



Preparing for the ICA process: Required efforts and capacities needed

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Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices

Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

T +49 228 44 60-0 (Bonn)

T +49 61 96 79-0 (Eschborn)

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 40

53113 Bonn, Germany

T +49 228 44 60-0

F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5

65760 Eschborn, Germany

T +49 61 96 79-0

F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E info@giz.de

I www.giz.de

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Responsible/Editors:

Matthias Daun

Rocío Lichte

Verena Schauss

Oscar Zarzo

Contributors version 1.0 (published in 2015):

Raúl Salas Reyes, Sina Wartmann, John D. Watterson, Gill Wilkins (Ricardo Energy & Environment)

Contributors version 2.0:

Luis de la Torre, Emelie Öhlander, Morten Pedersen, Jessica Wade-Murphy (NIRAS)

NIRAS  **IP CONSULT**

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Version

2.0

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Introduction

This paper assesses how Non-Annex I Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) can best prepare for the International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) of their Biennial Update Reports (BURs), and what efforts and capacities might be required as part of their preparation. In doing so, the paper draws upon project experiences from the Information Matters (IM) project and from Non-Annex I Parties' experiences gained during the first rounds of ICA sessions, comprising the Technical Analysis (TA) of the first BURs of 33 countries and the Facilitative Sharing of Views (FSV) of 30 countries as of July 2017.

This paper describes the ICA process, its components and the existing experiences with the rounds of ICA that have taken place so far¹. It then suggests how countries may prepare for their participation in the ICA process by identifying necessary preparation steps and related capacity needs, taking into account UNFCCC requirements. Finally, it offers recommendations on how to take into consideration the outcomes of the ICA in future reporting.

About the Information Matters project

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) of Germany under its International Climate Initiative (IKI) is providing capacity-building and technical support to a number of selected partner countries under the IM project. The aim of the project is to strengthen the in-country capacities for enhanced reporting under the UNFCCC, with a special focus on the preparation of BURs and the implementation of sustainable systems for measurement, reporting and verification (MRV). During the first phase of the project (2013-2016), support has been provided to the four partner countries Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ghana and the Philippines. During the second phase of the project (2016-2017), four additional countries joined the project, namely Colombia, Georgia and Viet Nam, building upon the results, experiences and lessons learned gained in the first phase of the project. In this context, the IM project also generates widely applicable knowledge products based on practical experience, such as this guidance paper on required efforts and capacities needed to successfully complete the ICA process.

¹ So far, under the ICA, three workshops of FSV have been held: 1st workshop in Bonn, Germany at Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) 44, 20 - 21 May 2016;

2nd workshop in Marrakesh, Morocco at SBI 45, 10 - 11 Nov 2016; and 3rd workshop in Bonn, Germany at SBI 46, 15 May 2017.

1. International Consultation and Analysis process

1.1 Introduction to the ICA process and its relevance

The ICA of BURs from Non-Annex I Parties aims to increase the *transparency of mitigation actions and their effects* by conducting an analysis of their BURs under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) through a process that is non-intrusive, non-punitive and respectful of national sovereignty and does not discuss appropriateness of the reported actions. The process takes place in two steps: first, the TA, conducted by a team of technical experts (TTE) in consultation with the Party concerned, and second, participation in an FSV session².

The ICA process was established by the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) in 2010 (decision 1/CP.16)³. At the following COPs, the requirements for the ICA process were further specified by defining the modalities and guidelines for the ICA (“ICA guidelines”, decision 2/CP.17)⁴, and by laying down the composition, modalities and procedures of the team of technical experts (decision 20/CP.19).⁵

The ICA process relates to mitigation actions and the MRV framework developing countries have established to support these actions. It focuses on the analysis and discussion of BUR contents, which

include national circumstances and institutional arrangements, national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, mitigation actions and their effects, constraints and gaps and related financial, technical and capacity needs, support needed and received, support received for the preparation and submission of the BUR, the domestic MRV, and any other relevant information that the Party deems reasonable to include due to its national circumstances.

The ICA process helps to understand the information provided in the BUR, but does not discuss the appropriateness of domestic policies and measures. It is important to note that the process is conducted *in a manner that is non-intrusive, non-punitive and respectful of national sovereignty*.

Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have special flexibility and can submit BURs at their discretion, but then undergo the TA process and participate in the FSV as a group of countries instead of individually.

The first round of the ICA process commenced within six months after the submission of the first round of BURs in December 2014. The following tables summarise all the rounds of TA and FSV under the ICA up to June 2017.

