



MRV and the International Climate Change Negotiations: Coming to Terms with MRV

What do the M, R, and V stand for?

M is for Measurement or M is for Monitoring: Depending on who you ask, the M stands for Measurable or for Monitoring. While the word “measurable” was originally used in the Bali Action Plan, it has since been replaced in some circles by the term “monitoring” since in a strict sense the aim is to monitor, rather than to measure.

Either way, the intent of the “M” is to keep track of two things: 1) greenhouse gases – both those emitted and those reduced or avoided through mitigation actions, and 2) the support provided in the form of financing, capacity building and technologies for carrying out the mitigation actions.

The bottom line is that the “M” should collect information about whether the world is on track to stay below the 2-degree warming target.

R is for Reporting: The R represents a commitment by parties to the climate convention to report progress and planned activities under the convention. Reporting under the convention happens via national communications; however, current reporting does not capture uniformly information about such things as mitigation actions, emissions projections and GHG inventories, particularly from developing countries.

Given the growing share of GHG emissions from these parties, more frequent and more robust reporting is necessary to create greater transparency and comparable information. The Cancun Agreements state that developing country parties should submit national communications every four years, as well as biennial reports containing key mitigation information, assuming that adequate support is provided.

V is for Verification: The purpose of verification is to ensure that reported information is correct and comparable and that confirmed methodologies for monitoring mitigation progress have been applied. The verification process might entail independent experts reviewing national communications, conducting visits to the reporting country and gaining access to facilities where mitigation actions and emissions took place.

Verification could also result in improvements in the quality of reported information by generating recommendations and facilitating collegial exchange between the reviewers and the reporters.

Why MRV?

Currently there are gaps with regard to gathering and sharing information about GHG emissions, mitigation commitments and support. The purpose of MRV is not to enforce or judge the actions of parties but rather to:

- » facilitate decision-making by serving as a tool for national planning,
- » support implementation of mitigation actions,
- » promote coordination and communication between emitting sectors,
- » generate comparable information across countries,
- » generate feedback for policymakers on the effectiveness of adopted policies and measures,
- » build trust through the production of transparent information,
- » signal whether a country is on track to meeting climate change-related goals,
- » highlight lessons learned and good practices,
- » increase the likelihood of gaining international support for mitigation actions.

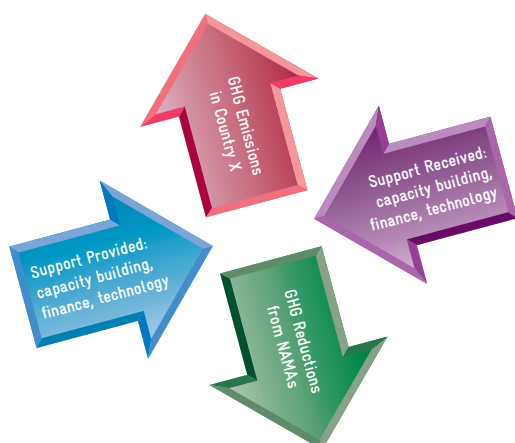
What are current gaps?

Given the often irregular and infrequent preparation of national communications by non-Annex 1 countries, it is difficult to gauge progress under the climate convention. No global “snapshot” of GHG emissions or actions to mitigate exists.

The gaps can be attributed to a variety of institutional, technical, political and financial problems, which are frequently cited by parties as hindering the production of high quality reports. For example, availability and access to emissions data, expertise in preparing national GHG inventories, and/or high turnover of experts are just some of the problems contributing to the gaps.

Within developed countries, information gaps also exist regarding available support, where the support is going, what the sources are, and how the support is being used.

What needs to be MRV'd?



MRV applies to GHG emissions, GHG reductions and support for GHG reductions

MRV is needed in three key areas to generate a complete picture of global progress towards halting global warming:

1. **National GHG Emissions:** the sources of GHGs, as well as the methodologies used to monitor emissions.
2. **Mitigation Actions or NAMAs** (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions): information about GHG emissions reductions that are taking place within a country as a result of specific actions, policies, strategies or plans.
3. **Support** information about the provision and receipt of finance, technology and capacity building targeting climate-related priorities.

Who should undertake MRV?

All parties to the climate convention have agreed to enhance national MRV systems to capture and communicate progress towards meeting the convention goals, taking into account common but differentiated responsibilities of developed and developing countries.

A tiered approach to MRV is being discussed as an option that would permit developing countries to gradually phase in more detailed and rigorous MRV systems over time.

What are some challenges to developing an internationally agreed upon MRV framework?

Mitigation pathways are country-specific and vary widely, which means that any internationally agreed upon MRV system must be rigorous and transparent to make information accurate and comparable, as well as flexible to capture a range of mitigation actions.

MRV requirements for a NAMA that is implemented domestically (unilaterally) may be less rigorous than the MRV require-

ments for a NAMA that receives international support, or a NAMA that generates carbon credits.

Another type of challenge is related to the capacities of many developing countries to fulfill the enhanced reporting requirements (See examples related to gaps above.)

Developed countries also face challenges with disaggregating information about support provided. For example, investment information from the private sector for climate-related purposes is not readily available.

What is the timeline for operationalising such a framework?

Work is already underway to operationalise an international MRV framework, with parallel discussions happening on monitoring methodologies, guidelines for biennial reports, and the scope of verification, which is actually referred to as international consultation and analysis (ICA) in the climate negotiation jargon.

While no clear deadlines have been set for finalizing these discussions, many parties are eager to have improved reporting in place in time for the 2013-2015 Review, when the conference of parties will take stock of progress towards reducing GHG emissions under the climate convention.

How can German International Cooperation contribute to enhancing MRV?

Progress on MRV is expected and happening outside of the climate negotiations, as lessons learned and best practices emerge from individual countries, whose MRV systems are taking shape.

German International Cooperation is already playing an important role in supporting its partners with regard to:

- » improving monitoring and reporting systems,
- » designing and implementing national and sectoral MRV systems,
- » developing mitigation actions (NAMAs) with MRV requirements in mind,
- » providing support to institutions involved in reporting,
- » building capacity within reporting institutions,
- » strengthening cooperation between relevant sectors and governmental entities,
- » facilitating the sharing of experiences between countries,
- » helping partners gain MRV experience before an international system is in place.

GIZ is actively involved in supporting partners in South Africa, Indonesia and Mexico in the establishment of national MRV systems, with the expectation that these and other practical applications of MRV can inform the climate negotiations, thereby contributing to the broader goal of developing an internationally-agreed-upon MRV system.

Imprint

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