

**Information note by the  
Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications  
from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention**

**Part II:  
Demonstrating impacts and added value of the work  
carried out by the CGE during 2014–2018**

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## I. BACKGROUND

- At its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, held in Bonn on 5 and 6 February 2018, the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) agreed to make available information providing an overview of its planned and implemented activities, as well as of its achievements, over the period 2014–2018<sup>1</sup> and to supplement this with additional information demonstrating the impacts and added value of its work.
- This information note is intended to give an overview of the impacts and added value of the work undertaken by the CGE during the above-mentioned period. The general methodology applied for this exercise is outlined in the annex.

## II. IMPACTS OF CGE WORK

- Recognizing the subjectivity inherent in demonstrating impacts and bearing in mind that effects can be ascertained more objectively, this assessment uses the short- to medium-term effects of the activities carried out by the CGE as proxy indicators of impact. For each work stream of activities, such as webinars and training events, a matrix was used to tabulate the number of times that a given activity was conducted over the reporting period, the extent of its reach, and the participants' perception as to whether the activity met their expectations.

### A. Webinars

- Webinars provide a cost-effective platform for the CGE to reach out to a wider audience of national experts and practitioners (compared with other methods it uses) and to assist these in gaining targeted knowledge in various thematic areas.
- During the period 2014–2018, the CGE conducted 25 webinars, in which a total of 1,142 individuals participated. The participants included national government representatives, researchers and technical specialists. Overall, the survey results indicate an average satisfaction level of 94 per cent. Table 1 summarizes the thematic areas, the number of webinars and participants, and the feedback provided by the participants.

Table 1  
CGE webinars, 2014–2018

Thematic area / Number	Vulnerability and adaptation assessment	Mitigation actions and their effects	Greenhouse gas inventories	Cross-cutting guidance	Total
Number of webinars	8	10	5	2	25
Number of participants	462	371	195	114	1 142
Average survey response rate (%)	17%	26% <sup>a</sup>	18% <sup>a</sup>	26%	Average: 22%
Survey result (% of respondents who found that the contents met their expectations)	93%	93%	93%	97%	Average: 94%

<sup>a</sup> Excluding one webinar on mitigation and three webinars on greenhouse gas inventories, since surveys had not yet been introduced at the time.

### B. Regional hands-on training workshops

- Regional hands-on training workshops provide a platform for the CGE to engage directly with its constituency. Over the reporting period, a total of 1041 national experts from developing country Parties were trained through 15 CGE regional hands-on training workshops, as well as 8 regional workshops on greenhouse gas

<sup>1</sup> See the CGE overview document on the delivery of its mandate in the period 2014–2017, which is available at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/CGE%20Stocktaking%20Report.pdf>.

inventories that were based on training material developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and during which CGE members acted as “resource persons”.

7. Overall, the survey results indicate an average satisfaction level of approximately 95 per cent for the workshops on vulnerability and adaptation assessment, 96 per cent for the workshops on mitigation actions and their effects, and 92 per cent for the workshops on the preparation of biennial update reports (BURs). Table 2 summarizes the thematic areas, the numbers of workshops and participants, and the feedback provided by the participants.

**Table 2  
CGE regional hands-on training workshops, 2014–2018**

Thematic area / Number	Vulnerability and adaptation assessment	Mitigation actions and their effects	Preparation of biennial update reports	Greenhouse gas inventories <sup>a</sup>	Total
Number of workshops	2 per region	1 per region	2 per region	LAC (3) AP&EE (1) AFR (4)	LAC (8) AP&EE (6) AFR (9) Total (23)
Number of participants	LAC (83) AP&EE (81) AFR (93)	LAC (32) AP&EE (33) AFR (40)	LAC (63) AP&EE (78) AFR (96)	LAC (114) AP&EE (111) AFR (217)	LAC (292) AP&EE (303) AFR (446) Total (1041)
Average survey response rate (%)	LAC (62%) AP&EE (74%) AFR (86%)	LAC (39%) AP&EE (79%) AFR (78%)	LAC (89%) AP&EE (60%) AFR (80%)	Not available	LAC (63%) AP&EE (71%) AFR (81%) Average: 71%
Survey result (% of respondents that rated the workshop as either good or excellent)	LAC (90%) AP&EE (100%) AFR (96%)	LAC (100%) AP&EE (92%) AFR (97%)	LAC (90%) AP&EE (91%) AFR (95%)	-	LAC (93%) AP&EE (94%) AFR (96%) Average: 94%

*Abbreviations:* AFR = Africa, AP&EE = Asia–Pacific and Eastern Europe, and LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean.

<sup>a</sup> These workshops were based on training material developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and involved members of the Consultative Group of Experts as “resource persons”.

