

**Conclusions and recommendations**  
**Tenth meeting of inventory lead reviewers**  
**Bonn, Germany**

*18–20 March 2013*

1. The tenth meeting of inventory lead reviewers (LRs) was held in Bonn, Germany, from 18 to 20 March 2013. A total of 34 experts from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) and 38 experts from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) were invited to the meeting. Of the 47 experts who attended, 24 were from non-Annex I Parties and 23 were from Annex I Parties. In addition, two members of the enforcement branch of the Compliance Committee attended the meeting as observers.

2. In accordance with decisions 12/CP.9, 22/CMP.1 and 24/CMP.1, the meeting addressed both procedural and technical issues relating to the annual review of greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories from Annex I Parties under the Convention and the annual reviews under the Kyoto Protocol.

### **Statistics and follow-up to the ninth lead reviewers' meeting**

3. The LRs noted, as at the eighth and ninth meetings of LRs, that there is a need to continue to improve the efficiency and timeliness of the review process. The starting point for improving the efficiency is for the secretariat and the expert review teams (ERTs), led by the LRs, to conduct better and earlier planning of and preparation for the reviews. In addition, the LRs recognized that improving the work of the ERTs before the review week, including improved communication between the ERTs and the Parties, could also help to improve timeliness and efficiency.

4. The LRs also recognized that there are constraints affecting the review process, including the limited number of experts and secretariat staff participating, the limited time available for the reviews and limited funding. Improving the review process, including the drafting of the review reports, to accommodate these constraints would have a positive impact on the efficiency and timeliness of the process.

5. The LRs welcomed the increase in the number of experts participating in the 2012 review cycle. Compared with the 2011 review cycle, in which 126 experts participated in the review activities, the number of participating experts increased to 157.

6. The LRs noted that the increase in the number of participating experts was especially marked in relation to the centralized reviews, with the result that all of the ERTs involved in centralized reviews in the 2012 review cycle were complete, in the sense that for each review there were at least two experts for each sector. However, they also noted that there were incomplete teams conducting some in-country reviews and that some reviewers participated in more than one review.

7. The LRs further noted that the 38 new experts that participated in the reviews in 2012 constituted one fourth of the total participating experts. The LRs recognized that they should provide important support to the new reviewers, but also recognized that their dual role as LRs and experts, especially if not acting as a generalist, leave limited time to coach the new experts.

8. The LRs also recognized that the centralized reviews would benefit from an increased number of participating experts and from limiting centralized reviews to four Parties. This could potentially decrease the workload of each expert, improve the integration of new experts and improve quality and timeliness. The LRs requested the secretariat and Parties to further increase their efforts to ensure that a sufficient number of review experts participate in the 2013 review cycle.

### **Consistency and timeliness of reviews**

9. The LRs welcomed the information provided by the secretariat on the analysis of the consistency of the reviews under the Kyoto Protocol during the 2012 review cycle.

10. They recommended that the secretariat enhance the guidance provided to ERTs, including those performing in-country reviews, such as by providing explanations in the template for the annual review report and by making presentations at the beginning of the review week clarifying the types of issues that

should be included in the review report and in the list of potential problems and further questions raised by the ERT during the review week (hereinafter referred to as the Saturday paper).

11. The LRs noted with concern that as at 20 March 2013 there were only six published review reports. In order for Parties to have enough time to implement the recommendations made in the review reports, the LRs agreed to improve the communication with the Parties having centralized reviews by informing them of the provisional main findings and recommendations at the end of the review week.

12. The LRs recognized the complexity of the review of the information on land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol (KP-LULUCF activities), being aware that the vast majority of Parties have chosen commitment period accounting. Therefore, the LRs recommended that the ERTs provide a strong message to the Parties in the review reports that any outstanding issues related to the reporting of KP-LULUCF activities must be addressed at the latest in the 2014 annual submission. The ERTs should ensure that all issues that could potentially lead to an adjustment at the end of the first commitment period should be brought to the attention of the Parties through a list in the Saturday paper.

