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Report of the Consultative Group of Experts

Summary

This report summarizes the progress of the Consultative Group of Experts in implementing its workplan for 2020, including major achievements and lessons learned. It covers the proceedings and outcomes of its two regular meetings and three ad hoc virtual meetings in 2020, at which the Group discussed its key areas of work and implementing its workplan despite the circumstances related to the coronavirus disease 2019.



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Abbreviations and acronyms

Annex I Party	Party included in Annex I to the Convention
BUR	biennial update report
CGE	Consultative Group of Experts
COP	Conference of the Parties
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
ETF	enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement
GHG	greenhouse gas
Global Support Programme	Global Support Programme for Preparation of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports by non-Annex I Parties
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MPGs	modalities, procedures and guidelines
MRV	measurement, reporting and verification under the Convention
NC	national communication
non-Annex I Party	Party not included in Annex I to the Convention
Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines	<i>Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories</i>
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
2006 IPCC Guidelines	<i>2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories</i>

I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. COP 24 decided to extend the term of the CGE for eight years from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2026.¹
2. Furthermore, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement decided that the CGE shall serve the Paris Agreement, starting from 1 January 2019, to support implementation of the ETF by, inter alia:
3. Facilitating provision of technical advice and support to developing country Parties, as applicable, including for preparing and submitting their biennial transparency reports, and facilitating improved reporting over time;
4. Providing technical advice to the secretariat on the training of technical expert review teams referred to in paragraph 12(c) of decision 18/CMA.1²
5. COP 24 also decided that the CGE, in fulfilling its mandate, shall function in accordance with decision 19/CP.19 and its annex. At the same time, it requested SBI 50 to review and revise the terms of reference of the CGE taking into account the functions referred to in the annex to decision 19/CP.19, the annual reports of the CGE and paragraph 15 of decision 18/CMA.1 with a view to recommending a draft decision thereon for consideration and adoption at COP 25.³
6. COP 19 requested the CGE to submit an annual progress report on its work to the SBI for consideration at the sessions of the SBI held in conjunction with the sessions of the COP.⁴
7. COP 19 also requested the secretariat to facilitate the work of the CGE by organizing its meetings and workshops and compiling reports thereon for consideration by the SBI.⁵

B. Scope

8. This report provides an overview of the implementation by the CGE of its workplan for 2020 (see annex II). It covers the proceedings and outcomes of its 3rd and 4th regular meetings, including key achievements, lessons learned, and challenges encountered, as well as the proceedings of three ad hoc virtual meetings held in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. Two other reports capturing the outcomes of key CGE activities in 2020 have been prepared for consideration by the SBI:
 - (a) A report on the virtual regional hands-on training workshops on the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF (see paras. 31–34 below);⁶
 - (b) A technical paper on problems, constraints, lessons learned and capacity-building needs in preparing NCs and BURs (see paras. 78–83 below).⁷

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

10. The SBI will be invited to consider this report and to provide guidance, as appropriate, to the CGE.

¹ Decision 11/CP.24, para. 1.

² Decision 18/CMA.1, para. 15.

³ Decision 11/CP.24, paras. 2 and 5.

⁴ Decision 19/CP.19, para. 7.

⁵ Decision 19/CP.19, para. 9(a).

⁶ FCCC/SBI/2020/16.

⁷ FCCC/TP/2020/1.

II. Proceedings of the meetings of the Consultative Group of Experts

A. Third meeting

11. The 3rd regular meeting of the CGE was held in Bonn on 18 and 19 February 2020,⁸ in which 22 members participated⁹ as well as a representative of non-Annex I Parties from Eastern Europe (Armenia) as an observer, invited in accordance with the conclusions of COP 19.¹⁰

12. Arif Goheer (Pakistan) was elected as Chair of the CGE and Kenel Delusca (Haiti) as Rapporteur, both for a term of one year.

13. At the meeting, the CGE formulated its vision, mission, metrics for measuring progress and strategic priorities for 2020–2026, which will be reviewed annually (see annex I). This was done with a view to ensuring that its annual workplan aligns with the broader, long-term objectives and it can respond to the evolution of the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF as well as the needs of developing country Parties. On that basis, the CGE developed its workplan for 2020 (see annex II), which was the main objective of the meeting.

B. Ad hoc virtual meetings

14. The CGE convened three ad hoc virtual meetings in 2020 to periodically assess the potential implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for its workplan, make necessary adjustments and consider the progress of implementation of its planned activities.

1. First ad hoc virtual meeting

15. The 1st ad hoc virtual meeting¹¹ was held on 14 April 2020 and attended by 20 CGE members and one observer.

16. The CGE reiterated its commitment to delivering on its mandate and ensuring successful implementation of its 2020 workplan. Recognizing the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its workplan, especially activities involving travel and in-person participation, the CGE agreed to meet periodically in a virtual setting to continue assessing the situation and make any necessary adjustments to its workplan.

2. Second ad hoc virtual meeting

17. The 2nd ad hoc virtual meeting¹² was held on 3 June 2020 and was attended by 20 CGE members and one observer.

18. The main objective of the meeting was to continue assessing the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the CGE workplan, particularly the planned in-person regional hands-on training workshops, and to make any necessary adjustments.

19. Noting the guidance from the Bureau of the COP that informal and non-mandated events be organized virtually, the CGE agreed to hold its informal forum virtually towards the end of the year. It requested the secretariat to make the necessary arrangements.

