Workshop report

Tracking Progress of the Mitigation Commitments of Nationally Determined Contributions

Co-organized by the Republic of Panama, the Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement (PATPA) and the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency - Global Support Programme (CBIT-GSP)

Date: 23-25 October 2023 | **Time:** 9:00 - 17:30 | **Venue:** Hotel Bristol, Panama City, Panama

Contents

Abbreviations

BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
BUR	Biennial Update Report
CBIT	Capacity Building Initiative on Transparency
COP	Conference of the Parties
CTF	Common tabular format
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
MPGs	Modalities, procedures and guidelines
MRV	Measuring, reporting and verification
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
PATPA	Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement
SPA	Support Project for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement
UNEP	Unites Nations Environment Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. Introduction

The training workshop on Tracking Progress of the Mitigation Commitments of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) was co-organised by the Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement (PATPA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), through the CBIT-GSP project (CBIT-GSP - Global Support Programme). The event took place over 3 days in Panama City, Panama, and was hosted by the Government of Panama with support of the Government of Colombia through their CBIT Colombia project and the US Government through US EPA.

The workshop brought together, for the first time, participants from both the Spanish speaking Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the Anglophone Caribbean countries. In order to facilitate interaction, the workshop stived to keep a balance between both languages, and offered additional simultaneous interpretation services.

The workshop was attended by a total of 64 participants, including 44 government representatives from 26 countries, 27 of which were women. Participants represented different government ministries, agencies and departments, all of whom are involved or are key stakeholders in implementing the strengthened transparency framework in their respective countries, and meeting reporting obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. The workshop was facilitated by and included the participation of invited experts.

2. Context

Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) are at the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of its long-term goals. NDCs embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Paris Agreement requires each Party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive NDCs that it intends to achieve. Parties shall pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions.

Tracking progress and achievement of NDCs is a requirement under the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). It requires transparent quantitative and qualitative information on the implementation of measures to achieve NDCs as defined under Article 4 of the Paris Agreement. This includes providing information on indicators relevant to the NDC, comparing current or projected emissions, and information that helps better understand the NDC target and its impacts.

The Republic of Panama, PATPA, and CBIT-GSP **co-organised a training to strengthen capacities of the Latin America and the Caribbean to understand the reporting requirements under the Paris Agreement, to identify indicators, and track the mitigation commitments of their NDCs.**

2.1 The Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement (PATPA)

The Paris Agreement Transparency Partnership (PATPA) aims to promote ambitious climate action through political dialogue and exchanges between practitioners. Today, more than 100 countries participate in its activities with a focus on the implementation of the Paris Agreement and, in particular, its enhanced transparency framework. By bringing together experts from a wide range of countries, the Partnership seeks to foster transparency, communication, networking and mutual trust, as well as learning processes and to identify and disseminate best practices and lessons learned. In addition, the Partnership has established five regional groups to enhance cooperation and exchanges between countries in specific parts of the world: Spanish speaking Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Anglophone Africa, Francophone Africa, Asia and the Lusophone Cluster.

The Regional Group for LAC, established in 2014, aims to promote integrated, ambitious, and transparent climate action through the exchange of experiences and cooperation among Spanish-speaking countries in the region. Since then, several face-to-face and virtual meetings have been held, as well as the exchange of good practices, knowledge management, peer-to-peer learning and capacity building. Currently, the Regional Group has an organisation based on four sub-working groups (inventories, NDCs and mitigation, adaptation, and support) with the objective of addressing specific issues with greater technical depth. The LAC Regional Group is supported by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection (BMWK) and the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AA) of Germany.

While not formally part of a regional group, PATPA has cultivated a relationship with the Anglophone Caribbean countries in the past years, in particular by supporting the work of the Cooperative Caribbean MRV Hub. PATPA will continue to closely collaborate with this group in the coming years, this workshop being another milestone in that direction.

2.2 CBIT GSP

The CBIT-GSP project aims to provide global support focused on capacity building and coordination to help developing countries meet the requirements of the ETF. It is the second phase of the Global Support Programme and Global Coordination Platform for CBIT projects, both funded by the GEF. The new project has two main components. First, it integrates the web-based platforms of the previous projects into a single platform, which will be a space to search for information on the current status of projects and countries on transparency issues and to exchange experiences among peers. Second, it continues the support provided in the previous projects, promoting regional transparency networks, offering timely technical support on issues such as the review of reports to the UNFCCC and the development of technical guidelines.