² See session reports in http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/reporting_on_climate_change/items/8722.php

³ UNFCCC. (2010). Report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixteenth session, held in Cancun from 29 November to 10 December 2010 Addendum Part Two: Action taken by the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth session. Bonn, Germany. http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07_a01.pdf; see paragraph 63

⁴ UNFCCC. (2011). Report of the Conference of the Parties on its seventeenth session, held in Durban from 28 November to 11 December 2011 Addendum Part

Two: Action taken by the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth session. Bonn, Germany. http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09_a01.pdf; see paragraphs 56 to 62, and Annex IV: Modalities and Guidelines for ICA

⁵ UNFCCC. (2013). Report of the Conference of the Parties on its nineteenth session, held in Warsaw from 11 to 23 November 2013. Addendum Part Two: Action taken by the Conference of the Parties at its nineteenth session. Bonn, Germany. http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10_a02.pdf#page=12 and its annex.

Table 1: Overview of the completed rounds of TA

Round	Dates of the TA week	Number of BURs/ Parties*
1	18-22 May 2015	11
2	17-21 August 2015	2
3	16-18 November 2015	1
4	29 February – 4 March 2016	6
5	13-17 June 2016	7
6	19-23 September 2016	5
7	5-9 December 2016	2
8	22-26 May 2017	7
*) From round 7 onwards, this also includes TAs of 2 nd BURs for some Parties		

Source: UNFCCC, 2017⁶

1.2 Step one: Technical analysis of the BUR

The first step of the ICA process consists of a TA of the BUR as a whole, as submitted by the Party. It is carried out by a TTE in consultation with the Party subject to the ICA, and results in a summary report. During the TA, the TTE compares the BUR to the requirements in the UNFCCC biennial update reporting guidelines for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (“BUR guidelines”,

Table 2: Overview of the completed rounds of FSV

Workshop	Dates	Number of Parties
1	20-21 May 2016 (SBI 44)	13
2	10 November 2016 (SBI 45)	7
3	15 May 2017 (SBI 46)	10

Source: UNFCCC, 2017⁶

Annex III to decision 2/CP.17)⁸ identifying, inter alia, whether all relevant information has been included (completeness) and whether it has been presented transparently. The TTE will also, in consultation with the Party, identify needs for capacity-building.

However, the analysis does not focus on the accuracy or comparability of the data. Furthermore, the ICA guidelines explicitly state that discussion on the appropriateness of the domestic policies and measures is not part of the analysis.

Team of technical experts (TTE)

Key elements of the requirements for the composition, modalities and procedures of the TTE conducting the TA under the ICA are highlighted in Table 3.

⁶ See http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_parties/ica/technical_analysis_of_burs/items/10054.php

⁷ See http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_parties/ica/technical_support_for_the_ica_process/items/10345.php

⁸ See Guidelines and Manuals in: http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/guidelines_and_user_manual/items/2607.php

Table 3: Key elements of the TTE composition

- TTE members are drawn from a group of international experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts by Parties. The exact number of the members to be included on a TTE is not clearly set by decision 2/CP.19. This allows flexibility in the composition of the teams on a case by case basis.
- Each TTE shall include, as a high priority and to the extent available, at least one member of the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE)⁹. Overall composition of the TTE should be such that the majority of experts come from non-Annex I Parties. Each TTE is co-led by two experts, one from a non-Annex I, and one from an Annex I Party.
- UNFCCC Secretariat selects the members of each TTE, guided by the CGE.
- To be eligible to be a member of the TTE, experts are required to complete a training programme developed by the CGE and pass a series of qualifying exams.
- Expertise of the TTE should cover the areas of information contained in the BUR.
- TTE members cannot be a national of the Party whose BUR is under analysis, nor nominated by that Party, nor have been involved in the preparation of the BUR under analysis.
- The TTE members cannot be involved in the analysis of successive BURs from the same Party.

Source: UNFCCC Handbook on Measurement, Reporting and Verification for developing country Parties, 2014¹⁰

1.3 Technical analysis (TA) timeline

Before the analysis week

The TA of the BUR starts within six months after the BUR submission. The TTE comes together in a single location for a week (also called “TA week”) to analyse the Party’s BUR and determines whether the information in the report is included in accordance with the BUR guidelines. Between four and five weeks before the TA week, the members of the TTE will analyse the BUR, and other relevant materials, to compile preliminary questions for clarification to be sent to the Party about two weeks ahead of the TA week. Ideally, the Party should answer these prior to the TA week, to facilitate the TTE’s work during that week. To this end, it is most useful if the Party ensures availability of the

relevant experts that participated in the BUR preparation around the critical dates.

During the analysis week

During the TA week, the TTE analyses the BUR for completeness and transparency, taking into account the clarifications already received from the Party concerned, and may send additional questions or clarifications to the Party. The Party may answer as quickly as possible, ideally within one or two days of reception. Table 4 provides a summary of a real example of participation in this analysis by one Party.

