

# International Consultation and Analysis:

Facilitating climate action  
through transparency

---



United Nations  
Climate Change

# International Consultation and Analysis:

Facilitating climate action  
through transparency

---

© 2020 UNFCCC

**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,  
the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement**

**All rights reserved.**

This publication is issued solely for public information purposes, including any references to the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, and any relevant decisions with respect thereto. No liability is assumed for the accuracy or uses of information provided.

#### **Creative Commons License**

This publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Excerpts from this publication may be freely quoted and reproduced provided that i) the source is acknowledged, ii) the material is not used for commercial purposes, and iii) any adaptations of the material are distributed under the same license.

All images remain the sole property of their source and may not be used for any purpose without written permission of the source.

#### **UNFCCC Logo**

Use and display of the UNFCCC logo, including its emblem, is highly restricted and essentially limited to the organization's activities. You may not use any official emblem, flag or logo of the UNFCCC, or any of its other means of promotion or publicity, to represent or imply an association or affiliation with the UNFCCC or its secretariat without the UNFCCC secretariat's prior written consent.

#### **For further information contact**

UNFCCC secretariat  
UN Campus  
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1  
53113 Bonn  
Germany

Phone: (49-228) 815-1000  
Fax: (49-228) 815-1999  
Web: <http://unfccc.int>

# Foreword

By **Patricia Espinosa**  
Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change



In the nearly three decades since the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force, Parties have consistently made efforts to strengthen climate action and increase the level of climate ambition. From the outset, the transparency framework under the Convention has played a crucial role in informing and enabling such efforts.

The landmark Cancun Agreements in 2010 established the international consultation and analysis (ICA) process for developing country Parties and the international assessment and review (IAR) process for developed country Parties. Together these processes form an important pillar of the transparency framework and represent a historic achievement on climate transparency.

Within a relatively short period of time, the ICA process became fully operational. Since its launch in 2015, developing country Parties have been participating in increasing numbers, providing national reports more frequently, and engaging in the international process to have them analysed in a transparent manner. The key results of the ICA process presented in this publication represent the collective efforts of all those who have participated and supported the implementation of the process to date.

The ICA process was built to offer practical support to developing countries. It enables them to share a clear picture of the current trajectory of their greenhouse gas emissions, the progress of their climate actions, and the support they need and have received. The up-to-date information shared through the process helps steer further actions and the targeted support provided through various channels. The process also allows Parties to learn from each other and build confidence that they can deliver the

objectives of the Convention through continued efforts. Most importantly, the ICA process provides an invaluable opportunity to identify specific capacity-building needs in developing country Parties and facilitates continuous improvement over time.

In our journey to increase climate ambition under the Paris Agreement, transparency is becoming ever more important. The ICA process provides Parties with an essential learning opportunity to prepare for the transition to the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement. Participating in the ICA process can help Parties better understand their readiness for the upcoming changes in reporting requirements and identify areas requiring further improvement.

This publication reveals the evolving success story of ICA. I hope the interesting experience and information presented in this publication will shed new light on the ongoing efforts of developing country Parties on climate change and transparency, and the value of the ICA process in supporting these efforts.

# Preface

---

By **Donald Cooper**  
Director, Transparency Division  
UN Climate Change



It gives me great pleasure to present this publication highlighting how the international consultation and analysis (ICA) process has, through its focus on transparency, facilitated climate action by developing countries. The ICA process is a key pillar of the existing measurement, reporting and verification arrangements under the Convention. This publication looks back on how far ICA has come in the past five years, and how the experience and lessons learned from the process will help Parties move towards the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement.

In 2020, the ICA process is at the midpoint of its lifespan, which started when it was created by Parties, and will end when it is eventually superseded by the ETF. Parties will submit their first biennial transparency reports no later than in December 2024. During the transition to the new transparency arrangements, ICA will be more important than ever as it informs the process established under the ETF and serves as the foundation for Parties in preparing comprehensive and targeted plans to improve their national capacity. An increasing number of Parties are already using the ICA process as a testing ground for assessing their readiness to transition effectively to the ETF.

This publication summarizes the core values of the ICA process in three areas: creating a knowledge base with clear and frequently updated information; improving the understanding of climate actions implemented and planned by developing country Parties; and supporting developing country Parties in better defining their capacity-building needs so as to help guide further climate action and seek targeted support.

The findings presented in the publication provide assurance that Parties have already made substantial progress in transparency under the existing arrangements, and that the developing country Parties that have participated in the ICA process have a head start on preparing for the transition to the ETF.

It is my sincere hope that this publication will prove to be a useful reference for all Parties and stakeholders and provide them with a clear overview of the encouraging developments in transparency. I would like to extend my warm thanks to Parties, technical experts and the secretariat staff for their valuable contribution to the ICA process, without which this publication would not have been possible.

# Abbreviations and acronyms

---

<b>BTR</b>	biennial transparency report
<b>BUR</b>	biennial update report
<b>CBIT</b>	Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency
<b>CMA</b>	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
<b>CO</b>	carbon monoxide
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>ETF</b>	enhanced transparency framework
<b>FSV</b>	facilitative sharing of views
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GHG</b>	greenhouse gas
<b>GWP</b>	global warming potential
<b>IAR</b>	international assessment and review
<b>ICA</b>	international consultation and analysis
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>LDCs</b>	least developed countries
<b>LULUCF</b>	land use, land-use change and forestry
<b>MRV</b>	measurement, reporting and verification
<b>NC</b>	national communication
<b>NDC</b>	nationally determined contribution
<b>NMVOC</b>	non-methane volatile organic compound
<b>NO<sub>x</sub></b>	nitrogen oxides
<b>REDD+</b>	reducing emissions from deforestation; reducing emissions from forest degradation; conservation of forest carbon stocks; sustainable management of forests; and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (decision 1/CP.16, para. 70)
<b>SBI</b>	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
<b>SIDS</b>	small island developing State(s)
<b>SO<sub>x</sub></b>	sulfur oxides
<b>TASR</b>	technical analysis summary report
<b>TTE</b>	team of technical experts
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

# Table of contents

---

---

Foreword	iii
Preface	iv
Abbreviations and acronyms	v
List of figures	vii
List of boxes	vii

---

Executive Summary	1
<b>1</b> Introduction	2
<b>2</b> Enhancing transparency	7
<b>2.1.</b> Keeping up with the latest information	7
<b>2.2.</b> Improving clarity and depth	9
<b>2.3.</b> Institutionalizing interactive dialogues	11
<b>3</b> Mapping progress of climate actions	15
<b>3.1.</b> Developing an overarching policy framework	15
<b>3.2.</b> Accelerating efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emission	16
<b>3.3.</b> Advancing adaptation efforts	21
<b>4</b> Building capacity	25
<b>4.1.</b> Better understanding the needs	25
<b>4.2.</b> Accelerating development of domestic MRV	27
<b>4.3.</b> Remaining challenges	28
<b>5</b> The way forward	31

# List of **figures**

---

FIGURE 1	BUR submission by developing country Parties (as of May 2020)	3
FIGURE 2	Regional distribution of BUR submissions	4
FIGURE 3	Key milestones in transparency arrangements for developing countries	5
FIGURE 4	Submission of BURs by developing country Parties (2014–2019)	7
FIGURE 5	Year of most recent submission of national reports by developing country Parties (2010–2019)	8
FIGURE 6	Year of most recent GHG inventory reported by developing country Parties (2002–2017)	8
FIGURE 7	Gases covered by GHG inventories included in the most recent BURs	9
FIGURE 8	Information on methodologies used for GHG inventories in the most recent BURs	9
FIGURE 9	Key elements of the interactive dialogues conducted during the ICA process	12
FIGURE 10	Sectors targeted by mitigation actions reported in NCs and BURs of developing country Parties	16
FIGURE 11	Sectors targeted by adaptation measures reported in NCs and BURs of developing country Parties	21
FIGURE 12	Capacity-building needs identified in NCs, BURs and TASRs	27
FIGURE 13	Existing transparency arrangements and the transition to the ETF	32
FIGURE 14	Geographic distribution of experts who participated in the technical analyses of BURs	33
FIGURE 15	How to be part of the ICA process	34

# List of **boxes**

---

BOX 1	Improvements in the completeness and clarity of information reported in BURs: example from Namibia	11
BOX 2	Promoting renewable energy: examples from Fiji, India and Morocco	18
BOX 3	Carbon pricing: examples from Chile, China, Republic of Korea, and South Africa	20
BOX 4	Examples of capacity-building needs identified in BURs and TASRs	26
BOX 5	Ghana's Climate Ambitious Reporting Programme: ongoing efforts to improve domestic MRV	27
BOX 6	Capacity-building initiative for transparency (CBIT)	33



Photo: 7<sup>th</sup> Workshop of the Facilitative Sharing of Views, Executive Secretary Ms. Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC.



# Executive Summary

---

**Since its launch in 2015, the international consultation and analysis (ICA) process has made significant progress in advancing the transparency of climate action.**

The transparent reporting and analysis facilitated by this process builds trust and confidence among Parties and enables them to make informed decisions and garner support for climate action. As at May 2020, 57 developing country Parties had submitted at least one biennial update report (BUR), representing 59 per cent of developing country Parties that are neither the least developed countries nor small island developing States, and 15 per cent of Parties that are classified under one of these two groupings. A total of 98 BURs have been submitted by developing country Parties, with an increasing number of Parties submitting subsequent BURs after successfully completing their first cycle of ICA.

**Since the introduction of BURs and the ICA process, the frequency and clarity of reporting by developing countries have increased substantially compared with the previous reporting arrangements.**

The increased availability of information facilitated by ICA, including up-to-date information on greenhouse gas inventories and climate actions in developing countries, expands the knowledge base. Parties show continuous improvement in the clarity and completeness of reporting in their subsequent BURs. The transparency of reporting and analysis is further strengthened by the interactive dialogues integral to the ICA process, including the facilitative sharing of views.

**Together with the national communications, the information shared through the ICA process sheds light on the progress being made by developing country Parties in their response to climate change.**

While they develop an overarching framework for climate action at the national level, these countries are also accelerating their efforts to slow the growth of greenhouse gas emissions with enhanced political commitment. Parties are increasingly moving away from individual projects towards sectoral interventions with a wider scope. In addition, cross-cutting policies – including carbon taxes, emissions trading schemes and fossil fuel subsidy reforms – are gaining prominence.

While the objective of the ICA process set out by the Conference of the Parties focuses on the need to increase the transparency of mitigation actions and their effects, **an increasing number of developing countries also provide information on their adaptation efforts in their BURs.** Parties are advancing their efforts in adaptation, often through the use of national adaptation strategies and plans together with various sectoral measures.

**The ICA process provides multiple entry points through which Parties are enabled to identify and better define the capacity-building needs specific to their circumstances.** These needs provide a solid basis on which to seek targeted support and pursue greater ambition. In response to the enhanced reporting requirements and the needs identified through the ICA process, a growing number of developing countries are accelerating their efforts to develop a robust and effective domestic system for measurement, reporting and verification.

**Parties will soon start implementing the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement,** with submissions of the first biennial transparency reports being due no later than 31 December 2024. **The ICA process provides an essential learning opportunity for developing countries in preparing for the transition** as it can help them assess their level of readiness and steer further development of their national capacity. Hence, it is crucial for Parties to engage in the ICA process at least once before the full transition to the ETF. Together with the active participation of international experts assembled in teams of technical experts to conduct the technical analysis of BURs, the broad participation of Parties in the ICA process will be essential for its continued and strengthened operation – and this will in turn form a vital input to the ETF.

