

# Conclusions and recommendations from the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of greenhouse gas inventory lead reviewers

## I. Introduction

1. The 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory lead reviewers (LRs) was held in Bonn on 14 February 2023. A total of 47 experts from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) and 69 experts from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) were invited to the meeting. Of the 75 experts who registered for the meeting, 70 attended (56 in person and 14 remotely), of whom 33 were from non-Annex I Parties and 37 were from Annex I Parties. In addition, one representative of the European Commission attended the meeting as observer.

2. In accordance with the annex to decision 13/CP.20, the annex to decision 22/CMP.1 in conjunction with decision 4/CMP.11, and annex II to decision 24/CMP.1, the meeting helped to facilitate the work of LRs in fulfilling their task to ensure the consistency of GHG inventory reviews across Parties and the quality and objectivity of the thorough and comprehensive technical examinations in the reviews, and in providing suggestions on how to improve the quality, efficiency and consistency of the reviews.<sup>1</sup> These conclusions and recommendations will be reported to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) at its fifty-ninth session (November–December 2023).<sup>2</sup> Such reports provide the SBSTA with inputs for providing further guidance to the secretariat on selecting experts and coordinating expert review teams (ERTs) and the GHG inventory review process.

## II. Organization of the 2023 greenhouse gas inventory review process

3. The LRs took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the plan for organizing the 2023 GHG inventory review cycle and invited the secretariat to proceed with the remaining steps in organizing the 2023 review cycle taking into consideration the conclusions and recommendations outlined in paragraphs 4–10 below.

4. The LRs acknowledged that the 2023 review cycle will be particularly challenging for ERTs, the secretariat and Parties owing to the number of changes in reporting and review activities happening simultaneously. Annual submissions will be made outside a commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol for the first time since 2006. At the same time that, the review of the additional period for fulfilling commitments for the second commitment period (true-up period) will be conducted by January 2024 at the latest. Concurrently, Parties may already be preparing for the implementation of the modalities, procedures and guidelines (MPGs) for reporting under the enhanced transparency framework (ETF),<sup>3</sup> including the use of global warming potential values from the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Therefore, there may be a need to adjust the review approach to ensure that it continues to be effective and efficient, and the LRs acknowledged their special role in that regard.

5. The LRs invited the secretariat to make minimal changes to the annual review report template for the 2023 GHG inventory submission, with the primary changes addressing the transition to a review without quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments (QELRCs). The LRs noted that, although discussions on the review report template for reviews of the 2024 and subsequent submissions extend beyond the GHG inventory to cover all elements of the biennial transparency report (BTR) review and were discussed during the joint LRs meeting, the experience gained in using the GHG inventory review templates could be useful for the implementation of these reviews.

6. The LRs noted the importance to remind ERTs, in the opening presentation for the review week, about the unique circumstances of the 2023 review cycle, and that Parties are preparing for their 2024 submissions under the ETF. In particular, ERTs should be reminded

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<sup>1</sup> As per decision 13/CP.20, annex, paras. 42 and 44.

<sup>2</sup> As per decisions 13/CP.20, annex, para. 44; and 22/CMP.1, annex, para. 40(a).

<sup>3</sup> Decision 18/CMA.1, annex.

that, since Parties do not have a QELRC, there will be no list of potential problems and further questions raised by the ERT (Saturday paper) in 2023, and accordingly Friday will be the last day of the review week. Further, the emphasis will shift from identifying underestimates for categories under Annex A to the Kyoto Protocol and the overestimation of removals in activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3–4, of the Kyoto Protocol, which guided the reviews for Parties with QELRCs in recent years, to verifying the accuracy of estimates and other remaining issues related to transparency, completeness, consistency and comparability.

7. The LRs noted that reviews in 2023 are subject to 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” (UNFCCC review guidelines)<sup>4</sup> and that ERTs conducting reviews of inventory submissions in 2023 will need to carefully consider recommendations made in previous review cycles to assess whether they are still relevant.

8. The LRs highlighted the continued relevance of the provisional main findings (PMF) in the 2023 review cycle, particularly given that developed country Parties will continue to follow the *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* in their 2024 annual submissions, and beyond, and encourage ERTs to continue their efforts to prepare timely and useful PMFs focused on relevant issues for 2023, taking into consideration the transition mentioned in paragraphs 4, 6 and 7 above.

9. Noting that some Parties may submit their GHG inventory due in 2023 applying one or more elements of the MPGs under the ETF, the LRs concluded that the review approach should take into account the specific circumstances of the Parties’ reporting, while ensuring adherence to the UNFCCC review guidelines guiding the review process.

