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UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Eighteenth session

Bonn, 4–13 June 2003

Agenda item 4 (a)

## METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

### REVIEW OF METHODOLOGICAL WORK UNDER THE CONVENTION AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

#### **Initial views on needs for specific methodological activities and on a strategic approach to further methodological work**

#### **Submissions from Parties**

#### **Addendum**

1. In addition to the nine submissions contained in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/MISC.3, one further submission has been received.
2. In accordance with the procedure for miscellaneous documents, this submission is attached and reproduced\* in the language in which it was received and without formal editing.

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\* This submission has been electronically imported in order to make it available on electronic systems, including the World Wide Web. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure the correct reproduction of the text as submitted.

**FCCC/SBSTA/2003/MISC.3/Add.1**

GE.03-62148

## SUBMISSION FROM AUSTRALIA

### **A proposal by Australia for the development of a Data Interface to improve access to data by Parties**

Australia's submission on SBSTA agenda item 4(a) *Review of methodological work under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol*, contained in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/MISC.3, proposed, inter alia, a series of specific tasks leading to a decision at COP 10 to strengthen the information base of the Convention. Based on its submission, the views expressed by other Parties and document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.1 *Synthesis and elements of a possible work programme*, prepared by the secretariat, Australia has elaborated and refined its proposal to assist the deliberations of the SBSTA on this matter.

Under the Convention, several information systems have been developed to serve information needs that have become apparent through Convention processes. These include the greenhouse gas database, TT:Clear and the numerous synthesis reports and other documents requested of the secretariat. Currently, self-reporting by Parties is the only source of data used to service information needs through Convention processes. While individual Parties also use other sources of data, there is no means of access by all Parties to a comprehensive source of additional data.

This paper proposes the development of a Data Interface to facilitate access by Parties to existing data relevant to their considerations of climate change. The data would be global in focus, and would include both environmental and economic data. This would not replace self-reporting by Parties, which would continue to be developed in its important role. The Data Interface would be distinct in its presentation, status and role.

#### ***What is a Data Interface?***

Development of a Data Interface would not require the creation or collation of new data. Rather, it would involve the linking of existing international databases to a central system through which users could request and receive specific data. Figure 1 (below) depicts the flow of requests for data from users, through the interface to the databases. The response from the databases could be presented simply and clearly, for example similarly to data retrieved through the greenhouse gas database. It would enable Parties to seek answers to simple questions, such as, has global emissions intensity increased or decreased over the past 5 years?

#### ***The rationale for a Data Interface***

It is striking that after 10 years of the Convention we still don't have the capacity to answer basic questions. A Data Interface would enable such questions to be answered efficiently, and would increase transparency under the Convention.

#### **Improving the efficiency of data access and use**

Convention processes place considerable demands on the institutional capacity of all Parties and the secretariat to amass and analyse information. While the relevant data may be available from existing sources, it may not be in a usable format or readily accessible for all Parties. Drawing on data from widely dispersed sources through a single, user-friendly interface would overcome such problems.

In many cases the secretariat is called upon to compile and present information to assist the COP and the subsidiary bodies in their deliberations. For example, the secretariat's tasks under SBSTA agenda item 5, *Development and transfer of technologies*, have included the preparation of two technical papers for

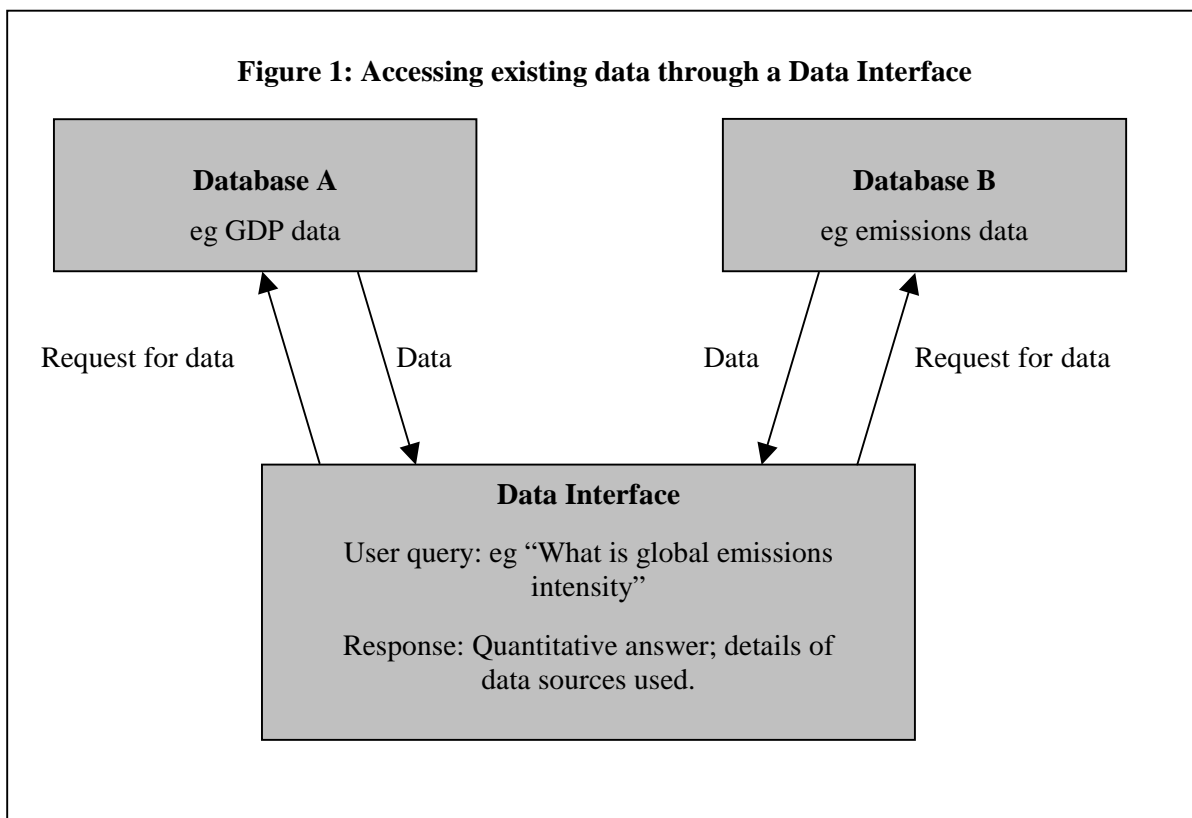
SBSTA 18. A Data Interface could increase the efficiency of this kind of work in the future, enhancing the ability of the secretariat to respond efficiently to future requests.

