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Report on the expedited review for Lithuania (2012)

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I. Introduction

1. This report covers the expedited review for Lithuania, coordinated by the UNFCCC secretariat, in accordance with the “Guidelines for review under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol”¹ (hereinafter referred to as the Article 8 review guidelines) and following a request from Lithuania. The review took place as an in-country review from 28 to 29 September 2012 in Vilnius and Kaunas, Lithuania, and was conducted by the following team of nominated experts from the UNFCCC roster of experts: generalist – Mr. Tinus Pulles (Netherlands); and land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) – Mr. Sandro Federici (San Marino). Mr. Federici and Mr. Pulles were also the lead reviewers. The review was coordinated by Mr. Roman Payo (UNFCCC secretariat).

2. In accordance with the Article 8 review guidelines, a draft version of this report was communicated to the Government of Lithuania, which made no comment on it.

II. Background

3. On 7 September 2011, the secretariat received a question of implementation indicated in the report of the expert review team (ERT) of the individual review of the annual submission of Lithuania submitted in 2010.² In accordance with paragraph 1 of section VI of the “Procedures and mechanisms relating to compliance under the Kyoto Protocol” and paragraph 2 of rule 10 of the “Rules of procedure of the Compliance Committee of the Kyoto Protocol”,³ the question of implementation was deemed to have been received by the Compliance Committee on 8 September 2011.

4. The question of implementation relates to compliance with the “Guidelines for national systems for the estimation of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks under Article 5, paragraph 1, of the Kyoto Protocol”⁴ (hereinafter referred to as the guidelines for national systems) and the “Guidelines for the preparation of the information required under Article 7 of the Kyoto Protocol”⁵ (hereinafter referred to as the Article 7 guidelines).⁶

5. In particular, the 2010 ERT concluded that the national system of Lithuania fails to perform some of the general and specific functions required by the guidelines for national systems, especially relating to paragraphs 10(b), 10(d), 10(e), 14(b) and 14(c) of these guidelines. The ERT also concluded that the national system is not able to ensure that areas of land subject to LULUCF activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol are identifiable in accordance with paragraph 20 of the “Definitions, modalities, rules and guidelines relating to land use, land-use change and forestry activities under the Kyoto Protocol”⁷ (hereinafter referred to as the KP-LULUCF guidelines).⁸

6. The ERT further concluded that the national system did not ensure that Lithuania’s 2010 annual submission was sufficiently transparent, consistent, comparable, complete and accurate, as required by the guidelines for national systems, the Article 7 guidelines, the “Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I

¹ Contained in the annex to decision 22/CMP.1.

² Contained in document FCCC/ARR/2010/LTU.

³ Contained in the annex to decision 4/CMP.2, as amended by decision 4/CMP.4.

⁴ Contained in the annex to decision 19/CMP.1.

⁵ Contained in the annex to decision 15/CMP.1.

⁶ See paragraph 224 of document FCCC/ARR/2010/LTU.

⁷ Contained in the annex to decision 16/CMP.1.

⁸ See in particular paragraphs 16, 20, 187, 215, 216 and 224–228 of document FCCC/ARR/2010/LTU.

to the Convention, Part I: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual inventories”⁹ (hereinafter referred to as the UNFCCC reporting guidelines), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Good Practice Guidance and Uncertainty Management in National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* and the IPCC *Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry* (hereinafter referred to as the IPCC good practice guidance for LULUCF).¹⁰

7. On 21 December 2011, the enforcement branch of the Compliance Committee determined that Lithuania was not in compliance with the guidelines for national systems and Lithuania was declared to be in non-compliance.¹¹

8. On 27 March 2012, the enforcement branch of the Compliance Committee received from Lithuania a plan under section XV, paragraph 2, of the “Procedures and mechanisms relating to compliance under the Kyoto Protocol” and rule 25 bis of the “Rules of procedure of the Compliance Committee of the Kyoto Protocol”. The plan also included the first progress report on the implementation of the measures included in the plan.¹²