### C. Training of experts for the technical analysis of biennial update reports

8. Since 2014, the CGE has run a dedicated training programme for the technical experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts for the technical analysis of the BURs submitted by non-Annex I Parties. During the reporting period, a total of 385 experts passed one or more proficiency assessments, as shown in Table 3 below. On average, 62 per cent of the experts trained were from developing countries, which has helped to expand the pool of national experts who are familiar with the process involved in the technical analysis of BURs, as well as, more generally, to promote capacity-building in developing countries. Of those 385 experts on the UNFCCC roster who passed at least one proficiency assessment, a total of 236 experts have become eligible to be on the team of technical experts undertaking the technical analysis of BURs.

Table 3

**Training of experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster for the technical analysis of biennial update reports**

Training programme	Experts from developing country Parties	Experts from developed country Parties	Total trained	Percentage of experts from developing country Parties trained
1 <sup>st</sup> round	43	26	69	62%
2 <sup>nd</sup> round	45	30	75	60%
3 <sup>rd</sup> round	18	15	33	55%
4 <sup>th</sup> round	20	11	31	65%
5 <sup>th</sup> round	31	15	46	67%
6 <sup>th</sup> round	43	15	58	74%
7 <sup>th</sup> round	40	33	73	55%
Total	240	145	385	62%

#### D. Online technical resources

9. Over the years, the CGE has developed a number of comprehensive sets of technical resources, which are made publicly available on the UNFCCC website. The records show that during the reporting period these online resources have consistently attracted a considerable number of web page visits ("hits"). The average monthly count of such hits between January 2014 and March 2018 is shown in Table 4 below, which illustrates how users are constantly referring to these technical resources.

Table 4

**Average monthly count of visits to the web pages containing CGE technical resources, January 2014–March 2018**

Web page contents	Average monthly hits
<a href="#">Guidelines and manuals for the preparation of national communications and biennial update reports, and for international consultation and analysis</a>	728
<a href="#">Training materials for the preparation of national communications</a>	582
<a href="#">Training materials for the preparation of biennial update reports</a>	364

10. The CGE also conducted 25 social media outreach events sharing information on CGE work activities, which garnered between 57 to 6921 views each with an overall average of 1346 views.

### III. ADDED VALUE OF CGE WORK

11. As indicated in the methodology used for this assessment (see the annex), "added value" is described in terms of the strengths of, and/or the unique role played by, the CGE in helping to create an enabling environment for climate action within the broader realm of capacity-building, which contains many other organizations and entities carrying out similar activities. The aspects in which the CGE brings added value include the following:
12. *Geographical representation:* the CGE is made up of representatives from a diverse group of Parties: five members from each of the regions of non-Annex I Parties, namely, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean; six members from the Annex I Parties; one observer from Eastern Europe; and three members from international organizations with relevant experience in providing technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties in the preparation of national communications (NCs) and BURs. In addition to these, there is also an observer representing non-Annex I Parties from the Eastern Europe region.

13. This composition enables the CGE to take into account the priorities and interests of different geographical groups, and to deliver products and services that are tailored to the varying circumstances of individual countries. It also helps to promote the exchange of experience and lessons learned among experts from non-Annex I Parties and Annex I Parties, and to incorporate this knowledge into the work of CGE. The presence of members from international organizations in the CGE allows for enhanced collaboration between the CGE and the wider climate action community.
14. *Diversity in expertise and experience:* the experts nominated to the CGE come with different technical backgrounds and work experience, and this generally results in a rich pool of expertise covering the whole spectrum of technical topics that are relevant to NCs and BURs. Moreover, a majority of the nominated experts are usually involved in measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) activities in their respective countries. Some of them are even also engaged, in their national capacity, in the intergovernmental negotiations on MRV-related issues. This further enriches the expertise pool of the CGE. Because of all these factors, the CGE has a unique perspective, on the one hand, of the nature and scale of technical expertise necessary to respond effectively to the different MRV requirements resulting from the intergovernmental negotiations, and, on the other, of the needs and gaps faced by developing countries.
15. *Equitable access to CGE products and services:* the mandate of the CGE is to provide developing countries with technical advice and support. Accordingly, the CGE has ensured (and continues to ensure) that opportunities are made available equally to all developing countries. For example, for any regional training workshop that it organizes, the CGE follows the established practice of inviting an expert from each of the countries within the region. The CGE also seeks to ensure, to the extent permitted by available resources, that similar workshops are organized for all the developing country regions. Similarly, all technical resources prepared by the CGE are made publicly available through the UNFCCC website.
16. *Improved understanding and implementation of the guidelines:* as an expert group mandated to provide developing countries with technical assistance and support in the preparation of their NCs and BURs, the CGE is well-versed in the guidelines that should be followed for such reporting. This has enabled the CGE to develop training materials and tools, as well as to organize training workshops that explain various parts of the guidelines, notably by providing concrete examples and templates. The number of NCs and BURs submitted thus far indicates that developing countries have drawn inspiration from these explanations and examples. The training provided has helped to improve the quality of reporting and also the consistency of presentation across the NCs and BURs submitted by developing countries.
17. *Bridge between the intergovernmental process and practitioners on the ground:* thanks to its unique place under the Convention, the CGE is able to act as a bridge between the intergovernmental negotiation process and climate action practitioners on the ground. For example, the CGE periodically engages with national focal points for, and coordinators of, NCs and BURs, through surveys in order to understand better the constraints, challenges and capacity-building needs faced by developing countries when preparing their NCs and BURs. Further, the CGE also interacts with the national experts involved in the preparation of NCs and BURs during the training workshops it organizes. The feedback from surveys and interactions during these workshops are usually captured in the progress report of the CGE, which is relayed to the Conference of the Parties (COP) through the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI). Similarly, as explained above, the CGE promotes awareness of the key outcomes and decisions coming out of the COP and the SBI through the technical assistance activities that it conducts for the benefit of developing countries.
18. *Active role in the implementation of the existing MRV arrangements:* in addition to providing technical assistance and advice to developing countries on the preparation of NCs and BURs, the CGE also plays an active role in the implementation of the existing MRV arrangements. These include the following:

