



Technical Report

GEF Funded Regional CBIT project participation in The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties Number 28 (UNFCCC COP28)

30th November to 12 December 2023

Expo City

**Dubai
United Arab Emirates**



**REGIONAL CENTRE FOR
MAPPING OF RESOURCES
FOR DEVELOPMENT**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	3
A. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	4
B. GEF FUNDED CBIT REGIONAL PROJECT.....	4
Objectives	4
C. DETAILED PROCEEDINGS AND SIDE EVENTS ATTENDED:	5
Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) for the African region under the AfDB NDC Hub	5
Launch of the UNFCCC Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) technical support tools	5
UNFCCC Together4Transparency initiative.....	6
Launch of the Enhanced Transparency Reporting Tools.....	8
Unlocking Enhanced GEF Support for Transparency	9
15th Facilitative Sharing of Views (FSV) Workshop.....	9
Meeting of the Consultative group of Experts	10
Side event on Enhanced Transparency for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) ...	10
Third progress update on the development of the training programme for technical experts participating in the technical expert review of the BTR	11
D. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	11
ANNEXES.....	13
List of sponsored delegation.....	13

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFOLU	Agriculture Forestry and Land Use
AfDB	African Development Bank
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CBIT	Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency
CGE	Consultative Group of Experts
CI	Conservation International
COMESA	The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COP	Confrence of the Parties
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
ICAT	Initiative for Climate Action Transparency
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MITICA	Mitigation-Inventory Tool for Integrated Climate Action
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification
NC	National Communication
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
RCMRD	Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources For Development
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SAGE	Sectoral Activity data for GHG Emissions
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
STAR	System of Transparency for Resource Allocation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Organization

A. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) established under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement (PA) aims to build trust and confidence that all countries contribute their share, to the global effort of combating climate change by transparently reporting the implementation of climate actions in their climate reporting.

Transparency is at the centre of the Paris Agreement. Unfortunately, most developing countries, still face significant challenges to collect, process and submit transparent, accurate, complete and consistent sources and sinks for Greenhouse Gas data, climate actions as set out in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

B. GEF FUNDED CBIT REGIONAL PROJECT

COMESA in collaboration with Conservation International (a Global Environment Facility Accredited Agency) are implementing a Regional Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency _ (CBIT) in climate change monitoring, reporting and verification (COMESA-CBIT project). The project is being implemented in four (4) COMESA Member States namely; Eritrea, Comoros, Seychelles and Zambia.

The overall goal of the Project is to strengthen the capacity of the four COMESA Member States to comply with transparency requirements as defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement through the establishment of an Eastern and Southern Africa Regional framework for Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of climate actions, reporting on NDCs and knowledge dissemination. The project will also strengthen the national transparency frameworks through the design and implementation of fully functional and harmonized domestic Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems for the effective implementation of the NDCs and other transparency-related activities in the four Member States.

The approved work plan and budget of the GEF CBIT Regional project had provision for the participation of the four Member States at the 28th Conference of Parties(COP28) at which Enhanced Transparency Framework(ETF) initiatives at regional, continental and global levels are discussed with lessons shared from across the globe. COMESA facilitated the participation of eight delegates(two from each of the four COMESA CBIT project countries) to the 28th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC.

The 28th Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held from November 30 to December 12, 2023, at the Expo City in Dubai under the slogan "*partnership promotes progress*".

Objectives

The following were the objectives of participating in the 28th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC:

- I. Participate in the UNFCCC side events and regional policy dialogues on Enhanced Transparency Framework(ETF)
- II. Share experiences, through policy dialogues and side event workshops on challenges and opportunities for transparency in the COMESA region

- III. Participate in side events of the Global CBIT coordination platform and share lessons learnt and experiences in implementing a regional CBIT project in the COMESA Region.
- IV. Discuss long-term joint cooperation and technical support between UNFCCC, COMESA and other institutions implementing ETF-related interventions at regional, continental and global levels.

