

Cooperative approach in capacity building for transparency in Eurasia, Central Asia and the Caucasus

Central Asia and the Caucasus
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Background

Since 2023, Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency – Global Support Programme (CBIT-GSP), Ministry of the Environment Japan (MOEJ) and Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) have collaborated on capacity-building for transparency through the Mutual Learning Program for Enhanced Transparency (MLP).

Funded by MOEJ and jointly implemented by IGES, Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting (MURC), and CBIT-GSP, the MLP aims to support countries in preparing their Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement through the exchange of drafting reports and best practices.

In 2023, experts and practitioners from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Japan, Moldova, and Uzbekistan successfully completed the MLP focused on mitigation actions reporting in the Energy sector. The program expanded in 2024, continuing with representatives from the same countries (Group 1) who progressed to the Agriculture sector, while a new cohort of participants – Armenia, Kazakhstan, Japan, Serbia, and Türkiye (Group 2) – began their learning journey in the Energy sector.

Over the 18-month program, from May 2023 to October 2024, participating countries engaged in a series of technical meetings and completed five reporting exercises. Group 1 finalized mitigation actions reporting for the Agriculture sector using the Common Tabular Format (CTF) table 5, while Group 2 completed CTF 5 as well as CTF tables 1 and 2, reporting indicators for tracking NDC as part of their BTR preparation. Before each technical meeting, participants exchanged and reviewed each other's exercises, provided feedback, and shared questions and insights to foster mutual learning.

Key Challenges Addressed

Before joining the MLP, the participating countries faced challenges in reporting mitigation actions in compliance with the Modalities, Procedures, and Guidelines (MPGs) requirements. They expressed a strong interest in learning how to complete the CTFs appropriately using data and information available domestically while gaining insights from the experiences of peer countries.

Since the Energy sector constitutes the largest share of GHG emissions, followed by the Agriculture, it was crucial for all participating countries to focus on these sectors. The program emphasized analyzing sector-based action programs to achieve NDC targets, developing and assessing assumptions, and identifying methodologies for calculating emission reductions, which were key to improving mitigation reporting.

Language barriers posed an additional challenge. While English is used to be the primary language of instruction in a multi-country community, the MLP utilized a simultaneous interpretation to enhance all the participants' full engagement in the learning process.

Approach

The MLP approach is highly practical and language-sensitive, ensuring that participants could effectively engage with the technical content despite language barriers.

The program emphasized hands-on learning, focusing on practical exercises and peer exchanges, while also providing language support to facilitate better understanding and communication among participants from different countries.

Participating countries need to have self-sufficient learning capacity and a basic understanding of MPGs and estimation of GHG emission reduction in order to fully engage with the MLP by developing CTFs and reviewing each other's drafts.

The MLP follows a three-step approach for its implementation:

- 1. Kick-off Meeting:** This initial session serves to introduce the program, outline expected outputs, and familiarize participants. It includes a discussion on the learning process and timelines, sharing the national status of NDC tracking and implementation, particularly focusing on mitigation actions in the selected sector. The meeting also aims to guide participants on how to complete the first exercise.
- 2. Main Meeting:** In this session, participants present the results of their first exercise on reporting mitigation actions in the selected sector. Feedback and insights are shared to enhance understanding of the methodologies, assumptions, and the content of the exercise. This meeting also focuses on planning for the second exercise, discussing its content and schedule.
- 3. Follow-up (Final) Meeting:** This closing session is dedicated to presenting the results of the second exercise, providing feedback from participants, and exploring potential future collaborations.



Pic. 1. MLP Main Meeting for Group 1 in Baku, Azerbaijan

Key Takeaway Messages

- Performing practical exercises resulted into improved quality of reporting on NDC tracking, including flexibility, notation keys, selection of timelines, conditional vs unconditional targets.
- The opportunity to learn from other countries and receive on-hand assistance from support providers (IGES, MURC and CBIT-GSP), significantly boosted the confidence of country experts in completing CTFs and adhering to MPG requirements.
- For future collaboration, all participating countries highlighted working on other sectors for CTF 5 (e.g. LULUCF, IPPU and Waste), filling in CTF 3 and CTF 4, explore on methodologies and practices on climate finance tracking, adaptation, refining methodologies for estimating emission reductions, reviewing the first BTRs and discussing possible improvements for the next BTRs, using of ETF tool as well as expanding the range of participating countries.

Group 1

Agriculture:

Agriculture has untapped opportunities for mitigation measures, therefore adequate policies will help reduce emissions in the sector.

Lack of disaggregated data, access to internal status of agricultural policies and measures and absence of policy impact assessment studies were the main barriers in mitigation reporting for Agriculture.

MLP helped the participating countries to generalize agriculture policies and measures especially in countries where they are in development stage and are not necessarily focused on mitigation.

Group 2

Energy:

Participating countries identified and prioritized mitigation actions in the energy sector, including increasing renewable energy sources (e.g., solar PV), improving energy efficiency (e.g., in commercial and residential buildings and street lighting), reducing transmission and distribution losses, and reducing emissions in transportation (e.g., through fuel switching and the adoption of electric vehicles).

Some CTF 5 tables included values for expected GHG emission reductions from mitigation actions (MAs) but lacked values for achieved GHG emission reductions. This gap is primarily due to the absence of robust monitoring and tracking systems and arrangements to collect the necessary data.

1 & 2

Reporting on NDC:

For CTF 2, country experts provided definitions necessary to understand each indicator listed in CTF 1. Participants were asked to clarify whether the indicators accounted for or excluded contributions from the Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF) sector or indirect CO₂ emissions.

Using net GHG emissions as the indicator for NDC tracking simplifies understanding, as it excludes the LULUCF sector. However, participants highlighted that CTF 4 includes three distinct cells for indicators: contributions from the LULUCF sector, Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs), and others. As such, it may be more appropriate to report LULUCF removals in a separate cell rather than integrating them with the primary indicator in CTF 4.

The importance of carefully reporting across CTFs to maintain consistency and account for interlinkages between tables, ensuring transparency and clarity.

Areas for Improvement

The areas for improved reporting on mitigation actions are to the most extent relate to the country-driven progress in data collection, data credibility and data flow and management.

Some examples of actions for further improvement, include:

- Enhance access to data, improve its reliability, and disaggregate it for sector-specific emission reduction actions.
- Strengthen coordination and partnerships with local and national data providers, ensuring transparency and accountability in the information used for climate reporting.
- Develop or advance national transparency systems to support data-driven climate actions, including effective tracking of NDC implementation.

Next Steps

The MLP was evaluated as an effective mechanism for mutual learning and knowledge exchange among countries on enhanced climate reporting under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.

This approach could be applied to support the same countries in advancing their reporting efforts on areas of support, which was highlighted earlier in this document, or extended to a new group of countries which are about to submit their first BTR in 2025.

The partnership between CBIT-GSP and IGES will continue to support developing countries in building their technical capacities for enhanced reporting under Article 13 and potentially on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.