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Report of the Consultative Group of Experts

Regional hands-on training workshops of the Consultative Group of Experts*

Report by the secretariat

Summary

As part of its workplan for 2024, the Consultative Group of Experts focused its annual regional hands-on training workshops on preparing biennial transparency reports. A key objective was to enhance the technical capacity of experts from developing country Parties in relation to preparing the first biennial transparency reports with a view to facilitating their submission by the deadline of 31 December 2024. Preparatory regional webinars were held in advance to provide introductory technical information and set the stage for the in-person workshops. This report provides details on the training, a summary of the webinars and workshops, and feedback from participants.

* This document was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline in order to take into account the outcomes of the 12th meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts.

Abbreviations and acronyms

BTR	biennial transparency report
BUR	biennial update report
CGE	Consultative Group of Experts
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRT	common reporting table
CTF	common tabular format
ETF	enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement
GHG	greenhouse gas
MPGs	modalities, procedures and guidelines for the transparency framework for action and support referred to in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement
MRV	measurement, reporting and verification
NC	national communication
NDC	nationally determined contribution
PAICC	Paris Agreement Implementation and Compliance Committee
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation

I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. At its 11th meeting, the CGE decided to focus its provision of technical support and advice to developing country Parties in 2024 on the preparation and timely submission of their BTR1s. To that end, it agreed, as part of its workplan for 2024,¹ to focus its annual regional hands-on training workshops on preparing BTRs with a view to facilitating use of the tools for reporting under the ETF and promoting peer-to-peer learning regarding the information to be reported in BTRs as well as peer review of draft text.
2. 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.²

B. Background

3. The ETF builds and improves upon the MRV arrangements under the Convention. With the adoption of the associated MPGs³ at CMA 1 and the corresponding CRTs, CTFs and outlines for reporting⁴ at CMA 3, the stage is set for full implementation of the ETF.
4. The enhanced reporting requirements under the Paris Agreement necessitate a fundamental shift in Parties' approach to meeting their obligations, with an emphasis on sustainable and comprehensive reporting practices.
5. While reporting under the Convention through NCs will continue, for developing country Parties to the Convention that are also Parties to the Paris Agreement BURs and international consultation and analysis under the Convention will be superseded by BTRs, technical expert review and facilitative, multilateral consideration of progress. The final BURs will be those submitted no later than 31 December 2024, which is also the deadline for Parties to submit their BTR1 and national inventory report, if submitted as a stand-alone report.⁵ The least developed country Parties and small island developing States may submit the information referred to in Article 13, paragraphs 7–10, of the Paris Agreement at their discretion.⁶
6. In recognition of Parties' differing national circumstances, the ETF and associated MPGs provide flexibility to those developing country Parties that need it in the light of their capacities, giving them the opportunity to build and improve those capacities over time.
7. The increased depth, scope and frequency of reporting mandated under the ETF, through the MPGs and the requirements for BTRs contained therein, necessitate enhanced readiness and technical capacity for implementation. There is thus a critical need for capacity-building efforts focused on improving understanding of the ETF, unpacking the MPGs and ensuring effective preparation of developing country Parties' BTR1s. This is reflected in feedback provided by developing country Parties to the CGE through its biennial surveys and at past training workshops, where the need to enhance technical capacity related to preparing BTRs was consistently highlighted, and was reinforced by the request of SBI 59 for the CGE to focus in 2024 on providing technical support and advice to developing country Parties for implementing the ETF, including for preparing and submitting BTRs and using the electronic reporting tools.⁷

¹ Available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/637079>.

² Decision [19/CP.19](#), para. 7.

³ Decision [18/CMA.1](#), annex.

⁴ Decision [5/CMA.3](#), annexes I–V.

⁵ As per decisions [1/CP.24](#), para. 38, and [18/CMA.1](#), para. 3, respectively.

⁶ As per decision [18/CMA.1](#), para. 4.

⁷ [FCCC/SBI/2023/21](#), para. 28.

C. Scope

8. As part of the annual reporting by the CGE on the progress of its work,⁸ this report summarizes the regional hands-on training workshops and respective preparatory webinars held in 2024 as well as the feedback provided by participants.

D. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

9. The SBI is invited to consider this report and to provide guidance, as appropriate, to the CGE.

II. Proceedings

A. Event details

10. Given the financial resources available, the CGE was able to conduct two regional hands-on training workshops in 2024, on preparing BTRs, each preceded by a preparatory webinar held a week before.

11. The target participants were national experts and practitioners who are actively involved in transparency-related processes and supporting the preparation of NCs, BURs and BTRs. In its letter inviting national focal points to nominate national experts to participate in the training, the CGE continued to strongly encourage the participation of women.

12. A total of 76 participants (37 per cent female and 63 per cent male) from 56 developing country Parties attended the workshops. The table below provides details on each workshop.

Regional hands-on training workshops of the Consultative Group of Experts in 2024

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Languages</i>	<i>Number of countries represented</i>	<i>Number of participants (female/male)</i>	<i>Number of CGE resource persons</i>
8–10 May	Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe	Africa	English, French	37	46 (11/35)	4
22–24 August	Panama City, Panama	Latin America and the Caribbean	English, Spanish	19	30 (17/13)	4

B. Objectives

13. The main objective of the regional hands-on training workshops was to enhance the technical capacity of experts from developing country Parties in relation to preparing BTRs with the aim of facilitating their submission by 31 December 2024 at the latest.

14. The aim was to achieve the following learning outcomes, providing participants with:

(a) The knowledge and skills to apply the MPGs when preparing their BTRs, including the CRTs and CTF tables;

(b) An interactive experience of preparing BTRs, with hands-on exercises on drafting sample BTR chapters and applying the flexibility provisions;

(c) An introduction to available tools and support processes that can be leveraged, including the ETF reporting tools and BTR technical expert reviewer training programme, and a space for peer-to-peer exchange of experience and best practices in relation to preparing BTRs.

⁸ See document [FCCC/SBI/2024/18](#) for the 2024 progress report of the CGE.

C. Structure

15. The training was designed to provide an immersive and dynamic learning experience. The CGE resource persons in attendance had a critical role in terms of facilitating discussions, moderating group exercises and addressing any questions or comments. Language interpretation services were provided, and the technical materials and presentations were made available to participants before the webinars and workshops.

16. The training comprised three phases – preparation, workshop and follow-up – over a three-week period.⁹

1. Preparatory phase

17. A preparatory regional webinar was held a week ahead of each workshop, facilitated by CGE resource persons, who delivered presentations, briefed participants, moderated the question and answer sessions and addressed questions and comments.

18. As well as providing workshop participants with an overview of the ETF and associated MPGs, including the flexibility provisions established therein, in the context of preparing BTRs and familiarizing participants with technical background information, the webinars introduced the objectives of and programme for the respective regional workshops. Expectations for the subsequent workshop were discussed with the participants, including the data and information to be compiled in advance, with the aim of enhancing their learning experience at the workshop.

19. The webinars, which were recorded for future reference,¹⁰ were also an opportunity to collect feedback from participants, including on their expectations for the upcoming workshop and the work of the CGE. A pre-workshop survey was carried out to collect information on participant profiles, with support for the workshop tailored according to participants' specific technical questions.

2. Workshop

20. Each workshop was conducted over three days. Participants were introduced to various chapters of the BTR and reminded of key provisions of the MPGs. The interactive sessions were designed to foster a hands-on learning experience and exchange of ideas, encouraging peer-to-peer sharing of lessons learned and best practices, including through presentations of case studies and discussion sessions.

21. As a key feature, the workshops involved hands-on exercises aimed at facilitating practical application of the MPGs, with a focus on drafting various chapters of the BTR and completing CTF tables. These exercises gave participants the opportunity to apply their knowledge, contribute to discussions and seek clarification or guidance where needed.

3. Follow-up

22. After the workshops, participants were encouraged to continue engaging with their peers, the CGE resource persons and the secretariat, either to address any technical questions or to share any experience, lessons learned or technical resources that could benefit their peers. With a view to fostering ongoing dialogue, promoting collaboration and support, and enabling quick responses, a WhatsApp group was set up comprising workshop participants, CGE resource persons and representatives of the secretariat.