C. DETAILED PROCEEDINGS AND SIDE EVENTS ATTENDED:

Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) for the African region under the AfDB NDC Hub

The African Development Bank in collaboration with the UNFCCC, Commonwealth and SADC presented a Work Programme towards supporting ETF implementation in Africa through the African NDC Hub. The side event provided an opportunity for countries to share their experiences in implementing MRV and ETF, engage with stakeholders, discuss support activities, and explore potential collaboration opportunities to strengthen transparency efforts in the region. During the panel discussion, Zambia shared information on progress made in the development of domestic MRV/ETF tools and systems including the greenhouse gas (GHG) management systems and legal frameworks as part of preparedness for the Enhanced Transparency Framework. Zambia also shared experiences from several approaches taken and synergies drawn with existing projects to facilitate the preparation of its first Biennial Transparency Report and fourth National Communication.

The objective of the side event was to provide the space for the Africa NDC Hub of the African Development Bank (AfDB) to present their proposal on how they are planning to support developing countries in the Africa region in implementing the ETF, including various support activities and engagement opportunities.

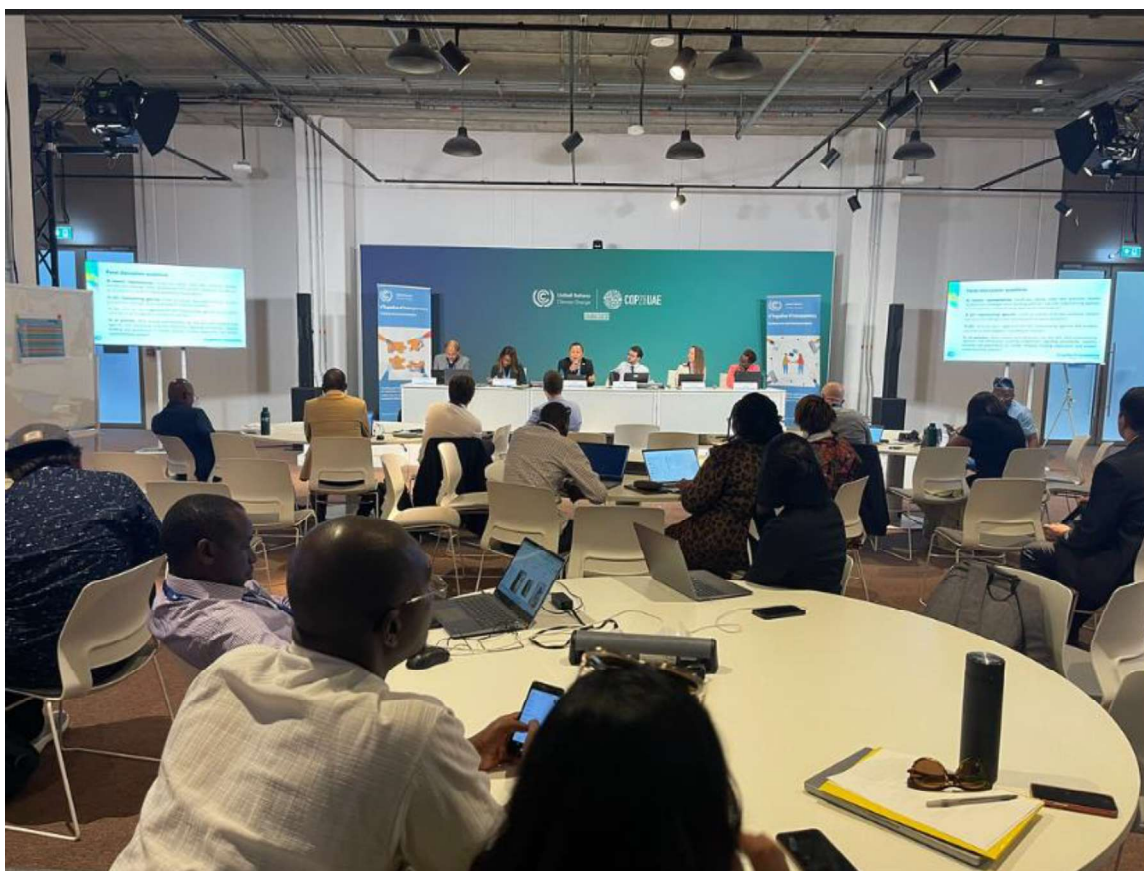
The AfDB NDC Hub discussed the critical need for capacity building of African Parties to the Paris Agreement if the continent is to meet the Article 13 provisions. The meeting discussed the need to identify sector experts who shall undergo a training of trainers programme which can lead to the cascading of capacity to other government officials and relevant stakeholders especially where data collection, analysis and storage are concerned, the foregoing being critical for effective GHG inventories at country level. The NDC Hub will also identify partner institutions at regional and continental level especially the RECs which will be key in delivering the training programmes.