3. Objectives and central concepts of the workshop

The main objective of the workshop was to **support country teams** in charge of reporting NDC mitigation commitments under the Paris Agreement in **technical understanding of the goals, principles, and actions associated with the reporting process for NDC mitigation commitments under the Paris Agreement**.

Specific objectives:

- Provide these national mitigation teams with useful information and experiences to facilitate their reporting to the UNFCCC under the Paris Agreement, preparing them to use the ETF´s common tabular formats (CTF)
- Put into practice concrete situations of mitigation assessment, tracking and report, using real country data and their own NDC
- Exchange experiences and lessons learned, corresponding to the application of tools and systems for mitigation assessment, tracking and reporting
- Identify common challenges and opportunities for collaboration among country teams on mitigation assessment, tracking and reporting

3.1 Target audience

The workshop targeted technical officers who coordinate the tracking and reporting of NDC mitigation commitments in the countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Networks. This includes national government staff of ministries or agencies in lead of climate change as well as relevant

sectoral ministries, and staff from other relevant institutions involved in reporting under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement (e.g., in the preparation of first BTRs).

3.1.1 Expectations of participants and learning objectives for the workshop

The expectation for the workshop expressed by participants included:

- Improve the understanding of NDC monitoring processes and the requirements of the ETF to facilitate implementation at the national level
- Improve understanding of requirements for BTRs and how to fill in reporting tables
- Learn about indicators for tracking NDCs
- Learn from experiences and progress made in other countries, and exchange about challenges.

3.2 Key concepts of the workshop

3.2.1 Indicators relevant to NDCs

Indicators convey information about the current state of a particular situation of interest, as such they are a means to demonstrate achievement of an objective. One key message conveyed during the workshop was that the ETF does not prescribe the indicators for tracking progress and achievement of NDCs. Instead to accommodate the nationally determined nature of NDCs, Parties are required to provide information on the indicators that are relevant to track progress and achievement of their NDCs. The workshop provided a conceptual background on indicators, for example that these may be quantitative or qualitative, reflect an impact or relate to a process, and aimed to support countries in identifying useful indicators which they may want to report in their BTRs.

3.2.2 SMART

The concept of formulating specific, measurable, ambitious, relevant and time-bound (SMART) objectives or targets was used to support countries in assessing the objectives contained in their NDCs and to identify instances where these objectives may require further specification. Using the SMART criteria participants were then presented with a stepwise approach to identify relevant and specific indicators for their NDCs and consider the necessary steps to collect the information on these indicators overt time.

Figure 1: Stepwise approach to identify and compile NDC indicators.

4. Workshop activities

4.1 Workshop methodology

The workshop constituted the third phase of a four-staged process:

- **Stage I**: Consisted of an introductory webinar that served to set out the approach and provided instructions to the participants for the other parts of the training workshop
- **Stage II**: This stage was dedicated to the collection of information in each country. The organisers provided templates for countries to collect information related to their NDCs. The collected information served as the basis for the exercises carried out in the face-to-face training.
- **Stage III**: Consisted of a face-to-face event where, through practical exercises and presentations, participants were provided with knowledge and tools for the assessment, tracking and reporting of mitigation under the ETF.
- **Stage IV**: This stage constitutes the follow-up phase. It is aimed at providing feedback to the participants on the exercises and results produced by the country representatives during the face-to-face training.

Stage I
- Introductory webinar
- **3 October 2023 for the Anglophone Caribbean Network**
- **4 October September 2023 for the Spanish Speaking LAC Network**

Stage II
- Country collection information
- **5 October to 20 October 2023**

Stage III
- Face-to-face Event
- **23 to 25 October 2023**

Stage IV
- Follow-up after the face-to-face event

4.2 Approach to workshop facilitation

The facilitation of the workshop centred around four dimensions to improve participant engagement and increase the opportunities for practical learnings:

1. **Personal reflection**: building on stage II of the learning process, participants were able to set individual learning objectives for the workshop. The agenda provided for spaces for individual exercises and personal reflection to capture individual considerations related to their tasks of reporting under the ETF and preparing their country's first BTR.
2. **Practical exercises**: Each technical and theoretical input was accompanied by practical exercises to allow participants to apply what they had just heard and provide for useful insights for the upcoming task of preparing the BTRs.
3. **Exchange**: through multiple opportunities for exchange, participants were able to strengthen learnings and discuss technical contents. This also allowed to compare between different national contexts and settings. The exchange was also intended to support participants in the building of a peer support and exchange network.

