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Methodological issues under the Convention

Work programme on the revision of the guidelines for the review of biennial reports and national communications, including national inventory reviews, for developed country Parties

Draft training programme for review experts for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to greenhouse gas inventories by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document presents a draft training programme for review experts for the technical review of the greenhouse inventories of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, as requested by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) at its fortieth session. The secretariat has prepared the document for consideration by the SBSTA with the objective of formalizing the training to be provided to review experts of greenhouse inventories and the subsequent assessment of the qualifications of those experts, as well as of providing additional guidance to the secretariat on such matters.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), at its nineteenth session, adopted the “Guidelines for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to greenhouse gas inventories, biennial reports and national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention” (hereinafter referred to as the review guidelines).¹

2. The review guidelines adopted by the COP state that experts participating in technical reviews shall have recognized competence in the areas to be reviewed, and that the training to be provided to the experts, and the subsequent assessment after the completion of the training² and/or any other means needed to ensure the necessary competence of the experts for their participation in expert review teams (ERTs), shall be designed and operationalized by the secretariat in accordance with relevant decisions of the COP.³

3. The review guidelines also state that the secretariat shall design and implement training activities for review experts, including lead reviewers, and the subsequent assessment of the experts’ qualifications, under the guidance of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA).⁴

4. The “Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part I: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual greenhouse gas inventories” (hereinafter referred to as the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines) and tables of the common reporting format to implement the use of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* (hereinafter referred to as the 2006 IPCC Guidelines) were adopted at COP 19.⁵

5. The SBSTA, at its fortieth session, recognized the need to update, revise and complete the training programme for the review of greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties), due to the adoption of the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines at COP 19, the use of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines, and the GHG inventories section of the review guidelines currently being considered by the SBSTA, and to be recommended for consideration and adoption at COP 20 later this year. It requested the secretariat to develop a formal training programme for the review of GHG inventories from Annex I Parties for consideration at SBSTA 41.⁶

B. Scope of the note

6. This document presents a draft training programme for review experts for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to GHG inventories by Annex I Parties, as requested at SBSTA 40. Background information on the training

¹ Annex to decision 23/CP.19.

² The experts who opt not to participate in the training have to undergo a similar assessment successfully to enable them to qualify for participation in expert review teams.

³ Decision 23/CP.19, annex, paragraph 29.

⁴ Decision 23/CP.19, annex, paragraph 52.

⁵ Annex to decision 24/CP.19.

⁶ FCCC/SBSTA/2014/2, paragraph 118.

programme is presented in chapter II and the draft training programme is contained in the annex.

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

7. The SBSTA may wish to take note of the draft training programme contained in the annex with a view to preparing and recommending a draft decision for consideration and adoption at COP 20, and to providing additional relevant guidance to the secretariat.

II. Training programme

8. In line with the current reporting requirements under the Convention, Annex I Parties submit national GHG inventories on an annual basis. Accordingly, each national GHG inventory is reviewed annually by an ERT, mostly by means of in-country review visits and centralized reviews.

9. The implementation of the existing review process made a major contribution to improving the reporting of Annex I Parties, including major improvements in the consistency, transparency, comparability, completeness and accuracy of the reported information. However, the process is very resource intensive and has resulted in increasing pressure on Parties, experts and the secretariat in recent years. A number of problems have been identified by the secretariat and raised on various occasions in the past,⁷ including the shortage of available experts with the necessary professional expertise and experience to conduct the reviews, and the increasing pressure being placed on the secretariat in providing support.

10. Such problems could become particularly important with the significantly increased volume of work during the reviews under the newly established international assessment and review (IAR) process following the submission of national communications (NCs) and biennial reports (BRs) by developed country Parties.⁸ From the beginning of 2014, BRs will be reviewed every two years, where relevant, in conjunction with the review of NCs. The IAR process will necessitate increased resources from and efforts of Parties, experts and the secretariat, which will put additional pressure, in particular, on the availability of experts during the review cycles of GHG inventory reviews, because many review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories are also part of the pool of experts for the technical review of NCs and BRs.

11. Past experience shows that the ongoing training of experts for the review of GHG inventories and supplementary information submitted under the Kyoto Protocol has greatly contributed to the rigour and consistency of the review process. That, in turn, has contributed to a significant increase in the quality of GHG inventories, including their transparency, accuracy, completeness, consistency and comparability. As a result of training activities, experts have improved and updated their professional knowledge and technical skills, enabling consistency across reviews to be achieved. Experts have also gained more clarity on the review tasks thanks to training activities, which has helped to improve the efficiency of the review process and shorten the time needed for each specific review task.

12. The current training curriculum needs to be updated, revised and complemented with specific training materials on key elements of the review of GHG inventories arising

⁷ FCCC/SBSTA/2012/INF.8 and FCCC/SBSTA/2012/INF.10.

⁸ Decision 2/CP.17, paragraphs 13 and 14.

from the adoption of new reporting guidelines as well as subsequent new review guidelines for GHG inventories, along with the new methodological guidance provided by the 2006 IPCC Guidelines. This would enhance the competence of the experts involved in the review of GHG inventories and bring more clarity to the approaches for the review process, consequently improving the quality of the experts' contribution to that process. It would also address the experts' needs in relation to the review of new reporting elements included in the reports as well as the new rules and procedures to be adopted in the currently discussed review guidelines.