The ICA guidelines provide specific details on what is the Party’s role when participating in the technical analysis, but in some cases they are of generic nature. For example, the ICA guidelines

⁹ CGE: The Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Non-Annex I Parties was established by decision 8/CP.5 with the aim to improve national communications from developing country Parties through technical advice and support. It constitutes a key technical support element under the

Convention to assist developing country Parties in meeting their reporting obligations.

¹⁰ https://unfccc.int/files/national_reports/annex_i_n_atcom/_application/pdf/non-annex_i_mrv_handbook.pdf

mention that *additional technical information may be provided by the Party concerned* but do not specify further the level of detail expected from the questions made by the TTE during the technical analysis of the BUR. In practice, the questions are quite specific, so Parties should prepare accordingly and ensure the availability of experts who have worked on the BUR during the TA week.

Table 4: Overview of first steps of the TA process – example: Colombia

- Colombia submitted its first BUR on 11 December 2015.
- The TA began shortly thereafter, with the analysis week held from 29 February to 4 March 2016 in Bonn, Germany. The TTE consisted of six experts (four from Non-Annex I and two from Annex I). The co-leads of the TTE were from Spanish-speaking countries. Two staff members of the UNFCCC secretariat provided administrative support to the TTE.
- During the TA, the TTE and Colombia engaged in discussion via email, primarily to reach an understanding on the identification of capacity-building needs for the preparation of BURs.
- Following the technical analysis, the TTE prepared and shared a draft summary report with Colombia on 31 May 2016 for its review and comment.
- Colombia provided its feedback on the draft summary report on 25 August 2016.
- The TTE incorporated Colombia's comments and finalized the summary report in consultation with Colombia on 27 September 2016.

Source: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2016/tasr/col.pdf>

As an element to facilitate the communication between the Party and the TTE, the UNFCCC Secretariat provides the possibility of a videoconference between the Party and the TTE. It is usually held during the second half of the analysis week, allowing a more direct communication. It also allows the Party under ICA to request feedback

on specific elements of the BUR, and permits TTE members to provide more detailed technical suggestions (if desired by the Party) and thereby get a better understanding of the capacity building needs of the Party under analysis.

After the analysis week

The TTE has up to three months after the start of the TA to draft a summary report, following a standardised format¹¹. The summary report focuses on findings related to completeness and transparency of the information provided in the Party's BUR and on capacity building needs for improved reporting and participation in the ICA, as identified by the TTE in consultation with the Party. The summary report is then sent to the Party, which has up to three months to provide comments. A further three months can be spent by the TTE in drafting a final version of the summary report, based on the Party's comments. Before publication, the final summary report is shared with the Party concerned for final endorsement. The TA step of ICA ends with the publication of the report on the UNFCCC website after which the SBI takes note of it.

1.4 Step two: Facilitative sharing of views (FSV)

The second step of the ICA, the FSV, takes place for those Parties that have completed the TA (with the TA summary report published on the UNFCCC website) and uses as input the BUR and the TA summary report by the TTE. The FSV takes place in the form of a workshop organised under the SBI at the meetings of the SBI and provides a space to exchange views among Parties on the contents of the BUR. Several Parties subject to the ICA participate in a session to present their BURs followed by a session of questions and answers among Parties present at the workshop. These sessions are open to Parties and observers; however, only Parties are allowed to intervene,

¹¹ Published TA reports and FSV records are available at http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-

[annex_i_parties/ica/technical_analysis_of_burs/items/10054.php](http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_parties/ica/technical_analysis_of_burs/items/10054.php)

which they frequently do, not only to pose questions, but also to commend the Party undergoing the FSV for its efforts or for asking to share further experiences and lessons learned.

All Parties also can submit written questions in advance to the Party presenting at the FSV via the FSV portal managed by the secretariat, or pose questions during the workshop. One lesson learned from the first rounds is that questions should be sent well in advance to avoid unnecessary pressure on the Party presenting. Also, as time for presenting is limited to 15 minutes for the BUR and about 15-20 minutes for questions and answers, the Party subject to the ICA should carefully consider which key messages from the BUR it intends to deliver in its presentation.

For this part of the ICA process Parties can request whether they wish to take part individually or in a group (of up to five Parties). However, so far, Parties have participated individually in all the FSV sessions that have been held.

LDCs and SIDS may decide to undergo this procedure as a group at their discretion; however, for these Parties individual participation may

enhance understanding of needs and of opportunities for improvement.

The results of the FSV are documented in the form of the presentation by the Party, the webcast recording of the workshop, and the written record of the facilitative sharing of views, all of which are made available on the UNFCCC website¹².

