

**Conclusions and recommendations**  
**First meeting of lead reviewers for the review of**  
**biennial reports and national communications**  
**Bonn, Germany**

*6–7 March 2014*

1. The first meeting of lead reviewers (LRs) for the review of biennial reports (BRs) and national communications (NCs) was held in Bonn, Germany, from 6 to 7 March 2014. A total of 57 experts from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) and 47 experts from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) were invited to the meeting. Of the 59 experts who attended, 39 were from non-Annex I Parties and 20 were from Annex I Parties. In addition, one representative of the European Union attended the meeting as observer.
2. In accordance with 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) included in annex to decision 23/CP.19, the meeting addressed both procedural and technical issues relating to the reviews of biennial reports and national communications from Annex I Parties with a view to facilitate the work of LRs in fulfilling their task to ensure consistency in the review across Parties.

**Review requirements and approaches to the review process**

3. The LRs noted that the 2014 reviews of sixth national communications (NC6) and first biennial reports (BR1) will be the first reviews to be conducted following the review guidelines adopted by decision 23/CP.19. The LRs affirmed their role in ensuring that reviews are performed according to the review guidelines and consistently across Parties.
4. The LRs noted that during the technical review of individual sections of the NCs and BRs the issues shall be identified as relating to transparency, completeness, timeliness and adherence to the reporting guidelines as per decisions 4/CP.5 and 2/CP.17, as well as the information provided in the common tabular format (CTF) for BRs as adopted by decision 19/CP.18. In that regard the LRs noted the usefulness of the templates, tools and training materials prepared by the secretariat to support the identification of issues and recommended that ERTs make full use of these tools during the review. The LRs also recommended that ERTs ensure that the issues that they identified are presented in a transparent, thorough and objective manner in the review reports, and that the recommendations and encouragements are clear and comprehensive for the Party to resolve the identified issue.
5. In the context of the approach for review, the LRs noted that while the CTF for BRs is a mandatory reporting requirement, the national circumstances of a Party are to be taken into account when the ERT reviews the reported information included in the tables of the CTF, in particular information on the effects of individual policies and measures (PaMs). To this end, the LRs recommended that the ERT clarify, where applicable, why a Party did not report some information in the CTF for BRs, including on the effects of its individual PaMs and summarise the Party's explanation in the review report. Gaps identified in the CTF for BRs might not necessarily mean incomplete reporting, provided that they are adequately explained by the Party as being due to national circumstances. The ERT should recommend that the explanation for gaps be included by the Party in its next submission of the BR and/or the CTF for BRs.
6. The LRs noted that the technical review as part of the international assessment and review (IAR) process will be followed by the multilateral assessment and that the review reports comprise one of the key inputs for the latter. The LRs also noted that a timely publication of review reports in accordance with the review guidelines is essential for the multilateral assessment to be finalized

for all Parties before the submission of the second BRs in 2016. In that regard, the LRs noted that the tools prepared by the secretariat will facilitate the timely preparation of review reports and agreed to take a strong role in leading ERTs, to ensure proper time management. The LRs recommended that ERTs make every effort to provide their input in a timely manner in all steps of the review process and especially in the preparation of the review reports.

7. The LRs agreed with the overall approach to the reviews of NC6 and BR1 in 2014, as presented by the secretariat during the meeting. This includes the organization of reviews of BR1 together with NC6 as in-country visits for 34 Parties and as centralized reviews for 10 Parties, in accordance with other UNFCCC review processes as adopted in decision 9/CMP.9. This also includes scheduling the in-country visits by the end of October 2014, at the latest to allow sufficient time to conclude the multilateral assessment for the submission of NC6 and BR1 for all Parties before the submission of the second BRs in 2016.

## **Planning and preparation for the 2014 reviews**

### ***Planning of the 2014 reviews***

8. The LRs acknowledged the challenges the secretariat is facing in planning the reviews of NC6 and BR1 in 2014. The LRs noted that these challenges arise from: (a) lack of sufficient number of well-prepared experts to conduct the reviews due to other competing priorities or lack of funding to cover their participation; (b) the outdated and not accurate list of experts on the UNFCCC roster of experts (RoE); (c) limited time slots for in-country reviews due to numerous relevant events, including UNFCCC activities, carried out in parallel and national circumstances of Parties under review; and (d) the need to schedule reviews within a very limited timeframe (see para. 7 above).