13. In that sense, SBSTA 40 recognized the need to update, revise and complement the training programme for the review of GHG inventories from Annex I Parties, due to the adoption of the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines at COP 19, the use of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines, and the revised review guidelines for GHG inventories currently considered by the SBSTA and to be recommended for consideration and adoption at COP 20 later this year. It requested the secretariat to prepare the updated, revised and completed materials of a training programme for the review of GHG inventories from Annex I Parties and to develop a formal training programme for consideration at SBSTA 41.

14. On the basis of this request, the secretariat has prepared a draft training programme for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to GHG inventories by Annex I Parties, to be implemented in the period 2015–2016, which addresses the elements and issues discussed in paragraphs 9–13 above.

15. The draft training programme, which is contained in the annex, consists of two parts: a general description of the training programme, including its scope, format and examination procedures; and a detailed description of the courses, including the period of implementation, target audience, type of course, and examination requirements and format.

Annex

Training programme for review experts for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to greenhouse gas inventories by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention

A. Details of the training programme

1. The courses are intended to train review experts for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention. All training courses will be available online. For trainees without easy access to the Internet, courses will be distributed electronically; for courses facilitated by instructors, trainees will communicate electronically with the instructor during the training period. At the request of any Party, the training courses will also be made available to other experts interested in the technical review of GHG inventories, provided that this does not require additional resources. All courses, without facilitation by instructors, will be available upon request to trainees all year round.
2. A closing seminar for the basic course of the training programme will be offered annually for around 30 participants (new review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories).
3. Additional regional training seminars for new review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories and a refresher seminar for experienced review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories may be offered annually, depending on the availability of resources. The refresher seminars may be offered in conjunction with meetings of lead reviewers in order to enhance their knowledge and that of other experienced review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories.
4. All training courses will include an examination. Examination procedures will be standardized, objective and transparent.
5. For courses which have a training seminar, the examination will generally take place during this seminar. In exceptional circumstances, other arrangements for examinations will be made, provided that the examinations take place under the supervision of the secretariat and that this does not require additional resources. For courses without a training seminar, the examination will take place online.
6. New review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories who successfully complete the relevant requirements of the training programme and pass the examinations will be invited to participate in centralized or in-country reviews, working alongside experienced review experts.
7. New review experts who do not pass a course examination at the first attempt may retake the examination only once, provided that the expert has fulfilled all of the tasks assigned during the training course in a timely manner and that the retake does not require the secretariat to incur additional costs.
8. Experienced review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories will be invited to take the online training courses. Examinations for experienced review experts are not mandatory but are encouraged, and may take place in conjunction with meetings of lead reviewers.

9. Experienced review experts with relevant GHG inventory reporting and review expertise will be invited to act as instructors for relevant courses of the training programme, ensuring that their collective skills cover the subjects addressed in each course. The secretariat will seek to achieve a geographical balance among the instructors participating in the training programme.

10. When selecting new review experts to attend training courses facilitated by instructors, the secretariat will give priority to review experts with relevant GHG inventory reporting expertise, nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts, from Parties which do not have review experts who participated previously in review activities.

B. Courses of the training programme

1. Basic course for the review of greenhouse gas inventories of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention

Description: This course covers a comprehensive introduction to the “Guidelines for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to greenhouse gas inventories, biennial reports and national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention”, an overview of the “Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part I: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual greenhouse gas inventories”, guidance on procedures and approaches for the technical review of GHG inventories and general Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) inventory guidance (*2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*) as well as specific aspects of the review of the following IPCC sectors: energy; industrial processes and product use; agriculture; land use, land-use change and forestry; and waste. This course also provides guidance on drafting substantive review reports, consistent among review teams and reader-friendly.

Preparation: 2015

Implementation: 2015–2016

Target audience: New and experienced review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories

Type of course: E-learning, facilitated by instructors, with a closing seminar

Examination requirements and format: New review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories must pass the examination before participating in expert review teams. Lead reviewers and experienced review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories are encouraged to take the examinations. The examinations will be conducted in person.

2. Review of complex models and higher-tier methods

Description: This course provides general guidance and procedures, as well as specific aspects for the review of emission estimates performed using complex models and higher-tier methods (tier 3 methods).

Preparation: 2010

Implementation: 2014–2016

Target audience: Lead reviewers and review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories

Type of course: E-learning without an instructor

Examination requirements and format: Optional; self-check electronic examination

3. Improving communication and facilitating consensus in expert review teams

Description: This course provides guidance and tools to improve the work of expert review teams and to facilitate teamwork

Preparation: 2003

Implementation: 2014–2016

Target audience: Lead reviewers and review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories

Type of course: E-learning without an instructor

Examination requirements and format: Optional; self-check electronic examination

C. Refresher seminar for experienced greenhouse gas inventory review experts

Description: This annual seminar provides general guidance on specific and complex aspects of the technical review of GHG emission estimates. It enables experienced review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories to strengthen and refresh their knowledge, both for cross-cutting aspects and for sector-specific issues.

Implementation: 2014–2016, subject to the availability of resources

Target audience: Lead reviewers and experienced review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories
