



United Nations

FCCC/SBI/2020/16



Framework Convention on
Climate Change

Distr.: General
28 January 2021

Original: English

Subsidiary Body for Implementation

Virtual regional hands-on training workshops on the existing measurement, reporting and verification arrangements under the Convention and the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement

Report by the secretariat

Summary

As part of its workplan for 2020, the Consultative Group of Experts was to organize three regional hands-on training workshops on the existing measurement, reporting and verification arrangements under the Convention and the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement. Taking into account the circumstances related to the coronavirus disease 2019, the Group agreed to conduct the workshops virtually. The main objective of the workshops was to enhance the technical capacity of developing country Party experts in implementing the existing measurement, reporting and verification arrangements and understanding the modalities, procedures and guidelines for the enhanced transparency framework with a view to facilitating developing country Parties' preparation for implementation of the framework. This report outlines the proceedings of the workshops and summarizes the discussions that took place.



Abbreviations and acronyms

BTR	biennial transparency report
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
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LAC*	Latin America and the Caribbean
MPGs	modalities, procedures and guidelines
MRV	measurement, reporting and verification under the Convention
NC	national communication
NDC	nationally determined contribution
REDD+	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)
Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines	<i>Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories</i>
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs	“UNFCCC biennial update reporting guidelines for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention”
2006 IPCC Guidelines	<i>2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories</i>

* Used exclusively in the figure.

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 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.²
2. 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 at its 3rd meeting, as part of its workplan for 2020,³ to organize three regional hands-on training workshops on implementing the existing MRV arrangements and understanding the MPGs for the ETF.⁴
3. Subsequently, it became evident that, owing to the circumstances related to COVID-19, it would not be possible to conduct the planned regional hands-on training workshops in person in 2020. While fully aware that virtual cannot replace in-person training workshops, the CGE decided, at its 3rd ad hoc virtual meeting, held on 22 July 2020, to deliver the planned workshops virtually as they would still be of considerable value.
4. 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.⁵

B. Scope of the report

5. As part of the annual reporting by the CGE on the progress of its work,⁶ this report contains a summary of the proceedings of and discussions at the virtual regional hands-on training workshops held in 2020.

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

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

II. Proceedings

7. In October–November 2020, in view of language and time differences between regions, the CGE conducted seven virtual regional hands-on training workshops on the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF (see table 1). A total of 296 participants⁷ (45 per cent female and 55 per cent male) from 108 developing countries were trained at the workshops.

¹ Decision 11/CP.24, para. 1.

² Decision 18/CMA.1, para. 15.

³ See <https://unfccc.int/documents/232029>.

⁴ Contained in the annex to decision 18/CMA.1.

⁵ Decision 19/CP.19, para. 7.

⁶ See document FCCC/SBI/2020/15 for the 2020 progress report of the CGE.

⁷ The number of registered participants connected; in some cases, more than one person may have participated through a single connection.

Table 1
Consultative Group of Experts virtual regional hands-on training workshops in 2020

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time^a</i>	<i>Region(s)/subregion(s)</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Number of countries represented</i>	<i>Number of participants (female/male)</i>	<i>Number of CGE resource persons</i>
13–15 October	10 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Asia–Pacific Eastern Europe Western Europe and other	English	24	67 (29/38)	6
20–22 October	11 p.m. to 2 a.m.	Pacific	English	8	18 (12/6)	3
27–29 October	4–7 p.m.	Africa Latin America and the Caribbean	English	30	68 (38/30)	5
3–5 November	10 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Middle East and North Africa	Arabic	9	24 (10/14)	2
3–5 November	4–7 p.m.	Africa Latin America and the Caribbean	French	14	50 (8/42)	4
10–12 November	4–7 p.m.	Eastern Europe Latin America and the Caribbean Western Europe and other	Spanish	17	52 (29/23)	2
17–19 November	10 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Asia and Eastern Europe	Russian	6	17 (7/10)	2

^a Times are given in Central European Time.

A. Background

8. Developing country Parties' reporting in their NCs and BURs, the CGE stocktake survey conducted in 2019 and the technical analysis of BURs have shown that national experts continue to require capacity-building for implementing the existing MRV arrangements.