# Introduction

# 1

Launched in 2015, the international consultation and analysis (ICA) process represents a significant step forward in increasing the transparency of climate actions of developing countries. The ICA process facilitates reporting of the latest information by these countries through the BUR and subsequent technical analysis of such information by international experts.

Building on the existing measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) arrangements and the relevant guidelines under the Convention, in 2010, the COP agreed that developing countries should share more frequent updates of information on climate actions every two years, through what is called biennial update reports (BURs).<sup>1</sup> With a view to increasing the transparency of mitigation actions and their effects, the Parties also decided to establish the ICA process, through which BURs are analysed in a manner that is non-intrusive, non-punitive and respectful of national sovereignty.

Triggered by the submission of a BUR from a developing country Party, the ICA process involves two stages: the first stage is a technical analysis of the BUR by a group of international experts referred to as the team of technical experts (TTE), the output of which is a technical analysis support report (TASR); this is then followed by a facilitative sharing of views (FSV) organized in the form of a workshop under the SBI, with the published TASR and BUR serving as inputs.

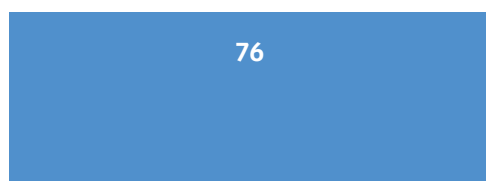
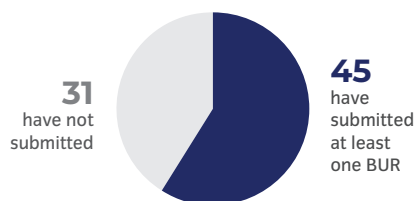
As of May 2020, 57 developing country Parties have submitted at least one BUR. After successfully completing the first cycle of ICA, an increasing number of Parties have continued to submit their subsequent BURs. With these submissions, a total of 98 BURs have been submitted to the UNFCCC to date, including 57 first BURs, 31 second BURs and 10 third BURs. Considering that 78 of the developing country Parties are LDCs and/or SIDS, which may submit BURs at their discretion, this submission trend indicates that approximately 59 per cent of developing country Parties that are neither LDCs nor SIDS have participated in the ICA process (see figure 1). An increasing number of LDCs and SIDS are also actively engaging in the ICA process. As of May 2020, approximately 15 per cent of LDCs and SIDS have submitted at least one BUR.

1. The COP also decided that developed country Parties should submit biennial reports every two years and established a process called the international assessment and review (IAR) to review the biennial reports and NCS submitted by developed country Parties.

FIGURE 1

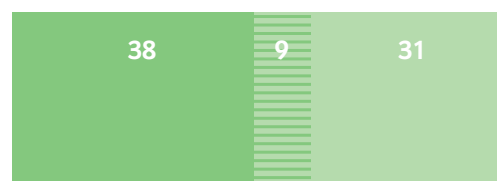
BUR submission by developing country Parties (as of May 2020)

Non-Annex I Parties that are not LDCs or SIDS



■ Non-Annex I Parties (excluding LDCs and SIDS)

LDCs and/or SIDS



■ Least developed countries (LDCs)  
 ■ Parties that are both LDC and SIDS  
 ■ Small island developing States (SIDS)

Source: UNFCCC.

Transparency is a key vehicle that enables climate actions. As Parties increase their climate ambition, including through submission of updated NDCs, it is equally important to share concrete information through transparent reporting and analysis that can facilitate a better understanding of reality to enable a transition from the current trajectory to a pathway that can deliver the objectives of the Convention. The solid basis of information and data established through transparent reporting helps Parties to make informed decisions and garner political support in taking climate actions at the national level. At the international level, transparency is essential to building trust and confidence among Parties in order to address climate change. The increased transparency of information also helps developing country Parties to identify capacity-building needs, which can provide an avenue to seek targeted support and enable greater ambition in their climate actions. The ICA process is a vital instrument to fulfil these functions of transparency.

The year 2020 marks the 5th anniversary of the operationalization of the ICA process. This milestone coincides with a critical juncture in the international response to climate change, when Parties will communicate their updated NDCs. The COP also invited Parties to communicate their mid-century, long-term low GHG emission development strategies by 2020. Since Parties to the Paris Agreement will commence reporting

under the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) by 2024 at the latest, this year is also an opportune time to assess the experience and progress achieved by developing country Parties through the ICA process. The ICA process provides a solid foundation to prepare Parties to transition to the ETF, which will require more comprehensive and transparent reporting.

Drawing on the information reported by developing country Parties and the experience of implementing the ICA process, this publication outlines the key achievements of ICA over the last five years: chapter 2 discusses how transparency has evolved through the ICA process, with developing countries providing clearer information more frequently; chapter 3 presents information on and trends in climate actions, which provide a basis for further action and peer learning among the Parties; chapter 4 unpacks the crucial role ICA plays in helping developing countries build and strengthen their capacities; and chapter 5 describes the way forward. With a view to providing a comprehensive overview of the information reported by developing country Parties, the scope of the analysis covers both BURs and NCs submitted in the last 10 years. Overall, this publication represents an endeavour by the secretariat to share with Parties and relevant stakeholders the collective knowledge and experience gained from the existing transparency arrangements under the Convention in order to help them prepare for the transition to the ETF.



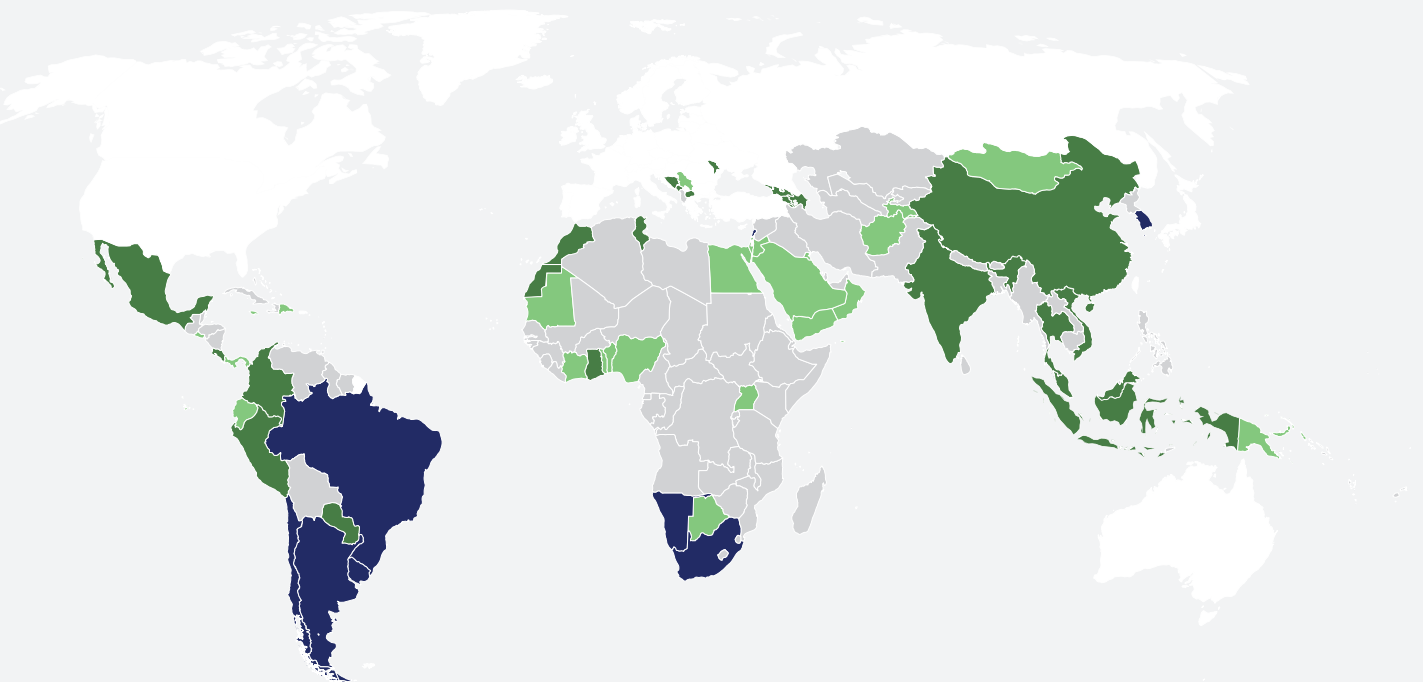
It is becoming clearer than ever how transparency is central to increasing climate action. Ensuring data is shared openly is vital to our collective climate change efforts. When we see what is working in one country, we are more likely to try it in our own, if it's applicable. This transparency directly helps inform governments as they increase levels of ambition to tackle climate change. ”

Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change

FIGURE 2

### Regional distribution of BUR submissions

Number of BUR submissions 0 1 2 3



0  
Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Maldives, Mauritania, Mongolia, Nigeria, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Togo, Uganda, Yemen.

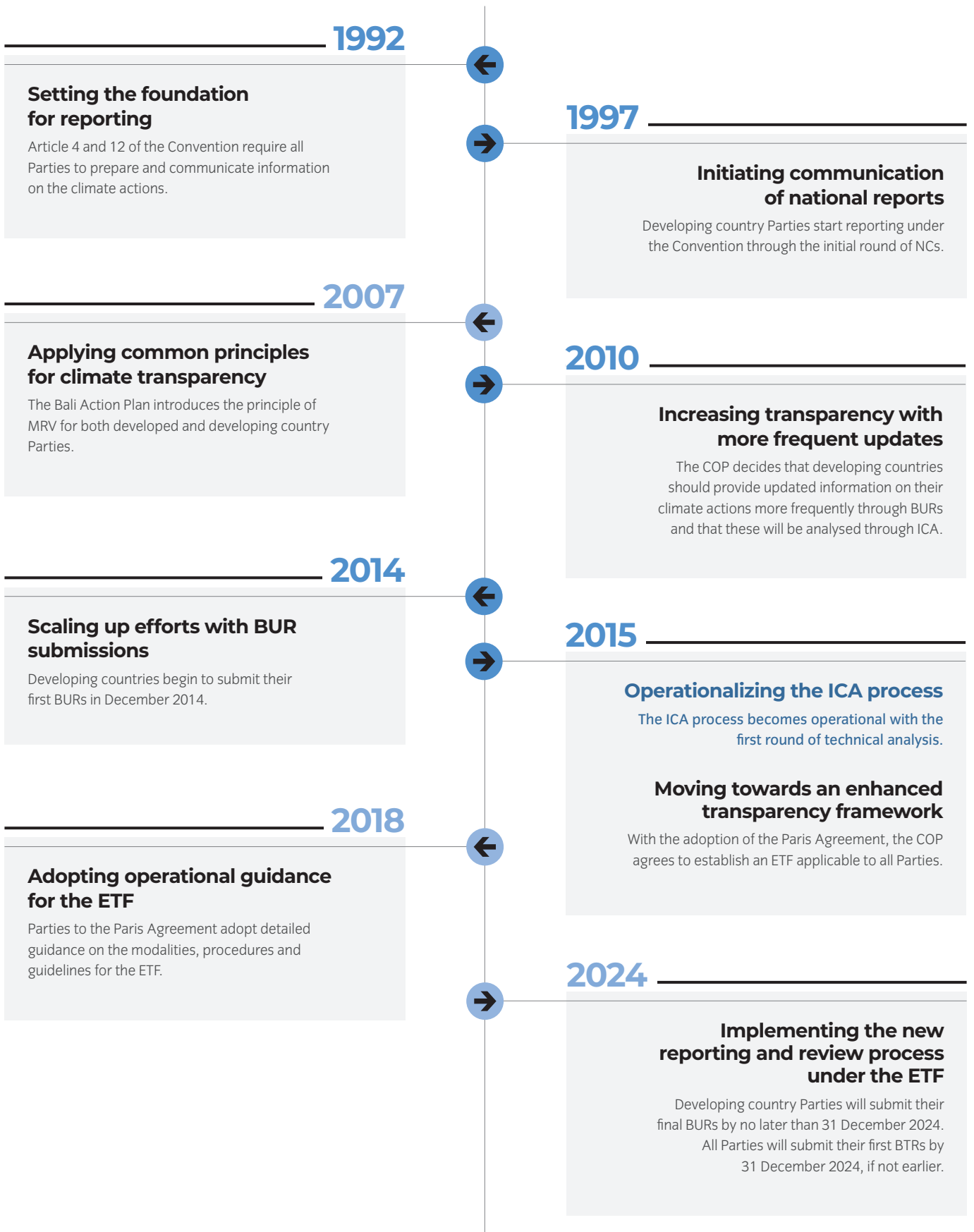
1  
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Georgia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Moldova, Thailand, Tunisia, Viet Nam.