- (a) A member of the CGE participates, as an observer, in the technical assessment of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels proposed by developing countries seeking to implement REDD-plus activities;
  - (b) The CGE trains the experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts for the technical analysis of BURs;
  - (c) In accordance with decision 20/CP.19, every team of technical experts involved in the technical analysis of BURs should have at least one CGE member;
  - (d) Some CGE members participate, in their national capacity, in the facilitative sharing of views under the international consultation and analysis process for non-Annex I Parties.
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## **ANNEX: Methodology for assessing the impacts and added value of CG work**

1. Capacity-building is a multidimensional and dynamic process, whereby capacity develops in stages and is strengthened over time. All definitions of the capacity-building process share the assumption that it results in an increase in capacity, that is, it has a positive “impact”. For the purposes of assessment, however, this assumption may not be so useful because of the lack of a common understanding of the nature of the relationship between capacity-building and impact; differing views on what constitutes “sufficient” impact; and the influence of the external environment on both capacity-building and its impacts.
2. This also means that demonstrating whether the activities carried out by the CGE have had an impact on developing countries is difficult. Because so many other variables are part of the equation, one cannot assert with absolute certainty a clear and direct causal link between those activities and apparent impacts. For example, it would be difficult or costly to ascertain objectively the strength of the causal link between the CGE training workshops that a developing country may have benefited from and the publication of its biennial update report (BUR), since there may be other contributing factors, such as the timely provision of financial resources, the availability of data and information, the maturity of the country’s institutional arrangements, and the level of priority accorded to the BUR by policymakers and decision makers.
3. Recognizing the subjectivity inherent in demonstrating impacts and bearing in mind that effects can be ascertained more objectively, this assessment uses the short- to medium-term effects of the activities carried out by the CGE as proxy indicators of impact.
4. Effects can be classified into three broad groups:
  - Short-term effects – the tangible, immediate effects resulting from activities undertaken by the CGE (e.g. the number of persons trained during a workshop);
  - Medium-term effects – the effects on, individuals or groups that follow from CGE activities (e.g. the feedback provided by trainees on whether the workshop addressed their needs in terms of knowledge or tools);
  - Long-term effects – impacts on society or the environment that follow from the delivery of CGE activities. (Determining the long-term effects (i.e. impacts) remains a matter of subjectivity for the reasons explained above, and they are therefore not addressed in this information note.)
5. The concept of demonstrating “added value” is more established in fields such as the marketing of goods and services, where the manufacturer or service provider delivers more than what customers expect in terms of tangible or intangible results. In other fields, such as addressing the capacity-building needs of developing countries, it is more difficult to demonstrate added value because, among other factors, there is no single baseline for the needs of all developing countries, which leads to ambiguous expectations of the tangible and intangible results that such capacity-building work can achieve.
6. Instead, in the context of addressing the capacity-building needs of developing countries, it is more appropriate to describe added value in terms of the unique role that an organization plays in creating an enabling environment for activities in its field of expertise. These activities take place within the broader realm of capacity-building, which contains many other organizations and entities carrying out similar activities. Therefore, the added value is determined by assessing whether the structure and processes of an organization are fit for purpose, and whether the organization has been successful in building relationships over the long term.
7. The ability of the CGE to provide an enabling environment for climate action in developing countries is demonstrated by considering its work from the following perspectives:

- Set-up: unique characteristics of the CGE (e.g. its composition, its position in the climate change intergovernmental process and its mandate);
- Relationship-building: the success of the CGE in establishing relationships with key stakeholders and leveraging support for developing countries.