In the timeline of the overall process, the FSV is likely to take place roughly around one year after the submission of the BUR, given that the preparation and publishing of the final version of the summary report by the TTE can take as much as up to nine months after the beginning of the TA. Because of this duration, a Party may be able to address the observations and comments received from the ICA process, including the FSV, to only a certain extent, depending on the preparation state of the following BUR at the time of receiving the comments and their magnitude. The potential timeline for the preparation and ICA of the first and second BUR is shown in Table 5. To avoid delays in reporting according to the UNFCCC timeline that may be caused by lack of funding, it is recommended that the Party initiate accessing funds from the GEF for the next BUR at the time of finalising the current BUR for submission.

Table 5: Timeline and main milestones of BUR submissions and ICA process (assuming submission of 1st BUR by December 2014)

Year	By Dec 2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1. BUR	Submission of 1 st BUR (Dec. 2014).	Start preparation of 2 nd BUR.	Continued preparation of 2 nd BUR. Submission of 2 nd BUR in Dec. 2016.	Start preparation of 3 rd BUR.	Submission of 3 rd BUR in Dec. 2018.
2. ICA		ICA of 1 st BUR starts within 6 months of submission.	ICA of 1 st BUR ends.	ICA of 2 nd BUR starts within 6 months of submission.	ICA of 2 nd BUR ends.
2.1 Technical analysis		TA of 1 st BUR takes place.	TTE finalises TA report of 1 st BUR followed by its publication.	TA of 2 nd BUR takes place.	TTE finalises TA report of 2 nd BUR, followed by its publication.
2.2 Facilitative sharing of views			FSV workshop for 1 st BURs.	2 FSV workshops for 1 st BURs.	2 FSV workshops for 2 nd BURs.

¹² See http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_parties/ica/technical_analysis_of_burs/items/10054.php and http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_parties/ica/technical_analysis_of_burs/items/10367.php

1.5 Experiences from the first ICA rounds

More than 30 Parties have undergone ICA between May 2015 and the date of writing (July 2017). This process has garnered experience that provides many lessons-learned for those countries that have not already participated in the ICA process.

In practice, 36 Parties have submitted their first BUR by June 2017. 33 completed the TA and 30 have undergone the entire ICA, i.e. including the FSV. On average, it has taken about 11 months to complete the TA process from the submission date of the BUR (taking also into account that the TA process is to be initiated within six months of the submission of the BUR).

The results of the TA step of the ICA process so far are informative for future participants in the TA process. The stated aim of ICA is to improve transparency of mitigation activities and their effects. To this end, the TA, in practice, considers first, the extent to which the elements of the BUR reporting guidelines have been reported, and secondly, the transparency of the information provided. Finally, it also provides a list of capacity building needs identified by the TTE in cooperation with the Party on matters related to improve the reporting of BURs and participation in the ICA process. In other words, in addition to the capacity-building needs, the TA provides feedback on how the Parties have reported on a) national circumstances and institutional arrangements, b) the GHG inventory, c) mitigation actions and their effects and related domestic measurement reporting and verification, and d) constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity-building needs, as well as support received to prepare the BUR.

The TA reports reveal that Parties should seek completeness in reporting, as much as possible.

However, when completeness is not possible due to national circumstances, capacities or time constraints, Parties can alleviate the lack of reporting by transparently explaining the circumstances that prevent reporting.

Any country interested in learning from the TA process would benefit from consulting TA reports from countries with similar circumstances to its own, reviewing the main feedback from the TTE and considering whether this feedback is also relevant for its own BUR.

The TA outcomes also provide useful inputs for a continuous improvement process of the BUR preparation. However, the extent to which the outcomes of the TA can be taken into account for the subsequent BUR will depend on the time by which the first draft of the TA summary report is available to the Party and, more importantly, on how they get internalised into the Party's institutional arrangements for future BURs, to the extent possible. Given the timeline of the overall process, the Party may wish to start working on its future improvements based on the discussions that have taken place during the TA week and the draft TA report, as appropriate. Otherwise, given the timing of the final TA report, the findings of the ICA may not be considered for the next BUR or NC, but in some cases for only the subsequent BUR. Where countries already have a documentation and archiving system as well as quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) procedures for the BUR in place, it is considerably easier for them to make the relevant information quickly available through their documentation systems and to consider and implement potential improvements identified by comments through their internal improvement processes.

2. Getting ready for the ICA process

2.1 What countries need to know and do

Certain conditions need to be in place for a country to be ready to take part in the ICA process. “Readiness” can be characterised as the case where a country has prepared the BUR with strong involvement of own national personnel, has adequately understood the ICA process to participate efficiently (for example, provide feedback within the established time limits to the TTE), and has the capacity to incorporate feedback from ICA into improved reporting. In other words, the country should have a firm understanding with regard to:

- objectives of the BUR;
- contents of its BUR;
- gaps and hurdles towards BUR completeness;
- technical requirements of the BUR guidelines;
- aim of the ICA process;
- scope, content and timeline of the ICA process;
- country’s role in the ICA process and the appropriate participants from its BUR team;
- benefits of the ICA process for the country.

