

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

*3–5 March 2014*

1. The eleventh meeting of inventory lead reviewers (LRs) was held in Bonn, Germany, from 3 to 5 March 2014. A total of 44 experts from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) and 51 experts from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) were invited to the meeting. Of the 61 experts who attended, 32 were from non-Annex I Parties and 29 were from Annex I Parties; in addition, a member of the facilitative branch of the Compliance Committee and a representative from a Party attended the meeting as observers. A “refresher” seminar in conjunction with the meeting was held on 6 March 2014, attended by 29 experts (12 from non-Annex I Parties and 17 from Annex I Parties).
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 tenth lead reviewers’ meeting**

3. The LR noted improvements in the timeliness of the publication of the review reports in the 2013 cycle compared to the 2012 cycle, but reconfirmed the need to further improve the efficiency and timeliness of the review process and achieve the 100 per cent completion rate of the reports by 14 April of the following year. The LR noted with concern that as of 5 March 2014 there were only 14 published review reports (32 per cent of all reports) and requested the secretariat to implement further improvements, as presented in the “Recommendations for improvements in the 2014 review cycle” section below.
4. Noting that recent review cycles did not meet the mandated deadlines in decision 22/CMP.1, the LR discussed the sustainability of the current review framework. The LR reiterated the conclusions of the tenth LR meeting on options for improving the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and practicality of the review process.
5. The LR welcomed the increase in the number of experts participating in the 2013 review cycle. Compared with the 2012 review cycle, in which 157 experts participated in the review activities, the number of participating experts increased to 172. However, the LR also noted that there were still incomplete teams conducting some reviews and that some reviewers participated in more than one review.
6. The LR further noted that the 34 new experts that participated in the reviews in 2013 constituted one fifth of all participating experts. The LR recognized that they should provide more support to the new reviewers, but also noted that their dual role as LR and experts, especially if not being a generalist, leaves them limited time to coach the new experts.

### **Training and availability of review experts**

7. The LR welcomed the information on the training activities undertaken by the secretariat in 2013, and ongoing and planned training activities in 2014, including the organization of on-line courses and an annual training seminar in the second half of 2014, and the possible launch of the revision of the training courses for GHG inventory review experts.
8. The LR noted the need to update and revise the training programme for the review of GHG inventories from Annex I Parties, due to 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) (decision 24/CP.19), the use of the 2006 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (hereinafter referred to as the 2006 IPCC Guidelines), and the future revised UNFCCC review guidelines for GHG inventories, which are to be considered by the SBSTA with a view to the COP adopting them during COP 20 later this year. The LR also noted that the update and revision of this training programme should address the training needs of both new and experienced experts.

9. The LRs reiterated the need to increase the number of review experts who can actively participate in the review process, in order to ensure the completeness and balance of expertise of the expert review teams (ERTs), in particular by increasing the participation of review experts from non-Annex I Parties. The LRs noted the need for the Parties to regularly update the UNFCCC roster of experts and to nominate, where appropriate, national experts who have knowledge in GHG inventories or who are inventory compilers or have sectoral technical background. The LRs encouraged Parties to ensure that the nominated experts are fully available for the complete review process and the required training.

10. The LRs requested the secretariat to expand the participation in the refresher seminars to sectoral experts in order to increase the knowledge and enhance the common understanding among the review experts on methodological and procedural issues that are required for the GHG inventory review process. The LRs noted that the refresher seminar in 2015 should focus on the issues arising due to the transition to the UNFCCC reporting guidelines and the future revised UNFCCC review guidelines for GHG inventories, including the use of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines, the IPCC 2013 Revised Supplementary Methods and Good Practice Guidance arising from the Kyoto Protocol and the 2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National GHG Inventories: wetlands, and on issues related to reporting and review under the Kyoto Protocol, in order to ensure that the experienced reviewers share the common knowledge and information required for reviews in 2015 and onwards.

## **Review tools**

11. The LRs welcomed the work undertaken by the secretariat to develop guidance for ERTs on the review tools for the review cycle in 2013. They noted that there is no need to develop new tools for the 2014 review cycle, but it is important to improve and maintain the existing ones. The LRs agreed that they should facilitate, with support of the secretariat, effective use of the review tools throughout the review process.

12. The LRs noted the information provided by the secretariat on the technical issues that may be encountered in using the Locator in the future because of the large, and growing size of the database and the ageing of the software. This is likely to require an upgrade of the Locator in the near future. In preparing and implementing the upgrade, the secretariat should:

- (a) Ensure availability of the whole time series;
- (b) Improve the software with respect to its flexibility and user-friendliness;
- (c) Ensure availability of an off-line version even if an upgrade is implemented as a web-based application;
- (d) Consider the development of two versions of the Locator: a full version and a “lighter” version that could be downloaded and used off-line more easily;
- (e) Provide access to the raw data used in the Locator.

