Regional Climate Action Transparency Hub for the Economic Community of Central African States: Launch Event Report

Initiative for Climate Action Transparency - ICAT

Regional Climate Action Transparency Hub for the Economic Community of Central African States (ReCATH-ECCAS): Launch Event Report

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Introduction

The Launch Event for the Regional Climate Action Transparency Hub (ReCATH) for countries of the Economic Community of Central African States in Central Africa (ECCAS), funded by the Initiative on Transparency of Climate Action (ICAT), took place on March 24th-25th 2022. It was hosted by ECCAS and held by video-conference. It was attended by the Ministers, or their representatives, of the 11 countries of this economic area, representatives of the specialized institutions and implementing agencies of ECCAS, the directors of ministerial departments, Climate Focal Points, national agencies, civil society organizations and Technical and Financial Partners of the sub-region.

Launch Event Day 1

Opening Ceremony

The ceremony was placed under the authority of Her Excellency Mrs. Eve BAZAIBA MASUDI, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Democratic Republic of Congo, country holding the current Presidency of ECCAS (represented by Mr. Godefroid Ndaukila). The event was opened by Dr. Henning Wuester, Director of ICAT, who welcomed Her Excellency Mrs. Eve BAZAIBA MASUDI through her representative, His Excellency Ambassador Gilberto Da Piedade Verissimo, President of the ECCAS Commission, their Excellencies Ministers of ECCAS Countries, and all other participants.

The Director of ICAT congratulated the ECCAS Commission and the countries of the sub-region for the establishment of this Regional Hub of Transparency for Climate Action (ReCATH), he recalled, on behalf of the ICAT Steering Committee, the willingness to continue to support the Central African sub-region in its efforts to fight against climate change and in the transparency of actions. He further stressed that the vision is for countries in the subregion to take action on climate change while strengthening their capacity to advance national development priorities.

The interventions of the President of the ECCAS Commission and the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister in charge of the Environment and Sustainable Development of the DRC, recalled the commitment and willingness of the High Political Authorities of Central African countries to make their contributions in the fight against climate change. They recognized the efforts to be made to build strong transparency systems in the countries of the subregion, which would contribute to making visible their actions in this area.

Keynote presentations

Presentation of ECCAS and their activities - Dr Honore Tabuna

Dr Honore Tabuna, Commissioner for the Environment, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development Department (DERNADR) at ECCAS, described the challenges facing the Central African Region, noting how it includes five major climatic/land use zones and the importance of forestry. He explained how ECCAS set up DERNADR as a new department to support the region address these challenges. Dr Tabuna described the four main axes of their work:

- Sustainable management of resources (land, water, extractives and forestry)

- ● The economy of the environment and biodiversity
- ● Traditional know-how and enhancement of natural resources
- ● Agriculture, rural development, security, health and food security.

Dr Tabuna outlined the Commission's ongoing regional programmes on forestry management and re-forestation, the management of flooding, the carbon economy, and on meteorological and climate data. He also emphasised the importance of working with partner organisations including the EU, WWF, UN Habitat, the FAO and most recently ICAT and explained how the new ReCATH-ECCAS programme will fit well and integrate with their other programmes and was very supportive and enthusiastic about the work of the hub.

Presentation of ICAT and the ICAT ReCATH-ECCAS hub – Prof Fobissie Kalame

Prof Fobissie Kalame, a technical expert from FOKABS, who together with Aether, are supporting the establishment and work of the Regional Hub at ECCAS, provided an introduction to the work of ICAT and more specifically, the aims and objectives of the ReCATH-ECCAS Hub. He stressed that the Hub will support countries in their implementation of the Paris Agreement and help build national capacity to monitor progress towards climate change goals, inform policy makers and boost ambition and resource mobilization. He further indicated that the hub will provide extensive training and technical support that will facilitate the sharing of information and good practices and build more capacity within the region.

Presentation of CAPC-AC - Dr Pascal Moudi Igri

Dr Pascal Moudi Igri presented the role and work of the Climate Application and Prediction Centre for Central Africa (CAPC-AC), a specialised institution within ECCAS. He highlighted that CAPC-AC is an intergovernmental organization to build the capacities of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in the region and is in the process of becoming a World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Centre of Excellence. The Centre is responsible for developing meteorological and climate policy and the provision of climate services and products to provide resources and tools for National Meteorological Services in the region. Their work seeks solutions to address problems such as flood, drought, erosion, environmental management, construction of resilient infrastructure, management of green and sustainable cities. Dr Moudi Igri explained how at a political and institutional level, the operationalization of the CAPC-AC is a translation of the commitment of ECCAS Heads of State to the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the international conventions on climate change, sustainable development goals and the Sendai Framework for Action 2020-2030.

