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## MESSAGE TO PARTIES

### **Information on the submission of proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels by developing country Parties, on a voluntary basis, when implementing the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, and on the technical assessment of these submitted reference levels**

Parties will recall that the COP, in its decision 12/CP.17,<sup>1</sup> paragraph 13, invited developing country Parties, on a voluntary basis and when deemed appropriate, to submit proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, in accordance with decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71(b), when undertaking the activities referred to in paragraph 70 of that same decision. Parties will also recall that the COP, in its decision 13/CP.19, adopted the guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels. In accordance with decision 13/CP.19, paragraphs 1 and 2, each submission shall be subject to a technical assessment and such proposed reference levels may be technically assessed in the context of results-based payments.

The secretariat, in response to the mandate set out in decision 13/CP.19, is pleased to inform Parties of the proposed **timing for the technical assessments** to be conducted in **2014** and **2015**. This information is being provided to facilitate the planning for submission of reference levels by developing country Parties and to ensure the efficient and effective organization of the technical assessment sessions by the secretariat in accordance with the procedures and time frames established in the annex of that decision.

To that end, and particularly to ensure the successful organization of the technical assessment sessions, the secretariat will be taking several actions, including the following:

1. Organize assessment sessions once a year in Bonn. In accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to decision 13/CP.9, submissions received no later than 10 weeks ahead of a session will be assessed at that session. (Submissions received beyond the 10 weeks ahead of a session will be scheduled for assessment the following year);
2. Coordinate the technical assessment process;
3. Ensure a balanced representation of LULUCF experts from developing countries and developed countries, whereby each submission shall be assessed by two LULUCF experts selected from the UNFCCC roster of experts, one from a developed country and one from a developing country.

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<sup>1</sup> All decisions mentioned in this message are available at <<http://unfccc.int/6917>>.



In line with point 1 above, the secretariat will need to receive submissions **at least ten (10) weeks** before the start of the assessment session to ensure adequate and effective logistical preparation and organization of the technical assessment (e.g. identifying, inviting and confirming relevant experts). The technical assessment process itself shall require up to **forty-two (42) weeks** (including interaction time between the assessment team and Party concerned, response time by Party and the time for preparation of draft and final reports).

After careful consideration of several factors that have implications for the timing of technical assessments this year and the subsequent years, such as the timing of all technical review processes being organized under the Convention and Kyoto Protocol in any given year, the timing of UNFCCC negotiation sessions, the availability of active LULUCF experts during the year and the need for on-going fund raising to support the organization of the technical assessments, the secretariat has identified the most feasible dates for the assessment sessions in 2014 and 2015 and the corresponding submission deadlines for these sessions.

The secretariat proposes **two options** for developing country Parties intending to submit their reference levels, on a voluntary basis and when deemed appropriate.

The **first option** relates to the assessment session in 2015, following the time frames set out in the annex to decision 13/CP.19. The **second option**, which relates to an assessment session in 2014, consists of two sub-options. **Sub-option 2(a)** follows the time frames agreed in decision 13/CP.19. **Sub-option 2(b)** presents a shortened assessment session being organized on an exceptional basis in 2014 only. This latter option is being made available to accommodate those Parties planning to have an assessed reference level before the end of December 2014, allowing them to report their results-based actions as part of their biennial update reports at the end of 2014. Those Parties selecting sub-option 2(b) should note that if the clarifications and responses requested from them are not provided within the time frames indicated for this particular sub-option, then the assessment session will automatically revert to the regular time frames indicated for sub-option 2(a). The detailed steps of an assessment session and the exact time frames for these two options are presented in the annex to this message. Submissions of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels should be sent by the UNFCCC national focal point to the secretariat at <secretariat@unfccc.int>.

In addition to the guidance contained in decision 13/CP.19 on the organization of technical assessments, the COP invited Parties, in particular developing country Parties, and, as appropriate, intergovernmental organizations to nominate technical experts with the relevant qualifications to the UNFCCC roster of experts. Each Party should also confirm to the secretariat the names of their active LULUCF experts on the roster of experts and which experts will be able to participate in the technical assessment of the submitted reference levels.

The COP, by decision 13/CP.19, paragraph 6, further invited Parties, in particular developed country Parties, and relevant international organizations to support capacity-building in relation to the development and assessment of reference levels.