In more detail, Table 6 shows an overview of what the required understanding might include.

Experience from other similar UNFCCC processes also shows that there are further relevant factors for a successful participation. Countries need not only to advance planning, organization and coordination of the BUR team, but also sufficient personnel to participate, e.g. to respond to questions for clarification, assess and comment on the report, prepare and attend the FSV, assess comments and implement relevant improvements. The BUR coordinating team can do this task, but a country may decide what will be the best way to approach the ICA process (i.e. the country decides whether the BUR coordinating team is sufficient for the

ICA process, or if they need to invite other relevant experts). Since the ICA process *is non-intrusive, non-punitive, and respectful of the national sovereignty*, and can be seen as a process that can help the Party to improve its reporting, Parties may include an improvement process depending on their national circumstances and capacities. If the Party decides to address any comments received during ICA, these improvements may require different types of resources (e.g. climate finance, capacity building, technology development and transfer, etc.) depending on the country circumstances.

2.2 BUR/ICA coordination team

As participation in the ICA represents an expenditure of work and resources, successful participation ideally requires the definition (or establishment) of a coordination team to lead the process and, at a later stage; integrate the international feedback in the future reporting cycles if the country wishes to do so. If possible, this team should have experts with involvement in the preparation of the BUR or parts of it.

Countries have to take a number of steps in preparing for the process itself. These are mainly non-technical. A key first step is clearly allocating the responsibility for coordinating the process. The coordination team should ideally include staff members that have compiled each section of the BUR. It will have to identify the other relevant experts who contributed to these sections of the BUR and thus should be available before and during the analysis week to answer questions for clarification.

Table 6: Understanding requirements for successful participation in the ICA process

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- UNFCCC requirements: BUR guidelines (2/CP.17, Annex III) and ICA guidelines (2/CP.17, Annex IV and 20/CP.19)- Basic technical understanding of BUR contents:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o National circumstanceso Institutional arrangements relevant to the domestic MRV system / to the preparation of BUR on a continuous basiso National GHG inventory (based on IPCC methodology)o Mitigation actions and their effects, including methodologies and assumptionso Constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity needso Support required and support received- Understanding of the ICA process:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Aim, scope, steps (technical analysis, facilitative sharing of views) and durationo The role of the Party (country) subject to the ICA processo The role of the TTE in conducting the ICAo The role of other Parties (what can they ask, when and how?)- Preparation for step 1 of the ICA: the technical analysis:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Identify team coordinating participation in ICA process in the countryo Identify all relevant country experts who should be available for the analysis process (e.g. BUR compilers and experts who provided key inputs to the BUR)o Ensure all relevant experts are available at short notice during the technical analysis.o Communication plan: How can the various experts best be contacted during the technical analysiso Prepare experts on the ICA process and timeframes for answerso Have all relevant documentation/ data sources available at hando Anticipate potential questions by the TTE by comparing the Party's BUR with the BUR guidelineso Identify potential capacity building needs for BUR preparation not yet described in the BURo Evaluation/ commenting on the summary reporto Learning from the process: documentation and evaluation- Preparation of step 2 of the ICA: the facilitative sharing of views:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Identify institutions and staff member(s) who should participate and familiarize with the country's BURo Decide whether to participate individually or as a group of countries (if applicable)o Identify the key messages for your presentationo Anticipate potential questions and prepare answerso Learning from the process: documentation, evaluation and improvements to the BUR

Figure 1 gives an idea of how to identify the BUR/ICA coordination team, including roles and responsibilities along the ICA process.

