



Completeness and Transparency Assessment of Information Reported in Technical Review Reports of 5th Biennial Reports – 2024 Update

**Background paper for the First Meeting of Lead Reviewers of
Biennial Transparency Reports**

April 2024

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Acronyms and abbreviations	3
I. Background	4
II. Purpose and scope	4
III. Results of analysis of the assessment of completeness and transparency in the technical review reports of the first, second and third biennial reports	5
A. Trends in completeness of reporting	5
B. Trends in transparency of reporting	6
C. The most frequent recommendations	7
IV. Conclusions for consideration by the lead reviewers	8

Acronyms and abbreviations

Annex I Parties	Parties included in Annex I to the Convention
BR	biennial report
BTR	biennial transparency report
CTF	common tabular format
ERT	expert review team
ETF	Enhanced transparency framework
FTC	Financial, technological and capacity-building (support)
GHG	greenhouse gas
LR	lead reviewer
LULUCF	land use, land-use change and forestry
MBM	market-based mechanism
MPGs	Decision 18/CMA.1 Modalities, procedures and guidelines for the transparency framework for action and support referred to in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.
NCs	national communications
PaMs	policies and measures
RPG	Review Practice Guidance
TER	technical expert review under the ETF
TRR	technical review report
UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BRs	“UNFCCC biennial reporting guidelines for developed country Parties”
UNFCCC reporting guidelines on NCs	“Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention”

I. Background

1. 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”¹ request ERTs to: assess the completeness of BRs in accordance with the reporting requirements contained in decisions 2/CP.17, 19/CP.18 and 9/CP.21; undertake a detailed technical review of the information provided in the individual sections of the BRs; and identify issues relating to completeness, transparency, timeliness and adherence to the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BRs, as per decision 2/CP.17.

2. The LRs, at their meetings in the period 2016–2021, welcomed and acknowledged the following analytical background papers that supported consistency of reviews:

- “Analysis of further options to use the gradations ‘mostly’ and ‘partially’ in the assessment of completeness and transparency in BRs”, 2016;
- “Analysis of the assessment of completeness and transparency of information reported in biennial reports – 2017 update”;
- “Completeness and transparency assessment of information reported in technical review reports of 3rd biennial reports – 2019 update”;
- “Completeness and transparency assessment of information reported in technical review reports of 3rd biennial reports – 2020 update”;
- “Completeness and transparency assessment of information reported in technical review reports of 4th biennial reports – 2021 update”; and
- “Completeness and transparency assessment of information reported in technical review reports of 4th biennial reports – 2022 update”

3. In their conclusions and recommendations from their 2023 joint meeting of lead reviewers, the LRs requested the secretariat to continue assessing the consistency of assessments and improvements in reporting across the review of BR5s and NC8s, as well as how reporting and review practices under the existing MRV arrangements have evolved through the BR review cycles and how these review practices can inform the reporting and technical expert review processes under the ETF and present the assessment in the next LRs meeting.

II. Purpose and scope

4. The main purpose of this background paper is to provide the latest available information on trends in assessing the completeness and transparency of information provided by developed country Parties in their final BR5s compared with the previous BRs 1–4, and on the most frequent review issues related to mandatory reporting requirements identified by the ERTs in reviewing BR5s.

5. It should be emphasized that this paper covers analysis of TRR5s of 29 Parties² reviewed in 2023 and 2024 whose TRR5s were published; in this regard, the same group of Parties was used for the analysis of trends in assessment of completeness and transparency in this paper.

6. Sections I and II have introduced the subject, purpose and scope of this paper. Section III provides a summary of the results of the in-depth analysis of the trends in assessing

¹ Decision 13/CP.20.

² At the time of analysis, TRR5 reports of 29 Annex I Parties were published. These Parties are Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, EU, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK and US. The other Annex I Parties were not included in the analysis of this paper.

completeness and transparency in TRR5s and identifies the main challenges faced by Parties in reporting information in the BRs. Section IV outlines the conclusions for consideration by the LRs.

