

Twenty-sixth IRENA Council and related meetings

INFORMATION NOTE

Reports on Collaborative Frameworks

In response to Members' requests at the tenth session of the Assembly, and as recently as the twelfth session of the Assembly on several technologies and other themes for which they wished IRENA to facilitate targeted collaboration tailored to the associated opportunities and challenges, IRENA's Collaborative Frameworks have been established to promote engagement, facilitate peer-to-peer exchange, and enrich programmatic output. Mindful of the work already undertaken by the Agency, the wealth of knowledge and expertise that exists within our Membership and the advantages that may be reaped through wider global cooperation with other entities, the work of the Collaborative Frameworks continue to evolve to highlight the Agency's commitment to enhancing Member engagement and fostering ownership of programmatic output, while enabling peer-to-peer collaboration and exchange of national experiences, challenges, and respective solutions, including with stakeholders, where appropriate.

To date, eight Collaborative Frameworks have been established on relevant themes that reflect growing interest amongst the Membership for deeper insight into specific topics and technologies that are critical to accelerate the energy transition across countries, regions and the world. These include Critical Materials for the energy transition, Enhancing Dialogue on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems, Geopolitics of Energy Transformation, Green Hydrogen, Hydropower, Just and Inclusive Energy Transitions, Ocean Energy/Offshore Renewables, and Project Facilitation to Support on-the-ground energy transition.

The Collaborative Frameworks serve as effective vehicles for dialogue, cooperation and coordinated action for the benefit of the global renewable energy transformation. The Collaborative Frameworks have successfully held several meetings to date, guided by their scope of work as agreed by their respective members. To ensure a member-driven approach to the activities, each Collaborative Framework is Co-Facilitated by two IRENA Members who are elected to serve for a term of one to two years. Co-Facilitators steer the meetings and discussions held under the respective Collaborative Frameworks.

The following reports on the Collaborative Frameworks, presented to the twenty-sixth meeting of the Council, provide an update on the latest developments and activities of the Collaborative Frameworks. Members may wish to provide their feedback on these activities during their interventions at the twenty-sixth Council and related meetings on 18-20 October 2023.

Collaborative Framework on Enhancing Dialogue on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems

Six technical meetings of the Collaborative Framework on Enhancing Dialogue on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems have taken place to date, facilitating peer-to-peer dialogue on different aspects of the respective subject matters under the overall workplan.

In 2023, the technical meeting of the Collaborative Framework dedicated to *Cross-Sectoral Strategies* was conducted in a hybrid format on 22 May 2023. The workstream on cross-sectoral strategies addressed alignment of renewable energy development in support of sustainable development goals related to water, food and health. The expert panel discussion concluded that in order to improve future cross-strategies and country programme designs, it is crucial to analyse more closely how renewables could effectively support productive use activities and whether these activities translate into positive development effects. The meeting delved into specific success stories in the agri-food value chain, bringing together different ecosystem stakeholders to discuss challenges and demonstrate technology options, policy and regulations, delivery and business models, financing schemes and other critical aspects for productive use of energy. China and Zimbabwe shared their experiences, which show that government programmes and development projects increasingly aim to develop strong linkages between renewable energy and productive activities that are expected to contribute to social and economic development.

The technical meeting dedicated to *Energy system innovation - introducing technology and business solutions for cost-effective integration of renewable energy* was also conducted in a hybrid format on the sidelines of the IRENA Innovation Week 2023 on 27 September in Bonn. The expert speakers shared experiences on energy system innovation, with a specific focus on innovative technology and business solutions for cost-effective integration of high shares renewables in energy systems.

The session examined different aspects of innovation trends, changing roles in future energy systems, enabling technologies, business models, market design, and system operation. Japan presented innovation technology on solar cells development and Panama informed about its first Energy Transition Law that will, amongst others, accelerate technological innovation in the electricity market.

Members and public and private practitioners have actively participated in the meetings held by the Collaborative Framework on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems. Representatives displayed keen interest to actively participate across the different workstreams of the Collaborative Framework, commended IRENA for the inclusive nature of this Framework and offered to contribute to its successful implementation through information sharing, knowledge dissemination and capacity building activities.

El Salvador and Japan, the Co-facilitators of the Collaborative Framework, provided full support and advanced the progress of work under this Framework.

Collaborative Framework on Project Facilitation to Support on-the-ground energy transition

The third meeting of the Collaborative Framework on Project Facilitation was held on 5 October 2023, and was Co-facilitated by Austria and Egypt. Mr Ali Ahmed Ali, Director of International Cooperation and Agreements at the Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy of Egypt, opened and moderated the meeting, and Ms Jasmin Haider, representing the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation, and Technology of Austria, delivered the closing remarks.

During the meeting, Mr Erick Ruiz Araya, Deputy Director of IRENA's Project Facilitation and Support (PFS) division, offered a comprehensive overview of IRENA's project facilitation efforts. He presented IRENA's two project facilitation tools: the Climate Investment Platform (CIP) and the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAF) Platform, as well as the Technical Advisory Services offered by PFS in order to guide project developers in their proposals.

Mr Amin Elkarib and Mr Hugo Savoini further elaborated on the progress of these initiatives, delving into more details. Regarding ETAF, an expansion of the funding partner base is ongoing, with other multilateral development banks expected to join the platform by COP28.

The primary objective of the meeting was to establish a technical-level platform for collaboration between IRENA and government offices and institutions responsible for implementing renewable energy projects within their respective countries. The aim was to enhance Members' understanding of and engagement with IRENA's project facilitation tools. Building upon discussions at the second Collaborative Framework meeting held in May 2023, it was emphasised that technical-level collaboration between IRENA and its Members would be pivotal in fully untapping the potential of the CIP and ETAF. This collaborative effort is envisioned to maximise the impact of the Platforms by providing Members the opportunity to contribute to their effectiveness and submit project support requests to IRENA.

The need to expand technical-level collaboration and further engage IRENA focal points as well as country and technical representatives in the project facilitation work of the Agency was highlighted by the low level of interaction during this Collaborative Framework meeting.

The IRENA Project Facilitation and Support division, in coordination with the Co-Facilitators of the Collaborative Framework, Austria and Egypt, will develop and implement a strategy to ensure avenues for strengthened engagement among IRENA Members ahead of the next Collaborative Framework meeting, which is expected to be organised before the twenty-seventh IRENA Council in 2024. Members are invited to provide their feedback and suggestions in this regard.

Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials for the Energy Transition

The Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials for the Energy Transition convened its second meeting on 12 October 2023.

Building upon the foundation laid during the first meeting and the subsequent three working group meetings, the meeting provided the Membership with updates and insights into the Agency's work on critical materials to date, while also presenting an opportunity for Members' input on CF's work plan and priority areas.

The meeting featured a presentation summarising the key takeaways from IRENA's recent publication, *Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation: Critical Materials*. IRENA Secretariat stressed that the rapid increase in demand for materials will require swift action to increase production and avoid bottlenecks, in addition to close monitoring of market developments, as innovation is showing great potential to reduce the need for some of these critical materials.

During the meeting, several members shared their progress in developing strategies and implementing policy frameworks to address critical material challenges. Members also placed a strong emphasis on the need for robust policies and a commitment to address environmental and social sustainability concerns related to mineral extraction and processing. Members highlighted the importance of international cooperation to navigate the complex landscape of critical minerals.

Members appointed Italy and Mexico as the new Co-Facilitators of the Collaborative Framework for a two-year term, taking over the responsibility from Peru and the United Kingdom.

The next meeting of the Collaborative Framework will take place in the first half of 2024. Members are kindly encouraged to nominate Focal Points to attend future meetings.