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INFORMATION NOTE

This message is being sent to Parties included in Annex I to the Convention. It is addressed to their National Focal Points for Climate Change. It is being copied to officials in charge of the preparation of national greenhouse gas inventories.

The following is information on the reporting of annual greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory submissions for 2005 in accordance with Conference of the Parties (COP) decisions (3/CP.5, 18/CP.8 and 13/CP.9) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) conclusions from its nineteenth and twentieth sessions. Specifically, it is meant to update Parties on the status of the development of software to support GHG reporting.

1. Document FCCC/SBSTA/2004/8, containing an updated version of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual inventories by Annex I Parties (adopted by decision 18/CP.8), has been prepared following decision 13/CP.9, which requested the secretariat to incorporate into the guidelines the revisions to the land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector, including the tables of the Common Reporting Format (CRF) for this sector, and the corresponding changes in the text of the guidelines, such as those for the national inventory report (NIR).

This document should be used when preparing the national inventory report for 2005. It is available on the secretariat's web site <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2004/sbsta/08.pdf>> and will be available in hard copy at the tenth session of the COP. It supersedes document FCCC/CP/2002/4, containing the reporting guidelines as adopted by decision 18/CP.8.

2. We are pleased to inform you that the secretariat will make available a pre-release (trial) version of a new reporting software application (CRF Reporter) to interested Annex I Parties as of 1 October 2004. The software, which is based on the CRF tables adopted by decision 18/CP.8, was developed at the request of the SBSTA to facilitate GHG data reporting by Parties and processing by the secretariat. The aim is to eliminate inconsistencies, redundancies and difficulties in reporting, inherent in the current reporting software based on spreadsheet applications.

The secretariat will also deliver to each interested Party a preliminary set of the data previously submitted by the Party to be used with the CRF Reporter. The datasets for each Party are under preparation, and for the time being should be considered preliminary but adequate for testing purposes. Annex I to this letter contains additional information on the CRF Reporter and its possible testing by Parties.



The software's release version, which can be used for reporting in 2005, will be deployed by mid-November, due to the additional work needed to ensure the stability of this complex software and that reliable datasets are included with the CRF Reporter.

Some Parties will begin preparing their inventories before mid-November and thus will want to use the existing CRF reporting (spreadsheet) software. Such Parties are asked to use version 1.29, which was recently updated to eliminate minor inconsistencies and is available at <http://unfccc.int/program/mis/ghg/index.html>.

In April 2005 the secretariat will be able to accept inventories prepared using either the CRF Reporter or the existing software (spreadsheet application). The submission of an inventory in the spreadsheet format will not affect the review of a Party's inventory in 2005.

3. The secretariat will make available to Annex I Parties on 17 September 2004 a spreadsheet application for reporting tables of the CRF for LULUCF, as adopted by decision 13/CP.9, for the submission in year 2005.

The COP further requested the secretariat to integrate these tables into the CRF Reporter currently under development, in order to facilitate the submission of inventories from Annex I Parties. Because of the complexity of the CRF Reporter, the provisional character of the LULUCF tables, which will be tested in a one-year trial period, and the need to facilitate timely submission of inventories by Parties, the secretariat has not yet integrated the LULUCF tables into the CRF Reporter. Instead, these tables are provided as a separate spreadsheet module.

The LULUCF tables in this module are considered an official part of the national inventory submission due in 2005. It is important that Parties report their LULUCF information using the module to enhance the usefulness of the trial period. As Parties will report LULUCF information in this new, independent LULUCF module, only totals need to be included, either in the CRF Reporter or in the CRF spreadsheet application, until an integrated version of the software is completed in 2005. Annex II to this letter contains additional information on this module and on LULUCF reporting.

The secretariat will work towards integrating the LULUCF module in the CRF Reporter after considering any further amendments that Parties might wish to introduce, following the trial period of LULUCF reporting. This integrated version will be developed with a view to having it deployed in time for use in reporting inventories in 2006.

The secretariat appreciates your understanding of the complexities associated with reporting in 2005 and developing and transitioning to new software. When the process is complete, the reporting of GHG inventory data by Parties from 2006 onwards will be made more efficient and the reliability of the inventory information to be provided to the COP will be increased. Please feel free to contact Roberto Acosta or James Grabert at ghginvai@unfccc.int for further information.

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Annex I

Detailed information on delivery and use of the new CRF Reporter

Pursuant to decisions of the Conference of the Parties and conclusions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), the CRF Reporter software application was developed with a view to assisting the Parties and the secretariat in the GHG inventory reporting process by facilitating the data reporting by Parties and processing and checking by the secretariat so as to ensure the overall quality of data submitted and used in the UNFCCC process.

During the second lead reviewers' meeting and SBSTA's June 2004 session, several participants highlighted the need for thorough testing, in particular to ensure the stability of the CRF Reporter software and installation possibilities, given the diverse environment of deployment. At the same time, it was emphasized that Parties should have a version of the CRF Reporter as soon as possible to familiarize themselves with it. Given these demands, and the status of development at the time, the SBSTA invited Parties to use the software for reporting their GHG inventories in 2005.