20. Recognizing the importance of providing training to developing country Parties, the CGE agreed to consider organizing virtual regional hands-on training workshops in place of the planned in-person workshops if holding the latter in 2020 was no longer possible in the light of COVID-19. To that end, the CGE brainstormed options for designing and delivering

⁸ See <https://unfccc.int/event/3rd-meeting-of-the-consultative-group-of-experts-cge-3>.

⁹ CGE members from Algeria, China (remotely), the Congo, Cuba, the European Union, France, Haiti, Japan, Pakistan, Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Slovakia, the Sudan, Togo, Turkey, the United States of America (remotely), Uruguay, the IPCC, UNDP and UNEP.

¹⁰ FCCC/CP/2013/10, para. 131.

¹¹ See <https://unfccc.int/event/ad-hoc-virtual-cge-meeting>.

¹² See <https://unfccc.int/event/2nd-ad-hoc-virtual-cge-meeting-0>.

effective virtual training that is as interactive as possible and takes into consideration the various languages and time zones involved. The CGE requested the secretariat to prepare, taking into account the discussions at the meeting, a concept note on organizing the virtual regional hands-on training workshops.

3. Third ad hoc virtual meeting

21. The 3rd ad hoc virtual meeting¹³ was held on 22 July 2020 and was attended by 15 CGE members and one observer.

22. The CGE considered the concept note referred to in paragraph 20 above and agreed, in the light of COVID-19, to hold virtually the regional hands-on training workshops planned for October and November 2020 (see paras. 30–34 below).

23. To inform Parties on its work in 2020, the CGE agreed to prepare for consideration by the SBI, by February 2021:

- (a) Its annual progress report for 2020;
- (b) A report on the virtual regional hands-on training workshops on the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF;
- (c) An updated technical paper on problems, constraints, lessons learned and capacity-building needs in preparing NCs and BURs.

24. In addition, the CGE agreed to hold its 4th regular meeting virtually and requested the secretariat to make the necessary arrangements for the virtual meeting to be held in September 2020.

C. Fourth meeting

25. The 4th regular meeting of the CGE was held virtually in two parts.¹⁴ The first part was held on 14 September 2020 and was attended by 19 CGE members and one observer.¹⁵

26. The main objective of the meeting was to review progress in preparing for the virtual regional hands-on training workshops, including reviewing and providing guidance on the revision of the draft training materials prepared by the secretariat.

27. In addition, the CGE agreed to convene an informal forum during the UNFCCC Climate Dialogues 2020 to showcase implementation of its 2020 workplan.

28. The second part of the meeting was held on 9 and 10 December 2020 and was attended by 21 CGE members and 1 observer.¹⁶

29. At the meeting, the CGE took stock of the implementation of its 2020 workplan and considered the feedback received on its knowledge products and knowledge delivery activities.

¹³ See <https://unfccc.int/event/3rd-ad-hoc-virtual-consultative-group-of-experts-cge-meeting>.

¹⁴ See <https://unfccc.int/event/4th-meeting-of-the-consultative-group-of-experts-cge>.

¹⁵ Members from Algeria, China, the Congo, Cuba, the European Union, France, Haiti, Japan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Slovakia, the Sudan, Togo, Turkey, the United States of America, Uruguay and UNDP and one observer from Armenia.

¹⁶ Members from Algeria, China, the Congo, Cuba, the European Union, France, Haiti, Japan, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Slovakia, the Sudan, Togo, Turkey, the United States of America, Uruguay, the IPCC, UNDP and UNEP and one observer from Armenia.

III. Progress of the Consultative Group of Experts in implementing its workplan for 2020

A. Virtual regional hands-on training workshops

30. Having recognized that engagement in the existing MRV arrangements, including preparing and submitting NCs and BURs and participating in the international consultation and analysis process, provides a solid basis for developing country Parties' preparation for implementation of the ETF, the CGE decided to focus its knowledge delivery activities on implementing the existing MRV arrangements and understanding the MPGs for the ETF.¹⁷

31. Taking into account language and time differences between regions, the CGE agreed to conduct seven virtual regional hands-on training workshops in October–November 2020.¹⁸ A total of 296 participants¹⁹ from 108 countries were trained at the workshops (see the table below).

Consultative Group of Experts virtual regional hands-on training workshops in 2020

<i>Date</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Region(s)/subregion(s)</i>	<i>Number of countries represented</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>
13–15 October	English	Asia-Pacific and Eastern Europe	24	67 (38 male and 29 female)
20–22 October	English	Pacific	8	18 (6 male and 12 female)
27–29 October	English	Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean	30	68 (30 male and 38 female)
3–5 November	French	Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean	14	50 (42 male and 8 female)
3–5 November	Arabic	Middle East and North Africa	9	24 (14 male and 10 female)
10–12 November	Spanish	Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean	17	52 (23 male and 29 female)
17–19 November	Russian	Asia and Eastern Europe	6	17 (10 male and 7 female)

32. The main objective of the workshops was to enhance the technical capacity of developing country Party experts in implementing the existing MRV arrangements and understanding the MPGs for the ETF with a view to facilitating developing country Parties' preparation for implementation of the ETF.

33. Specifically, participants were expected to gain from the training:

- (a) Better understanding of the existing MRV arrangements;
- (b) Good knowledge of the MPGs for the ETF;
- (c) The ability to articulate how the existing MRV arrangements have been enhanced to support implementation of the ETF;
- (d) Capacity to identify gaps and capacity-building needs in planning and preparing for implementation of the ETF.

