



NEW ZEALAND

Submission to SBI on experiences with reporting the first biennial report

March 2014

Context

The first biennial reports from developed countries were due for submission by 1 January 2014. On that basis, Annex I Parties were invited to make submissions on their experiences with reporting their first biennial reports (Decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 17 refers).

Introduction

2 Overall, New Zealand's experience with reporting its first biennial report was positive. However, based on that experience we believe that some improvements could be made to the aspects of the process before the next biennial reports are due to be submitted by 1 January 2016, and the next national communications due to be submitted by 1 January 2018.

Suggestions for improvements

Annotated outline

3 New Zealand would encourage the development by the secretariat of an annotated outline for biennial reports that would sit alongside the *UNFCCC biennial reporting guidelines for developed countries* (Decision 2/CP.17, Annex 1). This could follow the format of the *Annotated Outline for Fifth National Communications of Annex I Parties under the UNFCCC, including Reporting Elements under the Kyoto Protocol*. This would be particularly helpful in years when national communications are not published.

4 While the biennial reporting guidelines in themselves are reasonably clear to understand, an annotated table of contents would provide Parties with further clarity on the scope of (a) what to include in the narrative part of biennial reports and (b) what not to include. This is particularly true for the Information on greenhouse gas emissions and trends and Projections chapters.

5 Information that could be helpful to include in an annotated outline could be:

- a more detailed table of contents
- an indication of the minimum level of reporting required by Parties
- should the summary information be provided by sectors and/or by gas
- what level of detail should be included on the drivers of emission trends

6 Additionally, in years when both biennial reports and national communications are submitted, an annotated outline would provide the opportunity for clarification for Parties on what information should/should not be duplicated between the two reports. This could be

done following the guidance provided by the secretariat in the presentation given to lead reviewers in Bonn on 18 March 2013.

Experience with the Biennial Reporting online Application

7 New Zealand understands that the development of the Biennial Reporting Application is a work in progress, and that the application will continue to be enhanced for future biennial update reports.

8 New Zealand was particularly pleased that the function of importing from the CTF tables and from an Excel workbook worked well. New Zealand would however appreciate some further guidance on which version of Excel is best suited for this function, as it encountered some issues with older versions of Excel.

9 While New Zealand was generally satisfied, and generally had a positive experience with the application, New Zealand suggests that the following be improved for future submissions:

- Make it clear, in the application interface (ie, not only in emails from the secretariat help desk or in the user manual), that the ‘comment’ boxes are for internal use only, and are not represented in the final published CTF tables.
- In this light, make it clearer in the interface that should a Party wish to provide additional information or comments for particular tables, this must be done via a footnote.
- When a ‘workbook’ is requested, ensure that the workbook is sent only to the Editor (user/expert) who requested the workbook and to the National Biennial Report Compiler, not to all Editors. This would be particularly helpful to avoid confusion among Editors, and double handling of data.

10 New Zealand encountered issues with the formatting of the PDF versions of its CTF tables. While these issues were mainly editorial, some of them affected the footnotes under the tables, which New Zealand used to present additional information relevant to the tables. The only way to resolve these issues was to submit the tables and check/QC them. If an issue was encountered, New Zealand had to ‘clone the submission’ and resubmit it, creating a new version of the tables (eg, v. 2.0; v.3.0 etc...).

11 New Zealand suggests that Parties are given the chance to check/QC the final PDF version of the tables before they are submitted, to avoid having to resubmit tables multiple times if an issue is found.

Other improvements

12 Regarding Table 8 (Provision of technology development and transfer support) and Table 9 (Provision of capacity-building support) there was no clear guidance on what was deemed “technology development and transfer support” and “capacity building support”, leaving it to Parties to interpret. In order to make this reporting more meaningful for the purpose of consistency and comparability across country reports, it could be useful to

discuss whether a standard workable definition or set of guidance notes could be developed for future reports.

13 With regard to Tables 7 and 7(a) (Provision of public financial support: summary information) we note that the classification of UN agencies is confusing. Both UNDP and UNEP are listed under the heading “Specialized United Nations body”. However, both UNDP and UNEP are actually classified as “Programmes and Funds” in the UN System. The World Bank Group of agencies are indeed “Specialised Agencies” and we suggest the table heading be amended accordingly.

National communication reporting guidelines

14 We note that the reporting guidelines for Annex I national communications are to be revised, beginning at the upcoming SBSTA session, and in part this revision is to take into account the experiences gained in preparing the first biennial reports. In New Zealand’s view the revised reporting guidelines for national communications should be brought into line with the guidelines for biennial reports in areas where the same information is being requested. This would make the reporting consistent across both reports and reduce the opportunity for differences between them, and would facilitate the review process in years where both biennial reports and national communications are reported. In particular this issue of consistency applies to the reporting on financial, technology and capacity building support, which has been significantly enhanced in the guidelines for biennial reports.

Conclusion

15 New Zealand trusts that we can learn from the experiences of the first biennial reports and we look forward to beginning discussions at SBI on the revisions to the reporting guidelines for national communications from Annex I Parties.