Figure 1: How to set up an BUR/ICA coordination team

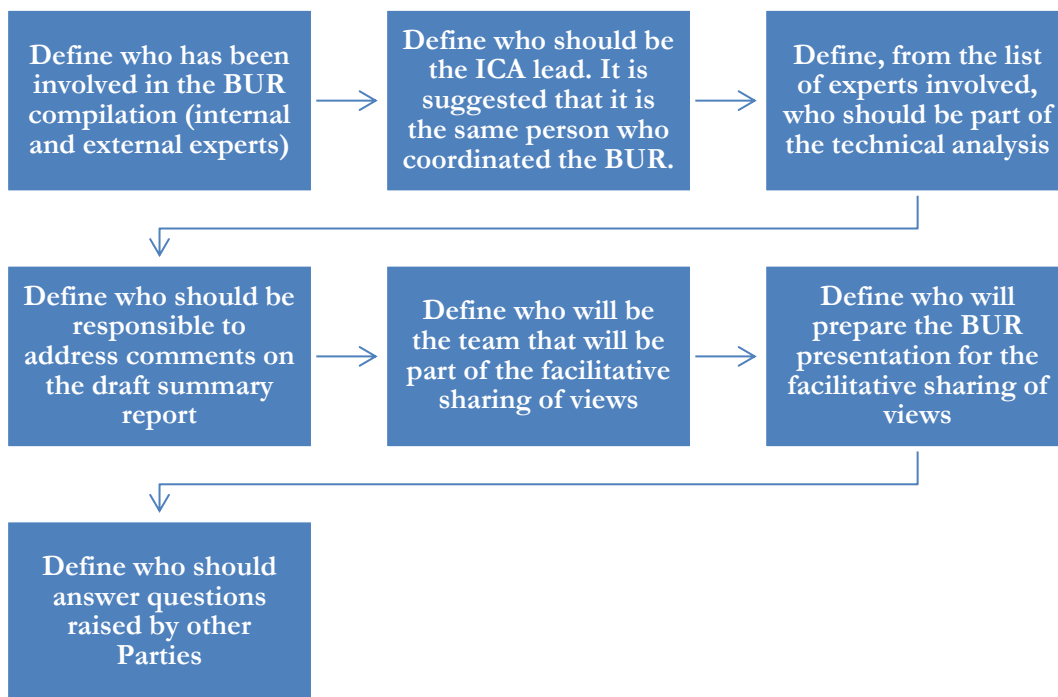


Table 7 follows the process on how to set up a BUR/ICA coordination team and proposes a list for the composition of this team. Experts may be

required, as listed in the table, to provide information when preparing for the technical analysis step.

Table 7: Proposed composition of the BUR/ICA coordination team

BUR/ICA coordination team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUR coordinator (recommended to be the ICA lead)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert(s) who contributed to the National Circumstances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert(s) who contributed to the compilation of the GHG inventory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert(s) on mitigation actions (such as Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM), and other international markets)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert(s) that contributed to the information on finance, technology, and capacity building needs and support received section of the BUR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert(s) that may provide additional information (e.g. experts with knowledge on how the national carbon contents and emission factors were estimated)

The experts have to be made aware of the process and its timelines. Ideally, potential questions for clarification (e.g. related to sections of the BUR which are less detailed than other) by the TTE are identified beforehand and the relevant information kept at hand. Compiling a communication plan listing experts, their area of expertise, affiliation, contact data and availability shortly before and

during the analysis week (e.g., in case of travel) can be helpful. The coordination teams also need to decide who should participate in the videoconference with the TTE. Table 8 shows a possible template that countries may use to include the information from each expert in the communication plan.

Table 8: Information that may be included from each expert for the communication plan

Expert name:		
Affiliation:		
Work phone number:		
Mobile phone number:		
Email:		
List of contributions to the BUR:		
Availability for the ICA process:		
Required for preparation of technical analysis?	Yes/no	
Required for the technical analysis?	Yes/no	
Required to comment on the summary report?	Yes/no	
Required for preparation of the facilitative sharing of views?	Yes/no	
Required for the facilitative sharing of views?	Yes/no	
Comments from the expert:		

A certain amount of time also should be set aside for the evaluation and commenting of the TA summary report, which likely has to involve the BUR coordinating team. For an efficient process, communication approaches need to be laid down early on (e.g. timelines, collection and compilation of comments). This will ensure experts can provide comments, and that these can be discussed internally before compilation and send-out.

While the TA is indeed a technical process step, the FSV mainly serves for the sharing of information, and may have a more political element. Party

delegations might be limited in number and do not necessarily coincide with the experts who have compiled the BUR. The consideration of which country representatives will give the presentation during the FSV and how they can prepare is thus an important one.

Also, as time for presentation is limited, countries presenting to the FSV will have to carefully consider which key messages from the BUR they want to present. Therefore, it would be important for Parties to involve relevant political stakeholders early on to agree on the key messages to be

presented and which institutions and staff members should be part of the presentation. The preparation and agreement of the presentation might take time, depending on the institutions involved. At the technical level, countries are again well advised to spend time anticipating potential questions and compile the relevant information so it is at hand during the FSV presentation.

2.3 Experiences from the Information Matters project

The IM project has delivered a number of insights relevant to the preparation of the ICA process. Before the first ICA process was carried out, countries felt uncertain what to expect from the ICA process both in terms of their specific role and the rigour of the process. Where experience from the Annex I annual GHG inventories' or National Communications' reviews was available, countries found it slightly easier to imagine what the process might look like (e.g. they anticipated that questions for clarification would be asked before and during the analysis week) and how it might be useful to them (e.g., for building their own capacity and improving the BUR content). The ICA process is an opportunity to get feedback from international experts, to improve the next reporting cycle. It also opens the door to experts of the participating countries to take part in the process of analysing other national reports, through the UNFCCC roster of experts.

