

Conclusions and recommendations

7th meeting of lead reviewers for the review of biennial reports and national communications of developed country Parties

9–10 June 2020

1. The 7th meeting of lead reviewers (LRs) for the review of biennial reports (BRs) and national communications (NCs) of developed country Parties was held remotely¹ on 9 and 10 June 2020. A total of 93 experts were invited to the meeting. Of the 67 experts who attended the meeting, 31 were from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention and 36 from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention.
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”,² the meeting addressed both procedural and technical issues relating to the review of BRs and NCs of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention with a view to facilitating the work of the LRs to ensure the consistency of reviews across Parties.

Approach to the review of fourth biennial reports

3. The LRs noted the information presented by the secretariat on the approach to the review of BR4s. The BR4s of developed country Parties will be reviewed in nine centralized reviews between March 2020 and March 2021. This will allow the corresponding technical review reports to be published in time to carry out the multilateral assessment for Parties, as feasible, at the fifty-second session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) in 2020 and SBI 53 and SBI 54 in 2021, and to complete the fourth international assessment and review cycle within two years after the submission due date of the BR4s, in accordance with the mandate.
4. The LRs noted that the measures proposed by the secretariat for organizing BR4 reviews facilitate timeliness and consistency. In particular, the LRs took note of the updated and integrated checklist and review report template, and the updated schedule for the review week. The LRs encourage the expert review teams (ERTs) to follow the approach proposed and to finalize the draft reports, ensuring accuracy and consistency, on time, namely by the end of the review week.
5. In the light of the recent outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019, the mode of reviewing the BR4s of 26 Parties scheduled for the first half of 2020 was changed to remote participation by experts in order to ensure the safety of those involved. This unique experience of remote participation has been challenging for Parties, the ERTs and the secretariat. The challenges include fewer opportunities to strengthen the capacity of new experts, some limitations in the engagement of reviewers, increased workloads for reviewers, review officers and the information technology support team, difficulties with internet connectivity for some experts from developing countries and finding time slots for virtual meetings across different time zones. Thus, the remote modality of centralized reviews may not be sustainable in the long term and should be used only as a response to the extraordinary circumstances. Once the situation has normalized, the mandated mode of the technical analysis and reviews will continue.

State of play in the development of the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement and the evolving role of lead reviewers

6. The LRs took note of the information presented by the secretariat on the outcomes from the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Madrid in December 2019, and in particular the technical work reflected in the informal notes by the facilitators prepared during the fifty-first session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice on methodological issues under the Paris Agreement related to the

¹ Owing to the circumstances related to the coronavirus disease 2019, the 7th meeting of LRs for the review of BRs and NCs of developed country Parties had to be conducted remotely.

² Decision 13/CP.20, annex.

enhanced transparency framework (ETF).³ The LRs also took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the implementation of the international consultation and analysis process, which helps developing country Parties gain experience as they move to the ETF under the Paris Agreement.

7. The LRs took note of the work of the secretariat on the development of tools such as the frequently asked questions on the ETF and the Reference Manual on the ETF under the Paris Agreement. Acknowledging the usefulness of such tools, the LRs invited the secretariat to inform them of updates to these tools, taking into account comments received from LRs by 15 August 2020, at its next meeting.

Improvement in the consistency of reviews

8. The LRs took note of the background papers “Completeness and transparency assessment of information reported in technical review reports of 3rd biennial reports – 2020 update” and “Assessment of information related to impacts of policies and measures reported in technical review reports of third biennial reports” prepared by the secretariat and acknowledged that the analyses contained therein facilitate improvements to the review process.⁴ The LRs requested the secretariat to continue updating the analysis of consistency in reviews on the basis of the technical reviews of BR4s and to present the analysis as an input for discussion during the next meeting of LRs.

9. The LRs requested the secretariat to prepare the review practice guidance (RPG) for 2020, incorporating the approaches discussed, revised and agreed at the 7th meeting of LRs. These approaches include cross-cutting, policies and measures, and projection issues. The LRs agreed that the review approaches presented in the RPG 2020⁵ should be applied by ERTs in the remaining reviews of BR4s.

10. The LRs also requested the secretariat to continue collecting information on and analysing review-related issues raised by the ERTs during the BR4 reviews with a view to presenting them for discussion at the 8th meeting of LRs in 2021.

³ Methodological issues under the Paris Agreement include the preparation of (1) common reporting tables for national greenhouse gas inventories; (2) common tabular format tables for tracking progress towards nationally determined contributions; (3) common tabular format tables for information on financial, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building support provided and mobilized, and needed and received; (4) outlines of the biennial transparency report, national inventory document and technical expert review report; and (5) a training programme for technical experts participating in the technical expert review.

⁴ The background papers are available at <https://unfccc.int/event/7th-meeting-of-lead-reviewers-for-the-review-of-biennial-reports-and-national-communications>.

⁵ The RPG 2020, when completed, will be available at <https://unfccc.int/RPG>.