

## Conclusions and recommendations

### Thirteenth meeting of greenhouse gas inventory lead reviewers

29 February to 2 March 2016

1. The 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory lead reviewers (LRs) was held in Bonn, Germany, from 29 February to 2 March 2016. A total of 39 experts from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) and 43 experts from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) were invited to the meeting. Of the 57 experts who attended, 29 were from non-Annex I Parties and 28 were from Annex I Parties. The secretariat held a refresher seminar for LRs and experienced reviewers on 29 February 2016, before the lead reviewers meeting, which was attended by 55 experts (29 from non-Annex I Parties and 26 from Annex I Parties). The focus of the refresher seminar was on experiences from reviews of GHG inventories in 2015.
2. In accordance with decisions 13/CP.20, 22/CMP.1 and 24/CMP.1, the meeting facilitated the work of LRs in fulfilling their task to ensure the consistency of reviews across all Parties and provided suggestions on how to improve the quality and efficiency of the reviews. These conclusions and recommendations will be reported to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), in accordance with the annexes to decisions 13/CP.20 and 22/CMP.1, in order to provide the SBSTA with inputs for providing further guidance to the secretariat on the selection of experts and the coordination of the expert review teams (ERTs) and the expert review process. In addition, decision 13/CP.20 invites LRs to provide guidance on such matters as review tools, materials and templates,<sup>1</sup> as well as to provide suggestions on how to improve the quality, efficiency and consistency of the reviews.<sup>2</sup>

#### **I. Coordination and planning of the 2016 review cycle**

3. The LRs noted the plans of the secretariat for 2016 reviews, taking into consideration the need to follow agreed decisions (decision 13/CP.20, 4/CMP.11, 20/CP.21 and 10/CMP.11), in particular, the number and type of reviews. The LRs recognized the importance of pursuing the timeliness of review in accordance with decisions 13/CP.20 and 4/CMP.11, in spite of the challenges for 2016.
4. The LRs recognized that the 2016 review cycle may be particularly challenging for Parties, reviewers, LRs and the secretariat because, for most Parties, the reviews of the 2015 and 2016 submissions under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol and of the report to facilitate the calculation of the assigned amount for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol will happen in conjunction during 2016.
5. The LRs also recognized that the 2016 review cycle will be particularly challenging owing to the late delivery of the CRF Reporter. They noted the secretariat's plan to deliver a new release of the CRF Reporter by 3 May 2016 and that this release may still not be considered a functioning version. The LRs noted that this may result in some Parties facing difficulties in submitting their 2015 and 2016 Kyoto Protocol submissions on time and, consequently, will have an impact on the organization of reviews under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol by the secretariat in 2016.
6. The LRs noted the importance of communicating the status of the development of the CRF Reporter to all review experts, so that they are aware of the problems associated with the software development and the implications on the planning and reviews.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision 13/CP.20, annex, paragraph 48.

<sup>2</sup> Decision 13/CP.20, annex, paragraph 44.

7. In order to manage the 2016 review cycle, the LRs requested the secretariat to send questionnaires by 1 April 2016 to all reviewers on their availability for the 2016 review cycle.
8. The LRs also requested the secretariat to send questionnaires by 3 May 2016 to Annex I Parties on their submission plans, availability for the 2016 review cycle, and the types of review in which they are willing to participate.
9. The LRs recognized the uniqueness of the 2016 review cycle and agreed that the reviews could be facilitated if they would start with the 2016 submission.
10. The LRs noted the information provided by the secretariat on the reviews of the reports upon expiration of the additional period for fulfilling commitments for the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (the true-up period reports), and recognized that the support of the secretariat in preparing the materials for the reviews has significantly contributed to the high efficiency and timeliness of the process.

