

Conclusions and Recommendations of the First Meeting of Inventory Lead Reviewers

16 - 18 June, 2003

Bonn, Germany

The first meeting of inventory lead reviewers was held in Bonn, Germany, in June 2003. The meeting was attended by 30 experts, evenly split between Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, with experience in the UNFCCC review process, as well as the development of the IPCC methodologies and good practice. Twenty four of the experts who attended served as lead reviewers during 2003.

The meeting addressed both procedural and technical issues related to the annual review of greenhouse gas inventories of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention. The conclusions of the meeting are presented below.

I. SUPPORTING TOOLS

Compilation of Review Findings

- Lead reviewers (LRs) agreed that the table of review findings prepared by the secretariat is extremely useful and will greatly facilitate the work of expert review teams (ERT). However, they noted that the table of findings should not substitute new analyses by review teams.
- LRs recommended that:
 - The table of findings be provided to ERTs as an input to the individual review stage of the inventory review; and
 - Members of ERTs be requested to update the table of review findings during the course of the individual reviews.
- To facilitate this update by reviewers, LRs recommended that the secretariat:
 - Develop standard terminology for use in the table of findings, based on the IPCC good practice guidance;
 - Provide a field for any additional comments (not linked to specific sources and/or problems) of review team members; and
 - Shorten and streamline the tool, if possible, to make it more user-friendlier.

Review Handbook

- LRs welcomed the secretariat's work to revise the review handbook to make it more reflective of the good practice guidance and more consistent across sectors.
- LRs suggested that the secretariat incorporate the relevant outcomes and recommendations of the Lead Reviewers Meeting in the handbook, and make it available for members of the review teams in 2003 and beyond.

Training

- LRs welcomed the secretariat's activities on training for expert review team members to improve the preparation of reviewers for their tasks;
- LRs recommended that the secretariat make the general module on UNFCCC and IPCC Guidelines accessible to all reviewers participating in review activities in 2003 and encourage reviewers to use the module;
- LRs were asked to provide feedback to the secretariat on the development of the course for improving communication in ERTs (handouts provided at meeting).

International Data Sets

- LRs agreed that data from international sets can be a useful basis for comparison of national inventory data and for identifying potential inconsistencies in national data. In this regard, data from international data sources is more appropriate for the synthesis and assessment stage than for individual inventory review.
- LRs note that not all datasets are useful to reviewers, or to national inventory experts, and that additional information (metadata) about international data sets is necessary to determine the value of specific data sources in the inventory review:
 - Information on the sources and underlying difference in sources for international datasets;
 - Descriptions of the dataset, how data is collected, archived and updated;
 - Criteria and rules for data collection.
- LRs did not believe that access to additional international datasets is a high priority for the inventory review process at this time. Rather, LRs recommended that the secretariat collect more metadata on international datasets currently used in the review process, in particular the synthesis and assessment, and provide this information for reviewers and Parties.
- LRs also note that it would be useful for the secretariat, on a case-by-case basis, to explore ways of improving the consistency and usefulness of data from others international sources with national GHG inventory information.
- Additionally, LRs recommended that the secretariat compile a list of currently available datasets and provide this information to reviewers.

Clustering

- LRs did not consider cluster analyses to be particularly relevant for inventory reviews generally, and only as a last resort for the calculation and application of adjustments.
- If cluster analyses is necessary for the calculation of an adjustment, LRs recommended that expert review team members should primarily:

- Consider, based on expert judgement, differences in national circumstances at the source level;
 - Identify other countries that may be expected to have similar circumstances for the source as the country under review ; and
 - Identify any parameters that may reflect these specific national circumstances.
- If review team members use the cluster analyses tool, the results should only be used if they are understandable in terms of underlying similarities.
- LRs recommended that the secretariat not undertake any additional work on clustering at this time, but to report on any experiences of expert review team members with cluster analyses at the next lead reviewers meeting.

II. REPORTS

Synthesis and Assessment

- LRs emphasised the importance of information in Parts I and II of the synthesis and assessment for the individual inventory reviews and urged that all the information currently available in the review process be maintained.
- LRs welcomed the tool for outlier analyses as input to Part II of the S&A report. LRs emphasised that the tool should only be used to identify issues for further consideration by review teams, and that it should not substitute for expert judgement.
- To facilitate preparation of the synthesis and assessment report in accordance with the deadlines established in the review guidelines, LRs recommended that Part I of the synthesis should only cover information for the most recent year of the inventory submissions.
- However, LRs emphasised the importance of trend information for the inventory reviews, and for preparation of Part II of the Synthesis and Assessment Report, and recommended that the secretariat provide trend information to LRs, and to the Party concerned, with other inventory review materials in advance of individual reviews.
- Additionally, LRs recommended that the secretariat publish the trend information as an addendum to Part I at a later date.
- LRs also asked the secretariat, in the context of its activities to enhance the GHG database, to explore options for presenting information graphically in Parts I and II of the synthesis and assessment report.

