

# IGES Submission to ADP Workstream 1

## A Process to Make Nationally-determined Contributions More Ambitious

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), 1 September 2013

This submission proposes specific steps and time frames that aim to add *ex-ante* clarity to nationally determined contributions to climate change mitigation and enhance their levels of ambition. The IGES proposal has three distinctive features:

- 1) A consortium of research institutes is established with a view to providing benchmarks to which Parties can refer to when proposing their initial contributions, and against which each Party's relative contribution to the 2°C target is assessed;
- 2) To enhance *ex-ante* clarity and comparability of Parties' contributions, the consortium also provides a common and clear template for information on mitigation contributions that Parties will complete *ex-ante*;
- 3) A limited number of Parties—for example, the G20 member countries—are requested to complete the common template and go through an international consultation process with a view to amending contributions to meet the required aggregate contribution for the 2°C target.

Concrete steps and rationales for these specific features will be described below.

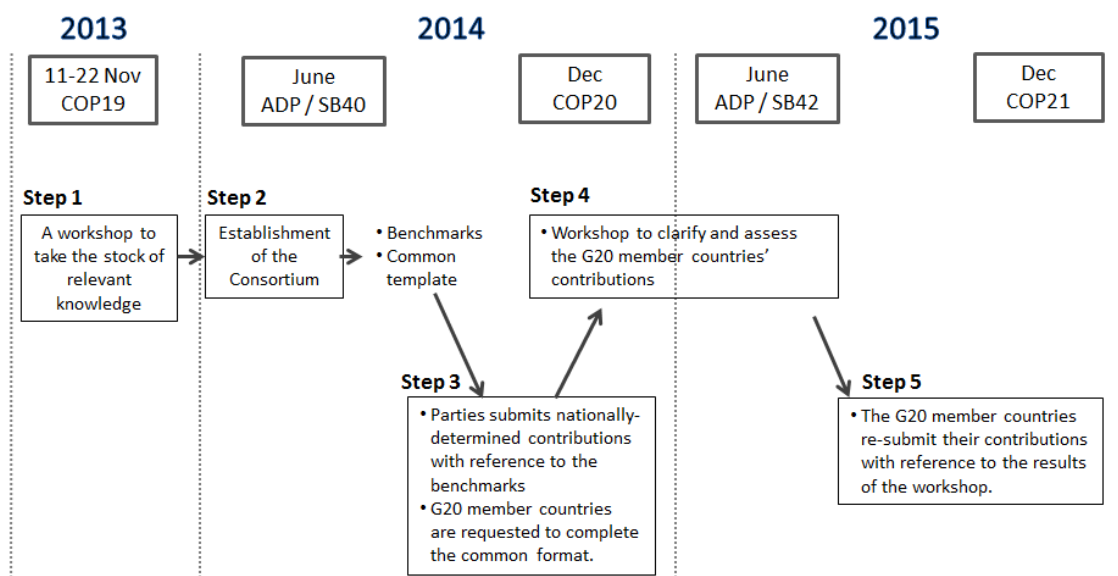


Fig. Timeline for the international consultation process

## **Key steps**

**Step 1 - Paving the way to a Consortium:** Some benchmarks and a common template are necessary for comparison. Such benchmarks need to be seen as scientifically well-founded and politically not-biased by the international community. Building upon the relevant research outputs in the past, a consortium of research institutes could provide such benchmarks and a common template. It would be useful to start with a workshop to take stock of relevant knowledge and to shed light on the importance of creating a consortium of research institutes for this purpose.

**Step 2 - Establishment of a Consortium:** A consortium of research institutes (the Consortium) is established with a view to developing benchmarks/indicators (for example as 20-45% emissions reduction for developed countries as in IPCC AR4, and 15-30% reduction from the baseline for developing countries as in den Elzen and Höhne (2008)<sup>1</sup>, or required emission reduction ranges in even an individual Party) to which Parties can refer to when they develop their mitigation contributions. Some of Parties have less capacity to evaluate their relative contributions to the global goal and lower quality of data. Such a reference helps them realize their potentials and make greater contributions. Each Party's relative contribution to the 2°C target can also be assessed against such benchmarks. The Consortium also provides a common template for information on mitigation contributions to be completed by each Party.

