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Item 4(b) of the provisional agenda

**Reporting from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention**  
**Work of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications**  
**from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention**

**Technical report by the Consultative Group of Experts on  
National Communications from Parties not included  
in Annex I to the Convention on the constraints in and  
recommendations for composing teams of technical experts**

*Summary*

At the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE), held in Bonn, Germany, from 2 to 4 February 2016, the secretariat presented for its consideration a report, pursuant to paragraph 2 of the annex to decision 20/CP.19, on composing the teams of technical experts (TTEs) for the technical analysis of biennial update reports (BURs) from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) in 2015, including a list of challenges and lessons learned. The CGE, in accordance with paragraph 2 of the annex to decision 20/CP.19, established a task force with the objectives of undertaking an in-depth analysis of challenges faced in composing the TTEs to undertake technical analysis of BURs from non-Annex I Parties, and identifying and recommending solutions that respond to or mitigate the constraints and challenges identified. This report contains the outcome of the work of the task force, capturing its analysis, findings and recommendations.

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## I. Context

1. At the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE), held in Bonn, Germany, from 2 to 4 February 2016, the secretariat presented for its consideration a report, pursuant to paragraph 2 of the annex to decision 20/CP.19, on composing the teams of technical experts (TTEs), for the technical analysis of biennial update reports (BURs) from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) in 2015, including a list of challenges and lessons learned. The CGE considered the report and highlighted the additional challenges and constraints summarized in this report.

2. The CGE, in accordance with paragraph 2 of the annex to decision 20/CP.19, established a task force to:

(a) Undertake in-depth analysis of challenges faced in composing TTE to undertake technical analysis of BURs from non-Annex I Parties; and;

(b) Identify and recommend solutions that respond to or mitigate the constraints and challenges identified.

## II. Task force composition

3. At its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, held in February 2017, the CGE, recalling that the terms of 5 of its 10 members had ended following elections held during COP 22, agreed to modify the membership of the task force as follows:

(a) Three experts from the Latin American and Caribbean States: Mr. Thiago de Araujo Mendes, Ms. Rhianna M. Neely and Ms. Estefania Ardila Robles;

(b) Two experts from the Asia-Pacific States: Mr. Fei Teng and Mr. Ziaul Haque;

(c) Two experts from the African States: Mr. Gervias Ludovic Itsoua Madzous and Mr. Bryan Mantlana;

(d) Four experts from Annex I Parties: Ms. Laurence Ahoussou, Mr. Takeshi Enoki, Mr. Ricardo Fernandez and Ms. Julia S. Meisel;

(e) One expert from an intergovernmental organization: Mr. Stanford Mwakasonda.

4. The CGE encouraged any further members so interested to participate in the work of the task force. The work of the task force was co-led by two members: Mr. de Araujo Mendes and Mr. Enoki.

## III. Outcome of task force work

5. Building on the list contained in the annex and in the context of paragraph 2 of the annex to decision 20/CP.19, the task force:

(a) Identified key constraints and challenges in composing TTEs to conduct the technical analysis of BURs;

(b) Identified the principal causes of those constraints and challenges, including relevant actors and/or processes; and

(c) Explored and recommended solutions to respond to or mitigate the constraints and challenges identified.

6. This report presents the analysis, findings and recommendations of the task force. It is part of the annual progress report of the CGE to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).<sup>1</sup>

## **IV. Background on composing teams of technical experts**

### **A. Context**

7. Pursuant to decision 20/CP.19, paragraph 4, the CGE developed a mandatory training programme for the experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts to conduct the technical analysis of BURs. Upon successful completion of the training, experts are eligible to participate in TTEs conducting the technical analysis of BURs. The primary objective of the training programme is to ensure that the nominated experts are fully conversant with the relevant reporting requirements for developing country Parties and the modalities and procedures for international consultation and analysis, including the technical analysis of BURs from developing country Parties. The training programme further seeks to provide the experts with the technical competency required to conduct the BUR analysis.

8. The first round of the CGE training programme having begun in May 2015, as at July 2017 five rounds had been conducted and the secretariat had recorded a total of 659 registered experts, 336 of whom had undertaken the CGE training programme and 189 passed at least one examination. Among the total of 2,081 experts registered on the UNFCCC roster of experts, 414 have been nominated by their national focal points to participate in the technical analysis of BURs.

### **B. Process of selection of teams of technical experts**

9. The planning for the technical analysis process – including the composition of TTEs – is based on the projections of BUR submissions from the annual Global Environment Facility report to the SBI.<sup>2</sup> The secretariat communicates (via email, telephone and survey) with those experts on the UNFCCC roster of experts eligible to participate in the technical analysis of BURs, at least three-to-five months in advance of the analysis, to ascertain their interest and availability. The TTEs are then composed, in accordance with the criteria outlined in decision 20/CP.19, annex, paragraphs 3–5, drawing from the pool of experts having confirmed their interest and availability. The number of teams depends on the number of BURs pending technical analysis. In general, each team analyses two or three BURs over a period of five days. The secretariat also engages in continuous communication and outreach to experts through multiple channels, including its website<sup>3</sup>, technical workshops, including those organized by the CGE, side-events during meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies, Lead Reviewers' meetings, Twitter and Facebook.

### **C. Update on the technical analysis of biennial update reports from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention**

10. As at June 2017, the secretariat had organized eight rounds of technical analysis, covering 41 BURs from 36 non-Annex I Parties (including 5 second BURs). A total of 111 experts, from Annex I and non-Annex I Parties alike, including current and former members of the CGE, participated in the TTEs that performed these technical analyses. The composition of these TTEs was guided by the relevant decisions and guidance of the CGE

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<sup>1</sup> The report of the CGE also comprises documents FCCC/SBI/2017/15 and FCCC/SBI/2017/16, to be published in due course.

<sup>2</sup> FCCC/SBI/2015/INF.15.

<sup>3</sup> [http://unfccc.int/national\\_reports/expert\\_training/training\\_for\\_the\\_technical\\_analysis\\_of\\_burs/items/9279.php](http://unfccc.int/national_reports/expert_training/training_for_the_technical_analysis_of_burs/items/9279.php).

and took into account the language of submission of the BURs. For example, of the four TTEs that conducted the first round of technical analysis, two reviewed submissions in English, one in French and one in Spanish, while the three TTEs that conducted the recently concluded eighth round each reviewed submissions in a different language (one each in English, French and Spanish).

Table 1  
**Overview of technical analyses (2015 – 2017)**

<i>Round</i>	<i>Team</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Parties</i>	<i>Language</i>
1 (4 teams)	1	6	2	French
	2	6	3	Spanish
	3	6	3	English
	4	8	3	English
2 (1 team)	1	5	2	English
3 (1 team)	1	6	1	English
4 (2 teams)	1	6	3	Spanish
	2	8	3	Spanish
5 (3 teams)	1	7	3	English
	2	6	2	Spanish
	3	5	2	French
6 (2 teams)	1	7	3	French
	2	6	2	Spanish
7 (1 team)	1	10	2	French
				Spanish
8 (3 teams)	1	6	3	English
	2	5	2	French
	3	7	2	Spanish

## V. Challenges and lessons learned

11. The lessons learned and challenges identified during the analysis include the following:

(a) With a greater number first BURs being submitted along with second BURs, the demand for the experts will increase significantly, a problem that is compounded by competing demand for experts from similar processes under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, namely:

- (i) Greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory reviews;
- (ii) National communication/biennial review (BR) reviews;
- (iii) Technical assessment of REDD-plus<sup>4</sup> reference levels.

<sup>4</sup> In decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, COP encouraged developing country Parties to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector by undertaking the following activities: reducing emissions from deforestation; reducing emissions from forest degradation; conservation of forest carbon stocks; sustainable management of forests; and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

(b) A small number of experts reported difficulties in participating in multiple UNFCCC review or technical analysis events in the same year.

12. Some experts nominated by Annex I Parties reported challenges in obtaining financial support to facilitate their participation in the technical analysis. In a small number of cases, they were unable to secure the necessary financial support and therefore unable to participate in the technical analysis.

13. In the case of an expert serving as an official of a national governmental institution at the time of his or her nomination who ceases to serve in such a capacity, the nominating Party may be less willing or able to support his or her participation and/or the expert may be less willing or able to participate.

14. It may be necessary, at the national level, to raise the profile of technical analysis and raise awareness among decision-makers of the importance of nominating experts to the UNFCCC roster of experts.

15. Climate change professionals having completed the CGE training programme reported the lack of feedback following assessments on specific training modules as an obstacle to motivation and further focused study. Revisiting the evaluation process as well as the overall delivery of training based on feedback from trainees may help improve success rates.

