

INTERNATIONAL



# Opportunities for Increasing the Efficacy of the Mitigation Work Programme Submission

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Originally established to accelerate climate mitigation in this critical decade, the mitigation work programme has become mired in political division and procedural gridlock, raising questions about its efficacy. With the work programme due to close in 2026 with the option for renewal, it is crucial that Parties avoid losing the only formal agenda item and work programme dedicated to mitigation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This submission responds to the call for views on opportunities, best practice, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers relevant to the continuation, functioning and effectiveness of the work programme, with a view to discussions taking place at intersessional meetings in June 2026.

Ahead of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (*UNFCCC's*) 64<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies (*SB64*) and 31<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties (*COP31*), Parties face a critical opportunity to politically and strategically recalibrate the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (*MWP*). Originally established to accelerate both ambition and implementation in this critical decade, negotiations under the MWP have remained slow and contentious, struggling to move beyond political posturing and procedural decisions, and raising questions about whether the programme is fulfilling its mandate.

The MWP, due to close in 2026 with the option for renewal, aims to scale up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade in a manner that complements the global stocktake (*GST*). Political disagreements over the intended nature of the MWP have prevented consensus on key aspects.

Deep divisions persist over whether the work programme is fulfilling its core mandate, in particular with respect to complementing the GST. There are differing positions amongst Parties about whether and when it is appropriate for the MWP to surface key signals on mitigation ambition, or whether its role is to solely provide the procedural conditions to continue its mandated dialogues and investment-focused events twice per year. At the core of this divergence lie fundamental tensions on how to drive enhanced mitigation in a way that complements the GST, as mandated. Concerns include: (i) respecting the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities in light of different national circumstances; (ii) respecting national sovereignty; and (iii) not explicitly or implicitly redrafting the Paris Agreement's ambition cycle, including the GST.

If these tensions are left unresolved, there is a risk of undermining the MWP's ability to support meaningful ambition. Further, failing to renew or replace the MWP this year would mean losing the only formal space under the UNFCCC dedicated to mitigation. In reflecting on the MWP and assessing next steps for mitigation work under the UNFCCC, Parties should consider how to more effectively elevate political issues on mitigation to the ministerial level—under the guidance of the COP Presidency—in order to unlock further technical cooperation.

### Questions for consideration

- Has the MWP fulfilled its objective of scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade in a manner that complements the global stocktake?
- How can the Parties overcome political divisions to enable more effective cooperation and implementation in the MWP?
- Should the MWP remain a primarily procedural and technical space, or should it evolve to play a more facilitative role aligned with broader efforts under Article 4 of the Paris Agreement, the global stocktake, and the Global Climate Action Agenda?

## A. Context

### The MWP Mandate

1. The MWP—established at COP26 (2021)<sup>1</sup> and operationalized at COP27 (2022)<sup>2</sup>—aims to accelerate mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade in a manner that complements the GST, including in support of the implementation of Article 4 of the Paris Agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>3</sup> At COP27 (2022), Parties specified that the MWP would start after COP27 and run until 2026, with a possible extension.<sup>4</sup>
2. The decision on the MWP at COP27 also:
  - confirms that the MWP’s objective shall be to accelerate mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade in a manner that complements the GST<sup>5</sup>
  - decides that the MWP shall be operationalized through focused exchanges of views, information and ideas<sup>6</sup>
  - notes that the outcomes of the MWP will be non-prescriptive, non-punitive, facilitative, respectful of national sovereignty and national circumstances, take into account the nationally determined nature of nationally determined contributions (*NDCs*) and will not impose new targets or goals<sup>7</sup>
  - decides that the MWP shall function in a manner that is consistent with the procedures and timelines for communication of successive NDCs established in the Paris Agreement.<sup>8</sup>

### Progress and Challenges to Date

3. It is important to recognize progress made on mitigation, including the dramatic global shift to renewable energy and the evolution of developing country mitigation commitments over the years under the UNFCCC process.<sup>9</sup>
4. However, negotiations under the work programme thus far have been slow and politically fraught, resulting in largely procedural outcomes with limited impact on enabling conditions.<sup>10</sup> Since its launch, Parties have disagreed on: the nature of any normative decisions arising from the MWP; its approach to sectoral discussions; and the extent of the MWP’s linkage to the GST. For these reasons, the MWP has largely focused on convening the mandated twice-yearly technical dialogues and investment-focused events.<sup>11</sup>