2  
Andorra, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Lebanon, Namibia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Uruguay.

Source: UNFCCC.

FIGURE 3

Key milestones in transparency arrangements for developing countries





# Enhancing transparency

# 2

With the introduction of the BURs and the ICA process, the frequency of reporting and the clarity and depth of information provided by developing countries have substantially increased over time. The increased availability of information facilitated by ICA contributes to expanding the knowledge base of climate actions.

## 2.1.

### Keeping up with the latest information

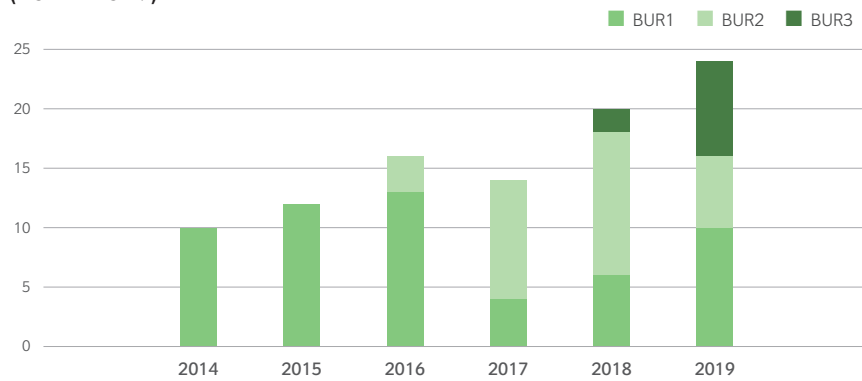
The number of Parties submitting BURs and engaging in the ICA process has continually increased; as of May 2020, a total of 98 BURs had been submitted to the UNFCCC. As shown in figure 4, the first BURs were submitted in the initial years of the ICA process, in accordance with decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 41(a), which called on developing countries to submit the first BUR by December 2014, with the exception of LDCs and SIDS that may submit the BURs at their discretion. Since then, a greater number of developing country Parties have institutionalized updated reporting as a continuous process and submitted subsequent BURs.

In accordance with decision 1/CP.16, developing country Parties should submit an NC every four years. In practice, Parties that submitted a first NC submitted subsequent NCs on average every 9.4 years, until 2014 when the submission of BURs was initiated. Since the changes were made to the reporting requirements, there has been a clear tendency towards shorter intervals between submissions of national reports by developing country Parties. As of May 2020, 97 per cent of the developing country Parties, including the LDCs and SIDS, have communicated the most updated information on their climate actions through BURs or NCs within the past 10 years, and 76 per cent within the past 5 years (see figure 5). Of the 37 Parties that have not submitted an updated national report within the past five years, approximately two thirds are either LDCs or SIDS, which have additional flexibility in their reporting requirements.

The increased frequency of reporting provides a better insight into GHG emission trends of developing countries, based on their updated national inventories (see figure 6). As per the BUR reporting guidelines contained in decision 2/CP.17, developing country Parties are required to cover, at a minimum, the inventory for the calendar year no more than four years prior to the date of the submission, or more recent years if the information is available in their first BURs. Subsequent BURs are expected to cover a calendar year that does not precede the submission date by more than four years.

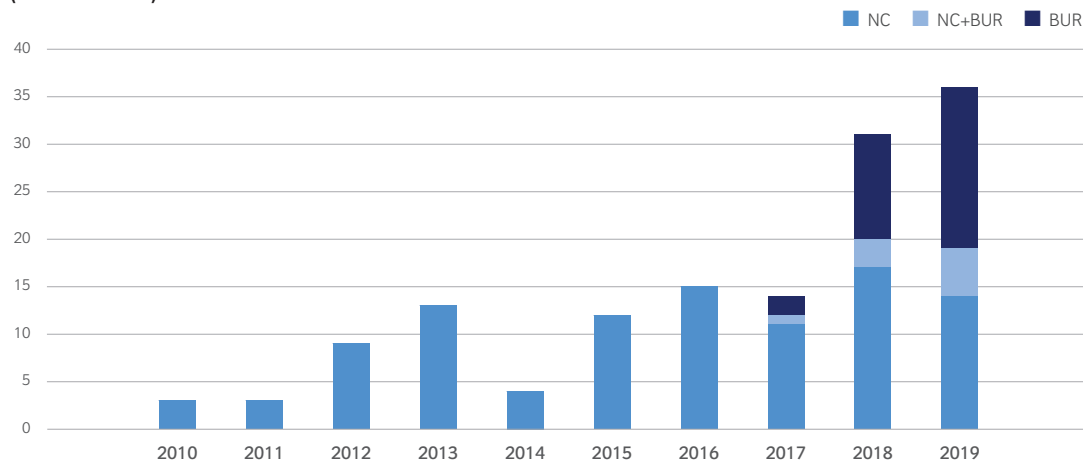
In the BUR guidelines, Parties are also encouraged to provide a consistent time series back to the years reported in the previous NCs. Accordingly, an increasing number of Parties are providing a full time series of their GHG

**FIGURE 4**  
**Submission of BURs by developing country Parties**  
**(2014–2019)**



Source: UNFCCC.

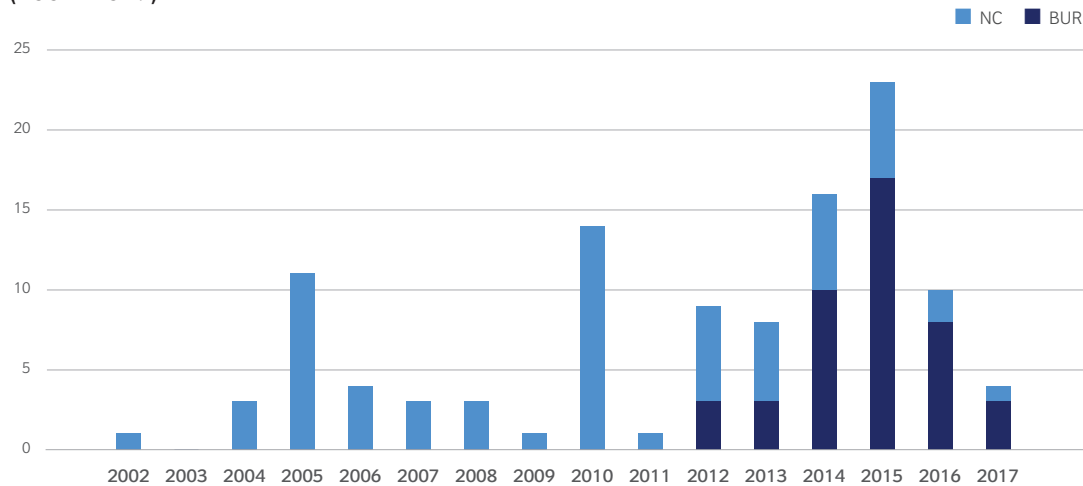
**FIGURE 5**  
**Year of most recent submission of national reports by developing country Parties**  
**(2010–2019)**



Note: All Parties that submitted a BUR during 2014-2016 submitted another national report in a more recent year.

Source: UNFCCC.

**FIGURE 6**  
**Year of most recent GHG inventory reported by developing country Parties**  
**(2002–2017)**

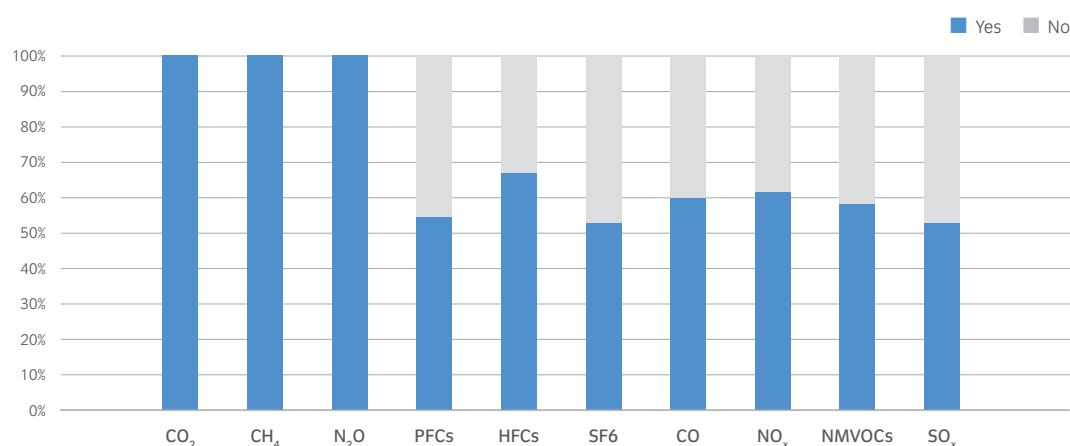


Source: UNFCCC.



FIGURE 7

## Gases covered by GHG inventories included in the most recent BURs



Note: The information summarized in this figure is based on the most recent BURs submitted by 57 Parties, as of May 2020.

Source: UNFCCC.

inventory and moving away from reporting on single years. This trend is coupled with efforts to recalculate earlier GHG inventories, although several Parties have noted challenges in this area owing to limited availability of data. There is also a growing tendency among developing countries to submit a detailed national inventory report in conjunction with the BUR; as of May 2020, approximately 30 per cent of BURs submitted had accompanying national inventory reports.

The BURs also provide updated information on the progress of implementing and achieving mitigation actions, with reference to the nationally appropriate mitigation actions<sup>2</sup> and NDCs<sup>3</sup> of developing country Parties. Parties communicate the most recent institutional and policy changes at the national level, and the updated information creates an important benchmark for further action and support. Details on the trends and information regarding climate actions reported by developing countries are further discussed in chapter 3.

