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**SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

**Twenty-first session**

**Buenos Aires, 6–14 December 2004**

**Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda**

**Methodological issues**

**Issues relating to greenhouse gas inventories**

## **Views on a possible data interface and other issues raised in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9**

### **Submissions from Parties**

1. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, at its nineteenth session, invited Parties to submit to the secretariat, by 30 July 2004, their views on a possible data interface and other issues raised in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9 (see FCCC/SBSTA/2003/15, para. 14 (e)).
2. The secretariat has received seven such submissions. In accordance with the procedure for miscellaneous documents, these submissions are reproduced\* in the language in which they were received and without formal editing.

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PAPER NO. 1: AUSTRALIA

**Submission by Australia**

**Views on a possible data interface and other issues  
raised in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9**

**Introduction**

Australia is pleased to provide its views on the data interface and the issues raised in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9, and thanks the secretariat for its work to upload the links to external data sources on the UNFCCC web site, as requested by the SBSTA in paragraph 14(e) of document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/15.

Australia regards reliable, comprehensive and relevant data as essential to informing the development and implementation of effective climate change policy.

Furthermore, Australia recognises that reliable, comprehensive and relevant data sets are not always available in an easy to use form, and that there are differences between Parties in their respective capacities to access and analyse data. The resultant shortfall and inequality in data access have the potential to hinder the identification of the best approaches to climate change response both nationally and internationally. The development of a data interface to make reliable, comprehensive and relevant data freely available to all Parties in an easy to use format is a viable and logical approach to solving these problems.

**Extension of the pilot phase of the data interface**

At SBSTA 19, Parties considered four options for the development of a data interface, outlined by the secretariat in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9, paragraphs 25-38. The option chosen by Parties, which was to request the secretariat to provide links on the UNFCCC web site to the external data sources listed in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9, was consistent with the fourth of these options (outlined in paragraph 38).

This option was chosen as a pilot phase of the data interface, to allow Parties to gain experience in using the range of data sources and tools currently available from external sources, without requiring a substantial allocation of resources under the UNFCCC budget.

Australia has found the links provided to be very useful both in locating data when needed and in improving the ease of use and transparency of the data. In particular, Australia has found that the World Resources Institutes' Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT) has been of great use and has afforded policy makers insights into the significance of a wider range of variables to climate policy than would be possible when dealing with unconnected data sets.

Australia proposes that the links to external data sources be maintained on an ongoing basis, and looks forward to discussing with other Parties their experiences in using the external data sources, and their insights gained.

### **Issues for consideration and a proposal for next steps**

Although the links to external data sources contribute to meeting Parties' data needs, Australia is not certain that this is an adequate response for the longer term. The primary data sources provide transparent and comprehensive data, but are often difficult to use in the absence of an analytical tool, and they include some data sets that are not relevant to climate change considerations. The United Nations Environment Programme's GEO Data Portal, for example, provides access to an extensive range of data sets that can be analysed individually, but analysis across data sets is limited. The World Resources Institute's CAIT tool, on the other hand, is easy to use, comprehensive and limited to relevant data sets, but in Australia's experience the combination of data derived from UN sources (ie data reported by countries into the UN system) and other data has led to uncertainty about the reliability of some of the analytical results obtained. While there may be benefit in Parties working with the World Resources Institute to improve CAIT, for the longer term Parties will need to consider the implications of not having a central, Party-controlled data source and analytical tool.

With this in mind, Australia proposes that SBSTA 21 initiate the development of a data interface based solely on data from the UNFCCC's GHG database and other data reported by Parties into other UN bodies. This would be consistent with the third of the options for the development of a data interface proposed in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9 (paragraphs 31-37).

Subject to the availability of funding, the cost of implementing this option could be kept relatively low by establishing data sharing arrangements with UN bodies, and providing only simple data analysis tools. There would be no attempt to fill gaps in data sets by using data from non-UN sources, to avoid any confusion regarding the source of the data and any concerns about the reliability of data not self-reported by Parties.