## **Planning and preparation for the 2013 review cycle**

13. The LRs noted that the 2013 reviews of the annual submissions of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol will focus on 2011, which is the penultimate year of the first commitment period. This means that there is not much time left for Parties to resolve issues identified by the ERTs, such as potential problems with the national system or related to emissions and removals from KP-LULUCF activities, before the last review for the first commitment period. In that respect, the LRs encouraged the ERTs to identify the remaining problems and, as appropriate, to strongly recommend that Parties resolve these issues as a matter of priority.

14. The LRs also noted that there is limited time available during centralized reviews to analyse each Party. Therefore, they reiterated the recommendation made at their eighth meeting that, during centralized reviews, special attention should be paid, by review experts and LRs, to following up on the recommendations made in previous review reports and on significant recalculations, while still ensuring that all review requirements are covered during the review.

15. The LRs stressed the need for good preparation by review experts prior to the actual review week and the role of LRs in such good preparation. This should be further clarified within the Stepwise Guide for Managing GHG Inventory Reviews for Annex I Parties (hereinafter referred to as the Stepwise Guide), including a timeline and tasks for the preparation prior to the actual review week.

16. The LRs agreed to continue their practice of the last two years with regard to the preparation of draft status reports. This means that they provide comments on the draft status report prepared by the secretariat within one week of receipt of the draft.

17. The LRs endorsed the overall approach to the annual reviews in 2013, as presented by the secretariat during the meeting, including the prioritization for an in-country review of all Annex I Parties that are also Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that have not yet had an in-country review during the first commitment period.

18. The LRs agreed to the procedure presented by the secretariat for the preparation of the annual report by the LRs to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) in 2013, which is the same as that followed in 2010–2012, including suggestions on how to improve the review process in accordance with the “Guidelines for review under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol”.

## **Improvements in documents and tools**

### ***Annual review report template***

19. The LRs noted with concern the length of time that it takes to send the draft review report to the Party and to publish the final annual review report. With this in mind, the LRs agreed to modify the annual review report template, along with the quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) checklists, in order to improve the efficiency and timeliness of the completion of the annual review process. Timeliness in the 2013 review cycle is particularly important, as this will be the last annual submission reviewed prior to the final annual submission within the first commitment period.

20. The LRs requested the secretariat, in cooperation with a small group of LRs, to improve the annual review report template. They agreed that, in identifying possible improvements to the annual review report template, the decisions of the Conference of the Parties and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) should be referred to and the required elements of the annual review report identified, while recognizing the needs and requirements of the users reading the annual review reports. The LRs recommended that the secretariat and the working group explore the possibility of using checklists and tables in the annual review report template.

21. The LRs welcomed the distribution of the annual review report template to the ERTs one week prior to the 2012 annual review cycle and recommended that the secretariat continue this practice for future reviews.

### ***Review tools***

22. The LRs welcomed the work undertaken by the secretariat to further develop the review tools for the review cycle in 2012. They noted that there is no need to develop new tools for the 2013 review cycle and that the focus should be on the utilization of the review tools during the review process to the extent possible. The LRs also noted that the review tools facilitate and increase the consistency of the annual reviews, and that providing feedback on the review tools is crucial for the further development of the tools. The LRs also welcomed the presentation provided during the LRs' meeting on review tools at each review stage, which made the function and aim of the review tools at the different review stages clear to them. They recommended that the LRs of each ERT, with the help of the secretariat, provide further guidance to the ERT during the review week and help the team to use the tools effectively.

23. The LRs requested the secretariat to prepare guidance for ERTs on the review tools by providing a short description of their use, aiming for the full utilization of the review tools by the ERTs, including some examples of using the review tools, before, during and after the review week, and encouraged the secretariat to include this guidance in an annex to the Stepwise Guide.

24. They also requested the secretariat to improve the usefulness of the synthesis and assessment report, part II, by including information on the time-series consistency of the total land areas reported for LULUCF and for KP-LULUCF activities by the Parties.