## 2.2.

### Improving clarity and depth

The ICA process, defined in the Cancun and Durban Agreements, also elicits more clear and detailed information from developing countries compared with the previous reporting under the NC. Pursuant to the relevant decisions and reporting guidelines, the BURs provide more detailed information on GHG inventories, including disaggregated data and related methodologies

used to estimate emissions and removals. For example, an increasing number of developing countries report on emissions of fluorinated gases and indirect GHGs, including CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, NMVOCs, and SO<sub>x</sub> (see figure 7).

The clearer information provided on GHG inventories also reveals growing efforts among developing countries to use more up-to-date methodological guidance. While the BUR reporting guidelines<sup>4</sup> for developing countries adopted in 2011 refer Parties to the *Revised 1996 IPCC guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*, 75 per cent of Parties report their national inventories in the BURs using more recent methodologies from the *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* (see figure 8). Parties are also using more up-to-date global warming potential values than those mandated in the existing guidelines.<sup>5</sup> Approximately 30 per cent of developing country Parties that submitted BURs applied more recent global warming potential values than those mandated with a view to improving the accuracy of estimated emissions and their impact on climate change (see figure 8).

The introduction of BURs and the ICA process has also improved clarity of reporting on climate actions. In accordance with decision 2/CP.17, developing countries provide detailed information on mitigation actions in the BURs, including coverage, quantitative goals, progress indicators, and related methodologies and assumptions used. The mitigation actions are often reported with the results achieved in terms of GHG emission reductions or estimated outcomes using relevant quantitative indicators, such as renewable electricity generation capacity installed,

2. COP 16 agreed that developing country Parties will take nationally appropriate mitigation actions in the context of sustainable development, supported and enabled by technology, financing and capacity-building, aimed at achieving a deviation in emissions relative to 'business as usual' emissions in 2020 (decision 1/CP.16, para. 48)

3. In accordance with Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Paris Agreement, each Party shall prepare, communicate, and maintain successive nationally determined contributions that it intends to achieve.

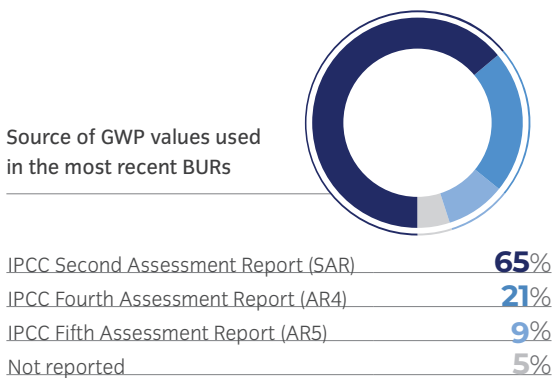
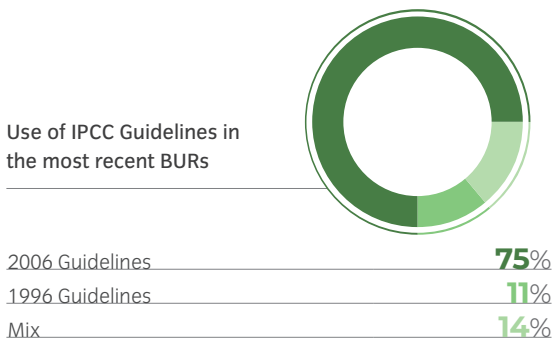
4. Decision 2/CP.17, annex III.

5. See decision 17/CP.8, annex, para. 20, which mandates use of global warming potential values from the IPCC Second Assessment Report.



Photo: Bongkarn Thanyakij.

**FIGURE 8**  
**Information on methodologies used for GHG inventories in the most recent BURs**



Note: The information summarized in this figure is based on the most recent BURs submitted by 57 Parties, as of May 2020.

Source: UNFCCC.

reduction of energy use or hectares of afforested area. Occasionally, Parties choose to report information on mitigation co-benefits of relevant initiatives aimed at sustainable development or adaptation to climate change. An increasing number of developing countries also provide information on different mitigation scenarios with projected emissions, often in reference to their NDCs. Overall, the improved reporting in the BURs facilitates a better understanding of the efforts and progress of developing countries in delivering climate actions.

Information reported in the BUR also clarifies details on the flow of support to developing countries. In accordance with the BUR reporting guidelines contained in decision 2/CP.17, developing country Parties should provide updated information on financial resources, technology transfer, capacity-building and technical support received from developed country Parties and multilateral institutions. In this regard, Parties often include in the BUR the amount of financial support received, the different types of support received, sources of support, the executing entity at the national level and a clear description of activities for which the support was used. This provides a new source of information on tracking available support, additional to that required of developed countries in the biennial reports and NCs on support provided to developing countries.

## BOX 1

### Improvements in the completeness and clarity of information reported in BURs: example from Namibia

The table below illustrates how information reported in the three BURs of Namibia have improved over time, with the Party increasing the scope and clarity of information and level of detail provided for individual reporting elements.

	BUR1	BUR2	BUR3
<b>GHG inventory</b>			
Consistent time series	Partly	Partly	Yes
Reporting on uncertainty analysis	Partly	Partly	Yes
Reporting on key category analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sources of activity data	No	Yes	Yes
Sectoral report tables	Partly	Partly	Yes
<b>Mitigation actions and effects</b>			
Energy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry	No	Yes	Yes
Agriculture	No	Yes	Yes
LULUCF	No	Yes	Yes
Waste	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Support needed and received</b>			
Financial needs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Technology needs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Capacity-building needs	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: UNFCCC.

In some cases, developing countries also communicate information on support they provided to other developing countries on a voluntary basis. However, it should be noted that many developing country Parties report challenges in obtaining adequate data to provide a complete and detailed overview of the support they have received.

Building on the experience of first round of the ICA process, developing countries are making substantial efforts to enhance the completeness and transparency of the information they report over time. Parties that submitted second and third BURs show steady progress in terms of the depth and clarity of information provided for each reporting element in the BUR (see box 1 for an example from Namibia). This continuous improvement is the result of various aspects of the ICA, including the data and process established at the national level by the Party when preparing the BUR, the feedback received from the technical analysis and the FSV, and the Party's ongoing efforts to address the capacity-building needs identified in

the previous rounds of ICA. This cycle increases the quality of information and enhances the capacity of developing countries to report under the ICA process and, in future, the ETF.

### 2.3.

#### Institutionalizing interactive dialogues

Based on the information reported in the BURs, the ICA process provides a multilateral platform for participating Parties to engage in interactive discussions with relevant experts and other Parties in a transparent manner (see figure 9). These discussions add new layers to further strengthen the transparency of information reported and facilitate capacity-building in the reporting Parties. The technical analysis of BURs brings together international experts as a TTE to discuss and analyse the information reported in the BUR. The TTE works closely with the Party undergoing the technical analysis to seek technical

FIGURE 9

Key elements of the interactive dialogues conducted during the ICA process

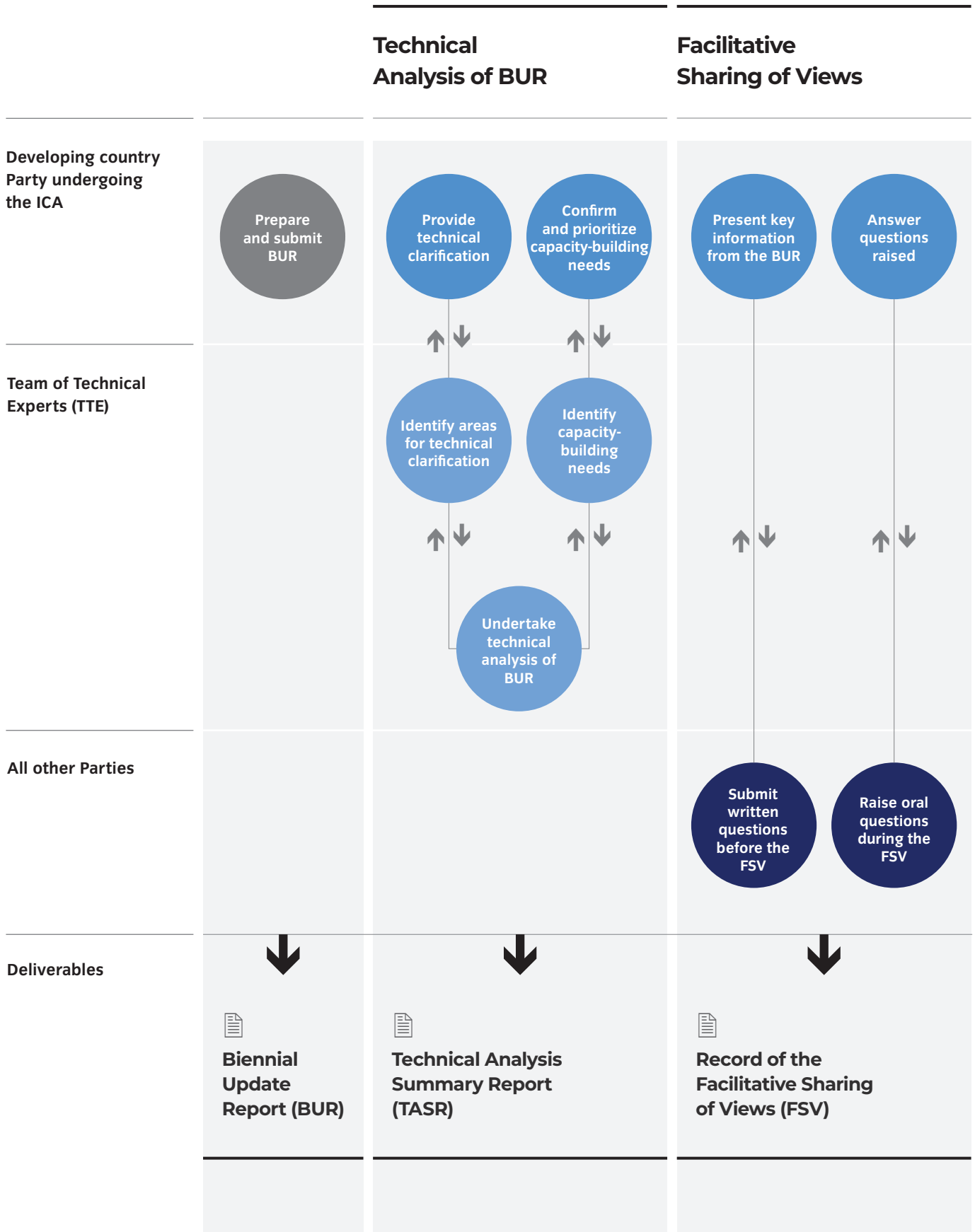




Photo: Opening remarks by the Executive Secretary at the 8th workshop of the Facilitative Sharing of Views, UNFCCC.

clarifications on the information reported in order to better understand the extent and clarity of information. In consultation with the Party concerned, TTE also identifies additional capacity-building needs that may not have been reflected in the submitted BURs, in accordance with the mandate outlined in decision 20/CP.19, annex, paragraph 15.

