

SUBMISSION BY LITHUANIA AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES

This submission is supported by Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia.

Vilnius,

Subject: Work programme on the revision of the guidelines for the review of biennial reports and national communications, including national inventory reviews, for developed country Parties¹

At its 37th session, the SBSTA invited Parties to submit additional views on the overall approach and views on the structure, outline, key elements and content of the review guidelines for national communications and biennial reports.

The reviews play an important part in ensuring that the COP has reliable information on the implementation of commitments under the Convention. The revision of review guidelines is therefore very important and the work plan agreed by the SBSTA at its 37th session should be followed. According to the work programme agreed by the SBSTA at its 37th session, the work should start with the overall approach followed by review guidelines for BRs and NCs. The revision of the review guidelines for greenhouse gas inventories would commence after the work on revision of the reporting guidelines for greenhouse gas inventories is completed.

The EU welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on the overall approach to review, and on the structure, outline, key elements and content of the review guidelines for national communications and biennial reports. The submission is structured so that general views and views on the review of the specific reporting elements are given separately.

Overall approach to review

Parties have gained experience from the review of national communications and greenhouse gas inventory submissions from a period of more than ten years. During this period, the quality and timeliness of the submissions have improved significantly. The reviews have been an important factor contributing to this improvement. The EU believes that robust, comparable and comprehensive reviews should continue to ensure the quality of information submitted. At the same time, the EU believes that there is a need and room to further develop the reviews taking the experience into account. The EU also believes that it is important to enhance the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of the reviews by analyzing alternative ways of conducting the reviews including the format and level of detail regarding in-depth review of information.

The SBSTA at its 38th session agreed that the same information should only be subjected to one review. This requires an analysis of the common elements for BRs, NCs and annual GHG inventories.

¹ As this submission addresses only reviews of developed country Parties, this is not specified later on in the submission text unless needed for reasons of clarity

Common elements – National Communications and Biennial Reports

To facilitate discussions and possible streamlining of the review process, it is considered important to identify which elements are common between the different reporting obligations, i.e. annual greenhouse gas inventories, biennial reports and national communications. The EU has identified the following issues as common in the different reporting obligations, and provided a preliminary proposal were duplicative information should be reviewed.

Reporting element	Included in
National circumstances	NC
Emission inventories incl. emission trends	NC, BR, GHG inventory
Projections	BR, NC
Policies and measures	BR, NC
Adaptation and vulnerability	NC
Research and systematic observation	NC
Education, training and public awareness	NC
Progress towards target	BR
Financial resources	BR, NC
Transfer of technology and capacity building	BR, NC

Outline for review guidelines on general aspects of review

In the view of the EU, there are a number of aspects related to review that is universal regardless of reporting requirements. These aspects include:

- The objective of reviews
- The general approach
- Expert review teams and institutional arrangements
- Reporting and publication

In the view of the EU, it is necessary that a common approach to the review of the different reporting obligations in order to ensure the quality, cost-efficiency and effectiveness of the reviews.

The objective of reviews

The objectives for all types of review include:

- The establishment of a process for a thorough, objective and comprehensive technical assessment of all aspects of the implementation of the Convention by Parties;
- To promote consistency and transparency in the review of information submitted by Parties;
- To assist Parties in improving their reporting of information under Article 4 and Article 12;
- To provide the Conference of the Parties (COP) with a technical assessment of the implementation of the Convention by Parties.

The general approach

The general approach to all types of review should include:

- The right of the ERT to ask questions and/or request further information from Parties;
- The obligation by Parties to respond to questions raised by the ERT and provide the ERT with additional information as requested within specified timelines;

- A process for how confidential information is handled during the review process;
- Identification of problems relating to fulfilment of the reporting requirements and recommendations by ERTs;
- Procedures for how Party's responses or any differences in views between the ERT and Party are reflected in the review report.

Expert review teams and institutional arrangements

The role of ERTs is the same regardless of the type of review. The same relevant provisions include:

- Each submission shall be assigned to a single ERT;
- A submission shall not be reviewed in two successive review years by ERTs with identical composition;
- Each ERT shall provide a thorough and comprehensive technical assessment of information submitted and shall prepare a review report;
- The expert review teams shall refrain from making any political judgement;
- ERTs shall be coordinated by the secretariat and shall be composed of experts selected on an ad hoc basis from the UNFCCC roster of experts and will include lead reviewers;
- ERTs may vary in size and composition, taking into account the national circumstances of the Party under review and the different expertise needs of each review task.

Many requirements of the experts participating in the technical reviews are the same for all types of review:

- Participating experts shall serve in their personal capacity;
- Participating experts shall have recognized competence in the areas to be reviewed according to these guidelines;
- Participating experts selected for a specific review activity shall neither be nationals of the Party under review, nor be nominated or funded by that Party;
- Participating experts shall be nominated to the roster of experts;
- Participating experts from developing country Parties and developed country Parties with economies in transition shall be funded;
- Experts from other developed country Parties shall be funded by their governments.