Review Templates

- LRs recommended that the templates for all three types of inventory review reports (in-country, centralized and desk) be as similar and consistent as possible, taking into

account page limits and the different scope of the review types. LRs made the following specific suggestions to improve the templates, based on the current in-country review templates:

- Deletion of tables 1 and 2 for the desk and centralized review reports; For the in-country review reports, general trend information could be presented in the summary section.
 - Remove common procedural elements and references;
 - Review teams should elaborate main findings in the ‘general assessment’ section, rather than merely stating a general conclusion,
 - Reports should be more problem and solution driven, with suggested improvements following each identified problem;
 - Reviewers should be encouraged to distinguish between major problems to be addressed by the Party, and relatively minor problems;
 - More evaluation and discussion of the national inventory report (NIR) should be encouraged throughout the review report in a systematic way;
 - More room should be provided for assessment of sectors; and
 - Reviewers should be encouraged to record any additional review information, which may not be included in the review reports due to page limits, in the table of review findings. LRs also noted that, if necessary, annexes could be used.
- The LRs recommended that the secretariat revise the template to reflect these comments, and to also incorporate any additional changes necessary to reflect the use of the new inventory reporting guidelines in 2004.

III. APPLYING COMMON APPROACHES

Identifying Departures from Good Practice Guidance

- LRs agreed that the choice of method for a key sources must take into consideration the availability of resources of the Party concerned, as indicated in chapter 7 of the Good Practice Guidance.
- They noted that the basic premise of the good practice guidance decision trees is that countries should use the highest recommended tier methodology possible for a key source, given national circumstances and data availability. If a Party uses a lower tier methodology than that recommended for a key source, the review should explore the reasons the country has not used a higher tier methodology.
- The use of a lower tier methodology, including a tier 1 methodology, for a key source is not necessarily inconsistent with good practice, but will depend on consideration of specific national circumstances.
- Similarly, use of a country-specific methodology is encouraged by IPCC Guidelines and good practice guidance, but should not be automatically considered consistent with GPG. In this regard, reviewers must consider the technical merits of country-specific methods in the overall context of the IPCC Guidelines and good practice guidance.

- LRs identified questions to guide reviewers' consideration of methodological choice (attached) and recommended that the secretariat incorporate this guidance into the review handbook for reviewers.

Analyses of Inventory Problems in Trends

- Lead reviewers briefly considered a discussion paper on the assessment of problems in trends of inventory data. They underlined that any analysis of inventory problems in trends should be focused on time series consistency, as defined in the IPCC GPG, rather than on over or underestimation of emissions. They expressed that the discussion paper was not sufficiently clear in this respect.
- LRs expressed the view that the identification of potential problems in trends could provide useful warning information to reviewers, but that the reviewers should verify in detail if the identified anomalies are normal as a consequence of national circumstances.
- LRs may provide any additional comments on the discussion paper to the secretariat directly.

IV. PROCESS TO ENABLE EXPERT REVIEW TEAMS TO GAIN EXPERIENCE WITH THE METHODS FOR ADJUSTMENTS

- Lead Reviewers provided recommendations to the secretariat on how to facilitate practice with adjustment methodologies by expert review team members, using real inventory data of Parties that volunteer.
- LRs agreed that:
 - The secretariat should inquire of Parties in advance of scheduled inventory review as to whether the Party wishes its data to be used for practice with adjustment methodologies.
 - Practice with the application of adjustments will be conducted separately from the inventory review process, and will not be reflected in the inventory review reports.
 - Expert Review Teams will review inventories in accordance with normal inventory procedures and identify any departures from Good Practice Guidance;
 - The secretariat will coordinate with Parties that volunteer, and with review teams to encourage practice with a range of adjustment methods across various inventory sectors;
 - Expert Review Team members that agree to participate in the practice with adjustments will select 1 to 2 estimates for practice from each country that has voluntarily made its data available for practice;

- The ERTs will calculate adjustments based on the technical guidance for adjustment contained in document FCCC/2003/L6/Add.3.
- The ERT will document the calculation of the adjustment(s) and its experiences in calculating the adjustment(s).
- The calculated adjustments and all documentation will be provided to the Party concerned for its comments and feedback.
- The secretariat will compile the results of the practice with adjustments, the experiences and comments of the Expert Review Teams and of the Parties concerned and make this information available to experts and Parties concerned prior to the next meeting of Lead Reviewers.
- The secretariat will also provide information on the process for practice in its 2004 report to SBSTA on inventory review activities.

V. MANAGERIAL ISSUES

Review Team Management Issues

- LRs recognized the need to take an active role in managing the work of expert reviews teams, including with respect to:
 - Ensuring that reviews are performed objectively, consistently, and in accordance with the review guidelines;
 - Time-management and meeting deadlines for review activities, following the individual review schedules provided by the secretariat;
 - Ensuring that all communication with the Party concerned and the secretariat is coordinated through lead reviewers;
 - Achieving cooperation in the team's work and consensus in the team's findings; and
 - Promoting the quality and relevance of inventory review reports.
- LRs encouraged the secretariat to organize the expert review teams (ERTs) as soon as possible and to inform them well in advance of the review activities in order to better prepare the activities of the review team.
- LRs encouraged the secretariat to provide the inventory review materials to the members of the ERTs as far in advance of the review as possible. Any materials that are not available at this time (e.g. comments of the Party concerned), could be sent later.
- LRs agreed that, in general, communication with Parties during centralized and desk reviews should be organized through them and not directly by the other members of the ERT.

Work of LRs

- LRs recommended the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to organize the next meeting of LRs in February 2004 with the objective of taking stock of the 2003 review activities and providing any recommendations to the secretariat for the planning of those of 2004.
- LRs agreed that, upon request, the secretariat should facilitate communication between LRs to provide technical advice regarding on-going review activities. A list of lead reviewers for the 2003 reviews by area of sectoral expertise is attached.