4. **Play**: playful elements were included to ensure continued engagement and energy of participants as well as to simulate the practical application of technical contents and thereby supporting the assimilation and understanding of the technical contents.

4.3 Summary of the workshop development

The workshop took place over three days. The first day started with technical inputs for setting the scene. It provided a review of the key concepts and requirements of the ETF and presented the theoretical and technical background on indicators. In the first practical exercise of the workshop, participants used the information on their NDCs prepared in stage II to define the relevant indicators for their NDCs. This was then followed up by a case clinic to discuss specific indicators and a panel discussion where representatives of Colombia, Panama and Belize presented their country experience. The training on filling out the Common Tabular Format (CTF) tables started after lunch. The afternoon of the first day was dedicated to CTF tables 1 to 4 (see Figure 3 for an overview of the CTF tables). The day concluded with a summary of learnings and take aways as well as an opportunity for participants to provide feedback.

The second day started with a technical input on key elements for tracking mitigation actions and a session dedicated to CTF table 5 for tracking mitigation policies and measures. During the exercise for filling out table 5, participants were once again invited to use their own country information gathered before the workshop. The afternoon of the second day addressed the issue of GHG projections, the related CTF tables for reporting on projections as well as data needs and recommendations for gathering or estimating data to close data gaps. During the practical phase groups were invited to review projections presented by developed countries and assess how these countries comply with requirements for reporting projections. The day included a dedicated time slots for participants to reflect on concerns they have when moving forward with their BTRs and elements that provide them with motivation for the upcoming tasks. The day concluded with a summary of learnings and take aways as well as an opportunity for participants to provide feedback.

The third day started with a dedicated time slot to strengthen the regional networks. Regional coordinators provided a look back to activities that have taken place in the last years and participants had the opportunity to share expectations and wishes for future activities. The following session focused on planning for the preparation and presentation of the first BTR. The session consisted of a technical input, the presentation of country experiences from the Dominican Republic, Chile and Belize and a simulation game for setting up a workplan until December 2024, when BTRs are due. During this game, participants from different countries were asked to come together as groups and come up with a name for their country, as well as a description of the key characteristics of the country (e.g. population, main economic sectors, vulnerabilities). They were then asked to elaborate a workplan for preparing and presenting their BTR, using a simplified version of the elements included in the BTR roadmap tool[1]. Then each group was presented with an unexpected challenge, e.g. considerable delay in funding or the loss of expertise and personnel, which triggered the need to adjust the workplan in order to still be able to present the BTR in time. Given the playful nature of the exercise, this was done in under 45 minutes. The exercise concluded with each group presenting their workplan and how they had chosen to adjust it to address the challenge they were presented with (see example in Figure 2).

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[1] https://transparency-partnership.net/publications-tools/btr-guidance-and-roadmap-tool
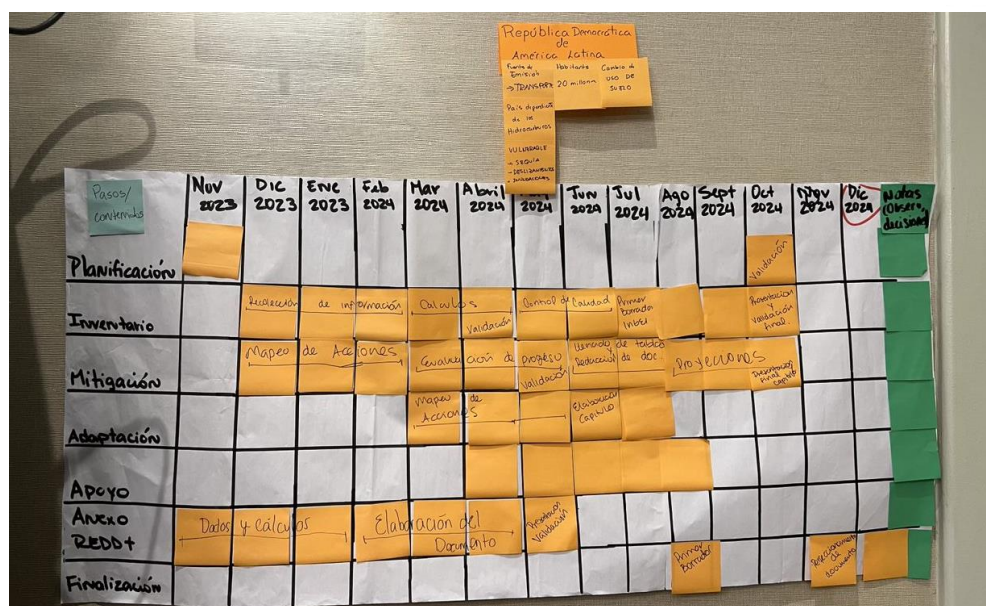
Figure 2: Example of a BTR roadmap developed in the BTR planning game