23. In addition, an online survey was circulated to participants to solicit feedback on the training, including approach and content, as well as on whether the learning outcomes and participants' individual expectations had been met.

⁹ The workshop agendas are available at <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/constituted-bodies/consultative-group-of-experts/calendar-of-meetings/archive-of-meetings>.

¹⁰ The webinar recordings are available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/consultative-group-of-experts-cge/cge-webinar-series>.

III. Summary of webinars and workshops

A. Preparatory webinars

1. Overview

24. A presentation was given on the architecture and fundamentals of the ETF, including how it builds and improves upon the MRV arrangements under the Convention and the importance of transparency arrangements at the national level, with a view to setting the stage for the subsequent workshop. The presentation explored the key provisions of the MPGs, particularly in relation to reporting, technical expert review and facilitative, multilateral consideration of progress, and concluded with key messages on the way forward for preparation of BTRs.

25. During the discussion session, participants stated that the presentation was useful as it provided much-needed clarity on the ETF and the MPGs and improved their understanding, particularly with regard to reporting requirements and processes.

2. Outlook for transparency

26. Participants were provided an overview of the timeline for the implementation of the ETF as well as key relevant outcomes from COP 28 and CMA 5, and significant achievements such as the development and official release of the ETF reporting tools and the establishment of the training programme for BTR technical expert reviewers. The presentation summarized the discussions at and key takeaways from mandated events on the ETF,¹¹ namely online regional workshops¹² and an in-person workshop¹³ on support available to developing country Parties for reporting under the ETF, and the in-session facilitative dialogue¹⁴ that enabled Parties to share experience in gathering, analysing and managing data.

27. During the discussion session, participants noted that they appreciated the presentation because it provided a clear overview of upcoming milestones and available support, and that it helped them to better understand the timeline associated with implementation of the ETF and expectations associated with reporting thereunder, offering practical insights into the ETF reporting tools and resources that can be used by Parties to assist them in meeting their reporting commitments.

3. Briefing on the regional hands-on training workshop

28. Participants were introduced to the objectives of and programme for the upcoming regional workshop, and given information on, inter alia, preparatory materials, relevant decisions, presentations and hands-on exercises to ensure that they were well prepared for the workshop. Expectations were outlined, and participants were encouraged to familiarize themselves with their Party's NDC, national reports (such as BURs and NCs), information and data related to tracking the progress of their Party's NDC, and other materials relevant to BTR preparation to enable them to effectively engage in the hands-on exercises during the workshop.

B. Regional hands-on training workshops

1. Introduction

29. A presentation summarized the workshop objectives and participant profile. The agenda for the three-day workshop was introduced, highlighting aspects such as the use of the ETF reporting tools, the drafting of key BTR chapters and planned practical exercises

¹¹ As per decision [18/CMA.5](#), paras. 14–15.

¹² See https://unfccc.int/ETF_online_workshops_2024.

¹³ See <https://unfccc.int/event/in-person-workshop-on-support-available-to-developing-country-parties-for-preparing-their-biennial>.

¹⁴ See <https://unfccc.int/event/in-session-facilitative-dialogue-on-sharing-of-experience-in-gathering-analyzing-and-managing-data>.

aimed at deepening participants' understanding of BTR preparation and enhancing their readiness for related processes.

2. Outlook for transparency

30. Participants were provided an overview of the ETF and the timeline for its implementation as well as key transparency-related outcomes from COP 28 and CMA 5.

31. The discussion that followed focused on the status of negotiations on transparency-related matters, the timeline for ETF implementation and the importance of building national technical capacity for implementing the ETF while reducing reliance on external consultants. Participants underscored the role of technical expert review in enhancing the quality of BTR submissions and enabling continuous improvement. The value of technical expert review was widely recognized, with feedback from the process offering critical insights that drive improvements in national transparency-related reporting and facilitate allocation of domestic resources for addressing identified areas for improvement. Participants acknowledged that national experts' active participation in the review process helps in identifying key gaps and needs, and associated areas for improvement.