## **II. Training and availability of review experts**

11. The LRs welcomed the information on training activities undertaken by the secretariat in 2015 and planned training activities in 2016, in particular, the launch of the new “Training programme for review experts for the technical review of greenhouse gas inventories of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention” (annex to decision 14/CP.20) (hereinafter referred to as the new training programme) and the organization of the refresher seminar held prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs, focusing on experiences from reviews of GHG inventories in 2015, which helped LRs to identify review approaches and good practices that may be used and replicated in future reviews.
12. The LRs noted the scope and focus and the examination requirements of the basic course of the new training programme, which new review experts must pass. The LRs considered that the training courses are also useful for experienced review experts and LRs to acquire new practical skills for the reviews because of the use, since 2015, of the new “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”, 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 UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines) and the methodological guidance of the *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National GHG Inventories* (hereinafter referred to as the 2006 IPCC Guidelines), and to facilitate consistent review approaches by ERTs. The LRs noted that only a few experts had participated and passed the relevant examinations of the basic courses to date, and welcomed the organization of examinations for experienced review experts by the secretariat prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs. The LRs reiterated their strong encouragement that experienced review experts and LRs undertake the relevant courses and examinations of the new training programme at their earliest convenience and use the examination sessions for experienced review experts planned by the secretariat in 2016. The LRs noted the need for further development and enhancement of the new training programme.
13. The LRs welcomed the information by the secretariat on the updating and implementing of the “Training programme for members of expert review teams participating in annual reviews under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol” (annex to decision 5/CMP.11) as requested by decision 5/CMP.11. The LRs stressed the importance of making these courses available online, if possible in time for the first review under the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, and strongly encouraged experienced reviewers and LRs to undertake the relevant courses and examinations of this updated training programme.
14. The LRs reiterated the need to continue to increase the number of review experts who can actively participate in the review process with the support of their nominating Parties, in order to ensure the completeness and balance of expertise of the ERTs. The LRs also reiterated the importance of the support from Parties to ensure that experts are fully available for the complete

review process and required training activities, and further stressed the importance that Parties nominate experts with experience in GHG inventories and robust sectoral technical expertise to the UNFCCC roster of experts (ROE) and regularly update their nominations. The LRs encouraged the secretariat to finalize the development of the new platform for the ROE as soon as possible.

### **III. Guidance on the development of review tools, materials and templates**

#### **Review tools and materials**

15. The LRs noted the development of the data warehouse, including existing review tools and the production of status reports under both the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, and the aggregate GHG information.

#### **Status report**

16. Regarding the standardized set of data comparisons, the LRs agreed with the practical proposal to implement the consistency checks in the status reports.<sup>3</sup> The LRs also recommended that the secretariat highlight or insert in the status reports the missing information identified in the report. In addition, the LRs emphasized the need for LRs to have experience in the use of the UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines before being able to adequately recommend further changes to assess the standardized set of data comparisons. Therefore a group of experienced reviewers among the LRs will be invited, after the 2016 reviews, to conduct an assessment of the standardized data comparisons.

#### **Aggregate GHG information**

17. In order to streamline the aggregate GHG information, the secretariat circulated a questionnaire to experienced reviewers, and compiled and presented the results. Owing to the low response rate to the questionnaire and time limitations to prepare material for the 2016 review, the LRs recommended that the secretariat provisionally implement its streamlining proposal for the 2016 review cycle. However, the LRs recommended that the same process of consultations be extended until December 2016, encouraging the LRs to fill in the questionnaire, prioritizing their relevant area of expertise in order to minimize the efforts. The LRs also recommended that the secretariat compile the results, in order to support an informed discussion and possible recommendations on this issue at the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs.
18. The LRs noted that the secretariat is redesigning the review tools in line with the recommendations resulting from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> meetings of LRs. The functionality of the tools remains unchanged while they are being integrated into the new data warehouse. The LRs noted the roll-out plan of the comparison tool and the Locator, and supported the proposed procedure for involving a group of LRs/ERTs in the testing of the updated tools. The LRs noted that user manuals are being developed in line with the recommendations of the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs and that these manuals will be made available at the same time as the comparison tool and Locator deployment.

#### **Annual review report template**

19. The LRs stressed that there will be heavy workload in conducting the reviews in 2016 and emphasized the importance of drafting the annual review reports (ARRs) efficiently, and ensuring that identical information is only reviewed once and reflected using the same language in multiple reports, where applicable, as provided in decisions 20/CP.21 and 10/CMP.11.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://unfccc.int/files/national\\_reports/annex\\_i\\_ghg\\_inventories/review\\_process/application/pdf/asr\\_sample\\_template\\_from\\_lr13.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/national_reports/annex_i_ghg_inventories/review_process/application/pdf/asr_sample_template_from_lr13.pdf)