The IM project also showed that a key element of a successful participation is ensuring that the aim and limits of the process are understood. Countries should be enabled to see that the process is not intended as a compliance exercise, but aims to support their capability in compiling a high quality BUR, and help the Party involved in identifying capacity building needs where necessary. For example, the ICA process focuses on the transparency of mitigation actions rather than on the appropriateness of the country's mitigation actions themselves.

While the compilation and submission of a BUR is an international requirement, the information contained therein is of utmost importance to the countries themselves in steering their mitigation actions to achieve their climate related goals, while at the same time receiving and managing the support required as a complement to national resources to take action towards these goals. The interaction with the TTE offers the opportunity to understand how the processes delivering the relevant information can be improved. Countries can considerably profit from the process where they seize this opportunity by actively asking questions (e.g., how can we improve the transparency of our BUR? Did we report our calculation methodologies or underlying assumptions in a clear and transparent way? Do the mitigation actions documented represent the overall actions from the country?), requesting feedback or even recommendations and engaging in a discussion with the TTE members during the videoconference.

A further insight from the IM project was that countries found it much easier to anticipate the ICA process and prepare for it when they had already gone through voluntary peer to peer reviews of their national GHG inventories (e.g., a non-Annex I Party had a voluntary review of its national GHG inventory by another Party (Annex I or non-Annex I)) and/or where elements of a national MRV system were in place. The ICA process may be considered a very light touch quality control process and requires countries to provide information at short notice and potentially improve their systems over time, based on comments received.

The IM project, through its focus on MRV, BUR and ICA, has supported a number of countries (Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam), to varying degrees to prepare for the ICA, in some cases even through specific training. The experience has shown that the effort required

for preparation is not very time consuming, with regard to both the capacity building and preparation of the process itself. The required understanding is, for the most part, not technical and can be captured within a limited timeframe. A key message for non-Annex I Parties is that capacity building for ICA preparation may require more effort where a country has requested external consultants to prepare and compile the BUR. In this case, training should ensure that there is a thorough understanding of the requirements of the BUR guidelines, the decisions taken in compiling the BUR, the contents of the Party's BUR itself and the methodologies and assumptions used.

The IM project has shown the same case when preparing for the TA. The steps require limited effort from the BUR/ICA coordination team as they are mostly of an organising nature (i.e. by understanding what documents/information will be required and having them available for easy access and having answers available for possible questions to be raised by the TTE). It is highly recommended to read the summary reports of other Parties in the process, to see the type of questions, the scope of the analysis and the resulting comments by the TTE on the extent of the information provided by Parties.

A higher effort is likely to be necessary during the TA week, where the BUR/ICA coordination team will need to be ready to answer questions raised by the TTE, participate in the videoconference and address comments (if any) for the summary report.

2.4 Ways to build and enhance capacities

Based on the above considerations, a number of ways can be explored to help Parties prepare for the ICA process and build and enhance the necessary capacities. For example, countries could use the opportunity to learn from other countries that already were part of the ICA process and/or

participated in any informal or peer-to-peer exchange or review with other countries (both from Annex I or non-Annex I). Knowledge and experience could be shared at events where country stakeholders and international experts gather to address matters related to mitigation and transparency, especially at regional meetings. For example, the annual retreats or regional group meetings organised under the Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement¹³ provide a platform to share experiences, ideas and lessons learned, including on matters related to mitigation, MRV, BURs and the ICA.

In addition, depending on the countries capabilities, capacity-building activities could assist in preparing and participating in the ICA. To this end, a number of modules related to building the capacity necessary for a successful ICA preparation could be developed, as suggested in Table 9. The modules provide an estimation of efforts in terms of time required and beneficiary groups for capacity building activities. The suggested duration of the modules relates to a situation where the country representatives don't have experience with the topic nor received any capacity building previously. Where the Party has not much experience in the topic, additional efforts to build the necessary capabilities will be required. The table also indicates the likelihood of previous experience existing and the conditions under which this might be the case.

Where previous experience exists, e.g. on BUR guidelines and requirements on BUR contents, efforts to build capacities might be considerably shorter as only a refresher might be needed. Furthermore, the modules could be delivered in various ways, e.g. in the form of in-country trainings, as regional workshops, webinars, calls or videoconferences for questions and answers, depending on the countries' circumstances.