9. The key areas of capacity-building needs in preparing for implementation of and transition to the ETF are:

- (a) Enhancing knowledge of the MPGs for the ETF;
- (b) Improving understanding of how the existing MRV arrangements have been enhanced under the ETF, and how best to address new reporting requirements;
- (c) Enhancing knowledge of and technical capacity to use methodologies and tools, such as:
 - (i) Those for tracking progress in implementing and achieving NDCs;
 - (ii) In relation to transitioning from using the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines;
- (d) Enhancing data collection and management processes for reporting under the Convention and the Paris Agreement by formalizing and/or standardizing them and by exploring synergies with other national reporting processes.

10. Despite the flexibility provisions enshrined in the Paris Agreement and detailed in the MPGs, many developing country Parties expect that considerable efforts will be required for the transition from the existing MRV arrangements to the ETF. For those Parties, the enhanced depth and scope of reporting under the ETF will pose a significant challenge in terms of the resources required to fulfil the new requirements.

11. At the same time, those Parties have acknowledged that their 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 preparing for implementation of the ETF. Their efforts to improve their NCs and BURs can

facilitate such preparation not only for reporting in the BTRs but also for participating in the technical expert review and the facilitative multilateral consideration of progress.

B. Objective

12. With a view to addressing the issues identified in paragraphs 9–10 above, the main objective of the virtual regional hands-on training workshops was, by engaging the participants in interactive discussions and exercises, to the extent possible, to enhance the technical capacity of developing country Party experts in implementing the existing MRV arrangements and understanding the MPGs for the ETF so as to facilitate those Parties' preparation for implementation of the ETF, complementing other CGE efforts in this regard.

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

- (a) 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.

C. Structure

14. The training was conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams, and supplementary materials were provided by email or made available online. A channel in Microsoft Teams was created for participants to interact with one another via both video and chat functions throughout the workshop. Training materials and presentations were made available to participants before the workshop (see paras. 17–18 below). Language interpretation services were provided for some of the workshops.

15. The training was aimed at experts who are actively involved in preparing NCs, BURs and national GHG inventories and in preparing for implementation of the ETF. The CGE strongly encouraged national focal points to take gender into account when nominating experts to participate.

16. The training was structured in three phases – preparatory, workshop and follow-up – that spanned two weeks in each case. Each workshop was held over three days, with a three-hour virtual session each day.

1. Training materials

17. Four pre-recorded videos were made available to participants – in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish – on the UNFCCC YouTube channel⁸ so that they could prepare for the training:

- (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 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 of reporting;
- (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 NDCs,

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3dg8sDsnYA&list=PLBcZ22cUY9RLLBHnq3xwvt1fq3qPqcxWb>.

reporting on adaptation, the global stocktake and the Paris Agreement Implementation and Compliance Committee.

18. In addition, the CGE developed and made available technical presentations⁹ 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 reporting guidelines on BURs 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 existing MRV arrangements to prepare for implementation of the ETF.

19. Furthermore, the CGE prepared a hands-on exercise aimed at helping participants to (1) familiarize themselves with the current status of their national 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, and (3) identify action items and support needs in planning and preparing for implementation of the ETF.

2. Workshop

20. The first day of the workshop comprised an opening presentation by the Chair of the CGE, a recap of the preparatory phase and two interactive information sessions that included in-depth discussion on the topics referred to in paragraph 18 above. The day concluded with a briefing on the breakout group exercise planned for day two, including how it would be facilitated.

21. On the second day, participants worked in breakout groups. Each group was provided with a case study for which it was tasked with conducting a rapid assessment of how the current reporting under the MRV arrangements (in NC and/or BUR) compares with the MPGs for the preparation of the GHG inventory, information on support needed and/or received, tracking progress in implementing and achieving NDCs, and adaptation assessment.

22. Each group identified key areas of institutional and technical capacity that would need to be enhanced to support implementation of the ETF; formulated solutions (action items) for addressing those key areas; determined support needs for implementing the identified action items; and developed a plan with prioritized actions.

23. On the third day, each breakout group reported back on its findings and experience of the exercise, which initiated discussions, followed by a question and answer session. The workshop was then closed by the CGE Chair.