32. Participants noted challenges related to translating technical BTR content for policymakers, highlighting the need for clear communication between technical experts and political leaders. Concerns about timelines were addressed, with participants sharing lessons learned and strategies for coordinating internal processes, securing government approval and enhancing communication among stakeholders. Despite the challenges involved, there was strong consensus that engaging with and involving diverse stakeholders is essential for continuously improving national reporting systems and establishing long-term technical capacity for ETF implementation.

3. Paris Agreement Implementation and Compliance Committee

33. A PAICC Co-Chair gave a presentation on the PAICC, which, comprising 12 expert members, operates in a facilitative, non-punitive and transparent manner, focusing on improving implementation of the Paris Agreement and ensuring accountability among Parties. The Co-Chair outlined the formation and functions of the PAICC and its non-punitive approach to facilitating compliance under the Paris Agreement.

34. During the subsequent discussions, participants asked questions about and sought clarification on the four-step compliance process of the PAICC, particularly the final step of issuing a formal statement on non-compliance, which has not yet been operationalized, as well as on the BTR and NDC submission deadlines. There was consensus that implementing the ETF will be a learning experience for all Parties, with improvement over time. Participants stressed the importance of Parties reporting accurate information that reflects national circumstances, and the PAICC reiterated its commitment to playing a facilitative and constructive role that supports the enhancement of national transparency-related efforts.

4. Biennial transparency reports

35. A presentation summarized the key provisions of the MPGs on BTRs, including the outline and the flexibility provisions related to reporting requirements, explaining what they involve in practical terms. The presentation underscored the need for continuous improvement in reporting, and Parties were encouraged to build on existing MRV systems and focus on enhancing institutional arrangements to improve their BTRs over time. Key takeaways focused on the importance of starting the drafting process with the best available data and information, involving stakeholders and using the BTR to communicate progress in implementing the NDC as well as financial, technical and capacity-building needs.

36. Discussions centred on the use of the flexibility provisions and the importance of the principles of transparency, accuracy, completeness, comparability and consistency in reporting. Participants acknowledged that the review process is a valuable opportunity to identify areas for improvement, and that involvement in implementing the ETF represents a valuable learning opportunity.

5. Group exercise: progress update on preparing biennial transparency reports

37. Guiding questions were discussed within groups during this exercise and the feedback from the groups indicated that Parties are at various stages of preparing their BTRs, ranging from initial data compilation to near completion, with some BTRs already awaiting government approval. Climate and environment offices were often identified as coordinating entities, working in collaboration with line ministries to gather and manage data and information.

38. Key challenges relate to, inter alia, technical capacity constraints, competing policies or goals, and securing resources for preparing reports. Participants noted that ongoing transparency-related projects, including under the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency and the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency, are crucial for building technical capacity, including for preparing BTRs. Participants stressed the need to build technical capacity among both coordinating entities and stakeholders with a view to improving data availability and quality and the timeliness of data provision. There was strong commitment among participants to meeting the BTR submission deadline. The session concluded with calls to the CGE to continue providing capacity-building support to developing country Parties.

6. Country presentations: tracking progress in implementing and achieving nationally determined contributions

39. Presentations were made by countries in the regions covered by the workshops (Brazil, Gabon, Panama, Uruguay and Zimbabwe), which highlighted the diverse strategies used for monitoring and tracking NDC implementation, including for selecting quantitative and qualitative indicators tailored to national circumstances, and approaches to pursuing NDC targets and implementing data management arrangements.

40. The ensuing discussions explored challenges in tracking progress, such as aligning sectoral data with overarching national targets, and selecting and monitoring progress indicators. Participants emphasized the need for practical, trackable indicators that accurately reflect progress, especially for adaptation and mitigation efforts. There were concerns about the complexities involved in translating qualitative goals into measurable outcomes and developing impact-focused indicators. Participants highlighted the need for additional training on using the ETF reporting tools. Participants also stressed the importance of legal frameworks and coordinated efforts across institutions, which were seen as essential for improving quality of data and timeliness of reports. The discussions reinforced the value of capacity-building and of leveraging existing resources to enhance monitoring, accounting and reporting of progress in implementing NDCs.