Question and Answer Session

Each ECCAS Member Countries was asked in turn if they had any questions about the regional hub and whether they were interested in participating. All ECCAS Member Countries (with the exception of Angola who had failed to join the event due to technical issues) replied positively and there was a good level of interest and commitment for the Regional Hub.

Closing Remarks

The countries and partners recalled the context in which this ceremony was held, including the commitments made by the countries of the Central Africa region in the fight against climate change, and stressed the importance of financial resources, and strong policies and actions for countries to achieve their climate action and sustainable development goals. To this end, they praised the initiative and expressed their willingness to engage, participate and benefit from the opportunities

that the Regional Hub will offer to the region.

Launch Event Day 2

Opening Messages

The 2nd day of the Launch Event focussed on the technical aspects of the Regional Hub and more detail about the proposed content and how it would be delivered. The event was opened with short introduction by Dr Henning Wuester (ICAT) and Dr Honore Tabuna (ECCAS), who again welcomed all participants and set the direction for the day's event.

Presentations of the Project Hub

Overview of the Regional Hub - Randa Ahmed

Randa Ahmed, from ICAT's Secretariat provided an overview of the Regional Hub. The objective of the Hub is to contribute to the strengthening of capacities and create a regional network to support efforts made by member countries to strengthen or put in place sustainable and integrated systems to support transparency. She described six specific objectives:

- Create a centre of expertise on transparency of climate action
- Assess the needs and priorities of each country
- Strengthen the capacity in the Congo Basin
- Create a network of experts and country managers
- Dissemination of tools and guidelines to support transparency
- Support the mobilisation of resources

Ms Ahmed noted the programme of work involves 3 elements the gap analysis and needs assessment followed by appropriate training and technical support programmes. She described the structure and governance of the Hub, the roles of ICAT, ECCAS and the technical support team (FOKABS and Aether), the Working Group comprising the Climate Focal Points from each country and the establishment of the Hub at ECCAS to provide focal point of contact with participants in all member countries. Working Groups will be established focussing on specific technical areas. Ms Ahmed explained that this is a major commitment by ICAT which is providing 1.8 million USD to fund the establishment of the Hub including the appointment of 5 experts in Douala and a set of national consultants, together with 750 thousand USD for international technical support.

Justin Goodwin

Justin Goodwin, a Director of Aether and Technical Lead for the international technical support team, gave a detailed presentation describing the scope of the Regional Hub and the technical approach being adopted. Mr Goodwin reiterated that the first activity in the project is a gap and needs assessment to ensure that the work is tailored to the needs of the member countries. The scope of the Regional Hub will cover all the areas required for the monitoring, tracking and reporting of climate transparency in line with the requirements of the Paris Agreement, including greenhouse gas emission inventories, mitigation and adaptation climate policies and actions, scenarios and projections, support (climate finance, technology and capacity building) and the wider impacts of climate action linking climate action to sustainable development goals and disaster risk reduction and the SENDAI framework. The scope is summarised in Figure 1. He stressed that the

team are aiming to work with ECCAS and national experts to develop long term, well-functioning Monitoring Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems that will serve their national teams for the next 15 – 20 years.

The technical approach is being structured around 5 main areas of capacity building, governance /institutional arrangements, building expertise of national experts and teams, supporting countries to identify and improve data flows, systems and tools and stakeholder engagement. He explained how the current situation in each country is being assessed through stakeholder engagement. Mr Goodwin also described the set of tools and resources that would be available through the hub including technical support and training, a knowledge library, a comprehensive stakeholder database and details on other MRV/transparency projects funded elsewhere.
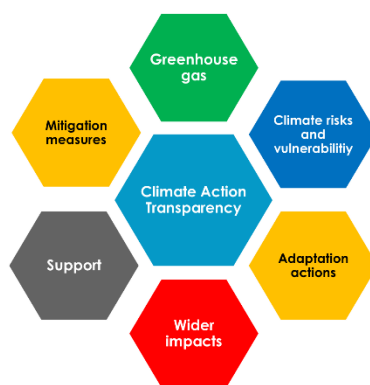

Figure 1: Thematic scope of the project

The presentation was well received and created a significant level of interest.

Presentations by ECCAS Member Countries

All ECCAS Member Countries were invited to make short presentations on the current status of transparency activity in their country and express their level of interest in the Regional Hub. All countries participated with the exception of Angola.