**Step 3 - Submission of Mitigation Contributions:** Referring to the benchmarks provided by the Consortium, each Party submits its own mitigation contribution to the UNFCCC Secretariat. The G20 member countries are requested to use the common template to provide information required for *ex-ante* clarity. The information that is provided is compiled and uploaded to the internet for easy comparison.

**Step 4 - Ex-ante Clarification Process:** A series of workshops will be held to clarify the G20 member countries' contributions, as well as their mitigation potential into which they would not fully tap. The workshop will consist of presentations by the G20 member countries Parties and the Consortium, with subsequent Q&A sessions. The workshop will be open to other Parties, observers and the media. Based upon the *ex-ante* clarification process, the Consortium will provide an assessment of the G20 member countries' contributions. This process will identify any gap between

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<sup>1</sup> den Elzen, M. and N. Höhne (2008) "Reductions of greenhouse gas emissions in Annex I and non-Annex I countries for meeting concentration stabilization targets" *Climate Change*. 91:249-274.

the combined national contributions and the overall global mitigation contribution required to avoid 2°C.

**Step 5 - Re-submission of Contributions:** Each Party will be encouraged to re-submit their mitigation contribution. The second submission of mitigation contributions should also be closer to the overall global mitigation contribution required. In doing so, more ambitious contributions will be stimulated.

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*Why is a Consortium Necessary?*

As the lessons from the Copenhagen/Cancun process show, a pure “pledge and review” system is not enough to raise the level of mitigation ambition. The review or consultation process can give rise to peer pressure through comparison between countries. For comparisons, benchmarks or indicators to compare Parties’ contributions need to be developed and shared. However, comparisons may produce positive results only when the indicators and method of comparison are clear and widely accepted. This is why a consortium consisting of respected research institutes from around the world is necessary.

*Who are Members of the Consortium?*

There are several options: e.g. 1) IPCC Working Group 3 authors’ institutes; 2) government nomination; and 3) self-nomination. To work under the UNFCCC process, membership of the Consortium needs to be approved by COP. Without the authorization by COP, however, it is still possible for the research community to launch a similar initiative.

*What would the Benchmarks and the Common Template Look Like?*

The Benchmarks could be the required emission reduction ranges in groups of Parties (or even an individual Party) to achieve, for example, the GHG stabilization level of 450 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>-eq (something similar to Box 13.7 of IPCC AR4 Working Group III). The common template can be based upon the common tabular format for reporting developed country biennial reports. However, some modifications are necessary for application to developing countries if they set mitigation contributions other than absolute emissions reduction targets.

*Why are only a Limited Number of Countries Requested to Go Through a Consultation Process?*

The process needs to be streamlined since there are several review and MRV processes (BR&IAR, BUR&ICA, the 2013-1015 Review, Review of Annex I Parties' the 6<sup>th</sup> National Communications and the inventory review of the first Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol) that will take place in parallel with the ADP and each process can be very resource-intensive. Unlike the current MRV process (BR&IAR and BUR&ICA) for all the Parties (except LDCs and SIDS), we propose that the international consultation process should focus on G20 member countries in order to be efficient and complete its work in time (by 2015).

*What is the Rationale for Targeting G20 Member Countries?*

The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR&RC) is key to differentiation under the UNFCCC. However, competing approaches and indicators to assess the relative distribution of responsibility and capability among countries have been put forward with divergent conclusions. We propose to utilize already established groups of countries, like the G20, rather than creating a new category under the UNFCCC process. Of equal importance is how developing countries participating in the G20 already show their interest and capability to supply and manage "global public goods."

**Caveats**

- This IGES proposal focuses on the international consultation process up to 2015. It is however necessary to consider how the proposed approach can be dynamically applied to a subsequent period in order to achieve the 2°C goal.
- It should also be noted that the adequacy of the 2°C goal under review and the emissions reductions targets may need to be reconsidered as needed.
- A nationally-determined contribution approach could be more politically feasible than other approaches, but is always associated with a risk of not reaching the required emissions reduction for agreed long-term global goal in aggregate. To share the effort to address the remaining amount of emissions reduction, a totally different approach might be necessary. The remaining amount of emissions reduction, for example, may be allocated to Parties as allowances based upon specific equity criteria (like per capita emissions or a combination of various criteria), and national governments would auction the allowances in their domestic trading markets.