7. Progress in implementing nationally determined contributions

41. A presentation outlined the provisions of the MPGs on reporting the information necessary to track progress in implementing NDCs. According to the MPGs, key information covers, inter alia, national circumstances and institutional arrangements, description of the NDC, information necessary to track progress in implementing and achieving the NDC, mitigation policies and measures, a summary of GHG emissions and removals, and projections.¹⁵ The presentation emphasized the importance of using standardized methodologies and CTFs in order to ensure clarity and comparability of reporting. The flexibility provisions, which allow developing countries to tailor their reporting, including the scope, frequency and level of detail, according to their capacities, were also highlighted.

42. During the following discussions, participants shared their experience of identifying indicators and systems for tracking and managing data collected from stakeholders. Participants underlined the importance of leveraging the support provided through, inter alia, the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency, the Global Environment Facility and the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency with a view to addressing technical challenges and supporting preparation of reports. There was a strong emphasis on the need to enhance the technical capacity of national experts through continuous learning. Participants noted

¹⁵ Decision [18/CMA.1](#), annex, chap. III.

that, in preparing the next NDCs, they will aim to select indicators for which data and information can be collected with a view to facilitating reporting on progress. They also noted the need to learn more about the available tools and models for tracking progress in implementing NDCs and outcomes of sectoral mitigation activities.

8. Hands-on facilitated exercise: drafting chapter II of the biennial transparency report

43. Under the guidance of the CGE resource persons and the secretariat, participants used national data and information to complete CTF tables, which were provided as Excel worksheets. The results of this exercise provided a basis for the following session, which involved working with the ETF progress reporting tool.

44. The discussions centred on difficulties in selecting appropriate indicators and methodologies for reporting progress in implementing NDCs, especially in terms of aligning data with NDC targets, and in distinguishing between definitions and descriptions of indicators. Discussions also revolved around how to prevent over- or underestimation of emissions, and the importance of explaining, in the BTR, the methodologies used to account for GHG emissions and removals. Participants acknowledged that NDCs and recently submitted NCs and BURs are useful resources for preparing BTRs.

9. Tools for reporting under the enhanced transparency framework

45. A presentation provided an overview of the ETF reporting tools, which were released on 28 June 2024. Designed to enhance the reporting process for Parties by providing a user-friendly platform for data submission and to ensure an efficient review process, the tools were developed in response to key mandates, such as the request of CMA 3 for the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to develop CRTs for the reporting of information on GHG inventories, and CTFs for reporting on, inter alia, progress in implementing NDCs.¹⁶ A live demonstration was given to showcase the tools' features, including offline functionality, integration with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change software, and capabilities for managing CTFs and CRTs and generating comprehensive reporting tables. These features were designed to strengthen the capacity of technical experts and ensure that Parties meet their reporting obligations under the ETF.

46. Participants had the opportunity to use one of the ETF reporting tools, inputting data and information compiled previously. They continued to advance their work by specifying indicators and completing the CTF tables, making significant strides in developing the relevant chapters and tables of the BTRs. As they did so, they asked questions and sought clarification on various aspects, including permissions, data management and tool functionalities.

IV. Feedback from participants

A. Preparatory webinars

47. After each preparatory webinar, a survey was shared with participants to collect their feedback and enable them to submit questions for further discussion at the upcoming regional workshop. Participants from both regions described the webinars as useful and relevant to their work.