34. Participants indicated in the feedback that the training had been successful in enhancing their understanding of the existing MRV arrangements and the MPGs for the ETF. Some participants expressed interest in using the training materials to conduct a rapid

¹⁷ MPGs for the ETF are contained in the annex to decision 18/CMA.1.

¹⁸ The report on the workshops is contained in document FCCC/SBI/2020/16.

¹⁹ The number of registered participants connected; in some cases, more than one person may have participated through a single connection.

assessment to identify gaps and capacity-building needs in their own country as part of planning, preparing for and transitioning to the ETF.

B. Regional webinar series

35. The CGE agreed to organize two series of regional webinars²⁰ as part of its workplan for 2020, addressing:

(a) Transitioning from using the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines (see paras. 36–41 below);

(b) Synergies at the national level in data collection for reporting under the existing MRV arrangements, the ETF, the SDGs monitoring framework and other international instruments (see paras. 42–45 below).

1. Transitioning between the IPCC guidelines

36. This series of three regional webinars organized in English, French and Spanish was attended by 222 experts from 87 countries. It was an important knowledge delivery channel for the CGE in enhancing developing country Parties' technical capacity to prepare for and implement the ETF and understanding of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for the compilation of the national GHG inventories.

37. The objectives of the webinar series were to:

(a) Improve understanding of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines, building on experience in using the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines and the IPCC *Good Practice Guidance and Uncertainty Management in National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*, to facilitate continuity in meeting GHG reporting requirements;

(b) Explore how GHG inventory reporting would be based on the 2006 IPCC Guidelines;

(c) Provide an interactive platform for discussing technical matters, experience and needs.

38. The webinars focused on providing an overview of national GHG inventories and IPCC guidelines and good practice guidance, including their evolution over time, the importance of estimating national GHG emissions and removals, and the principles and approaches to preparing national GHG inventories. They highlighted technical considerations regarding the transition from using the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines, including main differences, the inventory development cycle, the additional guidance provided in the 2006 IPCC Guidelines with respect to different sectors, and reporting under the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF.

39. On the basis of discussions during the question and answer session, a set of frequently asked questions and answers was prepared and made available online at the MRV/Transparency helpdesk.²¹

40. Participants noted their appreciation of:

(a) The quality and timeliness of the webinars;

(b) The clarity of the content and the presenters, who demonstrated a high level of expertise and experience;

(c) The access to additional technical resources and documentation;

(d) The opportunity to discuss with experts from other countries matters such as data collection for inventories and methodologies provided in the 2006 IPCC Guidelines and the *2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*.

²⁰ See <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/consultative-group-of-experts-cge/cge-webinar-series>, including for webinar recordings and background material.

²¹ <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/transparency/SitePages/Forum.aspx>.

41. Participants suggested that more time be allocated to questions and answers at similar webinars in future.

2. Synergies at the national level in data collection for reporting

42. This series of three regional webinars organized in English and Spanish was attended by 187 experts from 79 countries. The aim was to assist developing country Parties in enhancing their national MRV systems taking into consideration opportunities to maximize synergies in the area of data collection, processing and maintenance given that often similar data are required for reporting under different multilateral development and environmental frameworks, such as the SDG monitoring framework and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. The target audience was MRV experts and practitioners, those involved in monitoring SDG indicators and the Sendai Framework, and representatives of national statistical offices.

43. The objectives of the webinar series were to:

(a) Highlight the importance of sustainable institutional arrangements for reporting;

(b) Explore potential synergies in data collection at the national level for reporting under the existing MRV arrangements, the ETF, the SDGs monitoring framework and other international instruments;

(c) Showcase experience of developing country Parties that have integrated SDG monitoring into their national MRV system;

(d) Provide an interactive platform for discussing and sharing experience, lessons learned and needs.

44. The webinars focused on providing an overview of the benefits of national MRV systems and sustainable institutional arrangements for reporting under the MRV arrangements and the ETF; discussing national reporting under different international instruments, including reporting under the Convention and the Paris Agreement, the SDG monitoring framework and the Sendai Framework, and commonalities and/or linkages in data requirements and data and information sources for reporting under these instruments; and highlighting examples of countries integrating SDG monitoring into their national MRV system (such as Costa Rica and Kenya).

45. Participants noted their appreciation of the quality of the webinars in general and remarked positively on:

(a) The pertinence of the topic to their respective countries;

(b) The emphasis placed on the linkages between the SDGs, the Sendai Framework, and the Convention and the Paris Agreement;

(c) The informative examples and country case studies;

(d) Speakers sharing national experience in responding to questions, which enriched understanding of the various approaches to data collection in place;

(e) Experts sharing useful experience, examples and lessons learned.

C. Informal forum

46. At its 3rd meeting, the CGE agreed to organize informal forums on the margins of regional climate weeks as part of its workplan for 2020. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impossibility of holding in-person events in 2020, the CGE agreed to organize its 3rd informal forum as a virtual event during the Climate Dialogues.

47. The objectives of the informal forum were to showcase the work of the CGE throughout 2020 and to provide a platform for stakeholders to informally reflect on and exchange national experience and evolving needs and priorities in relation to implementing the MRV arrangements and preparing for transition to the ETF.

