

Workshop on Technology Needs Assessment and Technology Information for the Caribbean Region 20-21 October 2003, Port Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

The workshop on Technology Needs Assessment and Technology Information for the Caribbean Region was held in Port Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on 20-21 October 2003. This workshop was jointly organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Climate Technology Initiative (CTI), in cooperation with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT). This event was attended by more than 35 participants, including representatives from national governments, institutions, and relevant intergovernmental organisations. Participants from 14 Caribbean countries as well as international experts and developed country representatives participated in this event.

The main objectives of the workshop were:

- To discuss regional concerns and priorities in assessing technology needs, including information tools and resources relevant for the Caribbean Region.
- To discuss a framework to assist countries in conducting comprehensive technology needs assessments, including addressing adaptation issues and concerns.

The draft Handbook on Methodologies for Technology Needs Assessments developed by UNDP in collaboration with CTI was presented and discussed in the context of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) needs and priorities. The discussions focused on the issues SIDS face as they seek to place a greater emphasis on adaptation technology in their technology needs assessments (TNAs). Numerous constructive approaches and ideas were shared among participants on what these unique challenges may be, how existing work and information can be drawn upon to support the TNA process, and how the TNA Handbook and the international community may be able to best support this TNA process when adaptation technologies are of particular importance.

Key recommendations and outcomes included:

- Adaptation issues are inherently cross-sectoral and are often interrelated with mitigation options. In order to be truly effective, the TNA process will need to account for these attributes.
- Vulnerability assessments already carried out, or being carried out, will play a key role in identifying, and prioritizing, adaptation technology needs. This information should be drawn upon extensively and the data related to vulnerability may be an element that needs to be addressed “up-front” in the TNA process.

- TNA activities should not be conducted in a vacuum but ensure links with national development priorities and needs. In doing so, TNA would need to be practical, set realistic goals, and be consistent with national and sectoral strategic planning processes.
- Participants from the Caribbean region have extensive experience in building, and using, networks for stakeholder engagement. It was recognized that similar to TNA processes focused on mitigation technologies, real stakeholder engagement and participation will be critical to the success of a national TNA.
- Traditional indigenous technologies that have been used historically in the region may have significant value in adaptation strategies and should be considered in the TNA process.
- TNA should help build resilience in the region to assist countries in addressing the challenge posed by climate change.
- Workshop participants agreed that the existing TNA handbook should be revised to reflect many of the specific suggestions to better address issues relevant to adaptation. It was further agreed that the revised draft would be circulated to the workshop participants for comment.
- Although the current version of the TNA Handbook places more emphasis on mitigation, it also provides a valuable framework to assist countries in assessing adaptation technologies (e.g. generic steps that are applicable to both mitigation and adaptation) while the Handbook is being revised.
- Discussions on soft technologies issues will need to be strengthened in the handbook as currently written. This would assist countries in assessing a wider range of technological options, especially in the area of adaptation to climate change, where soft options can play a key role.
- Role and participation of private sector in the TNA process should be better defined. While engagement of private sector in mitigation technologies is well understood, it represents a bigger challenge in the area of adaptation to climate change.
- Identification of key capacity building and public awareness measures should play a more visible role in the TNA process. This would help countries develop a strategy to sustain stakeholder engagement and ensure continued interaction, as appropriate.
- There was general consensus that the Caribbean Climate Change Centre could serve a valuable role in enhancing the collection and sharing of information and experiences among the countries in the region as well as encouraging regional cooperation on adaptation issues.