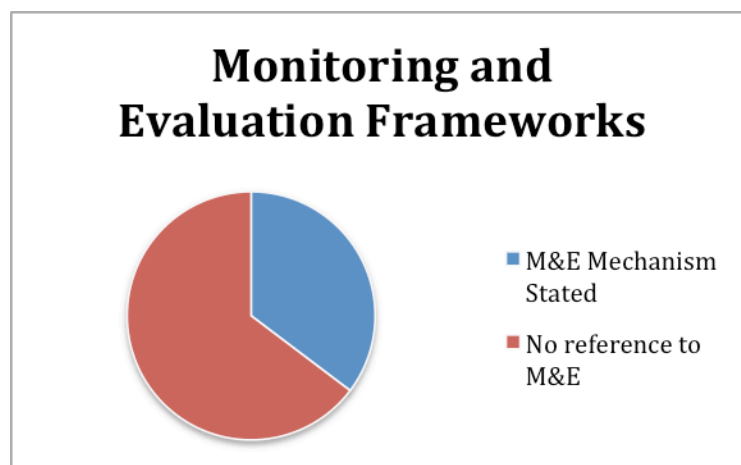


Table 1 Break down of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the 35 initiatives analyzed

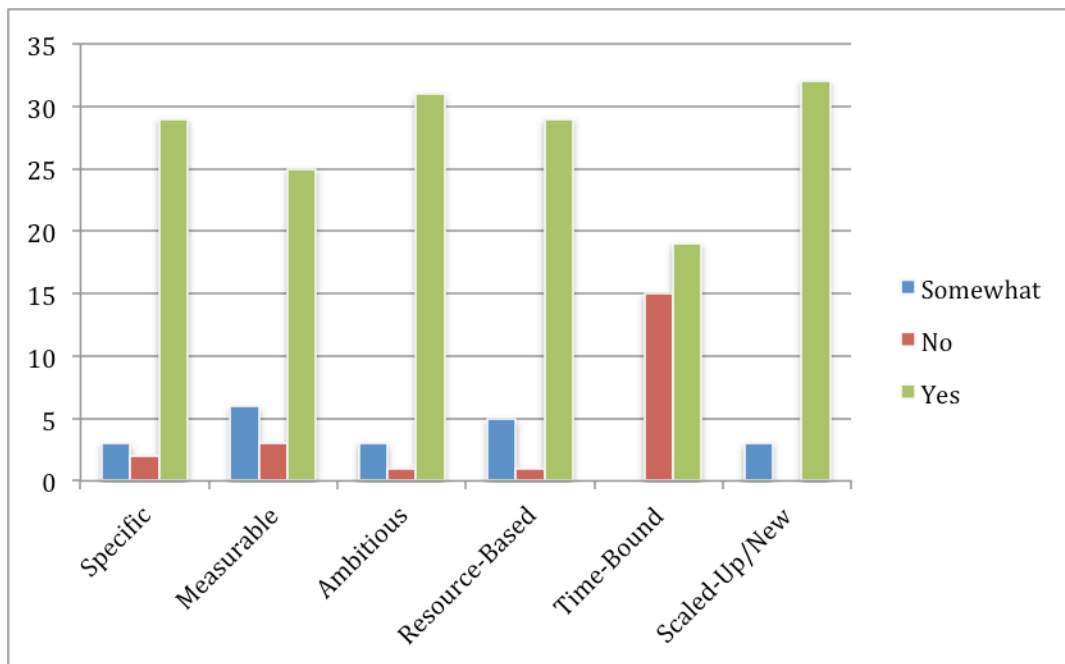


Table 1. Break down of the 35 multi-stakeholder commitments analyzed from the Climate Summit that meet the SMARTS criteria, somewhat meet it, and do not meet it.

Overall, we found that most of the commitments were specific, measurable, ambitious, resource-based, and scaled-up/new. However, only about half of the initiatives were time bound and 34% had monitoring and evaluation mechanisms explicitly stated in their commitment language.

One example is the commitment made by Walmart, McDonald’s and Kellogg Company to **reduce deforestation** by increasing the amount of food in their supply chains that is produced with **climate-smart approaches**. While that commitment seems ambitious for these major companies, there are **no apparently effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism** in place and **no clear metric to evaluate their success**.

On the other hand, the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Lighthouse Initiative is an example of a robust commitment. The initiative **solicits \$500 million of financing within 5 years**, deploys over **100 megawatts renewable capacity**, and plans to make **clean energy accessible to 4.7 million people** living in SIDS globally. The goals of the SIDS Lighthouse Initiative are not only specific and ambitious, but they have a clear deadline and are housed within the International Renewable Energy Agency, **IRENA**. This **third party** will annually assess the progress of this commitment and will organize a high-level meeting in 2018 to determine whether the initiative is on track.

Recommendations

The challenges that many of these initiatives face is the **lack of a solid framework** to implement their commitments. Most do not have the necessary frameworks to hold the partners together and accountable to what they said they would do moving forward. Without some entity to coordinate the various actors, there is **little incentive** for follow through and a real risk that the significant promise of many initiatives may fail to be realized.

Another important piece to the framework is a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. Without embedding a **means to maintain accountability** in the initiative itself, it is unlikely that the commitments will grow to their full potential.

Moving forward, we offer the following specific **recommendations** to improve the robustness of initiatives:

- First, each initiative should have a **multi-stakeholder coordinating entity** to coordinate the various actors that are a part of the initiative. This can take the form of a secretariat, a governing body, or something similar
- Second, there should be an **institutional home for follow up**
 - This home is where **follow up meetings** would be convened, tracked, and coordinated
 - And there would be **incentives** to join these meetings, such as access to resources or partners
- We should **strengthen existing platforms** that track commitments such as CDP, Carbons and the Climate Initiatives Database by **embedding commitment dashboards** like Aloha + in terms of **real time tracking** of commitment progress. These platforms could feed up to NAZCA which would facilitate broader awareness