48. The informal forum was held virtually on 26 November 2020 and connected around 300 participants from across the globe. Following the opening statements by the Chair of the CGE, the Chair of the SBI (Marianne Karlsen), representatives of the COP 25 Presidency (Jenny Mager Santos) and the incoming COP 26 Presidency (Eve Deakin) and the UNFCCC Deputy Executive Secretary made introductory remarks.

49. The technical session of the forum consisted of five segments dedicated to elements of the CGE work of 2020 – cross-cutting elements, knowledge products, knowledge delivery, peer exchange and needs assessment – and a segment on the CGE workplan. The CGE presented its key outputs and achievements in 2020, provided a space for Parties to discuss those outputs from a user perspective and sought feedback on the relevant needs of developing country Parties.

50. The feedback and inputs received throughout the forum reiterate that developing country Parties require continued technical support to enhance their knowledge and technical capacity, in particular to prepare for the ETF. The discussions also highlighted the need to improve the institutional arrangements and data management systems of developing country Parties.

51. The CGE prepared a summary of the informal forum with an overview of proceedings and key messages.²²

52. The CGE will take these valuable inputs into consideration in shaping its work for next year and beyond.²³

D. E-learning courses

53. The CGE e-learning courses are hosted on the secretariat's Learning Management System and cover vulnerability and adaptation assessment, mitigation assessment and national GHG inventories. As at 27 October 2020, 313 participants had registered for the e-learning courses.

54. Information on the e-learning courses has been shared with a wide audience through outreach by the secretariat on behalf of the CGE.

E. Support for the technical analysis of biennial update reports

1. Composition of teams of technical experts

55. The secretariat reports to the CGE on the composition of the teams of technical experts for the technical analysis of BURs on a semi-annual basis.²⁴ At its 3rd meeting and the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE considered the reports prepared by the secretariat.

56. As at June 2020, the secretariat had organized 16 rounds of technical analysis of BURs. The teams of technical experts were composed in accordance with the criteria defined in the annex to decision 20/CP.19 and taking into consideration advice from the CGE.

2. Training programme for teams of technical experts

57. COP 19 adopted the composition, modalities and procedures of the teams of technical experts under international consultation and analysis. It requested the CGE to develop and organize appropriate training programmes for nominated technical experts, taking into account annexes III–IV to decision 2/CP.17, on the basis of the most up-to-date training materials of the CGE.²⁵ As mandated, the CGE developed a training programme in 2014–2015.

²² Available at

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/CGE%20informal%20forum_outcome%20report.pdf.

²³ The presentation, recording and outcome report of the informal forum are available at

<https://unfccc.int/event/informal-forum-of-the-cge-on-mrv-and-etc>.

²⁴ As per decision 20/CP.19, annex, para. 2.

²⁵ Decision 20/CP.19, paras. 1 and 4.

58. The training programme for experts conducting technical analysis of BURs was rolled out in April 2015 and converted to an online e-course²⁶ in June 2015. Since then, the programme has been offered to experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts by Annex I Parties and non-Annex I Parties. The eleventh and twelfth rounds of the training programme were offered in 2020. During the eleventh round, 92 experts (21 from non-Annex I Parties and 71 from Annex I Parties) passed one or more examinations. A total of 356 experts are qualified to take part in the technical analysis of BURs.

3. Training module on mitigation actions and their effects

59. Only experts that successfully complete the CGE training programme may participate in the technical analysis of BURs.

60. At its 3rd meeting, the CGE considered the results of the proficiency assessment for the two rounds of training conducted in 2019. It noted that the pass rate for one of the training modules was consistently low in relation to that for the others.

61. With the aim of understanding the reasons for this, the CGE requested the secretariat to:

- (a) Review the performance of the participants on each question in the proficiency assessment for that module;
- (b) Identify where participants were underperforming and assess the possible underlying reason(s);
- (c) Propose solutions to address the issues identified through the above-mentioned assessment.

62. The secretariat subsequently presented its findings at the second part of the 4th CGE meeting, and the CGE agreed to proceed on the basis of the following recommendations, with the assistance of the secretariat:

- (a) Make the recommended changes to the examination for the relevant module of the training programme;
- (b) Monitor the impact of these changes on the pass rate of the examination for the module and gather feedback from experts on the efficacy of the training programme so as to prepare them for participation in the TTE.

F. Participation in the technical assessment of submissions on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels

63. In 2020, two CGE members participated as observers in two separate sessions of the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on their proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels,²⁷ which was conducted remotely in June 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

64. At the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE considered this matter, including the report on the technical assessment, and thanked the two CGE members for participating in the technical assessments and preparing the report. The CGE agreed to take into account the observations and findings contained in the report in its future relevant work.

G. Training materials on measurement, reporting and verification arrangements and the enhanced transparency framework

65. The CGE prepared training materials on the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF for the virtual regional hands-on training workshops (see paras. 30–34 above).

²⁶ See <https://unfccc.int/process/transparency-and-reporting/reporting-and-review-under-convention/training-review-experts>.

²⁷ As per decision 13/CP.19, annex, para. 9.