9. The LRs noted that over 150 experts are required to conduct the reviews of NC6 and BR1. Lack of sufficient number of well-prepared experts available to support the review process and lack of flexibility in scheduling the review week by Parties for which NC6 and BR1 have to be reviewed, may lead to a delay in organizing the reviews in accordance with the timelines set in the review guidelines adopted by decision 23/CP.19. The LRs encouraged Parties to nominate experienced experts to the RoE, update the list of experts on the RoE, as appropriate, facilitate experts' participation in the reviews and demonstrate flexibility in scheduling the review week.

### ***Review report templates***

10. The LRs took note of the approach to the checklists and the templates for the report on the in-depth review (IDR) of NCs and the technical report on the review (TRR) of BRs prepared by the secretariat. The LRs appreciated the work of the secretariat in preparation of the checklists and templates based on the requirements of the review guidelines and using the practices and approaches established during the review process in the lead-up to the submission of the NC6 and BRs. The LRs welcomed the efforts taken to streamline the templates by including a more analytical presentation of information in a tabular format, streamlining the standard text and improving clarity of the secretariat's instructions.

11. The LRs appreciated a balanced approach taken by the secretariat in preparing the templates to present the assessment of information reported in the NCs and BRs and cross-references used in the TRR of BR1 and IDR of NC6 reports, introduced to avoid repetition of the same information in both reports with the view to ensure that same information reported in the NCs, BRs and GHG inventories is reviewed only once. In discussing the approach to the technical assessment of reported information and its reflection in the templates, the LRs suggested to assess completeness and transparency by using four gradations: fully, mostly, partially and not complete or transparent. The LRs welcomed the distribution of the templates to the ERTs well in advance to the review week and recommended that the secretariat continue this practice for the future reviews to enhance consistency of approach to the reviews.

## ***Review tools***

12. The LRs welcomed the work undertaken and on-going work by the secretariat to develop the review tools for the BR1 and NC6 reviews, namely the biennial reporting virtual team room (BR VTR), the Synthesis and Analysis (S&A) report and the Data Interface (DI).

13. The LRs welcomed the achievements made in concluding the four components of the BR VTR: the Reference Library, the ERT Workspace, the Question and Answer tool and the Review Report Preparation workflow and noted that the BR VTR is a useful tool that can facilitate the consistency, timeliness and efficiency of the review process.

14. The LRs recommended that Parties and ERTs widely use this tool during the review activities and encouraged the secretariat to continue its work on improving the BR VTR and its components.

15. The LRs recommended that the secretariat provide access to the tools, including templates of the checklists, to the Parties and ERTs as early as possible and update the tools taken fully into consideration the feedback by the Parties and the ERTs.

16. The LRs acknowledged the on-going work by the secretariat to prepare the S&A report of the BR CTF data and make these data searchable through the DI. The S&A report will provide a summary of the data submitted by all Annex I Parties in the BR CTF, while the DI will allow users to search most important data reported in the BR CTF. The LRs noted that the S&A report will serve as an analytical supportive tool for the ERTs and the DI will make the BR CTF data more user friendly for the ERTs and Parties. The LRs encouraged the secretariat to pursue their plans in developing and enhancing the S&A report and the DI.

## **Training of review experts**

17. The LRs welcomed the organization of the training seminar on reviews of BRs and NCs during the LRs meeting and the presentation of the training materials developed by the secretariat on this matter. The LRs noted that the seminar helped to enhance the knowledge on substantive matters and approaches for the technical review process and to provide guidance and solid basis for the common understanding of the review steps, with a view of facilitating the work of LRs in fulfilling their task to ensure consistency in the review across Parties.

18. The LRs noted the need to formalize the current training materials developed by the secretariat in a training programme for the review of BRs and NCs for consideration of the SBSTA at its 40<sup>th</sup> session, with the purpose of addressing the training needs of both new and experienced experts, including an assessment of their qualifications, to ensure the necessary competence for their participation in ERTs for the reviews of BRs and NCs.

## **Multilateral assessment**

19. The LRs took note of the overall approach by secretariat in planning for multilateral assessment under the first round of the IAR process, with the understanding that details for operationalizing the working group session under Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) for multilateral assessment will be elaborated by June 2014, before the 40<sup>th</sup> session of the SBI, by the secretariat under the guidance of the SBI Chair. This will allow the launch of the multilateral assessment at the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the SBI (December 2014).