The afternoon session was dedicated to the UNFCCC ETF reporting tool. Representatives from the Secretariat provided a technical input and a demonstration of the tool. Participants were then able to try out the tool, ask questions and make suggestions. The third day concluded with a summary of main learnings an evaluation of the event and a discussion of next steps. Participants were also asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding their readiness for preparing and presenting a BTR in time in December 2024.

The detailed agenda is included in Annex II.

		CTF table	
Progress of what?	What is the objective or target?	Description of the NDC	Appendix
How will I track progress?	Definitions	Definiciones necesarias para entender la CDN	Table 1
	Indicators	Descripción de indicadores relevantes	Table 2
	Methodologies	Methodologies and accounting approaches	Table 3
How will I achieve the objective?	Policies, measures, actions, plans	Mitigation policies, actions, plans, measures	Table 5
	Projections	Projections of GHG emissions and removals	Tables 7,8,9
		Projections of indicators	Table 10
		Assumptions and parameters for projections	Table 11
Am I on track? Did I achieve my objective?	GHG emissions and removals	Summary of GHG inventory	Table 6
	Make assessment	Structured summary	Table 4

Figure 3: Overview of CTF tables and how they relate to tracking progress and achievement of NDCs

5. Main conclusions and lessons learned

5.1 Definition of indicators for tracking progress in implementing and achieving NDCs

Participants indicated that the concepts presented during the workshop related to indicators were useful to them. Several highlighted that the need to make objectives SMART and use them as a basis to determine the relevant indicators was a key learning provided by the workshop. Equally important, several participants highlighted the need to better understand and know the NDCs presented by their countries. In several cases, NDCs have been prepared by staff or consultants that are not tasked with transparency and reporting, and therefore requirements arising from there were not considered when NDCs were prepared. The workshop helped countries in identifying the relevant indicators for their NDCs. For all NDCs expressed in therms of GHG emissions, the relevant indicator for tracking progress is also be expressed in terms of GHG emissions in a given year. While for other types of targets, the indicators are chose to fit the targets. When countries expressed doubt, they were reminded that the ETF was designed to accommodate the variety of NDCs and thus does not prescribe in detail which indicators to use for traking progress. Finally it was clear to participants that tracking progress of implementation and achievement of their NDCs was best approached with a learning by doing mindset, hence the priority is to get started and improve over time.

5.2 Reporting on policies and measures (CTF table 5)

Frequent concerns were raised with regards to reporting policies and measures for achieving NDCs. These related, for example, to whether reporting on all policies and measures indicated in an NDC submission was necessary, how to deal with policies and measures where information for tracking progress is not readily available, and how to ensure continuity in reporting on policies and measures in light of changes and adjustments over time. Strategies to address these issues can include:

1) Clarifying whether policies and measures are part of the target(s) expressed in the NDC
2) Prioritising reporting of policies and measures that are key for achieving the target(s) expressed in the NDC as specified in paragraph 80 of the modalities, procedures and guidelines (MPGs) of the ETF (decision 18/CMA.1)
3) Prioritising policies and measures that are of especial importance for the country, e.g. because of co-benefits or development priorities
4) Start reporting the policies and measures where information is readily available and focus on improvement over time
5) Consider whether the necessary institutional arrangements for data collection to report on specific policies and measures are in place, are working or can be improved and if they are lacking, start with putting them into place

5.3 Use of common reporting formats (CTF)

The workshop provided ample opportunities for countries to get acquainted with the CTF tables and doing the work of filling them out. The information prepared during stage II was essential for the success completion of this exercise and for making significant learnings. Participants who were less acquainted with their NDC faced more challenges during this exercise. Participants received a large amount of information during a short period of time and a majority expressed that their knowledge improved, but they were not completely confident yet with filling out tables. This may be an indication for pursing follow-up trainings or small group setting for continuing the practical exercise with filling out tables. One important issue to consider early on is to help countries collect the information in a format that is compatible with the electronic reporting tool provided by the UNFCCC

secretariat. This will require ongoing exploration, as the tool is still under development. For now, the tables provided in excel format during the workshop constitute a useful tool for Parties to start collecting the information that will ultimately be included in their BTR.