66. Four pre-recorded videos were made available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish on the UNFCCC YouTube channel:²⁸

(a) **Introduction and overview of the ETF:** an overview of the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF;

(b) **Reporting under the ETF:** an overview of the reporting provisions under the ETF based on the MPGs and how the existing MRV arrangements can support the transition to the ETF;

(c) **Foundational elements of the MPGs:** an overview of such elements, including the provisions on flexibility, institutional arrangements and continuous improvement;

(d) **Linkages – how the ETF supports the Paris Agreement:** an overview of explicit linkages of the ETF with other elements of the Paris Agreement, such as nationally determined contributions, reporting on adaptation, the global stocktake and the Paris Agreement Implementation and Compliance Committee.

67. In addition, technical presentations²⁹ were developed on:

(a) **Key aspects of the existing MRV arrangements and how they can be enhanced to support implementation of the ETF:** key commonalities and differences between reporting provisions in the “Guidelines for the preparation of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention” and the “UNFCCC biennial update reporting guidelines for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention” and the MPGs, including discussions on “shall” and “should” requirements and flexibility provisions for eligible developing country Parties;

(b) **Key considerations in transitioning to implementation of the ETF:** building sustainable institutional arrangements and planning improvements to prepare for implementation of the ETF.

68. Furthermore, the CGE prepared a hands-on exercise aimed at helping participants to (1) familiarize themselves with the current status of their countries’ reporting and the reporting requirements under the ETF; (2) undertake a rapid assessment of how their current national reporting compares with the reporting requirements under the ETF; (3) ascertain what needs to be put in place for the transition to the ETF; and (4) identify action items and support needs in planning and preparing for implementation of the ETF.

H. Toolbox on institutional arrangements for measurement, reporting and verification and transparency of climate action and support

69. The CGE continued its activities and prepared outputs as part of its support for sustainable national institutional arrangements for implementing MRV and the ETF. It published the CGE *Handbook on institutional arrangements to support MRV/transparency of climate action and support*³⁰ to support developing country Parties in improving their capacity to implement the existing MRV arrangements in view of the transition to the more stringent ETF. The handbook has been translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish and will be available by the end of December 2020 on the CGE web pages.

²⁸ Available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3dg8sDsnYA&list=PLBcZ22cUY9RLLBHnq3xwvt1fq3qPqcxWb>.

²⁹ Available at <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/constituted-bodies/consultative-group-of-experts/calendar-of-meetings/archive-of-meetings>.

³⁰ CGE. 2020. *Handbook on institutional arrangements to support MRV/transparency of climate action and support*. Available at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Hand%20book_EN.pdf.

70. At its 3rd meeting, the CGE noted that as part of the toolbox³¹ on institutional arrangements 25 case stories, seven video interviews and a compilation of references to other technical resources have also been made available.³²

I. Technical handbook for developing country Parties on the enhanced transparency framework

71. With the support of the secretariat, the CGE finalized and published the first edition of the technical handbook³³ intended to help developing country Parties to prepare for implementation of the ETF by improving the awareness and understanding of the ETF and its MPGs among national experts and practitioners and thereby enabling them to consider improving the national reporting and to start establishing institutional arrangements and planning for reporting under the ETF.

72. The handbook has been translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish and will be available by the end of December 2020 on the CGE web pages.

73. The CGE intends to update the handbook periodically to take into account feedback from readers and practitioners and to correct any errors.

J. Translation of the handbook on measurement, reporting and verification for developing countries

74. At its 3rd meeting, the CGE agreed that the MRV handbook for developing country Parties³⁴ prepared by the secretariat in 2014 should be translated into the other official United Nations languages.

75. Subsequently, the document was translated into Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish and made available on the UNFCCC website.³⁵ The translation into Russian was done with the in-kind support of the UNDP team supporting the Global Support Programme.

K. Stocktake of training materials on mitigation and vulnerability and adaptation assessment

76. At its 3rd meeting, as part of its 2020 workplan the CGE agreed to take stock of the tools and models referred to in its training materials on vulnerability and adaptation and mitigation assessment. The aim of the stocktake was to review the tools and models with a view to establishing whether:

- (a) The training materials are up to date;
- (b) The information provided is relevant to the needs of developing country Parties;
- (c) There are any gaps or areas for improvement;
- (d) The training materials require revision.

³¹ Available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/consultative-group-of-experts-cge/cge-toolbox-on-institutional-arrangements>.

³² Four new case stories, of Afghanistan, Armenia, Maldives and Mauritania, were published in 2020.

³³ CGE. 2019. *Technical handbook for developing country Parties on preparing for implementation of the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement (with addendum)*. Bonn: UNFCCC. Available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/202962>.

³⁴ UNFCCC. 2014. *Handbook on Measurement, Reporting and Verification for developing country Parties*. Bonn: UNFCCC. Available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/transparency-and-reporting/support-for-developing-countries/guidelines-and-manuals-for-the-preparation-of-non-annex-i-national-reports-and-international#eq-2>.

³⁵ See footnote 34 above.

77. At the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE concluded that based on the review, the training materials need to be revised and updated. The CGE agreed to discuss further the scope of the update at its next meeting.

L. Assessment of gaps and needs

78. At its 3rd meeting, the CGE agreed to continue assessing existing and emerging constraints and challenges, lessons learned and capacity-building needs of developing country Parties in implementing the existing MRV arrangements and preparing for the ETF, and to update the relevant technical paper prepared in 2019.³⁶

79. The update took into account information from the 55 NCs and 45 BURs submitted between 1 February 2018 and 31 July 2020, and 20 summary reports on the technical analysis of BURs published between 1 September 2019 and 31 July 2020. In total, the most recent 152 NCs and 58 BURs from 152 developing country Parties and 44 summary reports on the technical analysis of BURs published by 31 July 2020 were drawn upon.³⁷

80. The assessment results show that developing country Parties continue to face constraints and challenges in preparing NCs and BURs. Thematically, for preparing national GHG inventories and reporting on support needed and received, the most frequently reported challenges and needs are related to data and information, whereas for reporting on climate change impacts and adaptation and mitigation, the most frequently reported constraints and challenges relate to methodology and tools.