III. Outcomes of discussions

A. Recap of the preparatory phase

24. During the preparatory phase, training materials were made available to the participants that provided an overview of the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF to help them understand the depth and extent of the changes in reporting requirements. The materials included information on the guiding principles of the MPGs and the institutional arrangements required for implementation of the ETF, as well as details on the MPGs as they relate to GHG inventories, the tracking of progress towards achievement of NDCs, adaptation, support, the technical expert review and the facilitative multilateral consideration of progress. Participants were also informed of the linkages of the ETF with other elements of the Paris Agreement, such as adaptation communications and the global stocktake. On the

⁹ Available at <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/constituted-bodies/consultative-group-of-experts/calendar-of-meetings/archive-of-meetings>.

basis of this information, participants prepared for the next phase of the training by reflecting on their countries' existing institutional arrangements and how they could be enhanced for implementation of the ETF.

25. During the recap, participants sought clarification on various aspects of the information provided in the materials. Requests for clarification on the following topics were common to all regions: the availability of support for implementing the ETF and how to access it; the differences between the existing MRV arrangements and the ETF in detail; the timelines for the submission of NDCs and for key transparency-related processes; the key potential benefits for countries of implementing the ETF; and establishing robust institutional arrangements for implementing the ETF.

26. Specific questions included:

- (a) Which elements of REDD+ activities will be reported in the technical annex under the ETF?
- (b) Will the technical expert review team conduct in-country or desk reviews of BTRs?
- (c) When does flexibility to those developing country Parties that need it in the light of their capacities apply and for whom? And how should flexibility be justified?
- (d) Why are the deadlines for submitting the last BUR and the first BTR both in 2024?
- (e) How should baseline and mitigation scenarios be developed to ensure that the results of mitigation actions meet expectations?¹⁰

B. Interactive information sessions

27. A briefing on the key transparency arrangements under the Convention compared with those under the Paris Agreement was followed by an update on the number of NCs and BURs received to date from each region. Since 2010, more and more developing country Parties have been transitioning from using the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for preparing their GHG inventories to using the 2006 IPCC Guidelines: some have completed the transition, while others are using a combination of both on account of sectoral delineations, data availability or data management processes. The use of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines by developing country Parties was highlighted as an example of their progress in transitioning to the ETF. Discussions also encompassed the timelines for submitting their final BURs and first BTRs and the discretion afforded to the least developed countries and small island developing States in meeting those timelines.

1. Building on the existing measurement, reporting and verification arrangements

28. The first interactive information session concerned how the ETF builds on and enhances the existing MRV arrangements, highlighting for example the increase in mandatory ("shall") reporting requirements in the MPGs compared with those in the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs; the built-in flexibility of the MPGs to be afforded to those developing country Parties that need it in the light of their capacities; the need for countries to identify, regularly update and report on areas for improvement, to the extent possible, especially when making use of the flexibilities; and the relationship between the reporting process under the ETF and the Paris Agreement Implementation and Compliance Committee.

2. Enhancing institutional arrangements for transition to the enhanced transparency framework

29. The second interactive information session elaborated on how institutional arrangements could be enhanced to support ETF implementation: strong institutional

¹⁰ Referring to the provision in the MPGs for developing countries to develop projections of GHG emissions and removals (decision 18/CMA.1, annex, para. 92).

arrangements will be vital for countries to report reliable, comprehensive and up-to-date information and to ensure that improvements in reporting are sustainable. Institutional arrangements are unique to each country, reflecting its national circumstances; therefore, each country needs to reflect on its own existing institutional arrangements and find ways to build cross-sectoral teams (among government departments and between public agencies and private sector organizations) that will improve the collection and flow of the data needed for reporting. In this context, countries may also need to strengthen their legal and procedural frameworks to provide the necessary mandate to relevant institutions and actors to formalize the roles and responsibilities of the cross-sectoral teams. Both institutional and technical capacity-building will be essential in this regard. Further, robust institutional arrangements to support implementation of the ETF can be achieved only with high-level government buy-in. As countries ‘learn by doing’ and learn from each other, robust institutional arrangements allow for internalization of this knowledge, thereby strengthening capacity and helping to improve reporting over time.