20. The LRs noted that a new ARR template for the Convention was used for the 2015 review cycle, and accepted its continued use during the 2015/2016 review cycles, noting that some modifications may be needed to reflect the combined 2015/2016 review cycles. LRs welcomed the new ARR template, which considerably enhances the efficiency of producing the ARRs through the use of more tables for the review findings. The LRs noted, in particular, the following further improvements:
  - a) Streamlined templates should include the possibility to express differentiated judgements for complex assessments. There should be consistent language for such differentiated judgements in the instructions provided with the template;
  - b) The importance of having an efficient connection between the review transcript and the revised ARR template, but detailed recommendations from the LRs may only be possible after the ARR template has been used in the 2015/2016 review cycle.
21. LRs stressed the importance of finalizing a zero order draft of the review report by the end of the review week. LRs should make use of the daily wrap-up meetings to assess the status and any obstacles that may prevent the finalization of the zero order draft.
22. If LRs note during the review week that there are areas not sufficiently clear in the new ARR templates or that are inconsistently addressed by review experts, they should discuss these issues in the wrap-up meeting and try to provide additional guidance.
23. The LRs endorsed the proposals by the secretariat for the ARR template under the Kyoto Protocol and the template for the review of the report to facilitate the calculation of the assigned amount. The LRs agreed that the secretariat should finalize these templates and include them in the package of review materials delivered to ERTs at least one month prior to the start of the 2016 review cycle, taking into consideration any comments received from LRs by 1 April 2016.
24. The LRs recommended that the secretariat include the templates for the 2015 and 2016 review cycles, as well as the template for the review of the report to facilitate the calculation of the assigned amount, in the review materials available one month prior to the review, and further recommended that all LRs familiarize themselves with the updated templates prior to the review cycle. The LRs also recommended that the secretariat provide the revised templates to the focal points of Parties to raise their awareness of the changes in the templates.

### **Other review materials**

25. The LRs welcomed the update of the *Handbook for Review of National GHG Inventories* (hereinafter referred to as the Review Handbook), to reflect decisions 24/CP.19 and 13/CP.20, and agreed that it will be a useful resource for both new and experienced reviewers. The LRs recommended that the secretariat strive to make the document as concise as possible, bearing in mind that the Review Handbook is one of many materials available to ERTs during the review week. The LRs further recommended that the secretariat finalize the Review Handbook and include it in the package of review materials delivered to ERTs at least one month prior to the start of the review weeks in 2016.
26. The LRs also welcomed the progress made in the compilation of all reporting, review and accounting requirements relating to the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in a user-friendly document (i.e. the consolidated decisions from the second commitment period). The LRs recommended that the secretariat finalize this document, including a summary, and include it in the package of review materials delivered to ERTs at least one month prior to the start of the review cycle in 2016. The LRs are encouraged to provide feedback to the secretariat on the structure and content of the compilation by 18 March 2016.
27. The LRs are also encouraged to provide comments on the Kyoto Protocol Reference Manual for the second commitment period, at most two weeks after the draft is circulated by the secretariat. The LRs recommended that the secretariat finalize the documents in a user-friendly way and include them in the package of review materials delivered to ERTs at least one month prior to the start of the review weeks in 2016.

28. The LRs agreed to encourage ERTs to use these materials and recommended that these materials be made available to Parties.

#### **IV. Improvements to the quality, efficiency and consistency of reviews, in accordance with decisions 13/CP.20 and 4/CMP.11**

29. The LRs recognized that the promotion of consistency of reviews is a primary responsibility of LRs in the reviews in which they participate, with support from the secretariat. The LRs recognized, however, that the ERTs need to exercise some level of judgement in implementing the reviews, taking into account the relevant decisions and the 2006 IPCC Guidelines, including the identification of issues, progress in addressing previous recommendations and prominent paragraphs.<sup>4</sup>
30. The LRs noted that consistency within and across reviews should be ensured as far as possible, but recognized that some inconsistencies may be inevitable, including those resulting from national circumstances, and should be acceptable. These inconsistencies do not necessarily indicate a problem with the overall review process.
31. The LRs agreed that findings related to non-mandatory language are important to meeting the objectives of the review process to improve national GHG inventories and therefore agreed that they should continue to be reflected in the annual review report and included in the review transcript.
32. The LRs also discussed specific ways to improve the consistency and efficiency of the review process, including the consideration of experiences from the 2015 reviews. In particular, the LRs recommend that LRs promote the following procedures during the 2016 review:
  - a) The list of provisional main findings should focus on issues and recommendations, including the assessment by the ERT of the progress in addressing recommendations in previous review reports;
  - b) Interacting with the Parties is fundamental in assessing whether sufficient progress has been made in the implementation of previous recommendations for the purposes of including the issue in a prominent paragraph.<sup>5</sup>
33. The LRs considered the experience with desk reviews and concluded that more experience needs to be gained with desk reviews before making any specific recommendations on how the desk reviews are to be conducted, in accordance with paragraph 15 of decision 13/CP.20.

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 83 of the annex to decision 13/CP.20.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.