16. A number of experts on the UNFCCC roster, in particular those recently nominated, reported having been unable to enrol in the TTE training, despite intending to do so, because they had been unaware of the course subscription deadlines. More continuous and direct communication between the secretariat and experts, including targeted messages in the form of flyers or newsletters, could help increase the rate of practitioners participating in future TTE training cycles.

17. The language of BUR submissions, if not English, is an important consideration when composing the TTE. The secretariat observed that there were fewer eligible experts on the UNFCCC roster fluent in Arabic, French or Spanish than in English and, consequently, the pool of experts was much smaller for the TTEs that have analysed or will analyse submissions in French, Spanish or Arabic. This in turn posed a challenge to maintaining regional balance, as there were very few Spanish-speaking experts from African and Asian countries on the roster. Against this backdrop, fully respecting the mandated criteria becomes significantly challenging. Since the guidelines for the preparation of BURs grant Parties the flexibility to submit their BURs in any official language of the United Nations, including Arabic, Chinese and Russian – languages in which ever fewer experts are available, this challenge is likely to persist.

18. The increasing number of BUR submissions requiring technical analysis, coupled with the limitations imposed by the language in which submissions are made, means the demand for the pool of 113 experts who are current or former CGE members will increase significantly. These issues became clear from the difficulties the secretariat encountered in assigning current or former CGE members to TTEs during the eight rounds of technical analysis, as described in the annex to decision 20/CP.19.

19. Under existing measurement, reporting and verification arrangements, experts on the roster contribute their time voluntarily, which may not be sustainable in the long term.

20. The process in place for nomination to the UNFCCC roster of experts requires motivated new national experts to be routed through their national focal point. This requirement may warrant further consideration since it has the potential to impede the efficiency and effectiveness of the process.

21. Retaining interest on the part of certified experts to continue participating in the process is a further challenge.

22. Only 44 experts are available to undertake the technical analysis of the REDD-plus technical annex to a BUR.

## VI. Experiences from similar activities under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol

23. Certain activities similar to technical analysis depend on the same pool of experts as the technical analysis. Lead reviewers of Annex I reports meet annually to discuss, among other things, the availability of experts for conducting various Annex I reviews. Consolidated recommendations from the Annex I report lead reviewers' meetings<sup>5</sup> for ensuring the availability of experts and improving the overall review process are as follows:

(a) Experience from review of Annex I Parties under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol regarding the **availability of experts**:

(i) Encouraging national focal points from all Parties to nominate experts to the roster of experts: the most frequent suggestion in the forum was to encourage Parties to ensure that a sufficient number of experts was nominated to the roster for training and certification to undertake the different activities;

(ii) Encouraging Annex I Parties to allocate funding for the reviews: this would ensure that all Parties could take advantage of the knowledge being disseminated;

(iii) Secretariat providing Parties with information on deficiencies in required expertise, which could help Parties to identify gaps in expertise on the roster; this could be also used by the Parties to internalize a similar analysis in identifying in-house expertise deficiencies;

(iv) Parties nominating experts with sector-specific knowledge;

(v) Professionalizing the review process by charging fees and constituting a standing group of experts, though this would not guarantee quality improvements or responsive timelines;

(b) Improving the **overall review process**:

(i) Combining different types of reviews for Annex I Parties rather than having separate reviews for GHG inventories, national communications and biennial reports;

(ii) Modifying the format and frequency of reviews;

(iii) Conducting centralized refresher courses to update experts' knowledge;

(iv) Land use, land-use change and forestry experts not also serving as Lead Reviewers on account of the workload;

(v) Making greater use of web-based training tools;

(vi) Questionnaires to Parties soliciting feedback on the overall process.

24. The review of clean development mechanism (CDM) projects uses a different **approach to engage experts**. The CDM Executive Board supervises the work of the CDM under the Kyoto Protocol and reports to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. It is supported by working groups and panels. Members are not nominated by UNFCCC national focal points but selected based on competence requirements, and do not represent any Party but function in their individual capacity. Experts are also recruited from the CDM roster of experts to perform project assessments as part of the registration and issuance team.

25. In accordance with United Nations rules and regulations and subject to the fulfilment of any conditions in the written agreement to be signed with the secretariat, experts on the CDM panels and registration and issuance team are remunerated for services provided on time and to the requisite level of quality with a daily fee.