9. On 24 April 2012, the Compliance Committee received from Lithuania a request to review and assess the Lithuanian plan.¹³ On 2 May 2012, the enforcement branch of the Compliance Committee assessed that the plan, once implemented, would be expected to remedy the non-compliance.¹⁴ On 15 June 2012, the Compliance Committee received from Lithuania the second progress report on the implementation of the measures included in that plan and a request for reinstating the eligibility of the Party.¹⁵

10. During the twentieth meeting of the enforcement branch of the Compliance Committee (9–14 July 2012), the branch considered the review report of the 2011 annual submission (published on 13 April 2012),¹⁶ the two progress reports on the implementation of the plan, the additional information presented by Lithuania at the meeting and the advice received from three invited experts.¹⁷ The branch concluded that, although Lithuania had made good progress, not all issues identified in the 2010 annual review report had been resolved and that Lithuania continued to be in non-compliance with the guidelines for national systems at the time of the finalization of the review report of the 2011 annual submission. While no questions of implementation were identified by the 2011 ERT during the review,¹⁸ the ERT made a number of key recommendations,¹⁹ including:

(a) To implement Lithuania’s Greenhouse Gas Inventory Archive Improvement Plan and to ensure that the additional efforts are made to strengthen the archiving system in line with the requirements contained in the guidelines for national systems;

(b) To implement the action plan to improve reporting on the LULUCF sector and provide information on how the harmonization of data was carried out to help identify activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol since 1990;

⁹ Contained in document FCCC/SBSTA/2006/9.

¹⁰ See in particular paragraph 224 of document FCCC/ARR/2010/LTU.

¹¹ See paragraphs 23 and 24(a) of the annex of the final decision of the enforcement branch of the Compliance Committee (contained in document CC-2011-3-8/Lithuania/EB).

¹² Contained in document CC-2011-3-9/Lithuania/EB.

¹³ Contained in document CC-2011-3-10/Lithuania/EB.

¹⁴ See paragraph 7(b) of the “Decision on the review and assessment of the plan submitted under paragraph 2 of section XV” (contained in document CC-2011-3-11/Lithuania/EB).

¹⁵ Contained in document CC-2011-3-12/Lithuania/EB.

¹⁶ Contained in document FCCC/ARR/2011/LTU and Corr.1.

¹⁷ See paragraph 8 of the “Decision under paragraph 2 of section X concerning the request for reinstatement” (contained in document CC-2011-3-14/Lithuania/EB).

¹⁸ See paragraph 205 of document FCCC/ARR/2011/LTU.

¹⁹ See paragraph 204(c), (d) and (g) of document FCCC/ARR/2011/LTU.

(c) To improve the completeness of the inventory, particularly in the LULUCF sector.

11. The enforcement branch also concluded that another in-country review was required for the branch to assess compliance with the guidelines for national systems.

12. On 18 July 2012, the secretariat received from Lithuania a request for the expedited review in accordance with part VIII of the Article 8 review guidelines, "Expedited procedure for the review for the reinstatement of eligibility to use the mechanisms".²⁰

III. Technical assessment of the issues that led to the question of implementation

A. Archiving

Inventory management

13. Lithuania has a centralized electronic archiving system, stored on a dedicated server at the Lithuanian Environmental Protection Agency. The system has been overhauled and redesigned to reflect the different aspects of inventory management and compilation, following the implementation of Lithuania's Greenhouse Gas Inventory Archive Improvement Plan and Order No D1-1017 of the Ministry of the Environment.

14. The system includes the archiving of disaggregated emission factors and activity data, and documentation on how these factors and data have been generated and aggregated for the preparation of the inventory. The archived information also includes documentation on quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) procedures, external and internal reviews, annual key categories, key category identification and planned inventory improvements.

15. The archiving system is managed by staff members of the Environmental Protection Agency, who ensure that all information uploaded into the system is complete and correct.

16. The ERT noted that all activity data, emission factors and other parameters used in a particular submission (2006 to present) and all documents related to internal and external QA/QC are now stored in the central archive at the Environmental Protection Agency.

17. The ERT concluded that Lithuania's archiving system now is fully functioning and fully complies with the requirements of paragraphs 12(c), 16(a), 16(b) and 16(c) of the guidelines for national systems.

B. Information on activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol

Overview

18. Lithuania, in its national inventory report contained in its 2012 annual submission and in the additional documents provided during the expedited review, demonstrated that its national system is able to collect, and is collecting, information needed for preparing accurate estimates of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and removals associated with activities under Article 3, paragraph 3, of the Kyoto Protocol and for forest management, which is the Party's only elected activity under Article 3, paragraph 4, of the Kyoto Protocol. Lithuania uses three sources of data:

²⁰ Contained in the annex to decision 22/CMP.1.

(a) The stand-wise forest inventory (SFI): a system that maps all of Lithuania's forested area in a rotation of 10 per cent of the country each year, ensuring that the whole country is covered every ten years. Forest area and ancillary data on forest type and structure are collected and spatially geo-referenced. It is currently in its tenth cycle;

(b) The national forest inventory (NFI): a continuous forest inventory system based on the sampling of 16,000 permanent plots. About one fifth of these are resampled each year. This is the main source of data on forest carbon stocks. It is currently in its third cycle;

(c) The State Forest Cadastre (SFC): a global information system database of the whole national territory with forest areas and information on forest type and structure, which aims to build a consistent time series for the representation of units of land subject to activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol. Spatial information contained in the SFC has been integrated with spatial data collected from the SFI, the NFI, the National Paying Agency (for afforested areas under a grant scheme²¹), forest maps, aerial orthophotographs since 1946, and satellite Landsat and Spot images for the 1990s. The SFC geo-references and registers all information on forest management activities and deforestation, afforestation and reforestation activities to avoid any double counting of areas subject to activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol. Covering the whole country, the SFC ensures complete spatial coverage of the entire national territory; further, it ensures, as data have been collected since 1946, complete time series of data on activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol, including the year of onset of the activity for each unit of land.

19. The ERT noted that, by harmonizing different sources of data, Lithuania, in its 2012 annual submission, has:

(a) Prepared a consistent time series of land representation which enabled the identification and tracking of units of land subject to activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol;

(b) Provided information in accordance with paragraphs 5 to 9 of the Article 7 guidelines;

(c) Reported a complete time series of common reporting format (CRF) tables with a complete set of information on and estimates of GHG emissions and removals associated with activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol (KP-LULUCF CRF tables), for each commitment-period year which has had to be reported so far (2008–2010).

20. The ERT noted that Lithuania, in its 2012 annual submission, has estimated the GHG emissions and removals associated with activities under Article 3, paragraph 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol, by applying methods provided in the IPCC good practice guidance for LULUCF, as requested by the Article 7 guidelines, the KP-LULUCF guidelines, the “Good practice guidance for land use, land-use change and forestry activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol”²² and by the UNFCCC reporting guidelines.

21. The Party also provided additional information that demonstrates that carbon pools not accounted for in activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol were not a net source of emissions during each reported year of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

²¹ Grants for afforestation in agriculture derive from the “Rural development programme for Lithuania 2007–2013” supported by the European Union legislation on agriculture and environment. Available at <<http://www.nma.lt/index.php/support/rural-development-programme-2007-2013/685>>.

²² Contained in decision 17/CMP.1 as amended by decision 6/CMP.3.

22. The submission of a complete set of estimates, with a complete time series of KP-LULUCF CRF tables, and relevant information testifies to the Party's capacity of planning, preparing and managing information needed for fulfilling reporting requirements for activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol.