Following the technical analysis, the published TASR and BUR serve as inputs during the second stage of the ICA process, which is called the FSV. As per decision 2/CP.17, annex IV, the FSV is organized in the form of a workshop under the SBI. The FSV workshops are open to all Parties, and create a space for constructive dialogue that facilitates understanding and builds trust between Parties in order to address climate change. The FSV offers developing country Parties an opportunity to showcase their achievements and innovative approaches to addressing climate change, and engage in discussion with their peers to exchange ideas and experiences. The sessions are also open to observers and made publicly accessible via webcasts. Interested Parties can submit written questions in advance before

the FSV workshops. As of December 2019, a total of eight sessions of FSV workshops had been held, covering 61 BURs from 41 developing country Parties.

On average, 17 written and oral questions are asked of each Party undergoing the FSV before and during the workshop. The questions discussed during the FSV cover various areas including best practices and lessons learned from the implementation of international MRV processes; experiences in developing and implementing specific mitigation policies; mainstreaming climate change into other development plans; modelling undertaken to develop mitigation scenarios; support needed and received; institutional arrangements for preparing the BUR and designing the domestic MRV system; and improvement plans and capacity-building needs for implementing relevant reporting guidelines.



# Mapping progress of climate actions

# 3

Together with the NC, the information shared through the ICA process reveals a broad range of climate actions in developing countries and sheds new light on progress being made. Encompassing actions and policies in practical terms, the ICA process creates a positive feedback loop that informs further actions and facilitates peer learning among the Parties.

## 3.1.

### **Developing overarching policy frameworks**

When reporting information on their national circumstances in the BUR, a large number of developing country Parties have communicated their ongoing efforts to develop and implement an overarching policy framework through a national strategy tailored to the country's circumstances and needs. Implementing ambitious climate action requires substantial coordination efforts at the national level, across sectoral boundaries. Formulating and implementing national strategies on climate change are often referenced as a useful avenue to tap synergies across the various sectors and levels of government and engage with a wide range of stakeholders.

The recent climate strategies reported by developing countries show that Parties are establishing more links between environmental concerns and economic development through concepts like green growth, green economy and low-carbon or sustainable development. For example, Costa Rica's national climate change strategy and action plan aim to mainstream the climate change agenda across different sectors and catalyse the country's transformation towards a low-carbon development model. The national climate change strategy of Viet Nam also sets out clear objectives for the country to move towards a low-carbon economy, providing a long-term vision up to 2050.

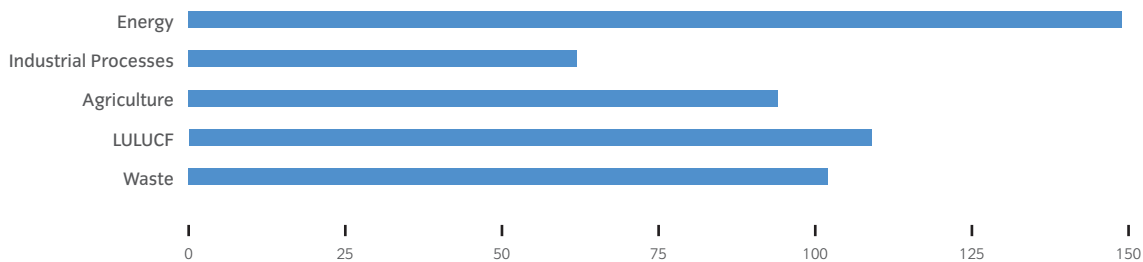
By articulating clearly defined national priorities and concrete activities, climate strategies can enable Parties prioritize the response to climate change in the political agenda and raise public awareness of related issues. Furthermore, climate strategies can also provide Parties with an opportunity to draw synergies between mitigation and adaptation actions and implement relevant activities in a more comprehensive manner. An increasing number of developing countries frame their mitigation actions in the context of national strategies when reporting relevant information in their BURs.

Owing to the multidisciplinary nature of climate change, institutional arrangements play a key role in the implementation of relevant policies and measures. In order to strengthen policy coordination across different sectors, a significant number of developing countries have established inter-ministerial bodies at the national level, such as a national committee on climate change or a dedicated task force. Such coordination bodies often

FIGURE 10

## Sectors targeted by mitigation actions reported in NCs and BURs of developing country Parties

Number of Parties reporting mitigation actions in the sector



Note: The information summarized in this figure is based on the latest information reported by all developing country Parties in their NCs and/or BURs.

Source: UNFCCC.

include research institutions, the private sector and civil society in their work, although Parties take varying approaches depending on their political context, national priorities, and available resources and capacities.

In addition, developing countries are increasingly making efforts to institutionalize climate actions by putting in place a dedicated department within line ministries. The information reported in NCs and BURs shows that approximately a third of developing countries already have such climate change-focused departments in place, mostly within their respective environment ministries. The responsibilities of these departments range from implementing, coordinating and monitoring climate actions to preparing NDCs, and appear to be increasing. Some Parties have taken even stronger measures and established a dedicated ministry on climate change or broadened the responsibilities of their environment ministries. The examples include Bangladesh, India, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and the United Arab Emirates. These activities demonstrate the growing relevance of climate change within the political agenda of national governments. Overall, climate change is becoming more deeply embedded in governmental structures, which provides a solid foundation for enhanced action on climate change.

Climate change legislation is another critical tool that has been used by a large number of developing countries to consolidate the policy architecture and integrate climate actions into a legal framework. For example, Mexico's climate change law adopted in 2012 establishes an overall institutional structure for climate change activities and anchors various planning tools, including a national strategy for climate change. The law also sets binding national targets on GHG emission reductions

and renewable energy. More recently, in 2019 Argentina adopted a climate change law to institutionalize efforts to address climate change. Climate-related laws are also used by developing countries to encourage low-carbon investments and/or establish financial mechanisms to support climate actions in a sustainable manner.

### 3.2.

#### Accelerating efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Developing countries are taking significant steps to slow the growth of GHG emissions and decouple economic growth from GHG emissions. Information communicated in recent reports shows how an enhanced political commitment to a climate change response leads to further action. More than 94 per cent of developing country Parties have developed and communicated their NDCs under the Paris Agreement, with GHG emission reduction targets ranging from 1.5 per cent to 84 per cent. Approximately 70 per cent of the NDCs submitted by developing countries involve some type of economy-wide target. The increasing level of ambition is often referenced in the mitigation portfolios included in the latest reports submitted by developing countries.

At the sectoral level, developing countries are increasingly moving away from individual projects towards a wider scope of policy interventions to address climate change. The sectoral composition of mitigation actions varies across Parties, as it reflects diverse national priorities, capacities and aspirations. Still, most developing country Parties report mitigation actions in the energy sector, as it is often the largest source of GHG emissions at the national level and considered a crucial component of





Photo: Asian Development Bank.

development objectives (see figure 10). More than two thirds of developing country Parties are taking actions related to LULUCF, while a significant number of Parties also reports measures in the waste and agriculture sectors. Approximately 40 per cent of the developing country Parties have reported actions to reduce GHG emissions from industrial processes.

---

## ENERGY

---

Among developing countries' efforts to decarbonize the energy sector, the promotion of renewable energy is one of the most commonly reported mitigation actions. The majority of the reporting Parties are stepping up efforts to increase the share of renewables in their electricity generation mix with investments in solar, wind, hydroelectric, biomass and geothermal power generation (see box 2 for examples). Information reported by developing countries indicates that a substantial number of further actions are also under development in this area. Several Parties are increasing efforts to encourage the uptake of renewables for non-electricity uses in various end-use sectors including industry, transport and buildings.

The steep decline in the cost of renewable energy sources, particularly solar photovoltaic technology, is creating a more favourable environment for their adoption. On the

other hand, developing country Parties still face challenges in securing funding for renewable energy sources, establishing an adequate grid infrastructure and balancing the existing power grid for intermittent renewable generation. Some developing countries have started to introduce measures to upgrade their grids and a few are stepping up their efforts in demand-side management to address challenges in integrating renewable energy into the grid. Meanwhile, a growing number of Parties are making use of off-grid opportunities, often generating benefits for low-income households. More than half of the reported measures in this area are already being implemented or have been completed.

Energy efficiency is another common area of focus of the mitigation actions reported by Parties. In many developing countries, a growing population and rapid economic development are driving increases in energy demand. The large number of policies and measures reported by developing countries in relation to energy efficiency shows an increasing awareness of how such energy efficiency measures can potentially help meet the challenge of rising energy demand at a relatively low cost.

The scope of mitigation actions reported in this area is diverse, ranging from improving power transmission efficiency to promoting efficient cookstoves and street lights. In order to increase the efficiency of power

## BOX 2

### Promoting renewable energy: examples from Fiji, India and Morocco

---

#### Fiji

Fiji, one of the small island developing states, currently generates 67 per cent of its electricity from renewable energy. Fiji's NDC sets a goal of generating 100 per cent of the country's electricity from renewable sources by 2030, subject to availability of funding. In order to reach its potential, the Party introduced tax incentives to encourage investments in renewable energy from the private sector and households.

---

#### India

As part of its NDC, India established a target of generating 40 per cent of its cumulative installed power capacity from non-fossil-based energy sources by 2030. In its second BUR, the Party reported that the share of non-fossil sources had already reached 35.5 per cent in June 2018. In particular, the share of renewables had increased nearly tenfold, from 2.2 per cent in 2005 to 20.4 per cent in 2018. India has developed a number of policies to promote renewable energy, including renewable purchase obligations for power distribution companies.

---

#### Morocco

In 2015, at the COP held in Paris, Morocco announced an ambitious target to increase the share of renewable energy to 52 per cent of the total installed capacity by 2030. Morocco has established a dedicated institution called the Moroccan Agency for Sustainable Energy, and launched a series of projects to install 2,000 MW of solar power capacity, at a cost of approximately USD 9 billion. One of the projects, Noor Ouarzazate, aims to build one of the world's largest concentrated solar power plants.

---

generation and avoid substantial losses, Parties are taking actions to replace old capacity or add new capacity, opting for more efficient technologies, including combined-cycle plants and combined heat and power generation plants, where demand for the generated heat exists. In countries that have added substantial new capacity in recent years, the overall energy efficiency appears to be quite high, often higher than in industrialized countries with relatively old power generation capacity. Additionally, developing country Parties often seek project-based support to improve energy efficiency in the industrial sector.

Other reported mitigation actions in the area of energy efficiency include implementing labelling requirements and standards, conducting information campaigns and creating financial incentives. Some Parties, including Albania, Armenia, Barbados, Jordan and the Republic of Moldova, have established dedicated funds to finance energy efficiency measures. Still, nearly three fourths of the energy efficiency measures reported by developing country Parties remain in the planning stage or are simply identified as a possible future mitigation opportunity. Further support is needed to enable developing countries to overcome the initial barriers to implementing proposed actions and ramp up existing activities.

Developing country Parties are also making efforts to reduce GHG emissions from the transport sector. Several Parties have enacted fuel efficiency or vehicle emission standards. An increasing number of Parties are rolling out various incentive programmes to encourage the replacement of inefficient vehicles and shift demand towards more efficient ones, including electric vehicles. Chile and South Africa introduced labelling systems for vehicles in order to better inform consumers and raise awareness of fuel efficiency. Several Parties are promoting the use of biofuels in the transport sector, often through biofuel blending mandates. Another measure reported in the transport area is the establishment of import controls to restrict less efficient vehicles, which do not meet minimum standards, from entering the country.