Launch of the UNFCCC Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) technical support tools

At COP28, the UNFCCC Secretariat launched key tools supported by the UNFCCC Secretariat to strengthen the operationalization of the ETF. The COMESA-sponsored delegation from the Union of Comoros, the State of Eritrea, the Republic of Seychelles and Zambia (the four COMESA CBIT Project countries) participated in the trainings and ETF technical clinics where the SAGE (Sectoral Activity data for GHG Emissions – a data collection and management tool), the latest version (2.89) of the IPCC inventory software and MITICA (Mitigation-Inventory Tool for Integrated Climate Action) were launched. The training and updated software will strengthen the

operationalization by developing countries of the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement.

The UNFCCC secretariat supported the development of three key tools, aimed at working in synchronization, in order to reinforce the transparency, completeness and consistency of GHG emissions data reported in various reports under the Convention. Together, the three tools synergistically complement each other and will contribute towards strengthening the capacity of developing countries to prepare and submit not only improved national GHG inventory reports, but also design and implement credible mitigation actions, which in turn will facilitate the efficient and coherent implementation of agreed outcomes, laying the foundation for effective reporting of data necessary for the Global Stock Take to support climate action, as well as the provision of more transparent information by countries under the Paris Agreement.



Delegates during the UNFCCC launch of ETF tools

UNFCCC Together4Transparency initiative

At COP28, the UNFCCC in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders launched a series of events under the #Together4Transparency initiative aimed at generating a global momentum for governments to prepare and submit, in a timely manner, the first Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and in accordance with the MPGs, before or at the latest by 31 December 2024. #Together4Transparency events included, targeted hands-on training sessions on ETF reporting tools, in-person seminars for BTR technical expert reviewers, side events on support needs to

address the specific needs and challenges of developing countries, and special events to recognise experts who passed the exams of the ETF overview training course. Further, the importance of the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE), which offers technical advice and support to parties on ETF implementation, was reaffirmed at COP 28.

Other key discussions were on a Common Time Frame (CTF) for submitting reports from all countries, including the push for the degree of flexibility to be granted to developing countries in their reporting requirements. It was noted that there is need to strike a balance between ensuring ambition and transparency while taking into consideration the capacity constraints of developing countries.

COP 28 discussions focussed on how participation in the UNFCCC transparency arrangements can help developing countries to further domestic climate action priorities, and build sustainable institutional, policy frameworks and infrastructure to facilitate climate reporting. Under the #Together4Transparency initiative, the UN's Climate Change Transparency Division organised special events to recognise experts who completed the ETF overview training course. In this vein, the Climate Change and Natural Resources Manager, Dr Charity Nalweya from the Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) was awarded a certificate of recognition by the UNFCCC for being a frontrunner in the Training Programme for Technical Experts reviewers under the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement. So far, the UNFCCC has provided training to more than 500 experts from 120 countries. In addition, the importance of the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE), which offers technical advice and support to parties on ETF implementation, was reaffirmed at COP 28.



Dr Charity Nalweya receiving the certificate of recognition from the UNFCCC

Launch of the Enhanced Transparency Reporting Tools

One of the key ETF outcomes at COP 28 was the launch of the web-based reporting tools, aimed at making the ETF infrastructure fully operational to facilitate the submission of the first Biennial Transparency reports (BTR1). The tools and resources developed included reporting templates, data platforms, and guidance documents. Once the ETF is fully implemented, Parties will be able to submit the mandatory information and data in the agreed formats which, in turn will allow for the comprehensive analysis, review, comparison, and assessment of progress towards meeting the climate goal.

To facilitate usage of the ETF web-based tools, hands-on training sessions on the GHG reporting tools and the NDCs tracking and support tools, were conducted by the UNFCCC during COP28. The hands-on training sessions allowed national experts to test the reporting tools in preparation for submission of the first ever Biennial Transparency Reports. Credentials to access the ETF tools have been availed to the National Focal Point Person for each Party to test the tools and provide feedback for further refinement. Once validated by Country parties, the tools will be released and officially made available on the UNFCCC website in June 2024.