The general part of the review guidelines should specify the role of the secretariat in the review process. This includes:

- The secretariat shall select the members of the ERTs, in a way such that the collective skills of the team cover all reporting elements;
- The secretariat shall select the members of the ERTs with a view to achieving a balance between experts from developed country Parties and developing country Parties;
- The secretariat shall make every effort to ensure geographical balance among experts;
- The secretariat shall ensure that in any expert review team one co-lead reviewer shall be from a developed country Party and one from a developing country Party;
- The secretariat shall prepare an annual report to the SBSTA on the implementation of the reviews.
- The secretariat shall organise the reviews, including the preparation of a work plan for the review;
- The secretariat shall provide all relevant reported information to the expert review teams;
- The secretariat shall develop review tools and materials and templates for review reports under the guidance of the Lead Reviewers;
- The secretariat shall coordinate, together with the lead reviewers, the communications during the

- review between the ERT and the Party under review;
- The secretariat shall compile and edit the final review reports, together with the lead reviewers;
 - The secretariat shall maintain a record of communications between the ERTs and Parties;
 - The secretariat shall coordinate the practical arrangements concerning the review;
 - The secretariat shall facilitate annual meetings of the greenhouse gas inventory lead reviewers;
 - The secretariat shall facilitate annual meetings of the lead reviewers for national communications and biennial reviews;
 - The secretariat shall summarise information on issues raised in the reviews to facilitate the Lead reviewers in their task to ensure consistency across Parties;
 - The secretariat shall make a compilation and synthesis report of the submission of biennial reports and national communications;
 - The secretariat shall design and implement training activities for review experts and subsequent assessment of the experts' qualifications under the guidance of the SBSTA.

The general role of lead reviewers is the same regardless of the type of review. This includes:

- Lead reviewers shall act as co-lead reviewers for the expert review teams under these guidelines;
- Lead reviewers should ensure that the reviews are performed according to the review guidelines and consistently across Parties;
- Lead reviewers should give guidance to the secretariat to summarise information from previous reviews to facilitate ensuring consistency across Parties;
- Lead reviewers should ensure the quality and the objectivity of the reviews and facilitate the continuity, comparability and timeliness of the review;
- Lead reviewers collectively shall advise on further measures to improve the quality, efficiency and consistency of the reviews;
- Lead reviewers shall comprise experts from Parties to the Convention nominated to the UNFCCC roster by Parties;
- Lead reviewers shall fulfil all other general requirements for reviewers mentioned above.

Reporting and publication

A number of elements related to the reporting and publication of review findings are identical across the different types of review. These elements include:

- The reports should follow an agreed outline, be concise and address the main findings by the ERT;
- All final review reports should include specific elements such as: introduction, summary, a description of the technical assessment of each reporting element, a description of any problems identified during the review, any recommendations to solve the identified problems, an assessment of any efforts by the Party to address any problems identified by the ERT during the current review or during previous reviews that have not been corrected, recommendations by the ERT on the conduct of the review in subsequent years, including which parts may need to be considered in more depth;
- All final review reports shall be published and forwarded by the secretariat to the COP and the Party concerned.

Outline for National Communication review guidelines

Purpose

The purposes of the guidelines on the review of national communications of Parties are:

- To provide a thorough and comprehensive technical assessment of national communications;
- To examine in an objective and transparent manner whether quantitative and qualitative information was submitted by Parties in accordance with the guidelines for preparation of national communications²;
- To promote consistency in the review of the information contained in the national communications of Parties;
- To assist Parties to improve reporting of information under Article 12, and the implementation of their commitments under the Convention;
- To ensure that the COP has reliable information on the implementation of commitments under the Convention by each Party.

Scope of the review

The individual review shall:

- Provide an assessment of the completeness of the national communication, in accordance with the reporting requirements, and an indication of whether it was submitted on time;
- Provide a detailed examination of each part of the national communication, as well as procedures and methodologies used in the preparation of the information, such as:
 - National circumstances relevant to greenhouse gas emissions and removals;
 - Policies and measures;
 - Projections and the total effect of policies and measures;
 - Vulnerability assessment, climate change impacts and adaptation measures;
 - Financial resources;
 - Transfer of technology;
 - Research and systematic observation;
 - Education, training and public awareness;
- Identify any problems in and factors influencing, the fulfillment of commitments relating to each part of the national communication;
- When national communications and biennial reports are submitted at the same time, the parts of the national communications, which are duplicative to the biennial reports, shall be reviewed only under the biennial report review.

Identification of problems

The problems identified during the assessment relating to individual sections of the national communication, shall be identified as relating to:

- Transparency;
- Completeness;
- Timeliness.

Only when issues of transparency prevent the ERT from making performing the review should this be considered a problem.

Failure to submit any section of the national communication shall be considered as a problem.

² Decision 4/CP.5 on “Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part II: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on national communications”

Timing

- The ERTs and the secretariat shall make every effort to complete the individual review of national communications within 1 year of the national communication submission;
- If additional information is requested during the review, it should be provided as soon as possible and within two weeks after the review;
- The ERT for each Party shall, under its collective responsibility, produce a draft of the national communication review report following the agreed format to be finalized within four weeks after the review;
- The draft of each national communication review report will be sent to the Party subject to review for comment;
- The Party concerned shall be provided with four weeks of receipt of the draft report to provide comments on it;
- The ERT shall produce the finalized national communication review report taking into account comments of the Party within four weeks of receipt of the comments.

Reporting

The review report should include a technical assessment of the elements specified in the section on the scope of the review and an identification of problems in accordance with the section on identification of problems.

Outline for Biennial Report review guidelines

Modalities and procedures for International Assessment and Review (IAR) for biennial reports were agreed in Durban (decision 2/CP.17). The IAR process includes the technical review of the information submitted. Parties have already agreed that the modalities and procedures of the IAR process will be revised no later than 2016 (COP 22), after experience from the first round reviews.

The EU believes that any revision of the review guidelines for biennial reports as included in decision 2/CP.17 should follow this timetable as agreed.