25. The LRs welcomed the secretariat's improvement of the introductory presentation to the ERTs performing centralized reviews, including specific guidance on the review tools available to facilitate the review process. The LRs also welcomed the secretariat's provision of a tool that examined the notation keys in each inventory. They considered that the further consolidation, and better knowledge and use, of these tools could improve the efficiency of the review process, and therefore encouraged the secretariat to brief all ERTs on the review tools.

### **Virtual team room**

26. The LRs noted the ongoing work being undertaken by the secretariat on the development of the inventory virtual team room (I-VTR) to support the review of the information on annual GHG inventories, and welcomed the achievements made in concluding the Reference Library and the ERT Workspace components of the I-VTR, which were presented during the LRs' meeting. The LRs also noted the results of testing these components during the 2012 review cycle, showing that the tool could be a valuable resource in supporting the review, management and recording of the information generated in the process, increasing the traceability and safety of the review materials, and encouraged the secretariat, for the next review cycle, to promote the Reference Library and the ERT Workspace as the major source of information for all centralized reviews and to test it in a limited number of in-country reviews.

27. The LRs also encouraged the secretariat to continue to undertake work on the development of the remaining components of the I-VTR, the review issues tracking system and the document management system, and to test them in a limited number of reviews as soon as they are available.

### **Suggested further improvements to the review process**

28. The LRs took note of the draft decision trees that were presented during the Refresher Seminar on Good Practice Approaches to Inventory Issues, which was held in 2012 back to back with the ninth meeting of LRs.

## ***Stepwise Guide***

29. The LRs welcomed the completion of the Stepwise Guide for trial use during the 2012 review cycle. They noted that the Stepwise Guide could be beneficial for LRs, ERTs and new reviewers to provide an overview of the timelines and tasks before, during and after the review week, thereby facilitating better time management of the reviews. They also noted that the Stepwise Guide could help to integrate new review experts by clarifying the roles and expectations during each phase of the process. The LRs encouraged the secretariat to update the Stepwise Guide on the basis of feedback received during the trial use in 2012 and during the tenth meeting of LRs and to distribute it with the review materials at least four weeks prior to the start of the review week.

30. The LRs welcomed the inclusion of the workflow and QA/QC checklists in the Stepwise Guide as a means of improving the efficiency and timeliness of the review process.

31. They noted that use of the QA/QC checklists, in particular in combination with the annual review report template, enhances the technical quality, accuracy, consistency and timeliness of the draft annual review reports.

## **Training of review experts**

32. The LRs welcomed the information on the training activities in 2012, and ongoing and planned training activities in 2013, including the organization of an annual training seminar in April 2013, the refresher seminar for experienced reviewers and a regional training seminar, subject to the availability of resources, in the second half of the year. They requested the secretariat to continue organizing regional training seminars and refresher seminars, subject to the availability of resources, and encouraged Parties to provide such resources.

33. The LRs participated in the refresher seminar held on 18 March 2013, in conjunction with the tenth meeting of LRs, which focused on the Stepwise Guide to inventory reviews and best practices for the review process. They noted that the seminar helped to refresh the knowledge and best practices needed for the different steps of the review process and to enhance the common understanding of how to implement these review steps within the framework of the Stepwise Guide developed by the secretariat.

34. The LRs also noted the need to increase the number of review experts who actively participate in the review process, in order to ensure the completeness and balance of expertise of the ERTs, in particular by increasing the participation of review experts from non-Annex I Parties. They reiterated the need for the Parties nominating experts to the UNFCCC roster of experts to ensure that the experts can devote enough time to studying the required training courses and are fully available during the complete review process. The LRs requested the secretariat to continue reminding all Parties once a year to update the UNFCCC roster of experts on a regular basis, and also reiterated the need for Parties to continue nominating experts to the roster, in particular experts from non-Annex I Parties. The LRs also requested the secretariat to provide Parties with summary information on the required profile of experts to be nominated to the roster, in order to help Parties to identify experts who have the sufficient skills to be trained as review experts and to join future ERTs.