5. Some Parties have raised concerns that the insights emerging from global dialogues and investment-focused events are not always captured in a way that supports wider action, limiting the MWP's ability to generate confidence among policymakers, funders, and other actors outside of the UNFCCC process.
6. Discussions under the MWP have reflected differing views among Parties on the balance between promoting ambition and respecting national circumstances. Some Parties believe that the MWP should do more to highlight key mitigation targets and signals, in particular in light of the evolving science and the greater urgency for mitigation action since the Paris Agreement was adopted. Others caution against approaches that could be perceived as imposing new commitments, contrary to the MWP mandate and the spirit and letter of the Paris Agreement.
7. There is tension around how to ensure the MWP complements the GST in a way that: (i) respects the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities in light of different national circumstances; and (ii) does not explicitly or implicitly redraft the Paris Agreement's ambition cycle.
8. Given these tensions and a number of procedural outcomes, some Parties have questioned whether the MWP has been effective. With the MWP due to close this year, Parties risk losing the only formal agenda item devoted to mitigation if it is not extended or replaced. Given the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it may send a poor signal on mitigation ambition if the MWP were not renewed.
9. Discussing the extension of the MWP presents an important opportunity to address how to best utilize the MWP, acknowledging that more ought to be done to scale up mitigation, and try to resolve ongoing tensions. Parties will need to consider whether the current structure of the MWP remains fit for purpose or whether it should be adjusted to better reflect evolving needs. This includes weighing its value as a procedural platform against its potential for a more facilitative approach that links directly to the implementation of Article 4 under the Paris Agreement and the outcomes of the GST process, contributing to enhanced international cooperation.

## B. Opportunities

### Global Dialogues and Investment Focused Events

10. The global dialogues and investment focused events to date have been an important forum for sharing best practice and exchanging ideas, including on some issues that are directly linked to the first global stocktake (*GST1*) outcomes. These dialogues and investment focused events contribute to the scaling up of mitigation implementation. To improve the impact of the work programme, attention could be given to ensuring more prominent outputs that build on the global dialogues and investment focused events.
11. Such outputs could take the form of non-prescriptive key messages that speak to Parties and non-Party stakeholders (*NPS*) to inspire domestic policies and ideas for initiatives that could attract investment. In collating these messages, attention must be given to ensuring that the mandate will be respected in order to build and maintain trust among Parties. Key messages that emphasize investment opportunities raised at the investment-focused events and that highlight ways to make NDCs investable improve the impact of the work programme.
12. There could be a more practical focus on highlighting best practice for institutional capacity building and domestic planning processes. Parties could consider how the MWP could more usefully link to NPS in order to better reflect realities on the ground and be strengthened to be more useful to practitioners. This could include including inviting the Climate High-Level Climate and/or relevant international cooperative initiatives participating in the Global Climate Action Agenda to present their work and progress to the MWP.

13. The facilitative Facilitative, Multilateral Consideration of Progress under the Enhanced Transparency Framework offers a depoliticized forum for sharing best practice in mitigation policies and provides opportunities for Parties to ask questions on them. Parties could also consider inviting Parties to present relevant case studies from their biennial transparency reports (*BTRs*) at the MWP's global dialogues, highlighting other elements of the ambition cycle under the MWP.
14. The COP Presidency should be encouraged to make use of the reports coming out of the MWP to ensure the insights emerging from global dialogues and investment-focused events are disseminated in a way that supports wider action and improves the MWP's ability generate confidence among policymakers, funders, and other actors outside of the UNFCCC process.

### Governance of the Work Programme

15. If Parties decide to renew the MWP, they should not only reinforce that it should not impose new commitments, but leverage the opportunity to ensure that the MWP:
  - be facilitative
  - encourage cooperation
  - promote technical exchange
  - be valuable to inform domestic planning
  - reinforce the nationally-determined nature of commitments
  - be aligned with the GST and follow up on GST1, including by focusing on sector specific pathways to urgently take forward the outcomes of GST1
  - focus on highlighting opportunities, including to generate investor confidence
  - speak to NPS.
16. To fulfil its mandate of “complementing” the GST, the MWP should be informed by GST1 and its synthesis report, and should inform the second global stocktake (*GST2*). However, there is little clarity on how it should support the uptake of the mitigation outcomes from GST1 or support the preparation for GST2. Furthermore, not all Parties have embraced the GST outcomes in the same way. Some Parties have expressed concerns that attempts to align the MWP with the GST could conflict with the nationally-determined nature of commitments if, for example, a decision on the MWP mandates reporting on progress against GST targets or signals.
17. To address this tension, Parties may want to consider how the work of the MWP is complementing the GST—aside from forwarding the reports from its dialogues and investment-focused events to the GST—and whether the relationship can be improved or strengthened in a way that addresses Parties' concerns regarding sovereignty. This could include explicitly focusing global dialogues and investment focused events on priority areas identified by the GST1, including components of paragraph 28.<sup>12</sup>
18. Political dynamics within and between national governments have contributed to the limited progress under the MWP, preventing it from advancing beyond procedural outcomes. Political disagreements over the nature of the MWP—whether it should focus on sending mitigation signals, align closely with the outcomes of the GST, or remain narrowly technical—have prevented consensus on decision text at recent sessions. These divisions, if unresolved, may continue to undermine the MWP's ability to support meaningful levels of ambition and implementation. Parties could consider better utilizing ministerial-level discussions to unlock progress under the MWP, including by leveraging high-level ministerial roundtables. By effectively elevating political issues under the MWP to the ministerial level, under the guidance of the COP Presidency, more technical cooperation could be unlocked. A clearer separation between the political and technical levels, together with a clear common understanding of

the mandate of the MWP, could help unlock the work programme and enable it to focus on supporting implementation and knowledge exchange.