¹³ www.transparency-partnership.net

Table 9 Suggested modules to build capacities, beneficiaries and time required for successful participation in the ICA process*

Required Understanding	For whom	Suggested duration assuming no previous experience	Likelihood of previous experience
UNFCCC requirements: BUR and ICA guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BUR/ICA coordinating team 	2 hours	Experience on BUR requirements likely where countries have prepared the BUR internally. Experience on ICA guidelines generally less likely.
Understanding of required BUR contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BUR/ICA coordinating team Individual experts who contributed to the BUR 	4 hours	Experience on BUR requirements likely where countries have prepared the BUR internally. Use UNFCCC latest guidelines to check these requirements.
ICA process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BUR/ICA coordinating team Individual experts who contributed to the BUR 	9 hours	Experience generally less likely. Some understanding might be found with individual staff members accredited as GHG inventory reviewers for Annex I / ICA experts for the TTE. Reading the participation of other countries is suggested in this module.
Preparation for the technical analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BUR/ICA coordinating team Individual experts who contributed to the BUR 	4 hours	Experience generally less likely. Some understanding might be found with individual staff members accredited as GHG inventory reviewers for Annex I / ICA experts for the TTE.
Preparation for the facilitative sharing of views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BUR/ICA coordinating team UNFCCC negotiators Political stakeholders Individual experts who contributed to the BUR 	4 hours	Experience generally less likely.

* The suggested duration of the modules have been estimated based on experience of trainings conducted under the IM project.

3. Improving the next reporting cycle

One important nationally added value of the effort to participate in the ICA process is to transform the feedback into improvements for the next reporting cycle. This means that the BUR coordinator or the QA/QC coordinator (or equivalent) in the national BUR team should be capable of compiling the feedback on all elements of the BUR and doing the following:

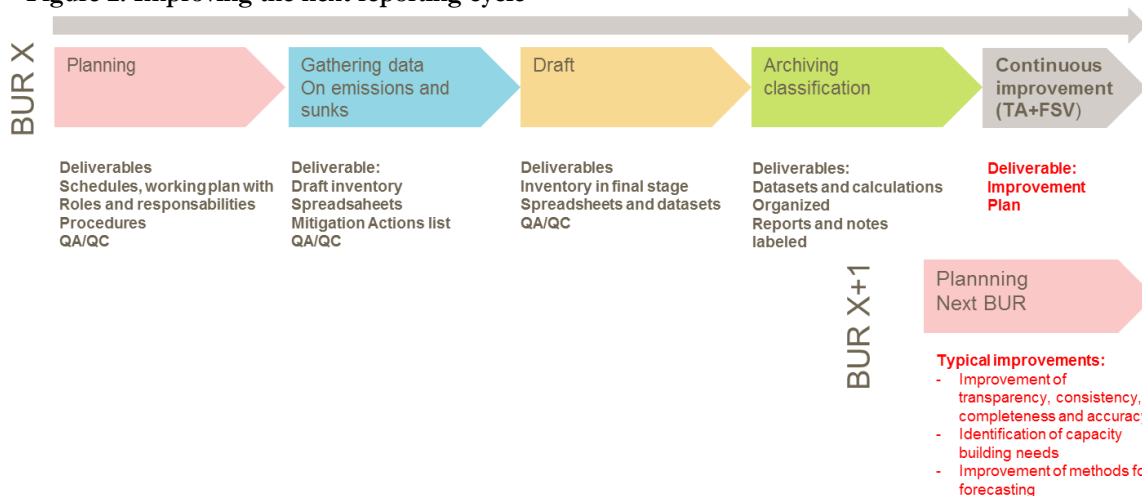
- Prioritise the most important elements for improvements as identified by the TTE
- Assess possibilities of how these changes could be incorporated permanently
- Request/secure the resources needed to implement the improvements
- Introduce QA/QC activities to monitor the changes, including stakeholder review

- Generate, where necessary, new inter-institutional agreements to obtain the information needed to support the changes consistently over time.

Figure 2 depicts the BUR preparation cycle, including the steps needed to identify and include improvements in the next reporting cycle.

General feedback from Parties that already went through the ICA process however indicates that there can be a number of additional nationally added values. For example, some countries say the process has helped them to increase political buy-in and ownership of their reports, has resulted in strengthened institutional arrangements and cooperation among institutions and stakeholders, or has contributed to enhance their own capacities.

Figure 2: Improving the next reporting cycle



Source: Adapted from Mitsubishi UPJ Research and Consulting¹⁴

¹⁴ Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting. Supporting Materials for preparing GHG Inventories, Biennial Update Reports, and National Communications Version 2.1. Ministry of the Environment, Japan “Feasibility

Studies on Joint Crediting Mechanism Projects towards Environmentally Sustainable Cities in Asia”, 2014; Osaka, Japan.



Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Sitz der Gesellschaft
Bonn und Eschborn

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn/Deutschland

T +49 61 96 79-0

F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E info@giz.de

I www.giz.de