30. Some questions commonly raised by participants requesting clarification were:

- (a) When at the earliest can the BTR be prepared?
- (b) Is it mandatory for developing countries to report information on financial, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building support needed and received?
- (c) Is there an example of effective institutional arrangements that countries can use as a model?
- (d) What can national experts do in the absence of the political will to establish a functioning transparency framework?

C. Breakout group work

31. Following a briefing on the objective of and approach to be taken by the breakout groups in the hands-on exercise, participants were assigned to their groups (see table 2). The groups were formed on the basis of participants’ interests indicated in a pre-workshop survey, where possible. CGE members and resource persons acted as facilitators. The country case study owners (participants who volunteered to share their country’s experience) presented their case to the relevant breakout group, which discussed the case and completed the required tasks. Nominated rapporteurs reported back on the outcomes of the discussions that took place in their respective breakout groups.

Table 2

Composition of breakout groups for the hands-on exercise

<i>Workshop</i>	<i>GHG inventories</i>	<i>NDC tracking</i>	<i>Adaptation</i>	<i>Support</i>
Asia-Pacific				
Eastern Europe	First group: 9	First group: 1		
Western Europe and other	Second group: 9	Second group: 10	6	9
Pacific (English)	8	No group	No group	8
Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (English)	First group: 10 Second group: 13	12	8	7
Middle East and North Africa (Arabic)	11	13	No group	No group
Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (French)	14	12	13	5
Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe and other (Spanish)	16	16	9	5
Asia and Eastern Europe (Russian) ^a	8	No group	No group	No group

^a Owing to the small number of participants in this workshop, only one breakout group was formed.

1. Greenhouse gas inventories

32. The breakout group hands-on exercise provided a useful stepwise approach to learning about and understanding reporting on GHG inventories in accordance with the MPGs. Many participants expressed interest in conducting an analysis of their own country's reporting to identify key areas for enhancing reporting on GHG inventories.

33. Participants from the Pacific region discussed their shared experience and identified the following areas for improvement with a view to enhancing current institutional arrangements in preparation for implementing the ETF: applying a systematic approach to data collection and management, formalizing public and private sector stakeholder involvement, centralizing data collection and validation, and ensuring that the budget allocated to improving institutional arrangements reflects the resources needed by establishing an action plan.

34. Participants in the French-language workshop for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean indicated the need to increase the number of sectoral experts involved in GHG inventory preparation and to improve the capacity of national experts to use the IPCC inventory software.

35. Participants in the Middle East and North Africa workshop highlighted the need to build a regional roster of experts.

36. Participants in the Russian-language workshop for Asia and Eastern Europe expressed the need for additional training materials in Russian, such as on the 2006 IPCC Guidelines, IPCC inventory software and data management.

37. Participants also identified areas where support is needed, including for applying technical backstopping; making use of and strengthening South–South cooperation; using technology for managing data (e.g. online systems and databases); understanding and using methodologies and procedures for collecting, managing and analysing data; and accessing sufficient financial support for preparing BTRs.

2. Tracking progress of nationally determined contributions

38. Participants appreciated the insight into the additional reporting that will be needed under the ETF in terms of the information necessary to track progress in implementing and achieving NDCs under Article 4 of the Paris Agreement.

39. They were keen to understand which provisions provide flexibility to those developing countries that need it in the light of their capacities. Participants in the English-language workshop for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean stated that they see many challenges in meeting the reporting requirements and support will be required for them to fill initial information gaps in the BTR.

40. Participants in the English-language workshop for Asia and Eastern Europe mentioned the lack of available resources for strengthening local technical capacity within the national focal point office and the respective ministries or agencies responsible for climate change action. They highlighted the need for more opportunities for technical training (on mitigation action, mitigation co-benefits of adaptation action and economic diversification plans) and the need for better access to information on tools and approaches that could assist them in developing baseline and mitigation scenarios and preparing more informed GHG emission projections.

41. Participants shared country experience of developing NDC targets, which highlighted the potential to collaborate with and learn from other countries in the region.