81. The results also show that the least developed countries and small island developing States reported challenges and needs pertaining to methodology and tools more frequently than other developing country Parties across the themes. Similarly, challenges and needs reported by Parties that have submitted NCs only show a higher share of issues related to methodology and tools than for Parties that have submitted at least one BUR and participated at least once in the international consultation and analysis process.

82. The CGE acknowledged that developing country Parties are increasingly emphasizing the need to formalize, sustain and improve MRV over time and enhance and retain institutional capacity with a view to preparing for implementation of the ETF.

83. Further, with a view to conveying the information on developing countries' gaps and needs in a more user-friendly manner and reaching a broader range of support providers and MRV experts and practitioners, the CGE issued the first in a new series of publications titled "CGE Technical Paper Distilled",³⁸ which visually presents the information from the 2019 technical paper.³⁹

M. Other elements of the workplan

1. Communications and outreach

84. At its 3rd meeting, the CGE noted the need to increase awareness of its role and activities in supporting developing country Parties so that it is able to reach out more effectively to its target audience. In this context, the CGE agreed to develop a communication strategy as part of its 2020 workplan.

³⁶ FCCC/TP/2019/4.

³⁷ The updated technical paper is contained in document FCCC/TP/2020/1.

³⁸ CGE. 2020. *CGE Technical Paper 2019 Distilled: Technical Paper on Problems, Constraints and Lessons Learned, as well as Capacity-building Needs for the Preparation of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports 2019*. Bonn: UNFCCC. Available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/258918>.

³⁹ As footnote 36 above.

85. The aim of the CGE communication strategy⁴⁰ is to guide its communication and outreach efforts in 2020–2026. It maps key stakeholders, outlines key communication and outreach outputs and defines communication channels.

86. In 2020, the CGE conducted the following outreach:

(a) Publishing articles on key activities, such as launching new technical materials, announcing the virtual regional hands-on training workshops and webinars, and implementing its 2020 workplan;

(b) Disseminating information through various social media channels, such as Facebook and LinkedIn;

(c) Sharing information through other networks, such as the regional collaboration centres and the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

87. The CGE web pages,⁴¹ as one of the main channels of communication, were maintained and updated throughout the year to ensure that the latest information and technical resources were easily publicly accessible.

2. Interactive online platform

88. The CGE continued to enhance its MRV/Transparency helpdesk for sharing technical materials, news and announcements. As at 5 November 2020, it had been visited over 29,920 times, with 97 views per day on average.

89. The CGE encourages national experts and other stakeholders involved in implementing MRV arrangements, including preparation of NCs and BURs and preparation for the ETF, to make use of the MRV/Transparency helpdesk.

N. Collaboration and cooperation

1. Constituted bodies and expert groups

(a) Adaptation Committee

90. A CGE member participated in the 18th meeting of the Adaptation Committee, held virtually from 9 to 12 November 2020.

91. At the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE agreed to continue engaging with the Adaptation Committee.

(b) Least Developed Countries Expert Group

92. At its 3rd meeting and the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE noted the ongoing activities of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group and specifically the training for the least developed countries on effectively and efficiently navigating and addressing many elements of the Paris Agreement, which will be launched by the end of 2020 as a self-directed online training course. The CGE contributed to this training by providing its knowledge products related to the ETF.

93. At the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE agreed to continue engaging with the Least Developed Countries Expert Group in 2021 with a view to exploring opportunities for collaboration.

(c) Paris Committee on Capacity-building

94. A representative of the CGE participated as an observer in the 4th meeting of the Paris Committee on Capacity-building, held virtually from 22 to 25 June 2020. The representative presented the CGE vision, mission, metrics for measuring progress and strategic priorities

⁴⁰ Available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/consultative-group-of-experts-cge/cge-news-and-announcements>.

⁴¹ www.unfccc.int/CGE.

for 2020–2026 and provided information on the activities carried out and planned by the CGE in 2020.

95. The CGE representative participated in the session at the meeting on coherence and coordination of capacity-building under the Convention, where the possible development and implementation of an informal mechanism for coordination of capacity-building was discussed.

96. At the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE took note of the outcomes of the discussions at the Paris Committee on Capacity-building meeting and agreed to continue collaborative efforts.

(d) Nairobi work programme

97. At its 3rd meeting and the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE took note of information provided⁴² on the work and mandate of the Nairobi work programme. The CGE disseminated information on its new publications through the Nairobi work programme quarterly newsletters.

98. The CGE expressed its interest to draw on, as appropriate, the expertise from the Nairobi work programme to contribute to its work on adaptation reporting.

2. Intergovernmental organizations

(a) Global Support Programme for Preparation of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports by non-Annex I Parties

99. At the 3rd meeting and second part of the 4th meeting of the CGE, the members representing UNDP and UNEP provided an update on the progress of implementation of the Global Support Programme.