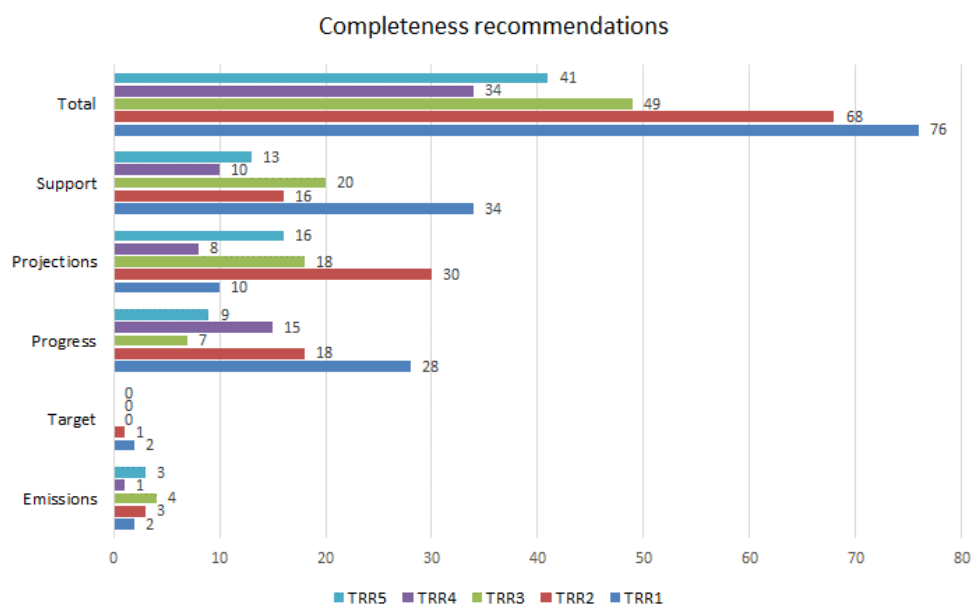
III. Results of analysis of the assessment of completeness and transparency in the technical review reports of the first, second, third, fourth and fifth biennial reports

A. Trends in completeness of reporting

7. The completeness of biennial reporting has improved since establishment of the current MRV system in 2014 with a slight fluctuation in the last three review cycles. Based on the 29 TRR5 analysed in this paper, the total number of recommendations in TRRs has steadily decreased throughout each review cycle, then increased slightly through the final review cycle (see figure 1). While in TRR1 the ERTs provided 76 recommendations, in TRR2s the number was 68, in TRR3s it decreased to 49, and in TRR4s it decreased further to 34. Finally, in TRR5s, there was an increase to 41 completeness recommendations, that is 46 per cent decrease compared to TRR1s.

Figure 1

Trends in completeness of reporting: comparison of the number of recommendations on completeness in TRR1s – TRR5s



8. With regard to individual sections of the BR5s, the most recommendations for completeness were related to projections (16), followed by recommendations for information on the provision of financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing country Parties (13) and progress in achievement of targets (9 excluding projections).

9. While reporting projections, the biggest challenge Parties faced was related to the separate reporting of projections related emissions from international maritime and aviation transport followed by recommendations related to reporting projections by gas, and factors and activities for each sector. With a total of 16 recommendations for completeness of information, this number of recommendations reported for this section has increased considerably compared to the BR4s (8).

10. While reporting the provision of financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing country Parties, the biggest challenges Parties faced were in reporting of national approach for tracking national approach for tracking of the provision of financial,

technological and capacity-building support, how financial support assist in adapting to the adverse effects of climate change and any economic and social consequences of response measures, and support of the development and enhancement of endogenous capacities and technologies of non-Annex I Parties.