Simple analytical tools linking the GHG database and the other UN databases could include features such as:

- Trends in indicators over time at country and aggregated levels
- Composite indicators eg emissions per GDP, emissions per capita
- Inter country comparisons

Over time, further consideration could be given to

- Additional categories of data
- How and when to fill gaps in the existing data sets
- How to incorporate other information reported by Parties through National Communications and Global Climate Observing System Reports

The table below outlines next steps proposed by Australia to implement this option.

Date	Action
December 2004	<p>Discussion at SBSTA 21 of the data interface and issues raised in UNFCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9, informed by Parties' 2004 submissions</p> <p>SBSTA 21 conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requesting the secretariat to continue to maintain the links to primary and secondary data sources on the UNFCCC web site</li> <li>- Requesting the secretariat to further develop the data interface by reproducing UN data on the UNFCCC website and providing simple analytical tools, including linkages to the GHG database, by COP 11</li> <li>- Encouraging Parties to use the data interface</li> <li>- Inviting Parties to submit their views, by August 2006, on the data interface, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Their experiences in using both the UN data and simple analytical tools developed by the secretariat, and the primary and secondary sources accessible via the UNFCCC web site; and</li> <li>▪ Key issues and next steps in progressing the data interface beyond COP 12</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
December 2005	Secretariat to host a side event at COP 11 to explain to Parties how to use the analytical tools provided on the web site
December 2005 – December 2006	Parties gain experience in using the data interface
August 2006	Parties submit their views on the data interface
December 2006	Discussion at SBSTA 25 of Parties' experiences and views on key issues, and determination of next steps

PAPER NO. 2: JAPAN

**Japan's view on a possible data interface and other issues raised in document  
FCCC/SBSTA/2003/Inf.9**

**1. General comments**

(1) Japan recognizes that policies related to climate change should be based on sound information on circumstances in which Parties are placed, and from this perspective, Japan supports the establishment of a data interface. The interface should be established in a manner which effectively helps all Parties facilitate their measures to address climate change, and the establishment of the interface itself should not be the goal.

(2) In considering details of the data interface, it is necessary to take into account the availability of resources. From this point of view, cost-effective options should be prioritized, and availability of external data sources should be examined as far as possible.

**2. Comments for options raised in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/Inf.9 (in the order of ascending priorities)**

**(1) Option 3: Improve data and analyses on UNFCCC website**

Japan basically supports this option aiming at improving the data and analyses on the UNFCCC website. From the viewpoint of cost-effectiveness, Japan suggests that the possible improvement and extension of the existing website be examined first so that additional costs for the improvement will be kept to the minimum.

**(2) Option 1: Improve Internet links to external data sources**

Japan can also support this option because of its high cost-effectiveness. This option may be more effective if implemented in combination with Option 3 above.

**(3) Option 2: Develop software to search external data sources**

It seems premature to develop software to search external data sources, because it is not clear yet what kind of data are needed by Parties and it incurs significant costs. Before developing software, simply making Internet links with external data sources (i. e. Option 1) seems more cost-effective.

**(4) Option 4: Data and analytical tools on an external website**

Careful consideration is necessary before adopting this option, such as how to choose an external website. It seems more realistic to consider this option as necessary, in parallel with the implementation of Option 3 and Option 1.

PAPER NO. 3: NETHERLANDS ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY  
AND ITS MEMBER STATES

**SUBMISSION BY THE NETHERLANDS ON BEHALF OF THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBER STATES**

**The Hague, 30 July 2004**

**Subject: Review of methodological work under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol:  
possible data interface and other issues raised in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9**

The EU recognises the importance of the availability and accessibility for all Parties of a comprehensive, up to date, and reliable system of data sets for supporting the UNFCCC process. The EU considers equal access to relevant data important for providing a common information base for policy evaluation and development.