5.4 Projections of GHG emissions in the BTR

The workshop provided a theoretical background on projections and detailed the requirements of the ETF, including the flexibility provided to developing country Parties in light of their capacities. This was followed by an introduction to the CTF tables, general input on how to collect information necessary for projections and an exercise for conducting a short review of projections reported by developed countries. It became evident that most of the countries are still lacking capacities to develop projections and to do so in a methodological sound way that is aligned with the work undertaken to prepare their NDCs. It is thus very likely that most countries will use flexibilities in the area of projections considering their limited capacities. Future work could address building capacities related to projections in a way that addresses both methodological and policy questions, to make the effort of preparing projections useful for countries during NDC implementation.

5.5 Overcoming constraints in data quality and availability

The collection of high-quality data and in some cases the lack of data for tracking the implementation of polices and measures or for preparing GHG projections was recognised as an important constraint for the preparation of BTRs. During the workshop participants identified strategies that could help them address data related constraints, these included:

- Improve data management at the subnational evel for use at the national level.
- Make use of sectoral data collection systems that are already in place to fulfil data requirements for BTR reporting.
- Ensure the buy-in of sectoral ministries and stakeholders, for example by finding ways for them to benefit from data collection and provision.
- Improving processes related to data collection and processing, e.g. through standardisation and streamlining.

It was also highlighted, that overcoming constraints related to data requires putting in place and improving institutional arrangements. The use of artificial intelligence tools was mentioned but not further discussed.

5.6 Preparation of the first BTR until December 2024

Countries recognised that preparing their BTRs in time will constitute a big challenge in light of existing constraints related to institutional and technical capacity, funding and available time. However, participants also felt motivated and on the third day of the workshop highlighted the following lessons that would help them in preparing the BTRs in time:

- Prioritise reporting requirements that are mandatory. In case of the mitigation aspects of NDCs this pertains to the GHG Inventory and the information necessary to track progress of its implementation and achievement
- Make use of flexibilities wherever necessary, e.g. reporting a "with measures" projection is mandatory for all Parties, but there is flexibility for countries that still lack the capacity to do so
- Make the effort to clarify and prioritise indicators for which information will be presented in the first BTR

- Prepare a clear roadmap until December 2024 for the preparation of the BTR. It is useful to plan for the different chapters of the BTR, assigning clear responsibilities and to consider enough time for the final approval of the document
- A few countries are still preparing a Biennial Update Report (BUR) under the Convention and wondered how they should approach this task in light of the BTR. It was recommended to align the work done for the BUR with the reporting requirements of the BTR in order to allow for information to be easily reused and repurposed

On day three of the workshop a small survey was conducted to ask countries whether they consider that they are in a position to present the BTR in time, which support they are currently receiving and where they see their main constraints. The results of the survey are presented in Annex 4.

5.7 Exchange and learning with a regional focus

The many working sessions provided opportunities for participants to exchange on concrete work they are undertaking and the problems they are facing. For example, some countries have put in place policies and measures related to black carbon and now face challenges on how to track progress. The regional nature of the workshop allowed for countries with similar issues to find each other and exchange perspectives on these issues. The workshop confirmed several benefits of providing opportunities for regional exchange. These include opportunities for peer learning, from countries that face comparable challenges but may have already found ways to deal with them, an exchange without language barriers as well as opportunities for networking and building a peer group that remains active beyond the workshop.

6. Recommendations and next steps

6.1 Topics for future exchange identified during the workshop

Drawing from discussions during the workshop and feedback given by participants, the following topics for future exchange could be identified. These include topics for stage IV of the process as well as topics for further peer learning events.