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The secretariat requests the kind cooperation of Parties in meeting the time frames of the selected option for submission as noted above and in the annex to this message with a view to facilitating the organization and coordination of the technical assessments of submitted forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels and to ensuring successful outcomes.

Yours sincerely,

*(Signed by)*

Christiana Figueres



Annex

**Overview table on the indicative time frames of the two options for technical assessment of reference levels**

	<b>Option 1: Technical assessment in 2015 with regular time frames (to be completed in 2015)*</b>		<b>Option 2(a): Technical assessment in 2014 with regular time frames (to be completed in 2015)*</b>		<b>Option 2(b): Technical assessment in 2014 with shortened time frames (to be completed in 2014)</b>	
	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
Early notice to the secretariat	by 1 Oct 2014		by 15 May 2014		by 15 May 2014	
Deadline for reference level submission (no later than 10 weeks before the assessment session)	by 8 Dec 2014		by 16 Jun 2014		by 16 Jun 2014	
Information forwarded to assessment team (8 weeks before the assessment session)	by 22 Dec 2014		by 30 Jun 2014		by 30 Jun 2014	
	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
Assessment session in Bonn (1 week)	16 Feb	22 Feb 2015	25 Aug	31 Aug 2014	25 Aug	31 Aug 2014
Seeking additional clarifications from the Party (up to 1 week)	23 Feb	1 Mar 2015	1 Sep	7 Sep 2014	1 Sep	7 Sep 2014
Party to provide clarifications (8 weeks with regular or 2 weeks with shortened time frame)	2 Mar	26 Apr 2015	8 Sep	2 Nov 2014	8 Sep	21 Sep 2014
4 weeks for assessment team to consider modified reference level (applicable in the case that the Party modifies its submitted reference level)	27 Apr	24 May 2015	3 Nov	30 Nov 2014	- / -	
Assessment team to prepare draft report	by 14 Jun 2015		by 21 Dec 2014		by 12 Oct 2014	
Party to respond to draft report (12 weeks with regular or 2 weeks with shortened time frame)	by 6 Sep 2015		by 15 Mar 2015		by 26 Oct 2014	
Assessment team to prepare final report within four weeks following the Party's response	by 5 Oct 2015		by 13 Apr 2015		by 24 Nov 2014	
Final report published and technical assessment completed	6 Oct 2015		14 Apr 2015		25 Nov 2014	

\* For planning purposes, dates indicate the maximum time frames required in accordance with decision 13/CP.19.



**A. Option 1: Assessment session 2015 in accordance with the time frames established in decision 13/CP.19**

As indicated in the table above, the submission deadline for this session is **8 December 2014**. The submission should be made by the UNFCCC national focal point. To assist in its planning, the secretariat would appreciate earlier notice, by **1 October 2014**, from Parties indicating their intent to make submissions of reference levels for the **February 2015** assessment session. The assessment team is expected to finalize the report and complete the process in October 2015. The secretariat will continue to organize assessment sessions on an annual basis; allowing Parties that are unable to make a submission in 2014 for the 2015 assessment session or those intending to update their already assessed reference levels to make their submissions in the following years.

**B. Option 2: Assessment session 2014**

**Option 2(a): Assessment session 2014 in accordance with the time frames established in decision 13/CP.19**

As indicated in the table above, the submission deadline for this session is **16 June 2014**. The submission should be made by the UNFCCC national focal point. The secretariat would appreciate earlier notice, by **15 May 2014**, from Parties indicating their intent to make submissions of reference levels for the **August 2014** assessment session. The assessment team is expected to finalize the report and complete the process in April 2015.

**Option 2(b): Assessment session 2014 with shortened time frames for response by Parties that submitted reference levels**

This sub-option is being proposed to accommodate those Parties planning to have an assessed reference level before the end of December 2014, allowing them to report their results-based actions in a technical annex to their biennial update reports at the end of this year (decision 14/CP.19, paragraph 7). It is being organized on a one-off basis, with the following annual assessments keeping to the time frames as decided by the COP. As indicated in the table above, the submission deadline for this session is **16 June 2014**. The submission should be made by the UNFCCC national focal point. The secretariat would appreciate earlier notice, by **15 May 2014**, from Parties indicating their intent to make submissions of reference levels under this sub-option for the **August 2014** assessment session. The assessment team is expected to finalize the report and complete the process in November 2014.

Parties opting for this sub-option should be aware that if they do not adhere to the time frames set out in the table above, then the assessment shall follow those indicated for sub-option 2(a).