Burundi

Astère Nindamutsa, the Representative of the UNFCCC Focal Point, presented the current situation in his country. A revised NDC has been submitted to the UNFCCC, and the biennial report has been prepared. An MRV system is in place but Burundi needs financial and technical contributions and requires institutional support at the national and regional level for the implementation of the climate actions. He identified a need for greater transparency in Burundi's climate change activities and expressed the country's intention to fully engage with the Regional Hub.

Cameroon

Cameroon was represented by Témothée Kagonbé, Deputy Director Ecological and Climate Monitoring, UNFCCC National Focal Point. He identified that much of the country's previous climate change work has been undertaken by international consultants, however Cameroon is now working to establish national databases. The country already has an MRV framework which is presented in the updated NDC and covers data gathering and processing. Cameroon's priorities include strengthening this system and improving data collection processes. Mr Kagonbé also highlighted

the challenges of collecting data from the private sector.

Central African Republic

The country's UNFCCC Focal Point, Igor Gildas Tolka Kogadou, expressed the Central African Republic's willingness to participate in the project. He outlined that although the country does currently have an MRV framework, it faces challenges when implementing it. Mr Kogadou identified the need to build capacity at a sectoral level and improve data collection processes in the country to better inform the current MRV mechanism.

Chad

Mr. Mahamat Abdoulaye Issa, National Focal Point for Chad, confirmed that the Ministry of Environment wish to support the project and discussed ICAT's previous work within the country, which included the development of a basic MRV system. Mr Issa explained that the country now needs to prioritise building capacity within the agency responsible for operationalising the MRV system, in particular developing the expertise of those in leadership roles and improving the coordination of data collection processes. He also highlighted the need for financial and material capacity building.

Congo

UNFCCC Focal Point, Florantine Mapeine Onotiang, represented Congo, in place of the relevant minister. She expressed the country's commitment to fully engaging in the project and to providing further information on Congo's current situation and needs at a later date.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo was represented by Aimé Mbuyi Kalombo, Head of the country's Climate Change Division. Mr Kalombo provided a detailed presentation about current systems and processes within the Democratic Republic of Congo, which included the implementation of a multi-stakeholder task force on climate change, an ad-hoc working group for adaptation and a pilot community MRV system for monitoring climate initiatives and projects. The representative also outlined existing national data flows.

Mr Kalombo provided a comprehensive list of challenges faced by the country. He identified building the capacity of national experts and streamlining data sharing, management and archiving processes as the areas of priority for the Democratic Republic of Congo. The country hopes that the Hub will contribute to the improvement of the following areas:

- Monitoring and evaluation of adaptation measures
- Analysis of climate scenarios, projections and mitigation measures
- Monitoring risks and vulnerabilities

Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea's focal point for climate change, Jose Nsue Ndong briefly outlined the country's current NDC targets. He confirmed that the country was fully engaged and wished to join the Hub.

Gabon

Davy Onomori briefly detailed the existing systems for climate change MRV in Gabon and spoke of the country's intention to fully engage with the project.

Rwanda

Mathieu Mbati attended the event on behalf of Rwanda. He declared the country's readiness to contribute to the project but explained that focal points at the Ministry of Environment would need to be contacted for further information.

São Tomé and Príncipe

Mr Jose Luize Lima Onofre, the São Tomé and Príncipe National Focal Point, from the National Institute of Meteorology, had previously shared a set of detailed slides with the international project team that describe the challenges faced and the support required. São Tomé and Príncipe already has a project underway to design a robust and sustainable institutional MRV system that is in compliance with the requirements of the Paris Agreement and will be supported by a knowledge management system. Priority is for the Institutionalization and operationalization of the system. Strengthening the capacity of the National Committee on Climate Change is also very important because it serves as the control and monitoring institution for the operation of the MRV system. São Tomé and Príncipe would like the Regional Hub to support capacity building of their institutions at the technical level, by providing support to improve existing databases, their harmonization and interconnection, and improve data archiving systems.

Discussion and Next Steps

A discussion session was held after the country presentations and participants were to ask questions. Dr Henning and Dr Honoré Tabuna, ECCAS Commissioner in Charge of Environment, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development responded to these. Overall, there was a good level of discussion that demonstrated a high level of interest for the ReCATH-ECCAS hub. Dr Tabuna also confirmed that the establishment of the Hub at ECCAS was underway and that it was hoped a Head of Hub would be appointed shortly.