The EU recognises that many different data sets can be obtained from sources outside the UNFCCC, that these are built to serve different purposes, and have different coverage, formats, and configuration. Parties may not be aware of the existence of these data sets and may not have equal access to them, particularly if specific expertise for retrieval of data is required or substantial costs are involved.

The present data information system of the UNFCCC secretariat is an important and authoritative source of information, and represents a first step towards facilitating access to information by all Parties. However, the current system is intended to focus on inventory data from Parties' submissions and does not include the full spectrum of useful information. The EU therefore welcomes the information provided by the Secretariat in its document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9 for options of enhancing the availability and accessibility of a broader set of data, possibly via a data interface.

As part of the scoping phase for consideration of such a data interface, we have looked at the various data bases referred to and would like to make the following comments. In using the different data sources and tools to access them, we considered which features were most useful. The main attributes that we looked for were:

- Sources where the data were comprehensive, containing global information, including all countries and sectors;
- Sources that included data from authoritative and reputable sources, including official UN data;
- Sources that made explicit reference to where the data had been sourced from;
- Tools that were user friendly - that is to say clearly set out, with guidance on how to use them and having technical notes on the methodologies used to calculate outputs;
- Tools that could be used offline;
- Flexible tools that allow users to interrogate data according to their needs (e.g. allows for freely sorting, comparing, combining and depicting data).

In reviewing the several data sets, the EU found that the WRI –CAIT performed best in these respects and can at present be considered the best example of the way forward and a useful tool for serving Parties' needs for the time being. Separately we note that the data locator used in GHG inventory reviews contains all CRF data (including detailed activity data, implied emission factors and some socio-economic data) and is a very useful existing tool to analyse emissions and other data from CRF tables. However, this tool is presently not generally available. If it were available to download on the internet (as it is now for Expert Review Teams) and/or copied to CDROM, it would also make existing information better available to all Parties.

The EU would like to continue consideration about how best to meet all Parties' data needs. Regarding next steps, we think that:

- It would be useful to have a data interface that gives all parties equal access to a comprehensive up-to-date data bank;
- It would be useful to combine present UNFCCC emissions data and other data sets in that data bank;
- The system should not duplicate existing efforts and have a clear added value to the Parties;
- The system should facilitate wider and more efficient use of relevant international data in the UNFCCC review process;
- The efforts and resource requirements to maintain the system should be kept as limited as possible and be sustainable in the future.

Issues for further consideration for the Parties include:

- What additional data sets would be incorporated;
- How other information reported by Parties through National Communications and GCOS reports could be incorporated;
- How to make best use of existing data bases in order to minimise duplication of efforts and limit resource requirements;
- Resource implications.

The EU looks forward to exchanging views on this issue with other Parties at the 21<sup>st</sup> session of SBSTA.



## PAPER NO. 4: NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand submission on a possible data interface

3 August 2004

This submission responds to the invitation to Parties in paragraph 5 of the conclusions of SBSTA 19 (FCCC/SBSTA/2003/L.25) to provide their views on a possible data interface and other issues raised in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9.

### Overview

The underlying concern that led to discussions of the possible need for a “data interface” was that Parties needed improved access to existing data and analytical tools that would build their capacity for analysis and decision-making in climate change policy, and in the implementation of commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. While the Greenhouse Gas Information System maintained by the UNFCCC Secretariat is the authoritative repository of greenhouse gas data reported by Parties to the Convention, it is not a comprehensive compilation of all reliable information relevant to global climate change considerations.

New Zealand appreciates the effort of the Secretariat in preparing INF.9. To some extent the information provided in this document has already “built capacity” by helping Parties to become aware of many sources of relevant information. It also is apparent that providing more formal linkages to all these sources is not a trivial undertaking either in a technical sense or with respect to resource implications.

There is a risk that Parties would place an unreasonable burden on the Secretariat if they were to charge the Secretariat to determine which information is reliable, up to date and sufficiently comparable with standards of the UNFCCC to meet the needs of all Parties. We note that the Secretariat makes clear that none of the options involving a more intensive activity considered in INF.9 are provided for in the Secretariat budget for 2004-2005.

### Data standards and implications

Some of the most important properties of any database to be used by Parties are comprehensiveness, transparency, and authority of the underlying data and information derived from the data.

With regard to greenhouse gas emissions, the UNFCCC Secretariat is clearly the most authoritative and transparent repository of data, but it is not comprehensive because different countries are obliged to report different information, and generally the time scale for which data are available is relatively short (post-1990). This highlights the fact that most databases that are likely to be useful for future discussions will have to make trade-offs between being comprehensive and authoritative.

As a consequence, New Zealand considers it vital that any databases used by Parties in a climate change context clearly identify their sources, their assumptions and limitations, and where choices between alternative databases have been or can be made by the database provider or user.

New Zealand considers it inappropriate for Parties to charge the Secretariat with making decisions about whether a database is sufficiently comprehensive and authoritative to warrant use by the UNFCCC. Such judgements are only appropriate for data provided to and maintained by the UNFCCC itself according to

its own accepted standards for the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and other information mandated under provisions of the UNFCCC.

### Response to options suggested by the Secretariat

For the reasons given above, we believe that out of the four options suggested in INF.9, options “2” (develop software to search external data sources) and “3” (improve data and analyses on UNFCCC web site) are not suitable because they would require the Secretariat to make judgements on the quality and suitability of data for inclusion in those services.

Option “1” (providing links to external databases on the UNFCCC web site) would be possible, but it would add only a limited value to the information already provided in INF.9. It would also raise the question of which databases should be listed on the UNFCCC web site, and what caveats should be placed on the links to individual databases so their transparency is ensured for the user who accesses them through the UNFCCC web site.

This suggests that option “4” (data and tools provided on an external web site), is most likely to meet the needs of Parties who want to build their capacity for analysis and decision-making, and discuss future implementation of commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

We emphasise that no external database can or should replace the UNFCCC as the authoritative source of greenhouse gas emissions data for those Parties that have reported this information to the UNFCCC.

### Ways forward

New Zealand notes that the Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT) developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI) is now freely available to Parties in a user-friendly spreadsheet format. CAIT collects a wide array of climate change relevant information, including from a range of the authoritative data sources noted in INF.9.

We note that WRI has not elected to use greenhouse gas emissions data from the UNFCCC Secretariat’s database, and the reasons for this. We understand that an upcoming version of CAIT will provide an option of including and using UNFCCC data where available. We suggest that this will be an important enhancement of the transparency and authority of its data, especially where its more comprehensive data sources are in conflict with data held by the UNFCCC. We highly commend this initiative and ongoing development by WRI.

In New Zealand’s view it would be very helpful for SBSTA to invite WRI to hold an in-session event on the use of CAIT, and to collect suggestions from Parties on future development of this tool. Such an event could also benefit from a more general consideration of standards of quality control, transparency, authority, and comprehensiveness, and trade-offs between these criteria in databases. This would provide an opportunity for all Parties to become familiar with the use of CAIT as one possible tool to address data and information needs of Parties.

Based on this discussion, Parties will need to decide for themselves which databases meet acceptable standards of quality control, including transparency, comprehensiveness, and authoritativeness of the data and information. Parties could then reflect further on the extent to which any concerns about data availability are met by CAIT. Parties would also be able to identify where there may still be some gaps or concerns, and how those gaps could be closed either by WRI, other external data providers, or efforts by the UNFCCC Secretariat.

New Zealand considers it important to avoid a situation where policy choices are constrained or, to an extent, predetermined by limitations in data and information availability and accessibility.

One such gap that New Zealand has already recognised is that it is not easily possible to derive insights around sector-based emission statistics, or around consumption “footprints”, because data are generally provided on a country-specific production basis. New Zealand notes that the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in chapter three of its *Plan of Implementation* specifically addresses the issue of the sustainability of both production and consumption patterns. This indicates the importance of analytical tools that facilitate insights based on consumption aspects as well as production. Addressing this gap would require additional information on imports and exports of emissions intensive commodities and products. Some data of this type is available in publications of the OECD<sup>1</sup>.