<sup>5</sup> Consolidated conclusions and recommendations from the sixth to the twelfth GHG inventory lead reviewer meetings.

26. The recommendations from Annex I report lead reviewers’ meetings and the CDM project review approach could provide valuable perspective for addressing the operational challenges facing the international consultation and analysis process. These examples suggest that CGE participation could be supported by a group of experts providing desk review technical analysis.

## VII. Options and solutions

27. Table 2 presents and categorizes the challenges identified; identifies the contributing factors, actors and impacts on the technical analysis process; and indicates potential solutions and responsive actors.

Table 2  
Challenges and solutions

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Contributing factors</i>	<i>Impacts</i>	<i>Actors impacted</i>	<i>Solutions</i>	<i>Solution actors</i>
Fewer experts are available and lost to competing offers from UNFCCC	Annual Annex I review cycles	Fewer experts are participating in the technical analysis of BURs	UNFCCC GHG and NC/BR review teams	Coordinate with other UNFCCC teams to avoid scheduling conflicts	UNFCCC
	Other BUR technical analyses		Other BUR TA teams		
	Limited number of experts nominated to UNFCCC roster of experts	Fewer experts are available to participate in the technical analysis of BURs	Parties nominating experts to UNFCCC roster of experts	Encourage Parties to nominate more experts Explore ways to raise awareness of importance of roster of experts among NFPs Explore further ways to communicate with Parties and NFPs to encourage more nominations Establish a supporting group of desk-reviewers Further simplify the process for the nomination of the national experts to the roster of experts	CGE National Focal Points UNFCCC Climate change experts trained by the CGE in person or via the website
	Private workload of experts	Fewer experts participating in the technical analysis of BURs	Experts	Advanced planning of UNFCCC events Creation of incentives	UNFCCC CGE
Fewer experts completing the CGE TTE training programme	Lack of awareness Sufficient time allocation Competing priorities	Small pool of eligible experts available to participate in the technical analysis of BURs	Parties Experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts UNFCCC	Raise the profile of BURs and technical analysis Improve the training material and content, making it more immersive Explore opportunities to create a pool of trainers from the experts engaged in the technical	Parties CGE UNFCCC GSP, national and regional partners



<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Contributing factors</i>	<i>Impacts</i>	<i>Actors impacted</i>	<i>Solutions</i>	<i>Solution actors</i>
				analysis, who can then train experts at the national level	
				Establish regional-level courses in partnership with other international institutions to replicate the model training for trainers	
				Provide feedback to experts whenever exams are failed	
				More direct communication with experts to inform training deadlines	
Annex I Party funding	Lack of funding from Annex I Parties	Fewer Annex I experts are participating in the technical analysis of BURs	Annex I Parties	Arrange for additional funding for experts to participate in UNFCCC processes	Annex I Parties
Experts changing employment		Expertise not being retained with centralized Government agencies, directly and indirectly impacting Parties' capacity needs	Parties Experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts	Parties nominate experts from both governmental and private entities Establish desk reviewers supporting group including members who are not necessarily experts nominated to the roster of experts but have the technical capacity to support the work	Parties CGE
Low profile of technical analysis	Technical analysis of BURs is in its early stages compared to 2 decades of Annex I Reviews	Not many experts are participating in the technical analysis	Parties UNFCCC	Create awareness campaigns	Parties CGE UNFCCC at sessions
A small number experts speak UN languages other than English	BUR guidelines allow submission in any official language of the United Nations	Fewer experts available with non-English language capabilities Additional work pressure for experts who speak UN languages, other than English	Parties CGE	Make the training available in non-English languages Non-English-speaking Parties nominate experts to the UNFCCC roster of experts Establish a desk reviewers supporting group that can be organized into networks by region or language	CGE Parties
Limited number of CGE members available		Increasingly difficult to include CGE members on	CGE	Former CGE members participate actively in the process Establish a CGE desk	CGE

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<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Contributing factors</i>	<i>Impacts</i>	<i>Actors impacted</i>	<i>Solutions</i>	<i>Solution actors</i>
		TTEs		reviewers supporting group	

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*Abbreviations:* BR = biennial reports, BUR = biennial update reports, CGE = Consultative Group of Experts from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention, GSP = Global Support Programme, NC = national communications, NFP = national focal point, TA = technical analysis, TTE = team of technical experts.

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