Therefore, the secretariat will deliver a pre-release (test) version of the CRF Reporter to interested Parties as of 1 October. **Parties that would like to receive the pre-release version should contact the secretariat at GHGINVAI@unfccc.int, preferably before 30 September 2004.** The secretariat would appreciate any requesting Party to tentatively indicate if it plans to submit its 2005 inventory using the new CRF reporter or the existing software. The recommended hardware configurations for a successful testing and use of the CRF reporter are indicated below.

As mentioned in the main text of this Information Note, the secretariat will deliver, following completion of the software over the next few months, the release version of the software by mid-November. In addition to the remaining issues that the secretariat and the developers have identified for correction in the release version, the secretariat would like to take into account in the release version any installation or stability issues that are identified by Parties. **For this reason we would appreciate any feedback from the testing Parties as soon as possible.**

Further to the ongoing work to complete the release version of the CRF Reporter, the secretariat will begin work on preparing a further version of the software to fully integrate the required changes related to land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF). As requested by the SBSTA, the secretariat will work towards delivering this fully integrated version in the second half of 2005, considering as well any further amendments to LULUCF that Parties may wish to introduce following the trial period for LULUCF reporting. This integrated version would be developed with a view to having it deployed to Parties in time for use in reporting their inventories in 2006.

Recommended hardware configurations

Recommended configuration for **sectoral expert (SE)** (user provides partial inputs, sectors, categories, etc. to national inventory compiler):

- * Processor: Pentium-III 1.4 GHz or Intel Celeron 1.7 GHz
- * Memory (RAM): 256 Mb
- * Hard disk: 300 Mb (for databases and XML files)
- * CD-RW drive

Recommended configuration for the **national inventory compiler (NIC)** (main user, submitter/assessor of complete data and preparation of submission files):

- * Processor: any Pentium 4 or Intel Celeron D 2.4 GHz
- * Memory (RAM): 512 Mb
- * Hard disk: 1 Gb (for databases and XML files)
- * CD-RW drive

For the both SE and NIC computers with Windows 2000 Professional or Windows XP Professional/Home Edition are recommended. Any version of MS Office is suitable.

Annex II

Detailed information on land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) reporting in 2005

The Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to use the common reporting format (CRF) tables for the LULUCF sector, adopted by decision 13/CP.9, for a trial period covering inventory submissions in 2005. A spreadsheet application has been especially developed to facilitate this reporting, which is presented as an independent reporting module for LULUCF.

As mentioned in the main text of this Information Note, **the LULUCF tables in this module are considered an official part of the national inventory submission due in 2005.**

When preparing the 2005 inventory submission using the spreadsheet application for LULUCF, Parties should bear in mind the following:

In keeping with the general inventory requirements for the CRF, Parties should provide data for the latest inventory year, and for those years for which a change has been made in a sector. Parties should ensure that a full and consistent set of tables is available for the entire time series from the base year onwards. If a Party does not provide information in the new CRF tables for LULUCF for all years, and has not recalculated the estimates for LULUCF for these years, it should provide information on mapping categories provided in the IPCC Good Practice Guidance for LULUCF to the LUCF categories (5.A to 5.E) used in the 1996 IPCC Guidelines and should include information on how it calculated totals for forest and grassland conversion.¹ The information provided in the national inventory report (NIR) should be cross-referenced to information in the CRF and vice versa.

Tables 9 (Completeness), if applicable, and 10 (Emission trends) should be completed for the latest inventory year only. The information reported in tables summary 3 (Methods and emission factors used), 7 (Key categories) and 9 (Completeness) should refer to the LULUCF sector only, *not* the inventory submission as a whole. Please note that this module does not include a separate table on recalculations, because this is the first time that the tables of the new CRF for LULUCF will be provided by Parties.² However, as stated in the UNFCCC reporting guidelines, Parties are reminded to provide information on recalculations in the NIR, including the new estimates for LULUCF.

When preparing the 2005 inventory submission, Parties should bear in mind the following information when using the software (CRF Reporter or existing CRF spreadsheet application) for reporting all other sectors:

Parties are requested to provide total aggregate LULUCF emission and removal data in the CRF Reporter for inclusion of this data in the summary tables of the CRF. In 2005, the CRF Reporter will be used only to report totals. If Parties choose to use the CRF spreadsheet application, they should only enter the totals (row: Total land-use change and forestry) in table 5 of the CRF. In the case of CO₂, only net emissions/removals need to be reported. It is not necessary to fill in the background tables of the existing CRF spreadsheet application, because the information will be available in the LULUCF module.

Parties are invited to submit to the secretariat by 15 May 2005 their views on the tables of the CRF on LULUCF contained in this module and their experiences in using them. The secretariat will

¹ See UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual inventories (FCCC/SBSTA/2004/8, page 24).

² Once the LULUCF module is integrated into the CRF reporter, the LULUCF sector will be included in the recalculation table.

synthesize the views of Parties for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice at its twenty-third session.

Please contact the UNFCCC secretariat (ghginvai@unfccc.int) in case of technical difficulties, or if you have questions concerning the use of this application.