ETF reporting tools hands on training

Unlocking Enhanced GEF Support for Transparency

Matters relating to financial support and access modalities to developing country parties to implement the ETF took centre stage in the transparency negotiations. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides support for BTR and national communication (NC) preparation, capacity building through the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT), and Global Support through the CBIT Global Support Programme. The support provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in the implementation of the ETF through preparations of BTRS was recognised. Discussions focussed on BTR financing and access modalities for the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Financial support modalities for standalone BTR1, and combined BTR and NC were explained. The discussions did not yield a specific decision on additional funding support for developing countries to meet their transparency requirements. Notwithstanding that, GEF reaffirmed its statement issued earlier in 2023 that an additional modality of US\$ 250,000.00 is available as top-up for BTR1.

GEF is working with its implementing agencies, e.g., FAO, UNDP, UNEP and UNIDO, to streamline and simplify access modalities and enhance coordination on project coverage. Developing country Parties indicated that they faced challenges in accessing GEF funding and support in a timely manner, as well as in implementing GEF projects sustainably. To address these issues, GEF informed Parties that it has simplified the application and funding processes by revising the funding application templates with the new template more concise, comprising three pages with 4-5 sections, and approximately 2,000 words. In addition, GEF now offers the option to bundle multiple reports within a single application.

COP28 underscored the significance of GEF in providing adequate and predictable finance to developing country parties and the need to enhance collaboration with implementing agencies to promote timely delivery of support in the preparation of BTRs.

GEF was urged to strengthen its approach in mobilising private finance including blended finance to minimise the risk of scalable projects in developing countries and contribute to the achievement of the PA. GEF was further encouraged to include in its annual report to be presented at COP29, lessons learnt to enable activities ie costs, access, modalities and delivery of support for the first BTRs including information on technology development and innovation and ways to enhance institutional capacities of developing countries to assist them to meet their reporting requirements.

15th Facilitative Sharing of Views (FSV) Workshop

The Eritrean delegation participated in the 15th facilitative Sharing of Views (FSV) Workshop which was held on 3 December 2023. The Facilitative of Sharing of Views is one of the two steps defined under the International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) process for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties). The 15th Facilitative Sharing of Views (FSV) is organized in the form of a workshop under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) parallel to COP28 meetings. Eritrea is among the 15 countries selected to the ICA process. The Department of Environment briefly presented the Eritrea's First Biennial Update Report (BUR1) to Parties. After the presentation the Parties raised oral questions and answered by the Eritrean delegates. The two COMESA sponsored delegates contributed their valuable in responding to the comments and

questions raised by Parties and Shared Eritrea's experience and practices at national level, particularly Eritrea's experience in renewable energy, energy efficiency, Soil and Water Conservation, Afforestation and Reforestation program, restoration and reclamation of degraded areas, on-farm soil and water conservation practices and soil fertility amendment activities as well as the approach adopted to implement adaptation measures through mobilizing community were also explained to Parties.

Mr. Tesfai from the Department of Energy participated in a panel discussion by panellists from IRENA Leveraging debts for climate adaptation and learnt lessons on how to address and control financial issues. He also participated in one of the panel discussions on climate action "Inclusive strategies for local climate adaptation and resilience, which was interesting to enhance our existing strategies and activities. In addition, he participated in a side event "Accelerated partnership for renewables in Africa" which is very important for Eritrea as the country is endowed with renewable energy, and it can benefit from this partnership.

Meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts

The Comorian delegation participated in the consultative group of experts meeting where several discussions were held on ETF. The discussions bordered on suggestions for separating parameters for submissions of biennial transparency reports (BTRs) from those for submissions of national communications and biennial updates, highlighting current capacity constraints. Countries called for equal access to fully participate in the GCE in the role of chair or rapporteur.

The meeting also highlighted the need to focus (within the 2024 work programme) on supporting developing countries in preparing TBRs to meet obligations under the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF); support to the Secretariat to train Parties in the use of new reporting tools; address imbalances in sectoral, gender and geographic representation; and identify and address current support gaps.

During the meeting, some developing countries highlighted the lack of capacity to carry out BTRs hence the need to build capacity in a more targeted manner. The meeting also reviewed the GEF's financial standing about capacity building on the ETF. Developing countries implored the GEF to assess the feasibility of streamlining processes for Parties to supplement their funding for Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) from their System for Transparent Resource Allocation (STAR), some expressed concerns about the impact this could have on the implementation of projects on the ground. Regarding calls to at least double the financial resources allocated for the preparation of BTRs under the Ninth Replenishment of the GEF (GEF-9), and the request to the GEF to prepare an information note on the structure of financing costs TBRs to inform the GEF-9 negotiations, which attracted the support of developing countries, many developed countries saw a risk of pre-empting the results of the GEF-9.