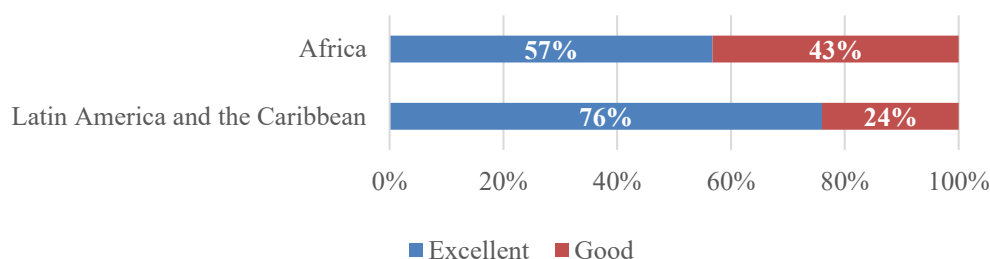
48. Participants expected that the upcoming workshops would, inter alia, deepen their understanding of the BTR preparation process and improve their capacity to track and report progress in implementing NDCs, and would cover use of the ETF reporting tools and application of the flexibility provisions. Participants also expected that participating in hands-on exercises and activities at the workshops would enhance their ability to prepare BTRs.

¹⁶ Decision [5/CMA.3](#), para. 8.

B. Regional hands-on training workshops

49. After each regional workshop, participants completed a feedback survey. Respondents were asked to rate the workshop overall as excellent, good, fair or poor. As indicated in figure 1, all respondents rated the workshops as either excellent or good. The respondents praised the resource persons for giving clear, well-structured presentations and for addressing their questions, concluding that the workshops enhanced their understanding of the topics covered and built their confidence in preparing BTRs using the ETF reporting tools. Respondents also stated that they learned from other countries’ experience and lessons learned, which will guide them in preparing BTRs.

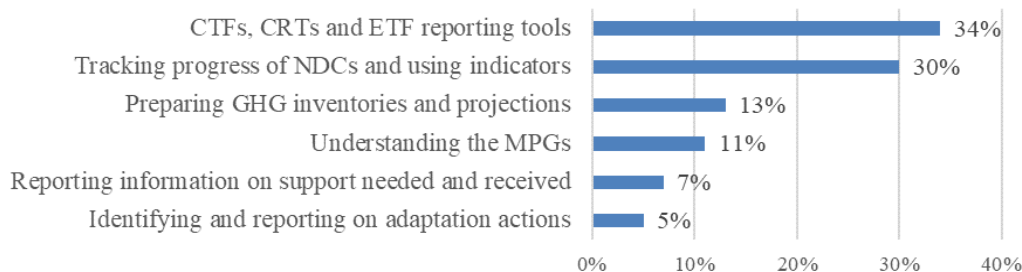
Figure 1
Survey respondents’ ratings of the quality of the regional hands-on training workshops of the Consultative Group of Experts in 2024



50. Respondents noted that the practical exercises were particularly beneficial, enabling them to directly apply concepts to BTR preparation. They found the ETF progress reporting tool very user-friendly and appreciated that they were able to gain first-hand experience of the tool during the workshop. Some participants suggested extending the duration of the workshops and allocating more time to these exercises, as they felt that additional practice would further enhance their understanding of BTRs and enable them to implement the practices discussed. However, they acknowledged the need to familiarize themselves further with their Party’s NDC.

51. Respondents indicated that they expect future such workshops to continue to focus on hands-on training in using specific tools and methodologies essential for preparing BTRs. Key areas of interest include better understanding the CTFs and CRTs and how to use the ETF reporting tools effectively, and selecting indicators for tracking progress in implementing NDCs (see figure 2).

Figure 2
Areas identified by survey respondents for inclusion in future regional hands-on training workshops of the Consultative Group of Experts



52. Considering the number of CRTs and CTF tables that Parties have to complete in preparing their BTRs, the CGE acknowledged the need to extend the duration of its regional hands-on training workshops and allocate more time to hands-on exercises at future workshops. The CGE also acknowledged that delivering presentations in United Nations languages relevant to the participants in a balanced manner during the workshops could help to further improve participants’ overall satisfaction with the workshops.

V. Additional remarks

53. The CGE expressed sincere appreciation to the Governments of Panama and Zimbabwe for hosting the regional workshops, and gratitude to the resource persons and organizations that provided support, including the Regional Collaboration Centre for Latin America, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme. The CGE noted the importance of coordinating and collaborating with partners offering similar training workshops.

54. In addition, the CGE acknowledged and thanked the Parties that have contributed financial resources to support its activities, including the organization of the workshops.
