

Summary Report
Informal Consultation Meeting on
Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency

April 13, 2016
Washington, DC, USA

1. Background

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat held an informal consultation meeting on the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) with GEF Council Members, GEF focal points, and other government representatives. The meeting was organized to facilitate an open discussion on steps needed for the establishment of the CBIT, and to gather informal feedback on programming directions and other matters. The GEF Secretariat encouraged the Council members and alternates to share the invitation with their respective capacity building negotiators for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Participants, in person and through an online meeting platform, included representatives of the following countries (in alphabetical order): Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Burundi, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Finland, France, Germany, Grenada, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Mauritania, Nauru, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

2. Introduction

The GEF CEO and Chairperson opened the meeting and expressed her gratitude that countries have put their trust in the GEF to take on the important task of establishing and operationalizing the CBIT. She indicated her commitment to support the CBIT, conveying her appreciation to donor countries considering to make voluntary contributions and to the recipient countries, who are committed to start implementing the CBIT.

The CEO acknowledged enhanced transparency of action and support as a critical foundation to make the bottom-up, country-led approach as embodied in the Paris Agreement work and to build mutual trust and confidence. Many developing countries still lack the capacity to effectively monitor and report on their progress vis-à-vis national greenhouse gas emission reductions, adaptation actions, and track progress made in the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) implementation. The CEO's vision for CBIT thus is to help place countries on a level playing field and enable them to effectively participate in the Paris Agreement implementation. The need to avoid business-as-usual was stressed, in order to ensure that we leave no one behind.

The CEO invited the participants to share feedback on the draft programming directions, circulated prior to the consultation, and to discuss information needed for the 50th GEF Council meeting in June 2016 to consider the CBIT establishment. She noted the need for timely establishment of the CBIT to respond to guidance by the Conference of the Parties (COP).

3. Overview and current status of the CBIT development

The GEF Secretariat representatives provided an overview the CBIT establishment. The aims of the CBIT as stated in the COP decision were introduced as follows:

- a. To strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities;
- b. To provide relevant tools, training and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Agreement; and
- c. To assist in the improvement of transparency over time.

The GEF representatives outlined the process for the establishment of a time-bound Trust Fund for CBIT to provide support for projects and programs during the remaining GEF-6 period (until June 2018), with voluntary contributions. CBIT activities would then be mainstreamed into GEF-7, starting in July 2018. Key elements of the proposed draft programming directions were presented for discussion.

4. Discussion on the CBIT establishment

Several participants acknowledged the need for timely follow-up on COP guidance by the GEF Secretariat on the CBIT. Many expressed their appreciation to the GEF for the efforts to date to respond to COP guidance in a timely manner, and for holding the informal consultation.

- ***Programming and activities:*** Various participants voiced their support for the proposal to provide assistance to both national level and global-regional level activities. Participants supported the proposed approach to provide a menu of options for countries to consider. The GEF Secretariat confirmed that the national capacity needs assessment is an optional activity, rather than a requirement or pre-requisite for accessing resources. Some participants stated that coordination and coherence with existing initiatives would be crucial and beneficial for the CBIT, and called for a coordination mechanism at the global level with existing and emerging initiatives. The need for close linkage with the UNFCCC workstreams and IPCC was also voiced. Some called for the share of national level actions to increase, given their importance in achieving concrete results, while others felt that the balance between the national and global components was reasonable.
- ***Access and prioritization:*** Participants noted that all countries will be able to access CBIT support under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. Many also voiced the need for prioritization and shared a wide range of views. Views shared include: having a strategic approach rather than first-come, first-served; targeting those that have ratified the Paris Agreement and submitted their first NDCs, and those indicating willingness to improve capacity; giving preference to countries that have demonstrated the greatest need for capacity; prioritizing larger emitters; prioritizing smaller countries; and prioritizing countries that are eligible for support from the International Development Agency (IDA) and those who have identified capacity needs in their BURs. A number of participants suggested countries with the least capacity, particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) be prioritized, recalling the CEO's vision to leave no one behind.

- ***Financial management:*** A number of participants noted the importance of including a sunset clause in the CBIT Trust Fund establishment, for the activities should be mainstreamed into the GEF Trust Fund in GEF-7. The GEF Secretariat confirmed that the sunset clause is included in the Council documents. The Trustee commented that it is feasible for the CBIT Trust Fund resources to be rolled over to the GEF Trust Fund. However, this matter needs to be specified in the financial agreement with donors. An indicative timeline for CBIT was also requested.
- ***Linkage with other GEF activities:*** A number of representatives also requested the linkage with the existing GEF support on related topics, such as National Communication and Biennial Update Reports support, be further clarified. An emerging need to address and reflect the NDC implementation was brought to the discussion. The GEF Secretariat agreed to clarify these elements in the documents to be presented to the GEF Council.

5. Next steps

The CEO expressed her appreciation to the participants for sharing their valuable feedback and suggestions. She noted the wide range of options and suggestions, particularly on prioritization. The CEO requested countries to reflect on the discussions and various views, and invited them to share additional written comments. She underscored the need for timely establishment of the CBIT in order to deliver on the COP decision.

She further shared her view that coordination with existing and emerging capacity-building initiatives at the country and global levels will be key to the success of CBIT. She mentioned GEF's consultative dialogue on CBIT, held on April 11, 2016, where she had an opportunity to learn and discuss the role that the CBIT could play to enhance coordination with representatives from civil society and non-governmental organizations, UNFCCC Secretariat and relevant workstreams, as well as others. She expressed her support for continued dialogue.

The participants expressed their appreciation to the GEF Secretariat for the consultations.