Side event on Enhanced Transparency for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

The Seychelles delegation attended a COP28 side event on Transparency which was co-hosted by Antigua and Barbuda, the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI) and the Initiative

for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) on Enhanced Transparency for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The meeting was of critical importance for the Seychelles and other SIDS in the COMESA region which are at the beginning of their journey to implement the ETF and yet to developing their Biennial Transparency reports (BTR) in 2024. Some of the critical highlights were that reporting is a hard obligation, especially for developing countries under the Paris Agreement and the basis for international transparency, but climate data is even more important domestically. Additionally, ICAT proposed to support Seychelles in preparing guidelines for a forest inventory in 2024 that would be in line with improving transparency in the AFOLU sector but the support will be in tandem with the current COMESA CBIT project.

Third progress update on the development of the training programme for technical experts participating in the technical expert review of the BTR

Discussions mainly centred on the shortage of experts participating in reviews and that funding of the review process are major constraint under the current MRV arrangements. The current situation is anticipated to intensify with the transition to the ETF due to the increased number of reviews. It was highlighted that the following courses were released in 2023:

- a) General and cross-cutting aspects for the technical expert review under the ETF under the Paris Agreement,
- b) Greenhouse Gas inventory,
- c) Tracking progress in implementing and achieving NDCs, and
- d) Financial, technology development and transfer and capacity building support.

The fifth course - Climate Change Impacts and adaptation reported under Article 7 of the Paris Agreement is under development and the scheduled launch date is September 2024.

D. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The COMESA delegation to COP28 was delighted to participate in the conference as many critical issues about transparency were discussed at COP28. Additionally, the ETF dialogues and trainings allowed for assessing the capacity needs at the country level if the 4 Member States are to meet the Article 13 requirements of the Paris Agreement. As countries will soon be transitioning to the ETF Regime and the BTR submission commences, there is a need for the COMESA CBIT project to expedite the capacity-building interventions under the project as a way of preparation for the transition and meeting the BTR reporting timeframes. Furthermore, the following are the recommendations to COMESA, CIAfD and RCMRD arising from attendance of COP28 which are worthy of consideration under the COMESA CBIT project programming for implementation:

- i. Facilitate the development and launch of robust MRV/ETF systems, tools and processes that will track progress in the implementation of Carbon/green projects and enhance the preparation of future BTRs
- ii. COMESA/CBIT to support the BTR Technical Working groups to test the ETF reporting tools

- iii. COMESA through the CBIT project should scale up in-country capacities in ETF through hands-on training on the latest UNFCCC Reporting guidelines and tools
- iv. COMESA CBIT Project to support the Technical Working groups members of the BTR project and Universities to take specialised short to medium-term ETF courses to strengthen in-country institutional capacities in ETF
- v. COMESA CBIT Project to consider capacity building support of the 4 Countries in Carbon Market mechanisms that will lead to active participation in future Article 6 negotiations
- vi. COMESA, CIAfD and RCMRD should expedite the commencement of training under the global project work plan as a way to ensure the 4 project countries are not left behind in terms of the required expertise and skills to embark on the ETF journey and the BTR reporting.
- vii. CIAfD and COMESA to facilitate south-south cooperation through knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt sharing among the 4 COMESA CBIT project countries and other non-COMESA CBIT countries. For instance, CIAfD and COMESA should explore the support of a Study tour to Ghana to learn lessons on the implementation of a robust NDC tracking tool to facilitate the preparation of the NDC tracking Chapter of the BTR1/NC4 report.

ANNEXES

List of sponsored delegation

Name of Delegate	Member State/Institution
Mr. Tesfai Andom	Eritrea
Mr. Micheal Asres Berhane	Eritrea
Ms. Faouza Mohamed	Comoros
Mr. Ambadi Issouf Miradje	Comoros
Mr. Andrew Jean Louis	Seychelles
Mr. Didier Dogley	Seychelles
Ms. Lilian Kalenge	Zambia
Dr. Charity Nalweya	Zambia
Ms. Edith Tibahwa	COMESA
Mr. Lwembe Mwale	COMESA