100. The CGE thanked the Global Support Programme for its contribution to the CGE regional hands-on training workshops and the translation of the technical materials (see para. 75 above).

(b) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

101. At the 3rd meeting and second part of the 4th meeting of the CGE, the members representing the IPCC Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories provided an update on its work.

(c) United Nations Statistics Division

102. At its 3rd meeting and the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE expressed interest in reaching out to the United Nations Statistics Division. Having identified national statistical offices as an integral part of the national institutional arrangements for reporting, the CGE was keen to promote the idea of embedding the data and information needed for reporting under MRV and transparency arrangements into national statistical processes. To that end, the CGE agreed to continue the discussion at the next meeting with a view to identifying concrete ways to engage with international organizations with a role in assisting developing country Parties to embed the data and information needed for reporting under MRV and transparency arrangements into national statistical processes.

O. Other regional organizations and institutions

103. At the second part of its 4th meeting, the CGE noted that the secretariat and the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation, the Asian Institute of Technology, the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education and Oregon State University will be collaborating on short-term professional training on reporting on adaptation action.

⁴² As per document FCCC/SBSTA/2019/2, para. 25.

IV. Conclusions

104. The CGE formulated its vision, mission and strategic objectives to guide its work, keeping the long-term needs and priorities in full perspective. It developed its 2020 workplan with a view to comprehensively fulfilling its mandate of assisting developing country Parties in improving their capacities to implement the existing MRV arrangements as well as start preparing for transitioning to the ETF in a smooth, timely and sustainable manner. The workplan aimed to provide, consistently with its mandate, technical support and advice to developing country Parties responding that targets their technical assistance needs. Despite significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CGE was able to use innovative approaches and working methods to successfully implement the activities outlined in its workplan for 2020, resulting in the following major outputs:

- (a) Training 296 national experts in seven virtual regional hands-on training workshops on the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF;
- (b) Organizing a series of regional webinars on transitioning from using the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines and on synergies at the national level in data collection for reporting under the existing MRV arrangements, the ETF, the SDGs monitoring framework and other international instruments, which reached 409 experts;
- (c) Developing, translating and disseminating online training resources, which include animation videos, technical handbooks, and a hands-on exercise on the ETF, and continuing the e-learning programme on NCs;
- (d) Continuing to offer the training programme on the technical analysis of BURs to experts on the UNFCCC roster;
- (e) Increasing awareness of CGE activities among stakeholders that are actively engaged in providing support to developing country Parties in the area of MRV and transparency, including bilateral and multilateral entities, through special events on the margins of the UNFCCC June Momentum for Climate Change and the Climate Dialogues, as well as through its website and interactive online platform;
- (f) Developing the CGE communication strategy to enhance its outreach among stakeholders;
- (g) Undertaking targeted analytical work, such as compiling and summarizing problems, constraints, lessons learned and capacity-building needs for the preparation of NCs and BURs.

105. Recognizing the increased efforts required from developing country Parties to prepare their biennial transparency reports, the CGE noted the need to further enhance its collaboration with constituted bodies and expert groups as well as regional organizations.

106. There is still demand for building the capacity of developing country Parties to enhance their preparedness to implement the ETF while continuing to implement the existing MRV arrangements. More specifically, feedback from CGE regional virtual workshop participants indicates a continued need for:

- (a) Focusing on specific elements of the MPGs;
- (b) Providing examples of best practices from developed country Parties in setting up an MRV system or transitioning to the ETF;
- (c) Providing more guidance on reporting on nationally determined contributions, including on developing indicators for tracking progress in implementing and achieving them;
- (d) Providing training on preparing biennial transparency reports.

107. The CGE informal forum, held on the margins of the Climate Dialogues, further reiterated that developing country Parties require continued technical support to enhance their knowledge and technical capacity, in particular to prepare for the ETF. Parties identified the need for further training as well as additional guidelines and methodologies, including on the following:

- (a) Formulation of indicators of progress in implementing and achieving nationally determined contributions, and quantification of mitigation effects and projections;
- (b) Transition from Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines to 2006 IPCC Guidelines;
- (c) Development of monitoring and evaluation systems for national adaptation plans, and adaptation reporting through different channels such as biennial transparency reports, adaptation communications and national adaptation plans;
- (d) Reporting on financial, technology development and transfer and capacity-building support needed and received.

108. The CGE extended its appreciation to developing country Parties for providing feedback that will help align its workplan with the needs and priorities of developing country Parties.

109. The CGE also extended its appreciation to Parties that provided financial contributions that enabled the CGE to implement its workplan in a timely and effective manner.

Annex I

Vision, mission, metrics for measuring progress and strategic priorities for 2020–2026 of the Consultative Group of Experts

At its 3rd meeting, the CGE prepared its vision, mission, metrics for measuring progress and strategic priorities for 2020–2026 (to be reviewed annually) with a view to ensuring that its annual workplan aligns with the broader, long-term objectives and it can respond to the evolution of the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF as well as the needs of developing country Parties:

(a) **Vision:** To comprehensively achieve its mandate of assisting developing country Parties in improving their capacity to implement the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF in a timely and sustainable manner;

(b) **Mission:** To provide targeted technical support and advice to developing country Parties that responds to their technical assistance needs for implementing, in a timely manner, the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF, including putting in place sustainable institutional arrangements and data management systems;

(c) **Metrics for measuring progress:**

(i) Number of experts from developing country Parties knowledgeable enough to understand and implement the ETF (this information will be gathered through a survey using the 2019 survey results as a benchmark);