---

#### LAND USE, LAND-USE CHANGE AND FORESTRY

---

While LULUCF represents a net sink of GHG emissions in many developing countries, an increasing number of Parties increasingly recognize the importance of afforestation and reforestation to avoid fluctuations in emission trends. The sectoral target for this area is often reflected in the NDCs of developing country Parties. The increasing number of references to afforestation and reforestation also demonstrates the efforts of developing countries to harness multiple benefits from sustainable forest management. Mitigation actions reported for this sector include the establishment of protected areas, conservation activities and policies to limit illegal logging.



Photo: Cecilia Schubert (CCAFS).

These actions are often associated with clear targets defined in terms of area afforested, number of trees planted or share of forest cover in total land.

A growing number of developing countries are actively engaging in activities related to REDD+. In accordance with decision 12/CP.17, developing countries implementing REDD+ activities are invited to submit forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, which are then subject to a technical assessment. Following this step, information on the actual results compared to the assessed forest reference emission level is submitted as a technical annex to the BUR. As of April 2020, 50 developing country Parties had submitted a proposed forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level,<sup>6</sup> and 11 had submitted a technical annex on REDD+ results with their BUR.

Completing the technical analysis of REDD+ annex together with the BUR is a prerequisite for Parties to access the results-based payments programme operated by the GCF. Following the guidance of the COP, the GCF launched a pilot programme for results-based payments on REDD+ with a financial portfolio of USD 500 million.<sup>7</sup> The financing programme aims to provide incentives for developing countries to strengthen their efforts to implement REDD+ activities. As of November 2019, the GCF has approved payments for Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Paraguay, and reviews new applications on a continual basis.

6. Further information is available on the REDD+ web platform at <https://redd.unfccc.int/>.

7. Further information is available at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/redd>.

## AGRICULTURE

In the agriculture sector, Parties are mostly taking measures to improve production techniques and management practices, including changing crop cultivation methods, improving irrigation systems and employing soil conservation methods. Efforts are underway to reduce GHG emissions from livestock by changing feed composition and introducing variations in breeds and additives that reduce enteric fermentation. While national circumstances vary, the agriculture sector in many developing countries involves a large number of small-scale farms. In this regard, several Parties also report a substantial number of awareness-raising, capacity-building and research activities associated with climate-friendly agricultural practices.

## WASTE

While many developing countries continue to encounter challenges in establishing adequate waste collection and management systems, the information reported shows a growing recognition of co-benefits in the areas of health and safety from developing and implementing mitigation measures for the waste sector. Developing countries are increasingly making efforts to minimize waste disposal by providing incentives to reuse, recycle and compost waste. Reported activities tend to focus on solid waste management, while some Parties also note activities to improve wastewater collection and treatment in the sectoral portfolio. Several Parties reported the use of clean development mechanism (CDM) projects in this area to support the collection and use of landfill gas.

---

## INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES

---

Regarding GHG emissions from industrial processes, mitigation efforts reported by developing countries often relate to the cement, steel and chemical industries. When relevant information is reported, there is a strong emphasis on reducing emissions from fluorinated gases, which have a high global warming potential. However, the number of Parties reporting mitigation actions in this sector is limited, and the majority of measures reported in this area appears yet to be implemented. There is still potential to identify and implement further mitigation activities in this sector.

---

## CROSS-CUTTING POLICIES

---

Moving beyond sectoral interventions, cross-cutting policies and measures are gaining prominence in the climate actions of developing countries. When effectively managed, cross-cutting measures can complement sectoral activities and make a significant contribution to delivering national climate change objectives. A variety of policy levers are used in such efforts, including investments, technology, taxes and subsidies. For example, developing countries are supporting the development and deployment of low-carbon technologies through direct funding from the public sector or facilitating private investments. Several Parties have established dedicated climate funds to scale up climate-friendly investments and support relevant activities that have the potential to reduce GHG emissions.

In particular, carbon pricing has advanced rapidly in recent years as an approach to spur climate action by putting a price on GHG emissions and incentivize the shift towards less carbon-intensive alternatives. Developing countries have been increasingly pursuing this effort through emissions trading schemes and carbon taxes (see box 3 for examples). A significant number of developing country Parties have already introduced some form of green or carbon tax, including Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Singapore and South Africa. China and the Republic of Korea have launched their respective national emission trading schemes, and several other developing countries are considering or planning the introduction of similar schemes.

Fossil fuel subsidy reforms have also been pursued in some developing countries. These reform efforts aim to phase out inefficient subsidies that incentivize production and consumption of fossil fuels, which could hinder progress in climate actions. Such reform could potentially free up public resources for investments in low-carbon alternatives. For example, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone described their ongoing efforts to reduce fossil fuel subsidies in their latest national reports.

### BOX 3

## Carbon pricing: examples from Chile, China, Republic of Korea, and South Africa

---

---

### Carbon taxes

---

#### Chile

Chile introduced the national green tax regime in 2017 to reduce GHG emissions and local air pollutants. The green tax applies to all establishments that have boilers and/or turbines with a total thermal power greater than or equal to 50 MWT. The tax is levied at the rate of USD 5 per tonne for carbon dioxide emissions, and also covers particulate matter, nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide emissions.

---

#### South Africa

Following an extensive stakeholder consultation process that began in 2010, South Africa introduced an economy-wide carbon tax in 2019. The initial tax rate is set at 120 rand per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent, with a number of transitional tax-free allowances put in place. South Africa strengthened its national reporting regulations on GHG emissions to inform the carbon tax.

---

### Emissions trading schemes

---

#### China

In preparation for the national emissions trading scheme, China implemented seven pilot schemes in selected provinces and cities beginning 2013. The nationwide emissions trading scheme was officially launched in December 2017, with an initial focus on the power sector. China continues to further develop the relevant rules and regulations. The Party is considering broader coverage to include other major sectors such as steel, chemicals and buildings.

---

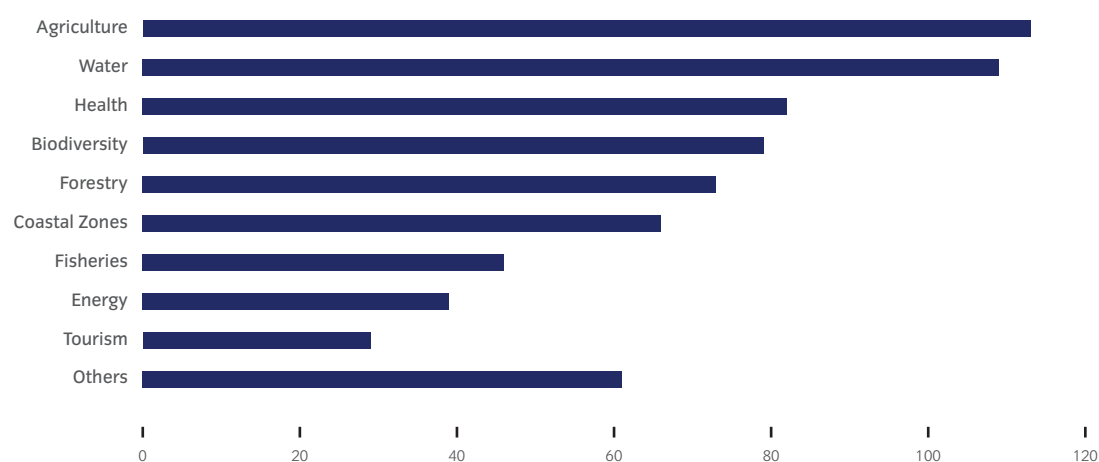
#### Republic of Korea

Launched in 2015, the Republic of Korea's national emissions trading scheme entered its second phase in January 2018. Building on the experience of the first phase, the Party started to auction 3 per cent of the total allowances and expanded the use of a benchmark-based approach to allocate free allowances. Operation of the emissions trading scheme is considered a critical part of achieving the national GHG mitigation target for the Party.

FIGURE 11

## Sectors targeted by adaptation measures reported in NCs and BURs of developing country Parties

Number of Parties reporting adaptation measures in the sector



Note: The information summarized in this figure is based on the latest information reported by all developing country Parties in their NCs and/or BURs.  
Source: UNFCCC.

### 3.3.

#### Advancing adaptation efforts

While the objective of ICA set out in decision 1/CP.16 focuses on the need to increase transparency of mitigation actions and their effects, Parties have the opportunity to include any other information that they consider relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention and suitable for inclusion in the BURs.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, an increasing number of developing country Parties has been providing information on climate-related risks and vulnerabilities and their adaptation efforts to build climate resilience in the BURs. In some cases, Parties also report information on the mitigation co-benefits of adaptation actions.

Analysing impacts, vulnerabilities and risks provide a basis for Parties' adaptation efforts. A significant number of developing country Parties have gained experience in this area based on their national adaptation plan processes and their reporting on related topics in the NCs. Building on these experiences, Parties often communicate relevant information in the BUR in the section on national circumstances. Information reported in NCs and BURs includes previously observed changes and information on climate parameters, such as rainfall, temperature or sea level rise.

Parties' efforts to build resilience and reduce vulnerability often take the form of adaptation strategies and plans. In many cases, such cross-cutting efforts are linked to

potential synergies with mitigation actions and sustainable development, often also with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Given the observed upward trend of and projected impacts from extreme weather events, many developing country Parties are making efforts to strengthen management of and recovery from unavoidable impacts. In addition to the cross-cutting measures, Parties are stepping up their adaptation efforts with policy interventions in various sectors, including agriculture, water and health (see figure 11).

#### WATER

Several Parties identify the need to improve water and sanitation infrastructure to minimize the adverse impacts of climate change on the water supply and the deterioration of water quality. Parties are considering various measures to increase the amount of available freshwater, including constructing dams and artificial lakes, increasing storage capacity, improving wastewater treatment and establishing desalination plants. Some Parties also reported rainwater catchment and harvesting as a possible activity. Parties are also pursuing measures to improve drainage and sanitation infrastructure to prevent the contamination of freshwater. Water conservation is prominently featured in measures across all sectors, for example, increasing the efficiency of irrigation technologies in the agriculture sector, regulating the use of water for non-agricultural irrigation, and promoting more efficient use of water by consumers through awareness-raising campaigns.

8. Decision 2/CP.17, Annex III, para. 2(g).



---

## HEALTH

---

In response to the climate-related health risks, Parties are striving to improve health services, including by addressing the current deficits and preparing for the growing demand for health services. Related measures reported in this area include increasing the availability of health care facilities and training health care professionals, and improving coordination systems to handle extreme events and epidemic outbreaks. Some Parties are undertaking efforts to control disease vectors through various measures including monitoring of such vectors, restricting breeding opportunities, as well as awareness-raising of activities, such as vaccination and treatment options, that prevent infection. Some Parties are pursuing measures to improve the physical infrastructure of buildings and settlements to reduce the health effects of heat stress.

Parties recognize that some of the health risks associated with climate change and the best ways to address them are not yet well understood and report a need for further research to support the improvement of health services. In addition, Parties identify raising awareness of key issues, such as proper food handling and storage, household water treatment options and the prevention of heat stress, as an important part of the health-related measures.

---

## AGRICULTURE

---

Agriculture is an important economic sector for most developing countries, hence enhancing the resilience of this sector forms a crucial part of their adaptation efforts. The most common measures relate to changing farming practices, including making changes to the crop mix or planting dates. In some cases, the introduction of agroforestry systems is reported as a measure to help retain water in plots, prevent erosion and provide shade. A significant number of developing country Parties are also considering new plant varieties and improved livestock breeds that are more resistant to heat, drought, soil salinity or to certain pests that multiply with climate change. Parties recognize that more research is required to develop such resistant varieties and identify suitable measures for their specific national context.

