



## **The Mitigation Action Implementation Network (MAIN)**

### **First Latin American Regional Dialogue on the Development of Mitigation Actions and Low-Carbon Development Strategies**

#### **MEETING SUMMARY**

INCAE Business School  
Alajuela, Costa Rica  
March 21-24, 2011

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## Meeting Summary

From March 21 to 24, 2011, the Center for Clean Air Policy (CCAP), the World Bank Institute (WBI) and INCAE Business School convened participants from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru and the Caribbean to exchange insights and “recipes for success” on Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and Low-Emissions Development Strategies (LEDS). The most prominent message that the more than 50 participants took home from this regional dialogue was that governments and stakeholders in several Latin American countries are intensively preparing actions to reduce greenhouse gases and are increasingly seeing these actions as tools to help develop sustainable, low-emission economies. Many saw opportunities to undertake and finance transformational changes in light of available fast-start financing despite the uncertainty of longer-term international support.

The first regional dialogue was remarkably successful in advancing the Mitigation Action Implementation Network (MAIN) initiative’s two primary objectives: 1) to accelerate through dialogue, analysis, and best-practice sharing the development of effective NAMAs that are consistent with national sustainable-development plans, and 2) to catalyze the establishment of a collaborative, regionally owned network of decision-makers and practitioners. This network also aims to contribute to the International Partnership on Mitigation and MRV – launched by Germany, South Africa, and South Korea – and other similar initiatives by providing insights and experiences from the ground. Many MAIN participant countries are also members of the International Partnership. Countries came to Costa Rica with teams representing key ministries such as environment, planning, energy, transportation and finance, as well as industry leaders, to work together to advance the design, implementation and financing of NAMAs that are consistent with development plans or LEDS.

Through in-depth presentations by climate and industry experts, roundtable discussions and brainstorming sessions, participants learned creative solutions that other countries have pursued in order to overcome barriers to implementation and advance mitigation actions. For example, many countries face obstacles to implementing renewable energy options. Experts from Mexico and Brazil presented their approaches to overcoming barriers such as intermittency of wind resources, policies requiring wind to pay capacity penalties, access to transmission and financing challenges. In a separate breakout session, country energy experts and industry leaders agreed on the value of exploring regional transmission linkages, solutions for renewables that could help with these barriers, and possibilities for tailoring some of the suggested remedies for use in individual country NAMAs. On energy efficiency, countries also found common ground, looking to NAMAs as a potential avenue to overcome financing barriers that have made it difficult to get banks to participate and thereby limited the ability of countries to capture the “low-hanging fruit” in energy efficiency alternatives.

On transport, two promising policy areas took center stage: 1) developing comprehensive urban strategies to increase the impact of bus rapid transit (BRT) systems, and 2) investing in freight rail and multimodal facilities to reduce the greater than 90% reliance on trucks for freight movement in many participating countries. Expert speakers presented powerful examples of comprehensive urban strategies relying on expanded pedestrian and bike options; transit-oriented, mixed-use development; and land-use design while profiling the economic and development benefits. Participants generally

agreed on the need to scale up investment around BRT systems and to take a systemic approach that focuses on the full range of co-benefits including cost savings, development advantages, health protection and improved mobility. The nationally and internationally supported NAMA approach was seen by many as having a much broader potential reach and impact than the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) while potentially offering an easier international implementation path. Many participants were inspired by these examples of success and expressed interest in learning how to apply these methods at home.

Participants saw as an opportunity the fact that the UN process does not yet have a specific definition of NAMAs – allowing countries to take concrete policy actions on the ground that can shape the design of the new mechanism from the bottom up instead of waiting for top-down guidelines. The dialogue illuminated this pivotal time as an opportunity for both developing countries and NAMA funders/investors to “learn by doing” and to link climate policy with sustainable development priorities. Early movers on NAMAs will be well positioned to reap the benefits of the “fast-start finance” phase, which promises new funding for climate change actions. Discussions revealed that many countries in the region are already preparing actions – often directed at non-climate-related development objectives identified in national planning or specifically in LEDS – that could be considered NAMAs due to their emissions reductions and that could leverage both public and private financing. In addition, many countries in the region are designing LEDS in the context of a more sustainable development pathway. The important link between NAMAs and LEDS was also a focus of presentations at the dialogue.

Representatives of developed countries that could support and invest in NAMAs joined developing countries for the final two days of the four-day dialogue. This provided an opportunity to begin forming a shared vision for collaboration between developed and developing countries in the design of climate mitigation actions. The discussions focused on the needs of both groups of countries, including what investor nations need in the form of actions to build continuing financial support from their parliaments and what developing countries need to win political support at home for taking such actions. Uses of potential funding, criteria for selecting actions to support, connections between NAMAs and LEDS, and reporting procedures were among the themes discussed – these and a number of other key issues lie ahead for fruitful discussion in coming virtual and/or web-based interactions as well future face-to-face dialogues, which are slated to be held roughly every six months.

In sum, the Costa Rica dialogue presented a unique opportunity for Latin American country teams to work together on the design of effective policies. Participants joined their colleagues from similar ministries and institutions in other countries to share insights and experiences and get valuable feedback on their policy ideas. They began to build a solid Latin American network of peers whom members can call upon for advice during the development and implementation of their own NAMAs, recognizing that the exchange of creative solutions will help empower them to take action and to avoid the pitfalls others have faced. Simply put, good climate and development policies are good NAMAs. Participants agreed that linking climate policies to overall development goals is critical to the acceptance and eventual success of these policies. Looking ahead, future dialogues and web-based, distance-learning sessions will seek to refine specific in-country policy proposals that can leverage international financing and ambitiously reduce emissions while greatly increasing economic prosperity.