19. Parties may want to consider what other linkages may be important to the MWP's work, including the following workstreams:

- The GST: As the beginning of the technical phase of the GST2 process in 2026 coincides with discussions about whether to renew the MWP, Parties should carefully consider how to align timelines and outputs.
- The UAE Just Transition Work Programme (*JTWP*): As Parties simultaneously work to elaborate the Just Transition Mechanism under the JTWP and consider what they want out of a potential extended MWP, they could leverage linkages between the two to support enhanced international cooperation, particularly to strengthen matchmaking between funders and project implementors.<sup>13</sup>
- The Veredas Dialogue (finance): As Parties seek to improve the MWP's matchmaking function and role in spurring investment opportunities for mitigation programs, they should consider how the Veredas Dialogue could offer another facilitative dialogue space to discuss financial alignment for mitigation implementation.<sup>14</sup>
- The technology implementation programme (*TIP*): Given the importance of technology development and transfer as an enabler of mitigation ambition and implementation, Parties should consider linkages between the MWP and the TIP, which Parties agreed should complement ongoing related work on climate technologies for both mitigation and adaptation under the COP.<sup>15</sup> This could include coordinating approaches to the topics of the TIP's annual dialogue and the MWP's global dialogues to allow for more granular discussion while avoiding duplication.
- The Global Implementation Accelerator and Belém Mission to 1.5: The Belém outcome launched two one-year initiatives that will enable and accelerate mitigation ambition and implementation. Parties could usefully consider how to maximize synergies across these workstreams this year and also consider the longer term trajectory of mitigation efforts under the Paris Agreement.<sup>16</sup>

## C. Related C2ES Resources

Reflection on Key Mitigation Outcomes from COP30 (March 2026)

<https://www.c2es.org/document/reflections-on-key-mitigation-ambition-outcomes-from-cop30/>

Key Negotiations and Related Outcomes of the UN Climate Conference in Belém (February 2026)

<https://www.c2es.org/document/key-negotiations-related-outcomes-of-the-un-climate-conference-in-belem/>

Delivering on the Targets and Signals from the First Global Stocktake (July 2025)

<https://www.c2es.org/document/delivering-on-the-targets-and-signals-from-the-first-global-stocktake/>



## D. References

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- <sup>1</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [hereinafter UNFCCC], *Glasgow Climate Pact*, Decision 1/CMA.3, ¶ 27 (March 8, 2022), <https://unfccc.int/documents/460950>.
- <sup>2</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme*, Decision 4/CMA.4 (March 17, 2023), <https://unfccc.int/documents/626569>.
- <sup>3</sup> UNFCCC, *Glasgow Climate Pact*, Decision 1/CMA.3, ¶ 27; UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme*, Decision 4/CMA.4, ¶¶ 1-3.
- <sup>4</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme*, Decision 4/CMA.4.
- <sup>5</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme*, Decision 4/CMA.4, ¶ 1.
- <sup>6</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme*, Decision 4/CMA.4, ¶ 2.
- <sup>7</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme*, Decision 4/CMA.4, ¶ 2.
- <sup>8</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme*, Decision 4/CMA.4, ¶ 3.
- <sup>9</sup> UNFCCC, *Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. Synthesis Report by the Secretariat*, FCCC/PA/CMA/2025/8 (October 28, 2025), <https://unfccc.int/documents/650664>.
- <sup>10</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme*, Decision 13/CMA.7 (November 10, 2025), <https://unfccc.int/documents/655273>; UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme*, Decision 2/CMA.6 (November 11, 2024), <https://unfccc.int/documents/644937>; UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme*, Decision 4/CMA.5 (November 30, 2023), <https://unfccc.int/documents/637073>.
- <sup>11</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme*, Decision 4/CMA.4, ¶¶ 8-10.
- <sup>12</sup> UNFCCC, *Outcomes of the first global stocktake*, Decision 1/CMA.5 (March 15, 2024), <https://unfccc.int/documents/637073>.
- <sup>13</sup> C2ES, *Issues and Options for the Just Transition Mechanism* (Washington, DC: C2ES, March 2026), [https://www.c2es.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Just-Transition-Mechanism\\_Issues-and-Options\\_v2.pdf](https://www.c2es.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Just-Transition-Mechanism_Issues-and-Options_v2.pdf).
- <sup>14</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh Dialogue on the scope of Article 2, paragraph 1(c), of the Paris Agreement and its complementarity with Article 9 of the Paris Agreement*, Decision 11/CMA.7, ¶ 5 (March 30, 2026), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2025\\_19\\_a01.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2025_19_a01.pdf).
- <sup>15</sup> UNFCCC, *Belém technology Implementation Programme*, Decision 18/CMA.7, ¶7 (November 2025), <https://unfccc.int/documents/655273>.
- <sup>16</sup> C2ES, *Reflections on Key Mitigation Ambition Outcomes from COP30* (Washington, DC: C2ES, March 2026), <https://www.c2es.org/document/reflections-on-key-mitigation-ambition-outcomes-from-cop30/>.