---

## BIODIVERSITY

---

Biodiversity management is critical for developing country Parties, given that the majority of threatened species and habitats are found in these countries, and their diverse and abundant biological resources constitute an important economic asset. Developing adaptation measures in this area poses a unique challenge, as many species are highly specialized and do not tolerate large variations in temperature or precipitation. Most of the measures reported on biodiversity largely aim to minimize pressure on habitats. Parties are also establishing natural reserves or protected areas and working towards improving the management of existing reserves. Several Parties have established measures to create buffer zones and corridors that connect ecosystems, combat invasive species and reduce socioeconomic activities, such as fishing, hunting and logging, that have a detrimental effect on key ecosystems.

---

## FORESTRY

---

In line with the measures to preserve biodiversity, Parties are increasing their conservation efforts to improve forest management practices. Such measures include promoting mixed forests, unevenly aged forests and agroforestry systems, and establishing community forests. Afforestation and reforestation efforts reported as part of mitigation actions are often closely linked to adaptation measures. Afforestation focuses on planting trees in previously non-forested areas, whereas reforestation involves human-induced conversion of areas that was forested but has been converted to other uses. Further measures include regenerating forests, for example, by providing seeds and increasing the plant density of existing forests.

---

## COASTAL ZONES

---

Given their high vulnerability, many coastal countries reported adaptation efforts to prevent erosion, seawater intrusion and damages from storms and flooding, such as constructing protective structures like dams and dykes. In addition to building physical infrastructure, Parties are also engaging in the rehabilitation of degraded coastal areas and the active restoration or expansion of protective coastal habitats. Rehabilitation and restoration efforts target coastal forests, mangroves and coral reefs, and some Parties strive to replenish and stabilize dunes. Several Parties are working closely with relevant stakeholders to improve coastal management, which includes restricting the settlement or use of particularly vulnerable areas and relocating settlements further inland. Parties' efforts to improve their fisheries management and related extension services are also closely linked to the management of coastal zones.





# Building capacity

The ICA process helps developing country Parties identify what is specifically needed to strengthen their capacities to implement and report on climate actions. The capacity-building needs identified through the ICA process in a consultative manner serve as a concrete base of information that helps guide further action and targeted support.

## 4

### 4.1.

#### **Better understanding the needs**

Identifying capacity-building needs is a distinctive feature of ICA, which is firmly established in the design of the entire process. The ICA process provides multiple entry points that enable Parties to detect capacity-building needs specific to their own needs and circumstances. The first step in determining a country's needs occurs when a Party prepares a BUR. In accordance with the reporting guidelines in decision 2/CP.17 and its annex III, developing countries should provide updated information on constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity-building needs in the BUR. This guidance encourages Parties to conduct an exercise at the national level to assess the gaps and define the capacity requirements so that clear information on the country-specific capacity-building needs is presented in the BUR.

Furthermore, the technical analysis of the BUR helps Parties work together with international experts in TTEs to build on what is already reflected in the BUR and further define their capacity-building needs. While undertaking a technical analysis of a BUR, a TTE studies the extent of information reported, and identifies possible areas to enhance the clarity of the information reported. In doing so, the TTE consistently assesses whether the findings relate to potential capacity-building needs; that is, whether the issues with the information reported could be attributed to underlying capacity-building needs. The interactive discussion with the TTE during the technical analysis allows Parties to consider and prioritize these potential needs, as appropriate. The additional capacity-building needs identified during this process are then documented in the TASR, which constitutes a crucial outcome of the ICA (see box 4 for examples). A survey conducted by the Consultative Group of Experts in 2018 shows that Parties that participated in the ICA process find the experience helpful in preparing for subsequent national reports.

Taken together with the capacity-building needs reported in NCs, the issues identified in the BURs and TASRs provide a clear overview of capacity-building needs in developing country Parties (see figure 12). In terms of thematic areas, capacity-building needs most commonly relate to compiling the GHG inventory, while needs related to mitigation, adaptation and cross-cutting issues are also frequently mentioned. The identified needs can be also understood in terms of procedural aspects, including data and information, methodology and tools, and institutional arrangements. The continued engagement of Parties in the ICA process is essential to periodically assessing their capacity-building needs and obtaining an updated overview of their evolving capacities.

BOX 4

Examples of capacity-building needs identified in BURs and TASRs

The table below provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building needs identified by Parties in their BURs, and additional items identified by TTEs in TASRs, in consultation with the Parties concerned.

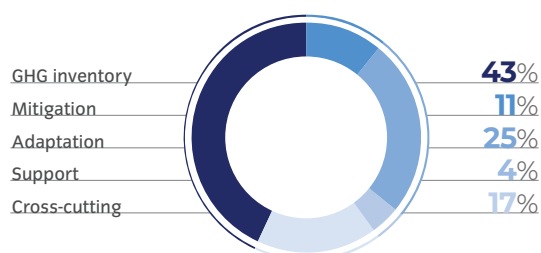
Area	Capacity-building need identified
<b>GHG inventory</b>	Strengthening technical capacity to develop and apply country-specific emission factors in estimating GHG emissions
	Developing a system to collect activity data and other related parameters for the GHG inventory on a regular basis
	Enhancing national capacity to conduct an uncertainty assessment of GHG emission and removals
	Enhancing technical capacities to apply the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories
<b>Mitigation</b>	Developing technical capacity to estimate emission reductions anticipated from, and/or achieved through mitigation activities
	Building national capacity to develop mitigation scenarios and emission projections with a solid analytical basis for future revisions
<b>Adaptation</b>	Developing milestones and indicators to monitor the effectiveness of adaptation measures
	Enhancing monitoring capacity for extreme weather and climate events, including coastal zones
<b>Support</b>	Enhancing technical capacity of national experts and relevant personnel to conduct a technology needs assessment
	Developing a system to collect and compile data on financial flows related to climate change across line ministries and non-governmental entities
<b>Cross-cutting issues</b>	Enhancing national capacity to implement education programmes and raise public awareness of climate change
	Strengthening the legal and institutional framework to mainstream climate change into national development plans

Source: UNFCCC.

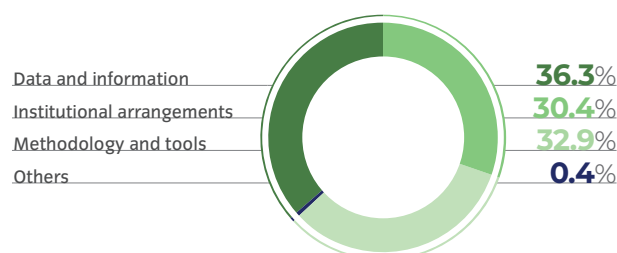
FIGURE 12

## Capacity-building needs identified in NCs, BURs and TASRs

Thematic areas of capacity-building needs reported



Types of capacity-building needs reported



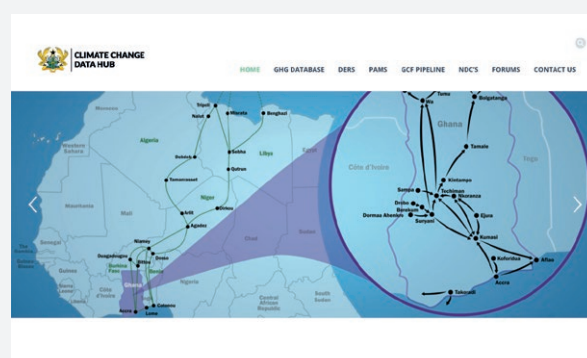
Note: The information summarized in this figure is based on the capacity-building needs identified and reported by all developing country Parties in their latest NCs, BURs, and/or TASRs.

Source: UNFCCC.

### BOX 5

## Ghana's Climate Ambitious Reporting Programme: ongoing efforts to improve domestic MRV

In 2013, Ghana launched the Climate Ambitious Reporting Programme to establish an integrated climate data management system for its domestic MRV, and to provide regular support national and international reporting. It is an integrated system that encompasses institutional arrangements, data management, methods and tools, and relevant training. Following its launch in 2013 through pilot activities, the system became fully operational in 2018 and is undergoing continuous improvements. Results are published on an online data hub at <http://climatedatahubgh.com>.



## 4.2.

### Accelerating development of domestic MRV

In response to the enhanced reporting requirements and the capacity-building needs identified through the ICA process, a growing number of developing countries are initiating or strengthening their efforts to develop an effective and sustainable domestic MRV system. More developing country Parties are choosing to establish a national system to ensure efficiency in data collection and management, which is an essential component of sustainable reporting (see box 5 for an example from Ghana). Such efforts allow Parties to closely monitor changing trends, identify areas for improvement and take actions in response to the issues identified. Development

of a country-specific data set can also better inform future actions, as it enables Parties to refine the assessment of different mitigation options and analyse their feasibility in the national context.

Parties also increasingly recognize the need to synchronize various reporting processes in order to prepare and update information on their climate action on a regular basis, although many Parties indicate challenges to developing an effective MRV system to track information on various types of support in a comprehensive manner. While Parties make constant efforts to improve the domestic MRV system for specific areas, including the GHG inventory, mitigation and support received, a significant number of Parties report information on their existing or planned system to collect and process all relevant information in an integrated

manner. Such a system can ensure the consistency of reporting and methodological approaches across different areas, such as the monitoring of mitigation measures and the GHG inventory, and increase synergy in data collection and management.

Successful operationalization of a domestic MRV system also requires sound institutional arrangements to support and sustain the system. While some developing country Parties still rely on an ad hoc, project-based approach to develop national reports, there is a clear tendency towards more sustainable and stable arrangements that are embedded within government institutions. Recent developments in the institutional arrangements of developing countries include a clear division of responsibilities, established sectoral working groups and a regular process to engage experts from national research agencies and institutions. An effective institutional framework enables Parties to improve their planning and the quality of their regular reporting under the Convention, and better prepare for the upcoming changes in the transition to the ETF under the Paris Agreement.

### **4.3. Remaining challenges**

The ICA process provides an opportunity for developing countries to strengthen the capacity of national experts involved, through the process of preparing the BUR and by engaging in interactive dialogue with international experts. Enhancing the capacity of individual experts in the country can contribute towards improving overall technical capacity at the national level. However, many Parties report a limited number of qualified experts with the necessary skill set and technical expertise. While developing countries are increasingly making efforts to address this issue through various training and education programmes at the national level, often with international support, the limited human resources is a significant barrier to reporting and implementing climate actions for many Parties. The secretariat is making constant efforts to assist Parties in this regard, including by developing and rolling out relevant tools, publications and training programmes.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, although Parties are stepping up their efforts to respond to the capacity-building needs identified in the ICA process, there is a need to bridge the gap between those efforts and the available resources to unlock their full potential to report and implement climate actions. A significant number of mitigation actions reported in the BURs are yet to be fully implemented, and many developing countries report that limited availability of financial resources is a major challenge to implementation.

Developing country Parties also report challenges to accessing necessary technologies, often associated with the high upfront costs of acquiring cleaner technologies. The support provided will need to be better aligned with the potential climate actions identified in the BURs in order to stimulate further actions in developing countries. In this respect, the capacity-building needs identified through the ICA process play a crucial role in informing decisions regarding the flow of external support from bilateral and multilateral channels.