## **Virtual team room**

13. The LRs welcomed 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. The LRs also noted the results of testing these components during the 2013 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, and increasing the traceability and availability of the review materials. The LRs continued to encourage the secretariat, for subsequent review cycles, to promote the I-VTR as the major repository of information for all reviews.

14. The LRs encouraged the secretariat to continue to undertake work on the development of the remaining components of the I-VTR, in particular the review issues tracking system, and to test these in a limited number of reviews in the 2014 review cycle.

15. The LRs also encouraged the secretariat to explore the use of the I-VTR in other supporting actions during the review such as the work of the sectoral groups (e.g. the LULUCF advisory group), the sharing of experiences from previous reviews in responding to particular review issues and monitoring the progress of review activities, for example through the implementation of a “traffic lights” system or a “dashboard” to allow for an easy, transparent monitoring of the overall progress by all experts.

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

16. The LRs welcomed the update on the development of the upgraded common reporting format (CRF) Reporter software and the opportunity offered by the secretariat to Annex I Parties to review and test the software. The LRs noted that June 2014 is approaching and urged the secretariat to focus on making the upgraded software available by the end of June to enable Annex I Parties to submit their inventories by 15 April 2015.

## **Consistency of reviews**

17. The LRs welcomed the information provided by the secretariat on the issues that may have been treated inconsistently during the 2013 review cycle. They recommended that in order to facilitate future discussions during LR meetings the secretariat should distribute such issues to LRs not later than one week prior to the meeting.

18. The LRs agreed that discussion of certain issues related to Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Kyoto Protocol (KP-LULUCF activities) in previous LRs meetings, such as directly human-induced activities, has contributed to enhanced consistency in reviews by ERTs. The LRs reconfirmed their commitment to provide, working with the ERTs, objective, consistent and transparent assessments and recommendations in their reports.

## **Planning for the 2014 review cycle**

19. The LRs emphasized that the 2014 review cycle will be particularly challenging:

- (a) For the Convention Parties, it will be the last year of the application of the current UNFCCC reporting guidelines for GHG inventories from Annex I Parties (before the change to the revised guidelines adopted through decision 24/CP.19);
- (b) For the Kyoto Protocol Parties, it will be the last inventory review for the first commitment period;
- (c) Also for the Kyoto Protocol Parties, the review of accounting information reported under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol will be implemented for all Parties, with annual accounting and commitment period accounting, as this is the final year of the first commitment period.

20. The LRs agreed that it is important to implement the 2014 review cycle in accordance with the relevant mandates despite these challenges, and, therefore, the 2014 review cycle will need to be efficient and effective.

21. The LRs agreed to continue their practice of the last three review cycles with regard to the preparation of draft status reports and of the annual reports by the LRs to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). The LRs will provide comments on the draft status reports prepared by the secretariat within one week of receipt of the draft.

22. The LRs requested the secretariat, when planning for the 2014 reviews, to consider conducting more than two centralized reviews during the same week in order to facilitate communication among the review experts and increase consistency among the reviews. The LRs also requested the secretariat to consider starting the review weeks not later than the last week of August, beginning with Parties with commitment period accounting or for which previous review reports show a relatively large number of outstanding issues related to KP-LULUCF activities.

23. The LRs requested the secretariat to consult with Parties with a view to agreeing to the dates of the 2014 review by the end of April 2014.

24. The LRs requested that the secretariat, in preparing the ERTs, aim to ensure that LULUCF experts do not act as LRs, and that at least one LR does not have sectoral responsibilities. In addition, the LRs encouraged the secretariat to strive to ensure that each LULUCF expert has no more than two Parties to review, in particular if those Parties have selected commitment period accounting or have a large number of outstanding issues from previous review reports. More broadly, the LRs encouraged the secretariat to compile teams with a view to ensuring that a sufficient number of experienced experts are available, particularly for the energy and LULUCF sectors.

25. The LRs recalled the conclusion from the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs (para 11) on the need 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. They concluded that the table of provisional main findings produced during the 2013 review cycle was beneficial to both the ERT and the Party being reviewed. Although this table may be of more limited use in 2014 due to the methodological changes that will be introduced in the 2015 review cycle from the use of the new UNFCCC reporting guidelines, the LRs agreed that this table should continue to be produced as an informal communication to the Party for future centralized reviews.