Interactive needs assessment – Justin Goodwin

Workshop participants were invited to engage in an interactive session, delivered on Mentimeter, that aimed to capture countries views on their priorities for the technical support and training to be provided by the ReCATH-ECCAS hub. It was based on initial information collected through a desk-based study and some early stakeholder engagement with country representatives. Fourteen participants from 5 countries took part in this survey including the National Focal Points from Cameroon, Republic of Congo and a representative of the National Focal Point for Burundi. Other participants included interested parties from Gabon and Rwanda and the Climate Application and Prediction Centre (CAPC-AC) at ECCAS. In line with standard Mentimeter surveys, the results themselves are anonymised.

The first question considered the provision of support on mitigation and asked which sectors the countries would like the ICAT ReCATH hub to provide support. The results are presented in Figure 2 and show that a significant number of respondents would like support across all sectors but the highest response was for forestry, agriculture and energy systems. The other sectors requested were disaster management and water and health.
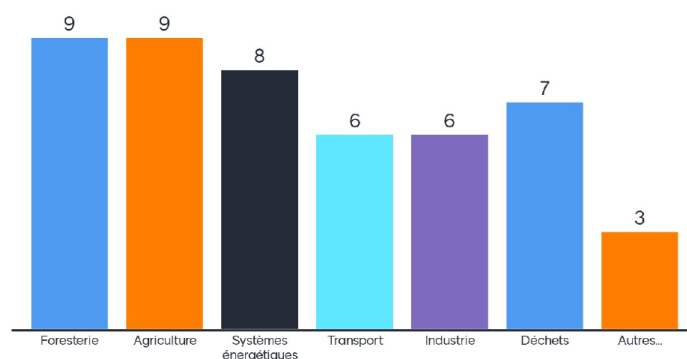
Figure 2: Response to the question: In which areas of mitigation do you wish to be supported?

In the second question, participants were asked their priorities for support in adaptation. The results are presented in Figure 3 and again show significant interest in the provision of support across all sectors, with the highest level of interest in water resources and floods, agriculture, human health, closely followed by infrastructure.
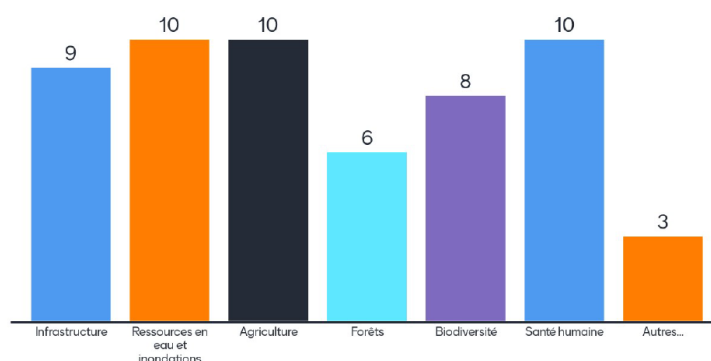

Figure 3: Response to the question: In which areas of adaptation do you wish to be supported?

Participants were then asked whether they experienced a series of common problems encountered in transparency work. In each case they were asked mark on a scale from 1-5, with 5 representing a serious issue. The average scores for each question are summarised below, although in all cases there was a spread of responses from 1 to 5.

- Lack of technical expertise within national teams (score 3.3)
- Insufficient and good quality national data (score 3.4)
- Ineffective systems and tools – data collection, assessment, reporting & archiving (score 3.3)
- Weak institutional frameworks for transparency (score 3.1)
- Insufficient resources and dependence on international finance (score 4.8)
- Lack of engagement with decision makers and the public (score 3.2)

Further, more detailed questions then asked participants their priorities for support on the assessment of climate risks, vulnerability and adaptation actions, their greenhouse gas inventories,

projections and mitigation measures, climate finance, technologies and capacity building and the wider impacts of climate change actions on sustainable development goals and the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction. In all cases there was a spread of scores collected but generally more participants showed high priority for support activities assessing climate risks, vulnerability and adaptation actions, projections and mitigation measures, and the assessment of the wider impacts of climate change actions.

Next Steps

Justin Goodwin explained that the next step would be the completion of the country needs and gap assessments and the development of the Work Plan for the project. This would be done in consultation with the National Focal Points or their representatives. It would build on the early stakeholder engagement that took place following the Pre-Launch meeting at COP26 and the discussions and country presentations and Menti assessment from the Launch Event. He thanked everyone for their interest.

Closing Remarks

Dr Tabuna thanked everyone for their active participation and noted that all 10 countries present had noted their commitment to join the Regional Hub project and become involved. He closed the event saying how he was looking forward to the implementation of the project.

Annex 1

Agenda – see separate file.