35. The LRs noted the need to update and supplement, in the future, the training programme for the review of GHG inventories from Annex I Parties, in order to meet the requirements of review experts arising from the adoption of the revised "Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part I: UNFCCC Reporting guidelines on annual inventories" (hereinafter referred to as the UNFCCC reporting guidelines), the use of the *2006 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* and the future revised UNFCCC review guidelines launched under the SBSTA work programme on the revision of the guidelines for the review of biennial reports and national communications, including national GHG inventory reviews, for developed country Parties. The LRs also noted the need to supplement and update the current training programme for reviews under the Kyoto Protocol with new or updated courses in the light of the implementation of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, particularly related to supplementary IPCC guidance. The LRs further noted that the updating and supplementing of the training programmes should address the training needs of both new and experienced experts.

36. The LRs noted the need for Parties to support the work on updating and supplementing the current training programmes, including possible contributions through the direct support of experienced qualified

experts, with the purpose of retaining the existing knowledge and experience of the experts currently participating in the reviews.

### **Options for improving the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and practicality of the review process**

37. The SBSTA requested the LRs to discuss, at their meeting in 2013, options for improving the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and practicality of the review process, and requested the secretariat to make the outcome of their discussions available as input to the discussions at the thirty-eighth session of the SBSTA, in June 2013, on the revision of the guidelines for the review of national communications, biennial reports (BRs) and national GHG inventories.

38. The LRs noted that the implementation of the existing review process of national communications and national GHG inventories is very resource-intensive and has resulted in increasing pressure on Parties, experts and the secretariat in recent years. They also noted that the newly established international assessment and review (IAR) process for developed countries, which will be launched in early 2014, will significantly increase the volume of work.

39. The LRs agreed on the need to have a cost-effective, efficient and practical review process that does not impose an excessive burden on Parties, experts or the secretariat. They discussed a range of options for addressing that need, including combining different types of reviews and modifying their format and frequency.

40. On consideration of the issue outlined in decision 2/CP.17, annex II, paragraph 6, the LRs would recommend that the reviews of BRs should not be conducted in conjunction with the GHG inventory reviews, because of the different timing and content of the reports.

41. The LRs considered the options of professionalizing the review process by introducing a service-fee system and establishing a standing group of experts at the secretariat, and concluded that these options should be further explored. They noted that introducing a service fee may increase the availability of experts but not necessarily improve the quality and timeliness of the reviews. The LRs agreed that the option of supplementing the current ERTs with a standing group of experts or other hybrid solutions should be further explored.

42. Based on the experiences of the LRs with reviews, they noted that there is value in providing training to experts on the IAR process.

43. The LRs recommended that Parties update and expand the UNFCCC roster of experts in order to meet the particular needs for expertise of the upcoming IAR process.

### **Development of the new CRF Reporter**

44. The LRs welcomed the information on the development of the new CRF Reporter software and welcomed the demonstration of the CRF Reporter software as deployed to Annex I Parties for testing on 22 October 2012. The LRs noted that one of the most important features of the new software is the possibility of importing existing data into the software. Without that prerequisite, it would be difficult to test the CRF Reporter software. The LRs also noted that the deadline for submissions of views on experiences with the UNFCCC reporting guidelines and with the updated CRF Reporter is 3 May 2013 and encouraged Annex I Parties to submit their views.

### **Issues related to the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol**

45. The LRs welcomed the presentation by the secretariat on the preparations for a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol and noted that the work has progressed since the ninth meeting of LRs. However, the LRs also noted that a lot of work remains to be done before the secretariat's processes and systems to support the second commitment period are ready.

46. The LRs further noted that the CMP, at its eighth session, agreed on the timing and reporting of the initial report for the second commitment period, as well as on the annual requirement for reporting on KP-LULUCF activities, with the exception of the common reporting format KP-LULUCF tables. They noted that a lot of work remains to be done under the SBSTA before all reporting and review guidelines for the second

commitment period have been finalized. Such work will also have an impact on the secretariat's processes and systems to support the second commitment period.

### **Financial implications**

47. The LRs noted that supplementary funding is needed for some of the secretariat's activities to support the review process, and emphasized the importance of Parties supporting such work with financial resources. This relates to:

- (a) I-VTR development;
  - (b) CRF Reporter development;
  - (c) Work on the preparation of processes and systems for the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol.
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