3. Adaptation

42. Participants highlighted that it will be challenging to integrate all adaptation reporting processes so as to prevent duplication of reporting. They also identified the collection of data for reporting on adaptation as a challenge, and noted that financial support will be needed to engage stakeholders in improving reporting on adaptation.

4. Support

43. Participants expressed in their feedback that the MPGs call for far greater detail in reporting on support needed and received compared with the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs, and expressed the consequent need to enhance and strengthen existing institutional arrangements for collecting the relevant data. Participants engaged in discussions on how these arrangements could be enhanced at the national level and shared country experience and best practices. Some participants highlighted experience of raising government and stakeholder awareness of the need for collecting data on support needed and received, while others shared experience of identifying key institutions and involving them in the data collection process. Most participants agreed on the significant need to build capacity for reporting on support needed and received.

IV. Conclusions

44. In their feedback, participants expressed the view that the training had been successful in enhancing their understanding of the existing MRV arrangements and the MPGs for the ETF.

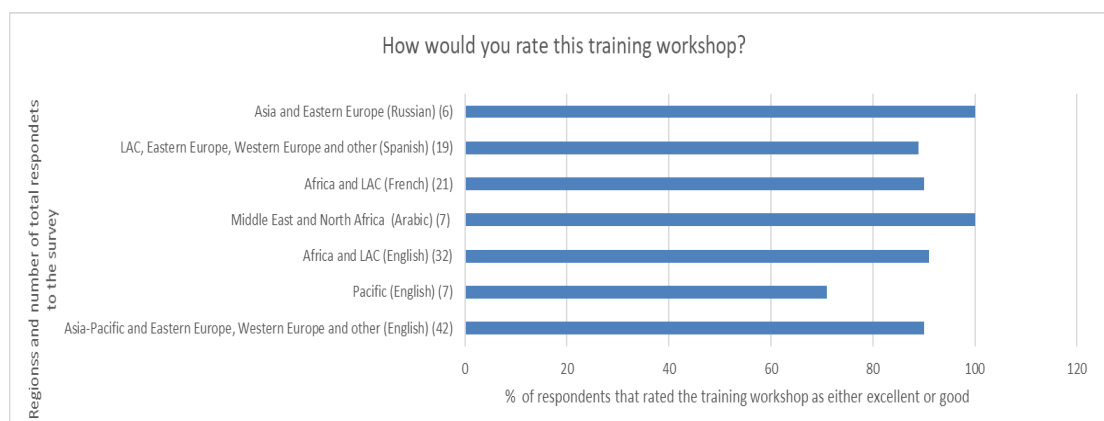
45. Some participants expressed interest in using the training materials to carry out a similar hands-on exercise for their own country in order to identify gaps and capacity-building needs as part of planning and preparing for implementation of the ETF.

46. After each round of the training, a survey was conducted to obtain feedback from the participants. Respondents were asked to rate the workshop overall as excellent, good, fair or poor. The figure below indicates that more than 90 per cent of respondents for most of the workshops rated the training as either excellent or good, with a lower result only for the Pacific workshop (71 per cent of participants rated the training as excellent or good). While recognizing the constraints due to COVID-19, participants were of the view that in-person workshops would be more productive than virtual ones. This sentiment seems to be related to the challenges experienced by participants in this workshop during the virtual training, including in relation to Internet connectivity, the accommodation of different time zones, and the limited opportunity to engage with other workshop participants.

47. Survey respondents suggested repeating the virtual training workshops and engaging a broader range of country experts. They also suggested the following specific actions for enhancing the effectiveness of such workshops in the future:

- (a) Reducing the duration of the workshop to maintain engagement;
- (b) Allocating more time to sharing country experience and lessons learned;
- (c) Improving the scheduling to more effectively accommodate different time zones so that the virtual workshops take place at reasonable times for all participants.

Participant ratings of the virtual regional hands-on training workshops



48. Survey respondents made the following suggestions regarding future training workshops on the ETF:

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

49. The CGE extended its appreciation to all resource persons who assisted with the training, including those from the regional collaboration centres, the United Nations Development Programme team supporting the Global Support Programme for Preparation of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports by non-Annex I Parties, and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

50. The CGE thanked Parties that contributed financial resources to support its work, including organizing the virtual regional hands-on training workshops.