Informing the targeting of resources for capacity building

By helping to build Parties' capacity for analysis and decision-making, a user-friendly Data Interface would reduce the effects of differences in institutional capacity with regard to data access and management. It would also be a valuable tool in targeting of resources for capacity building, for example with regard to technology transfer and in improving the ability of the COP to guide the GEF. As the GEF begins to move toward a more programmatic approach, a comprehensive information base will become increasingly important.

Increasing the transparency of Convention processes

A central Data Interface would be a transparent access-point to sources of data; open to scrutiny by individual Parties and the COP. For example, where 2 credible sources give differing data for a given indicator, transparency would be increased by ensuring that Parties were aware of the differences and were able to account for this in their considerations.



***What data would be included?***

Comprehensive, global databases held by credible, existing sources would be included. These sources could include UN statistics, IEA and FAO. Initially, the interface would ideally be limited to basic data in two broad categories:

- 1) Environmental data
  - For example, building on the greenhouse gas database, including data on major sources and trends
- 2) Socio-economic indicators, including:
  - Population and population growth; and
  - GDP and GDP growth.

In subsequent phases, more complex data could be incorporated as the system and its use became more efficient through experience and information needs and priorities became more clearly defined.

***Development and management of the Data Interface***

Synergies should be explored with existing work of the secretariat, including the continued improvement of the greenhouse gas database, the development of TT:Clear and the Article 6 information clearing house.

The Data Interface could be established and maintained through Convention processes or by a third party. Criteria important in considering the best organisation to take on this role include the need for acceptance of the organisation by all Parties, and the relevant experience and expertise of the organisation.

***How do we progress the Data Interface?***

COP 9 in Milan in December 2003 presents an opportunity to take stock of the Convention process and consider practical steps that can be taken. A COP 9 decision to establish an initial phase in the development of a Data Interface would be a practical and significant outcome from Milan that would improve the decision making capacity of Parties.

A strategy to pursue this work up to COP 9 and beyond is outlined in Table 1 (below), in terms of what needs to be done, how it could be done, who could undertake the work and the timeframe for the work.

Australia suggests that the preparatory work be initiated by SBSTA 18 tasking the secretariat with preparing a stock-take of existing, credible sources of emission and socio-economic data, and preparing options for the collation and presentation of the data to better serve the information needs under the Convention. The results of the stock take should be published prior to SBSTA 19, while the preparation of options may be completed by SBSTA 19 or 20.

Work on developing the Data Interface could be launched with a decision at COP 9.

**Table 1: Work program to improve access to data by Parties through development of a Data Interface**

What	How	Who	When
A stock take of existing sources of emissions and socio-economic data	A paper covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- sources</li><li>- accessibility</li><li>- comparability</li></ul>	The secretariat (in-house or by commission) under SBSTA agenda item 4(a)	In time for discussion at SBSTA 19
Development of options for the development, hosting and management of a Data Interface to improve access to data by Parties	A paper covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- possible host/management arrangements</li><li>- costing</li><li>- interface design</li></ul>	The secretariat (in-house or by commission) under SBSTA agenda item 4(a)	In time for discussion at SBSTA 19 or 20
Development, hosting and management of a Data Interface	Initial phase would cover a limited range of data	To be decided	To commence following a decision at COP 9 or COP 10

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