(ii) Number of submissions of NCs, BURs and biennial transparency reports, noting that:

a. The final BURs will be submitted no later than 31 December 2024;

b. Parties shall submit their first biennial transparency report and national inventory report, if submitted as a stand-alone report, at the latest by 31 December 2024;

c. Submission of NCs under the Convention will continue;

(iii) Number of experts trained (by gender and region, as well as total);

(iv) Feedback from CGE workshop participants;

(d) **Strategic priorities:** Taking into account the evolution of the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF, the CGE will:

(i) In 2020–2022, continue identifying gaps and needs and promoting understanding relating to the existing MRV arrangements (NCs, BURs, international consultation and analysis); and introduce and facilitate transition to the ETF;

(ii) In 2022–2024, promote and facilitate implementation of the ETF, in particular the preparation and submission of biennial transparency reports under the ETF and of NCs;

(iii) In 2024–2026, gather lessons learned and good practices, identify areas for improvement, refine the approaches and tools used to provide technical advice and support, and continue facilitating implementation of the ETF and preparation and submission of NCs.

Updated workplan of the Consultative Group of Experts for 2020

Theme	Activities	Timeline for implementation in 2020											
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
A. Knowledge products	1. <i>Technical handbook for developing country Parties on preparing for implementation of the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement</i>												
	a. Conduct quality assurance/quality control of the handbook		X	X	X	X	X						
	b. Finalize and publish handbook on the CGE web pages							X					
	c. Develop infographics drawing on the published handbook							X	X	X	X	X	X
	2. <i>Toolbox on institutional arrangements to support the MRV and the ETF of climate action and support for developing country Parties</i>												
	a. Review and finalize the <i>Handbook on institutional arrangements to support MRV/transparency of climate action and support</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X				
	b. Collect and publish lessons learned and experience in written form and video interviews		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	c. Analyse feedback on the toolbox and conceptualize a decision-making tool									X	X	X	X
	3. Translate CGE knowledge products into other United Nations languages:												
	a. <i>Handbook on Measurement, Reporting And Verification for Developing Country Parties</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X				
	b. <i>Technical handbook for developing country Parties on preparing for implementation of the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement</i>								X	X	X	X	X
	c. <i>Handbook on institutional arrangements to support MRV/transparency of climate action and support</i>								X	X	X	X	X
	4. Take stock and identify features of existing tools and materials to facilitate selecting and applying modelling approaches for assessing sectoral emissions, and conducting mitigation, and vulnerability and adaptation assessment		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	5. Capacity-building needs assessment												

Theme	Activities	Timeline for implementation in 2020											
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	a. Continue compiling information on capacity-building needs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	b. Publish results of capacity-building needs assessment			X	X	X	X						
	c. Prepare infographics and visualization materials					X	X	X	X	X	X		
	d. Compile questions and answers to address basic issues raised through the survey on capacity-building needs, and share on the CGE web pages and with survey respondents via email			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B. Knowledge delivery	6. Conduct regional webinars and hands-on training workshops on the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF)												
	a. Latin America and the Caribbean									X	X	X	
	b. Asia-Pacific and Eastern Europe									X	X	X	
	c. Africa									X	X	X	
	7. Conduct regional webinar series												
	a. Synergies at the national level in data collection for reporting under the existing MRV arrangements, the ETF, SDGs monitoring framework and other international instruments (e.g. Sendai Framework)							X		X		X	
	b. Transitioning from using the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines				X	X	X						
	8. Continue offering e-learning courses on preparing NCs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	9. Training of experts for the technical analysis of BURs												
	a. Round 11		X	X	X								
	b. Round 12						X	X	X				
C. Cross-cutting issues	10. Collaborative activities												
	a. Engage with the Least Developed Countries Expert Group on its training for the least developed countries in implementing the Paris Agreement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	b. Identify areas for collaboration and establish relationships with multilateral development banks to promote MRV and transparency of climate action and support	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Theme	Activities	Timeline for implementation in 2020											
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	c. Engage with the United Nations Statistics Division to help countries to collect activity data for national GHG inventories	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	d. Engage with the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform on exploring opportunities to capture and reflect local and indigenous knowledge in CGE training materials	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	e. Engage with the Global Forest Observations Initiative to provide targeted technical support on agriculture, forestry and other land use	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	f. Continue engaging with the secretariat on training programmes for preparing GHG inventories	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	g. Continue collaborating with the IPCC and the Global Support Programme	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	11. Communication and outreach activities												
	a. Develop CGE communication and outreach strategy			X	X	X	X						
	b. Disseminate infographics and visualized materials prepared from materials/tools/products to improve knowledge among the general public and experts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	c. Hold CGE side events during the sessions of the subsidiary bodies (postponed to 2021)												
	d. Convene virtual informal forum												X
	12. Information technology support tools												
	a. Maintain and/or update CGE virtual team room	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	b. Maintain and update the CGE web pages, the MRV/Transparency helpdesk and CGE social media accounts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
D. Other	13. Meetings of the CGE		X							X			X
	14. Technical assessment of submissions of forest reference emission levels/forest reference levels						X	X					
	15. Consider preparing a periodic technical report on the selection of teams of technical experts, as appropriate		X							X			
	16. Refresher seminar for the CGE on conducting and documenting technical analysis of BURs								X				