9. See <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/transparency-and-reporting/support-for-developing-countries/overview>.





# The way forward

# 5

With the adoption of the Paris Agreement, Parties decided to further advance the transparency arrangements under the Convention and establish an ETF. As set out in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, the ETF aims to provide clarity on climate actions and support and create a common framework applicable to all Parties to the Paris Agreement, with flexibility afforded to developing countries who need it in the light of their capacities. Following the adoption of the modalities, procedures and guidelines of the ETF at COP 24, held in 2018, Parties agreed to submit their first BTRs no later than 31 December 2024,<sup>10</sup> to start implementing the new arrangements under the ETF. The final BURs from developing country Parties will be submitted no later than 31 December 2024.<sup>11</sup> Recognizing the special circumstances, LDCs and SIDS were granted the flexibility to submit the BTRs at their discretion.

While the ETF represents a new chapter in the transparency framework, it draws upon the experience of existing transparency arrangements under the Convention, including ICA. Rather than starting anew, the ETF builds on the existing processes and thus reflects some similarities in approach. For example, similar to the principles of ICA outlined in decision 2/CP.17, Article 13 of the Paris Agreement clearly indicates that the ETF will be implemented in a manner that is facilitative, non-intrusive, non-punitive and respectful of national sovereignty. The core structure of the ETF also follows a structure similar to the existing MRV arrangements under the Convention (see figure 13).

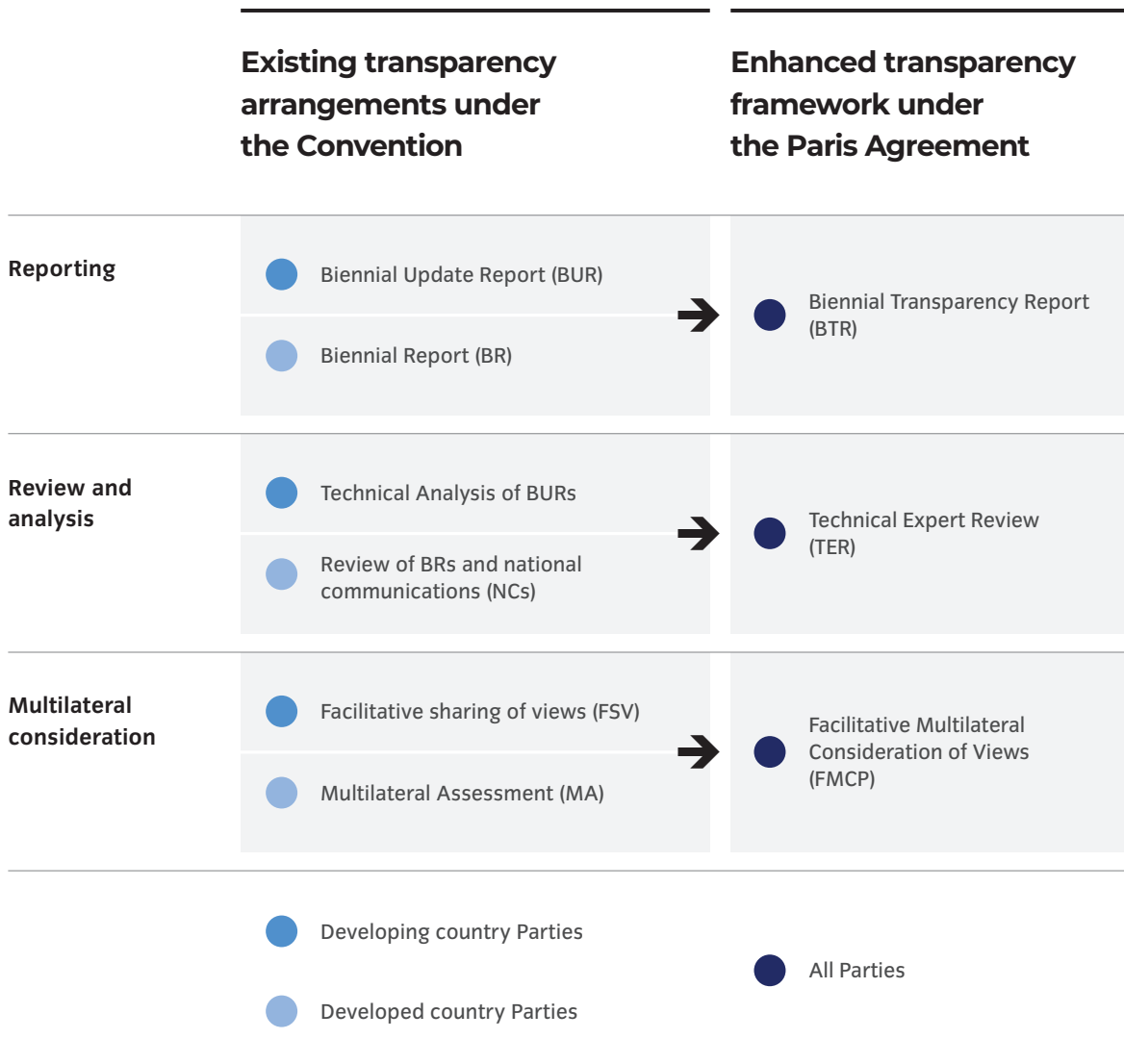
Nevertheless, the transition to the ETF will bring significant changes to the reporting requirements and relevant arrangements, especially for developing countries that are Parties to the Paris Agreement. For example, in accordance with the modalities, procedures and guidelines for the transparency framework for action and support referred to in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, contained in decision 18/CMA.1 and its annex, all Parties are required to use the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories to prepare their national GHG inventory. Parties must also identify one or more indicators they will use to track progress in implementing and achieving their NDCs, and provide information on such progress using the selected indicators in the BTR. Developing countries will also be subject to a more diversified review formats under the ETF, which will include a centralized review, an in-country review and a desk review. LDCs and SIDS may choose to participate in a centralized review as a group.

10. Decision 18/CMA.1, para. 3.

11. Decision 1/CP.24, para. 38.

FIGURE 13

Existing transparency arrangements and the transition to the ETF



Source: UNFCCC.

Given that it forms part of the foundation of the ETF, the ICA process provides an essential learning opportunity for developing country Parties to better prepare for the transition. Each Party is at a different stage in terms of fulfilling transparency requirements, and participating in the ICA process enables each Party to assess its level of readiness for upcoming changes to the international transparency arrangements. The ICA process informs the establishment and further development of institutional and technical capacity of developing country Parties, which are critical to supporting the ETF implementation. In this context, it is crucial for developing country Parties to continue preparing BURs and engage in the ICA process at least once before the full transition to the ETF. Broader participation of developing country Parties in the ICA process could also contribute to strengthening the

collective knowledge and experience of the Convention in implementing the transparency arrangements, which would be a vital input to operationalize the ETF.

Financial and technical support is available to assist the developing country Parties in preparing the BURs and engaging in the ICA process. As an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism of the UNFCCC, the GEF provides financial support to developing countries on request. As per the GEF policy guidelines, developing country Parties can currently access up to USD 352,000 for the preparation of BURs and USD 500,000 for the preparation of NCs. In addition, the Consultative Group of Experts provides technical assistance and support to developing countries in respect of MRV arrangements under the Convention. In accordance with decision 18/CMA.1, paragraph 15,



## BOX 6

### Capacity-building initiative for transparency (CBIT)

Building on existing transparency arrangements, as well as on national efforts to develop NCs and BURs, the CBIT provides support to developing countries to build institutional and technical capacity to meet the enhanced transparency requirements defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.

In accordance with decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 85, the CBIT has three aims:

→ To strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities;

→ To provide relevant tools, training and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement;

→ To assist with the improvement of transparency over time.

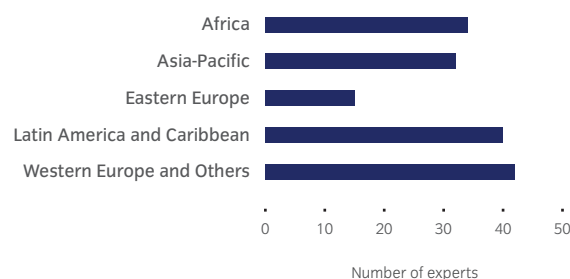
As of November 2019, the GEF secretariat had approved 58 CBIT projects, supporting countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern and Central Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. Further information is available at <https://www.thegef.org/topics/capacity-building-initiative-transparency-cbit>.

FIGURE 14

### Geographic distribution of experts who participated in the technical analyses of BURs



Source: UNFCCC.



the Consultative Group of Experts is mandated to support developing countries in implementing the ETF. Furthermore, the COP established the CBIT, operated by the GEF, to support developing country Parties in addressing priority needs to improve transparency in transition to the ETF (see box 6).

While the engagement of Parties remains an absolute necessity, the move towards the ETF also requires the active participation of another group of key players: climate change experts. Successful operationalization of the ICA process has benefited from the valuable contributions of international experts who have participated in the process as TTEs. As of March 2020, a total of 15 rounds of technical analysis of BURs have been conducted by 35 TTEs, comprising 163 experts from across the globe (see figure 14). Going forward, the continued operation of technical analyses under the ICA process and preparations for the technical expert review process under the ETF will lead to a significant rise in demand for qualified experts. While the secretariat is increasing its efforts to bring in more

experts to these processes, support from both developed and developing country Parties is also crucial to identify and nominate qualified reviewers and expand the pool of expert resources.

The ICA presents unfolding stories of climate actions in developing countries, which also represents determined efforts by those Parties to increase the transparency of their actions. In a relatively short period of time, the ICA process has made substantial progress in expanding the knowledge base and enhancing transparency. The concrete knowledge and experience shared through the ICA process enable further actions and targeted support while building trust and confidence among the Parties in addressing climate change. These achievements have been made possible by the active participation of Parties and relevant experts. Broader and continued participation of developing country Parties and qualified experts will be vital to making further progress through the ICA process and ensuring a successful transition to the ETF in the coming years.

FIGURE 15

## How to be part of the ICA process

---

### Parties



The first step for Parties to engage in the ICA process is to prepare and submit a BUR. Financial and technical support to prepare the BUR is available to developing countries.



Parties can also learn from others by participating in the FSV. Representatives from all Parties can submit written questions in advance or asks the questions in person during the FSV workshop.

---

### Experts



Climate change experts can express their interest in participating in the ICA process by registering online on the UNFCCC [Roster of Experts](#) and have to get nominated by a Party's national focal point.



Once nominated, the expert can take a training course and the exam for chosen areas of expertise. Experts who successfully pass the exam become eligible to join a TTE.

---

### Everyone



The information generated by the ICA process is available to anyone interested. The BURs and TASRs are publicly available at <https://unfccc.int/ICA>.



The FSV workshops are open to everyone. Those who cannot participate in person can follow the discussion online through a webcast available at <https://unfccc.int/FSV>.

---

**International Consultation and Analysis**

<https://unfccc.int/ICA>

 @UNFCCC

 [www.facebook.com/UNclimatechange](https://www.facebook.com/UNclimatechange)

 [www.linkedin.com/company/unfccc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/unfccc)



**United Nations**  
Climate Change