The topics identified for stage IV could be addressed in a targeted manner with countries that face more challenges or in group settings of countries. The identified topics include:

- Continued exchange on filling out CTF tables, this could include one-on-one sessions with countries or virtual sessions where countries come to exchange on burning questions they are facing
- Prioritisation of policies and measures to be reported in the first BTR
- Clarification of information gaps and needs arising from the current NDC that pose challenges for the BTR
- Once the electronic reporting tool is completed, an open line of communication to address and ideally solve questions or problems when using the tool

The following topics for future peer to peer learning workshops will benefit from a regional exchange as well as from cross-regional learnings:

- Exchange on tracking policies and measures with a focus on practical examples of how countries are doing this and identification of best practices
- Improve understanding of how tracking of policies and measures and tracking progress in implementing and achieving the NDC are linked
- Ensuring methodological consistency between the NDC and the GHG inventory
- Collection of experiences from the preparation of the first BTR that can inform the updating processes of NDCs

6.2 Methodology and Exchange: lessons learned

The format and setting of the workshop received positive feedback from participants. The focus on practical exercises in combination with technical inputs was considered useful. However, some participants indicated that they would have benefitted from more time to solidify learnings. Additionally, the opportunities for exchange between the two regional groups was limited. The separation by regional group during the practical exercises was considered useful, because there were no language barriers. For the technical inputs it was attempted to provide a language balance between English and Spanish, however this may have resulted in information not reaching all participants due to translation and the language barrier. Recommendations to improve future exchanges include:

- If possible avoid mixed language settings. Agreeing one workshop language provides clarity and can support participants in being continuedly engaged
- If the workshop takes place in a mixed language setting, all materials in both languages should be provided in both languages before the meeting. Time constraints during the workshop preparation phase may pose a barrier for implementing this recommendation, but it would contribute to reducing friction during the event and would be useful for participants
- Consider whether it is possible to provide practical exercises geared towards different capacities of countries. For example, countries that have more experiences and capacities with transparency may benefit from specific exercises and discussions that are not as useful for countries with less experience and capacity and vice-versa. After these more targeted exercises whole group exchange can then again be used to bring all learnings together

ANEX 2: Agenda

Day 1: ETF, mitigation in NDCs and indicators.

Time	Activities
09:00-09:10	Opening of the workshop. Welcoming remarks by organisers and presentation of workshop objectives
10:00-10:30	**Presentation:** The Enhanced Transparency Framework and Modalities Procedures and Guidelines with focus on NDC tracking provisions and overview of reporting tables Q&A and sharing of opinions
10:30-10:50	**Coffee break**
10:50-11:30	**Presentation:** Definitions and development of NDC indicators Q&A and sharing of opinions
11:30-12:10	**Exercise:** Definitions of SMART indicators and presentation of country cases
12:10-13:00	**Country experience:** Presentations of NDC-mitigation section, including how they have developed and defined indicators
13:00-14:00	**Lunch**
14:05-15:40	**Introduction and explanation of tables and exercise:** Filling CTF Tables 1 and 2: description and definitions to understand NDC
15:40-16:00	**Coffee break**
16:00-17:15	**Introduction and explanation of tables and exercise**: Filling CTF Tables 3 and 4: Methodologies, Accounting and Tracking progress of NDC
17:15-17:30	Summary and feedback
17:25-17:30	End of Day 1

Day 2: Training on filling in the CTF Tables.

Time	Activities
09:00-09:10	Summary of previous day and outlook
09:10-09:30	**Presentation:** Mitigation assessment and elements of mitigation tracking Q&A and sharing of opinions
09:30-10:30	**Introduction and explanation of tables and exercise:** Filling CTF Table 5: Mitigation policies and measures, actions and plans (1st part: using data from countries) **Exercise:** Filling CTF Table 5: Mitigation policies and measures, actions and plans (2nd part: using data from exercises)
10:30-10:45	**Coffee break**
10:50-11:30	**Presentation:** Elements on Projections of GHG emissions and removals Q&A and sharing of opinions
11:30-13:00	**Introduction and explanation of tables and exercise:** Filling CTF Tables 6 to 9: GHG emissions and removals with WM, WEM, WAM Scenarios
13:00-14:00	**Lunch**
14:00-14:40	**Introduction and explanation of tables and exercise:** Filling CTF Tables 10 to 11: Assumptions and parameters used for projections Q&A and sharing of opinions
14:40-15:10	**Presentation:** Practical cases of projections from other countries Q&A and sharing of opinions
15:10-15:25	**Coffee break**
15:30-16:00	**Presentation:** Response measures (table 12)

ANEXO 5: Group photos