In summary, New Zealand welcomes the current efforts by the UNFCCC Secretariat and external database providers to enhance the availability and accessibility of data, and hopes for continued efforts by all relevant agencies to provide comprehensive, authoritative and transparent data to facilitate future discussions by the Parties.

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. see *Carbon Dioxide Emissions Embodied in International Trade of Goods*; Nadim Ahmad and Andrew Wyckoff; OECD DSTI/DOC(2003)15

## **SUBMISSION BY SAUDI ARABIA**

### **REVIEW OF METHODOLOGICAL WORK UNDER THE CONVENTION AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL Views on a possible data interface and other concerns**

#### **REFERENCE:**

The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) invited Parties to submit to the secretariat, by 30 July 2004, their views on a possible data interface and other issues raised in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/ INF.9. The SBSTA requested the secretariat to provide a synthesis of the view of Parties on options for development of a data interface, as contained in the above document.

The SBSTA decided to continue consideration of this issue at its twenty-first session.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Saudi Arabia would like to thank the UNFCCC Secretariat for their valuable effort and welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on a possible data interface and other issues that have been addressed in the above-mentioned document. Since methodological work underlies the implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, such data interfaces will contribute to pursuing the ultimate objective of the Convention if implemented with a comprehensive and strategic perspective. To this end, Saudi Arabia would like to submit its views on this matter.

#### **GENERAL**

We agree it is striking that after ten years of the Convention's entry into force, we still do not have the capacity to answer basic questions. We are, however, concerned that some of the basic question may still not be answered after the development of a data interface.

#### **CONCERNS TO BE ADDRESSED**

In order for the data interface to enable such questions to be answered efficiently, Saudi Arabia suggests that it should include the following basic building blocks:

1. The Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities must be considered in developing and contributing to this interface. This means that only Annex I parties would be requested to participate in this program, for the benefit of all.
2. Every effort must be made to ensure the transfer of technology to developing countries to enable them to benefit from this new tool.

3. Resources for improvement in the institutional capacity of developing countries with regard to data access and management. Resources must be targeted for greater efficiency, in close cooperation with the GEF.
4. This data interface will need to lead to greater transparency of the Convention process, making it open to scrutiny by individual parties and the COP.
5. This interface must lead to the development of Win-Win policies and measures that have long been requested by developing countries. National Communications submitted by Annex I parties should include win-win policies and measures that would meet both the need to reduce emissions and the need to minimize adverse social, environmental and economic impacts on developing country parties, especially those identified in Article 4, paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Convention. Future work should be done in a way that Parties, relevant organizations and practitioners could submit their views to the secretariat for compilation to be considered by the Subsidiary Body for Science and Technological Advice for the development of these guidelines.
6. The interface should take into consideration, in a transparent and quantifiable manner, methodologies to assist developing countries to examine their vulnerability to terms of trade and socio-economic impacts in order to improve the effectiveness of current activities for assessing the impact of implemented response measures in a portfolio of approaches. In addition, factors, such as market approaches (taxes, subsidies, and cap-and-trade), regulations and research and development also need to be included in the assessments in order to properly assess the effects of policies.
7. This data interface should include methodologies, to be developed in collaboration with Intergovernmental Organizations such as OPEC to assess the impacts on developing countries of policies already implemented by Annex I parties.
8. Emphasis should be given to the potential spillover effects due to response measures taken by Annex I Parties.

### **CONCLUSION:**

It should be noted that the concept of a development of a data interface should not be viewed as a tool to be used by Annex I in lieu of the submission of national communications or any other obligations. Likewise, this data interface should not implicate the involvement of non-Annex I parties in its development or participation.