10. Noting the need to increase the number of active review experts, the LRs requested the secretariat to explore options for involving in ERTs more experts who have passed the required examinations but have not yet participated in a review.

11. Noting the barriers to the participation of experts in the review process, the LRs reiterated the need for Parties to continue encouraging, supporting and facilitating the participation of their nominated experts in GHG inventory reviews to ensure the completeness of ERTs; an appropriate balance of expertise, gender and geographical representation in ERTs; and the high quality of review reports, in particular given the expected significant increase in the number of review experts required under the ETF.

### **III. Training of greenhouse gas inventory review experts in 2022 and future activities**

12. The LRs welcomed the information on training activities undertaken by the secretariat in 2022 and on ongoing and planned training activities in 2023 for review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories of Annex I Parties.

13. The LRs stressed the importance for Parties to nominate experts with GHG inventory experience and robust sectoral technical expertise to the UNFCCC roster of experts, regularly update their nominations and support experts in completing the required training activities and examinations.

14. The LRs noted with concern the low rate of eligible experts emerging from the training and examination process and requested the secretariat to further explore the potential reasons for this and, if possible, identify measures to address this concern, and report its findings to the LRs at their next meeting.

### **IV. Organization of the reviews of Kyoto Protocol true-up period reports in 2023**

15. The LRs noted that decision 1/CMP.17, on the date of completion of the expert review process under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol for the second commitment period,<sup>5</sup> sets 1 June

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<sup>4</sup> Decision 13/CP.20, annex.

<sup>5</sup> The advance unedited version of the decision is available at [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cmp17\\_auv\\_4c\\_expert\\_review.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cmp17_auv_4c_expert_review.pdf).

2023 as the deadline for completing the expert review process for the final year of the second commitment period. The LRs encouraged ERTs, LRs, Parties and the secretariat to expedite the review process in order to publish all annual review reports by that deadline.

16. The LRs also noted that the decision referred to in paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.** above requests Parties, as appropriate, to submit their reports for assessing compliance with their commitments under the second commitment period by 24 October 2023.<sup>6</sup> The LRs welcomed the secretariat's current plan to organize the review of these reports as early as possible.

17. The LRs requested the secretariat to draw on the experience gained in true-up period reviews of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol when organizing the true-up period reviews of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

## V. Other matters

18. The LRs took note of the decisions adopted at the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-seventh session with direct implications for the GHG inventory reporting and review<sup>7</sup> and the secretariat's plans for implementing the relevant actions related to the mandates therein in a timely manner.

19. The LRs welcomed the background paper prepared by the secretariat on the experience gained in 20 years of reviewing Annex I Parties' GHG inventories<sup>8</sup> and concluded that this experience could be helpful to LRs and technical expert review teams in future GHG inventory reviews under the Convention and the ETF. Furthermore, the LRs agreed to:

(a) Invite the secretariat, in collaboration with a small group of LRs, to prepare a compilation of conclusions and recommendations from LRs meetings relevant for future technical expert review teams, and present it in the form of a background paper to be considered at the next LRs meeting discussing BTR technical review issues;

(b) Request the secretariat, when developing the review handbook for the purpose of reviews under the ETF, to identify the sections of the current review handbook that are still relevant under the ETF, and report its findings at the next LRs meeting discussing BTR technical review issues;

(c) Invite the secretariat to organize information sessions with the aim of sharing experience and lessons learned by experienced LRs in participating in GHG inventory reviews under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol with a view to assisting future reviewers, Parties and the secretariat in the efficient transition to the technical expert review process under the ETF.

20. The LRs took note with appreciation of the activities undertaken by the secretariat for the successful management of the 2022 GHG inventory review process, including the ongoing timely preparation and publication of the review reports, noting their importance for the last review cycle of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and the actions for implementing the conclusions and recommendations from previous meetings of GHG inventory LRs.

21. The LRs noted that the development and implementation of the actions mentioned in paragraph 19 above are dependent on the availability of resources.

<sup>6</sup> Forty-five days after the completion of the true-up period for the second commitment period.

<sup>7</sup> Advanced unedited versions of which are available at [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27\\_auv\\_SBSTA\\_13c.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27_auv_SBSTA_13c.pdf), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27\\_auv\\_SBSTA%2013d.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27_auv_SBSTA%2013d.pdf) and [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cmp17\\_auv\\_4c\\_expert\\_review.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cmp17_auv_4c_expert_review.pdf), respectively.

<sup>8</sup> GHG inventory reviews, in transition.