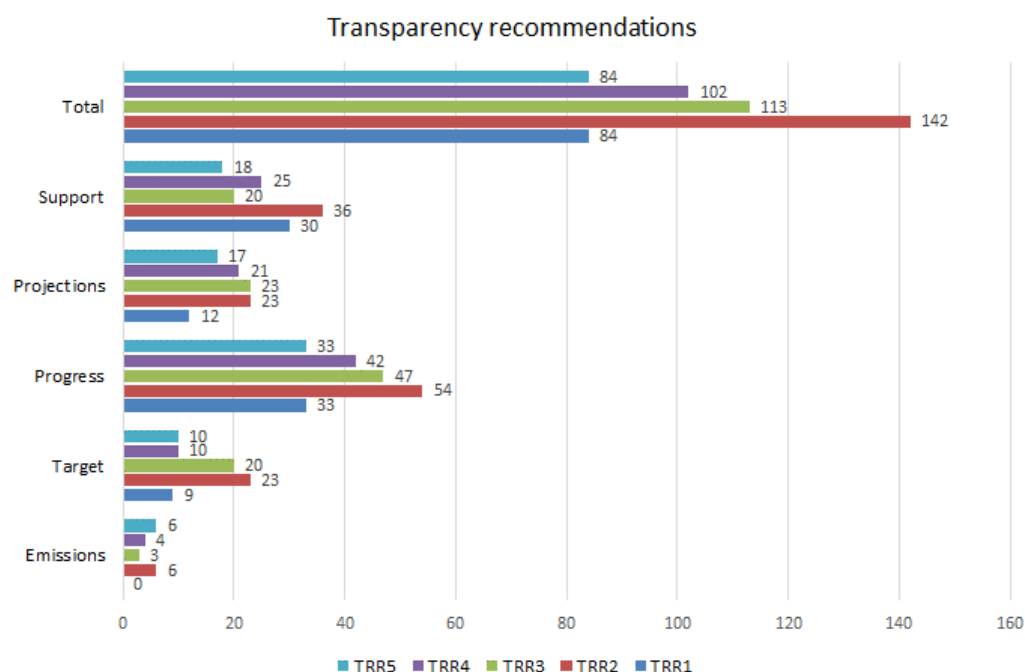
11. While reporting on progress in achievement of targets (excluding projections), most completeness recommendations were related to missing information on the estimates of mitigation impacts of PaMs and estimates of emission reductions and removals and the use of units from the market-based mechanisms and land use, land-use change and forestry activities.

B. Trends in transparency of reporting

12. The transparency of biennial reporting has slightly fluctuated throughout earlier review cycles, but overall trend after the first review cycle of BR1s shows improvement in the transparency of reporting. It should be emphasized that the increase of transparency recommendations between the first and subsequent review cycles is largely due to the introduction of the Review Practice Guidance in 2016, that provides agreed review approaches on many challenging review issues identified by the ERTs. Based on the 29 TRR5 analysed in this paper, the ERTs provided 84 recommendations in TRR1s, in TRR2s number of recommendations has increased to 142 number, decreased to 113 in TRR3s, and decreased further to 102 in TRR4s. Finally, in TRR5s there were 84 transparency recommendations (see figure 2).

Figure 2

Trends in transparency of reporting: comparison of the number of recommendations on transparency in TRR1s–TRR5s



13. With regard to individual sections, the most recommendations for transparency were related to information on progress made towards the achievement of the quantified economy-wide emission reduction target (33), followed by financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing country Parties (18) and projections (17). Compared to TRR4s, provision of support for developing country Parties, projections and progress in achievement of targets received less recommendations in TRR5s.

14. Parties faced challenges in reporting information on progress made towards the achievement of the quantified economy-wide emission reduction target that were related to

reporting information on estimated impacts of individual PaMs or adequately explaining why such impacts cannot be estimated, organizing PaMs by sector and by gas or providing consistent information on PaMs in BR5 and NC8, and providing estimates of emission reductions and removals and the use of units from the market-based mechanisms and land use, land-use change and forestry activities.

15. While reporting on the quantified economy-wide emission reduction target, the largest number of issues were identified in the reporting of information regarding the description of the reduction target and the use of MBMs and possible scale of its contribution in achieving emission reduction target.

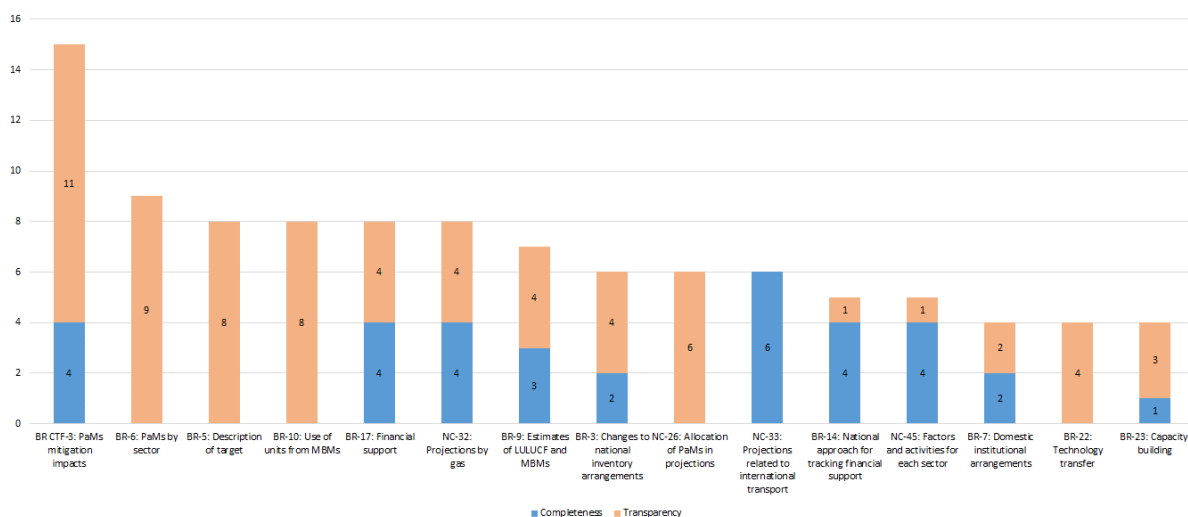
16. While reporting on the financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing country Parties, the biggest challenges Parties faced were provisions related to allocation channels and addressing information on measures and activities related to technology transfer. In addition, Parties faced challenges related to providing information on two calendar or financial years of financial support and information on capacity building projects.