## **Recommendations for improvements in the 2014 review cycle**

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

26. The LRs welcomed the efforts by a small group of lead reviewers and the secretariat to improve the annual review report (ARR) template for the 2013 review cycle, including through the use of checklists and more tables, and agreed that these changes contributed to efficiency improvements during the 2013 review cycle.

27. The LRs recommended that the secretariat refine the ARR template as necessary based on the experience of the 2013 review cycle, but not make major changes to the structure of the template. In particular, the LRs recommended that the secretariat provide additional guidance for the ARR tables, including in the use of the terminology to present the ERT's assessment of issues such as time series consistency, quality assurance/quality control, transparency, and the final conclusions and recommendations by the ERT. The LRs requested the secretariat to reconvene the small group of LRs to consider terminology and guidance in the ARR template tables, including on how to address recalculations, considering the recommendation of the LRs to remove the recalculations table from the template.

28. To further improve the efficiency of the review process, the LRs recommended that the secretariat complete the factual information in the ARR for review by the ERTs (e.g. data in tables 1 and 2 and the compilation and accounting tables, information on the tiers used for the key categories and uncertainty analyses, information regarding the difference between the reference approach and the sectoral approach, and information in the sectoral overview regarding emissions and removals). The LRs also recommended that in cases where there are no changes to, or problems of, the national system, the ERTs need not include information on the inventory planning process or inventory management in the ARR.

29. The LRs encouraged the secretariat, in preparation for the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the LRs, to explore whether there is a need to make further revisions to the ARR template for the reviews starting in 2015 based on any decisions adopted in COP20/CMP10 on the new review guidelines under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. They requested the secretariat to present suggestions on this, if any, at the next annual LR meeting and to communicate these suggestions to the LRs not later than one week before the meeting.

### ***The review process***

30. The LRs concluded that consideration of issues related to KP-LULUCF activities is one of the challenges of the 2014 review cycle because most Parties will be subject to accounting for these activities for the first time.

31. The LRs stressed that reviews should be initiated as early as possible. For that purpose they requested the secretariat to initiate and conclude the preparation of the ERT as early as possible, preferably by the end of May. The LRs also agreed to start the review process, including the consideration of materials, the discussion of issues within the ERT (including conference calls) and communication of questions and answers with Parties as early as possible. The LRs requested the secretariat to inform Parties in advance of the review week of when to expect communications from the ERT.

32. For the purpose of ensuring that experts have sufficient information in a timely manner, the LRs requested the secretariat to deliver to ERTs the ARR template and the schedule for the review as early as possible, preferably by the end of June, and the review tools, preferably by the end of July. The LRs requested the secretariat to ask Parties for permission to make available to the ERT, on request of the ERT, information from previous reviews, including questions and answers and Saturday Papers, and the draft ARR, if still unpublished.

33. The LRs agreed that it is important that the schedule for the review should ensure that timeliness is achieved and stressed the importance of agreeing on an appropriate schedule within the ERT, continuously monitoring progress and keeping the ERT informed of remaining actions.

34. The LRs concluded that it is important to enhance the communication within the ERT and the collective consideration of findings and recommendations during the review week. For that purpose the LRs agreed that ERTs should prepare a list of key issues before the review week for consideration and discussion by the ERT during the review week and to have a complete zero order draft ready by the end of the review week. With the same objective, the LRs requested the secretariat to ensure that quality control actions are done at the end of the review week or immediately thereafter.

35. The LRs concluded on the importance of providing clear and consistent guidance on the review process at its beginning, and requested the secretariat to prepare and use a common introductory email to all ERTs; they also requested the secretariat to assist the LRs in the preparation of their common introductory email to the ERTs.

36. Noting the roles of LRs defined in the review guidelines, the LRs stressed that they should focus on the coordination of ERTs and the planning of their work, monitoring the progress of the review, communication with the Party and ensuring consistency.

37. The LRs noted the value of the LULUCF advisory group in assisting ERTs in the reviews. The LRs requested the secretariat to establish advisory groups for other sectors. The LRs requested the LULUCF advisory group to prepare supportive materials to facilitate the review and ensure consistency prior to the 2014 review cycle and to make these available in supporting the reviews during the review week. The LRs requested the secretariat to coordinate these actions, including distributing any supportive materials to ERTs.

38. The LRs requested the secretariat to inform the national focal points on the progress of the review frequently.

## **Financial implications**

39. 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) Training of review experts, including the organization of the refresher seminars;
  - (b) I-VTR development;
  - (c) CRF Reporter development;
  - (d) Work on the preparation of systems and tools for supporting the review processes in 2015.
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