PAPER NO. 6: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Submission of the United States  
FCCC/SBSTA/2003/L.25, paragraph 5  
Views on a Possible Data Interface and Other Issues Raised in  
FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9  
July 30, 2004**

The Nineteenth Session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice in December 2003 (SBSTA-19) invited Parties to submit to the Secretariat their views on a possible data interface and other issues raised in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9 (the Report). The United States notes that the Report presents information on existing sources of emissions and socio-economic data and on tools for accessing and analyzing such data. In addition the Report presents four options for “improving access of Parties to greenhouse gas emissions data and socioeconomic data relevant to climate change...” The United States welcomes the opportunity to provide views on these subjects.

The United States notes and concurs with the statements in the Report (paragraph 6 and 7) that, “The sole sources of GHG emissions data recognized under the Convention are national GHG inventories reported by Parties...” and “UNFCCC emissions data are generally considered more accurate than emissions data from other sources...” It is essential for the UNFCCC to maintain this highest level of data integrity. The U.S. is concerned that this may be undermined if the Secretariat begins to mix data from other sources on the UNFCCC web site, in its databases, or in data interfaces hosted on the UNFCCC website. The U.S. believes that the Secretariat should not reproduce on its web site or in any way endorse external data that may be based on distinct methodologies and assumptions. The Secretariat should continue to be the authoritative source of GHG emissions data from those Parties submitting national inventories.

The U.S. has considered the four options in the Report for improving access to data by Parties including the relative advantages and costs of the options. Given the mandate of the Secretariat and limited resources available for priority work, we suggest that the Secretariat pursue a strategy along the lines of Option 1: Improving Internet links to external data sources. This option would entail the Secretariat maintaining a list of external sources of emissions and socio-economic data and to provide links to these sources on the UNFCCC web site. As noted in the report, other data interfaces exist in the public and private domain available to Parties.

By pursuing Option 1 and providing informational links on its web page to external sources of data that may be of interest to Parties the Secretariat is able to maintain the integrity of data submitted by the Parties and still facilitate access to other data. In this way Parties can explore other data sets understanding that the sources and methodologies may be distinct from those in the UNFCCC GHG information system. The United States believes it would be useful to discuss the estimated cost of US\$10,000 - \$15,000 per year for Option 1. The cost may be easily reduced since the sources of information provided in the Report provide a reasonable starting point for the list of links to other data sources.

PAPER NO. 7: UZBEKISTAN

**Issue of possible data interface.**

The Republic of Uzbekistan supports the efforts of UNFCCC Secretariat on implementation of database and development of its interface containing estimates of greenhouse gas emissions and socio-economic data.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has considered four options of development of data interface given in document FCCC/SBSTA/2003/INF.9:

**Option 1:** “Improve internet links to external data sources on the UNFCCC web site” allows to have access to data directly to various enlarged databases or web sites;

**Option 2:** “Develop software to search external data sources” allows **to get integrated data;**

**Option 3:** “Improve data availability and analyses on UNFCCC web site” allows– **to get integrated qualitative, analyzed and comparable data from UNFCCC web site.;**

**Option 4:** “Data and analytical tools on an external web site” allows **to have the limited amount of non-comparable data** from external organizations on the base of signed agreement.

The Republic of Uzbekistan is interested in getting qualitative, analyzed and comparable data on developed and developing countries as following:

**emissions:** direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, HFC<sub>s</sub>, PFC<sub>s</sub>, SF<sub>s</sub>) and precursor gases; aggregated, current and forecasted emissions; forecasts of GHG emissions by 2010; emissions and forecasts of non-CO<sub>2</sub> emission; CH<sub>4</sub> emissions from rice fields; CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from relevant types of soils in different regions; assessment of global, regional and national CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fuel and gas combustion; GHG emissions from full combustion on energy data;

**information:** on energy consumption, statistical data of energy balances;

**socio-economic indicators:** income, education, health, population, demographic data, GWP.

The option 3 can allow to get such data for Republic of Uzbekistan

The Republic of Uzbekistan as developing country requests the UNFCCC Secretariat to consider the funds in the program budget for development possible data interface and free access to data interface on option 3 for developing countries.

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