17. While reporting on projections, the biggest challenge was to provide further information on allocation of implemented, adopted or planned PaMs to different scenarios based on the definitions from UNFCCC reporting guidelines of NCs and presenting information on projections by gas.

C. The most frequent recommendations in TRR5s

18. The frequency of recommendations in the 29 TRR5s was analysed to provide insight into areas where additional attention may be needed by Parties and ERTs. The most frequently cited mandatory reporting requirements are shown below in figure 3. This figure represents reporting requirements, covering both completeness and transparency, that amount to 80 per cent of all recommendations made in TRR5s.

Figure 3
Recommendation frequency: number of recommendations for the most frequently cited reporting requirements in TRR5s



19. The quantification of mitigation impacts of PaMs, corresponding to BR CTF table 3, had the largest number of recommendations, i.e. 15. If the 9 recommendations of paragraph 6 of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BRs, related to providing information on the description of individual PaMs, are taken into account then combined these two reporting requirements by exceed the other most frequent reporting requirements as shown in figure 3, amounting to 19 per cent of the most frequent recommendations.

20. The description of the economy-wide emissions target, the reporting on the use of units from MBMs, the support allocation channels, and projections by gas all received 8 recommendations.

IV. Conclusions for consideration by the lead reviewers

21. The analysis presented in this paper demonstrates that the completeness of biennial reporting has improved since establishment of the current MRV system in 2014 with a slight fluctuation in the last three review cycles, and the transparency of biennial reporting has slightly fluctuated throughout earlier review cycles, but overall trend after the first review cycle of BR1s shows improvement in the transparency of reporting.

22. It should be emphasized that the increase of transparency recommendations between the first and subsequent review cycles is largely due to the introduction of the Review Practice Guidance in 2016, that provides agreed review approaches on many challenging review issues identified by the ERTs. Also, it should be considered that this analysis is based on the TRR5s of 29 developed country Parties whose reports were published at the time of the preparation of this background paper.

23. The completeness and transparency of reporting combined, taking into account the total number of recommendations made by ERTs for the 29 reviewed Parties analysed in this paper, improved in BR5s (total of 125 recommendations) compared with BR4s (total of 136 recommendations), resulting in 8 per cent decrease. The total number of completeness recommendations increased from BR4s to BR5s, primarily in the projections and support section (total number of recommendations increased by 21 per cent). The total number of recommendations on transparency decreased by 18 per cent.

24. The completeness and transparency of information provided in individual sections of BR5s fluctuated in comparison to in BR1s, BR2s, BR3s and BR4s, which indicates that Parties faced some challenges in maintaining the quality and consistency of reporting. The most recommendations for both completeness and transparency related to information on progress made towards achieving the quantified economy-wide emission reduction target (mostly related to reporting on individual PaMs and their estimated mitigation impacts); the provision of financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing country Parties; and projections. Thus, these three sections were the most challenging for Parties with regard to complying with mandatory reporting requirements.

25. Several specific reporting elements have presented continuous challenges for Parties in almost all review cycles, including the estimated impacts of individual PaMs, the use of MBMs and the possible scale of their contribution to achieving emission reduction targets, and the annual contributions of LULUCF and units from MBMs in achieving the 2020 target. It should be emphasized that some of these reporting requirements are identical or similar to those in the MPGs and it is expected that reviews of the first BTRs will demonstrate whether these reporting requirements will continue to challenge Parties in their reporting under the ETF.