IV. Changes to the national system

23. The ERT noted that, since the review report of Lithuania's 2011 annual submission, the Party has further improved its national system by:

(a) Implementing a redesigned centralized archiving system with appropriate QA/QC procedures to ensure that all activity data, emission factors and other parameters used in the estimation of emissions and removals of GHGs for the annual inventory submissions are archived and available for external reviews;

(b) Making the SFC the main repository of information related to the reporting of GHG emissions and removals for the LULUCF sector;

(c) Introducing a requirement for land-use change actions to be legally authorized and registered by the SFC;

(d) Archiving in a single location, the State Forest Service, all information compiled for the preparation of estimates for activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol;

(e) Formalizing QA/QC procedures and responsibilities for reporting estimates for activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol.

V. Conclusions

24. The ERT concludes that:

(a) Lithuania's archiving system is fully in line with the relevant requirements of the guidelines for national systems;

(b) Lithuania has in place all institutional arrangements and compiles all necessary data to identify the lands subject to activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol and to enable accurate estimates of GHG emissions and removals associated with these activities.

25. Regarding the question of implementation raised in the review report of Lithuania's 2010 annual submission, the ERT noted that Lithuania has fully addressed the relevant issues for improvement raised in the review reports of Lithuania's 2010 and 2011 annual submissions and in the decision of the enforcement branch of the Compliance Committee on 14 July 2012. Therefore, the ERT concludes that the question of implementation for Lithuania has been fully resolved.

Annex I

Documents and information used during the review

A. Reference documents

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*.

Available at <<http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gl/invs1.htm>>.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Good Practice Guidance and Uncertainty Management in National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*. Available at <<http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gp/english/>>.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry*.

Available at <<http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gp/landuse/gp/landuse.htm>>.

“Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part I: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual inventories”.

FCCC/SBSTA/2006/9.

Available at <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbsta/eng/09.pdf>>.

“Guidelines for the technical review of greenhouse gas inventories from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention”. FCCC/CP/2002/8. Available at

<<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop8/08.pdf>>.

“Guidelines for national systems under Article 5, paragraph 1, of the Kyoto Protocol”.

Decision 19/CMP.1. Available at

<<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2005/cmp1/eng/08a03.pdf#page=14>>.

“Guidelines for the preparation of the information required under Article 7 of the Kyoto Protocol”. Decision 15/CMP.1. Available at

<<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2005/cmp1/eng/08a02.pdf#page=54>>.

“Guidelines for review under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol”. Decision 22/CMP.1.

Available at <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2005/cmp1/eng/08a03.pdf#page=51>>.

Status report for Lithuania 2012. Available at

<<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/asr/ltu.pdf>>.

Synthesis and assessment report on the greenhouse gas inventories submitted in 2012.

Available at <<http://unfccc.int/resource/webdocs/sai/2012.pdf>>.

FCCC/ARR/2011/LTU and Corr.1. Report of the individual review of the greenhouse gas inventory of Lithuania submitted in 2011. Available at

<<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/arr/ltu.pdf>>.

Plan under section XV, paragraph 2, of the “Procedures and mechanisms relating to compliance under the Kyoto Protocol” and rule 25 bis of the “Rules of procedure of the Compliance Committee of the Kyoto Protocol” in response to the final decision concerning Lithuania of the enforcement branch of the Compliance Committee, including the first progress report. Document CC-2011-3-9/Lithuania/EB. Available at <https://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/compliance/questions_of_implementation/application/pdf/cc-2011-3-9_lithuania_eb_plan_and_first_progress_report.pdf>.

Second progress report on the implementation of the plan and request for the reinstating of the eligibility of Lithuania. Document CC-2011-3-12/Lithuania/EB. Available at

<https://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/compliance/facilitative_branch/application/pdf/cc-2011-3-12_lithuania_eb_req_for_reinst_and_2d_prog_rep_on_plan.pdf>.

Decision under paragraph 2 of section X concerning the request for reinstatement. Party concerned: Lithuania. Document CC-2011-3-14/Lithuania/EB. Available at <http://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/compliance/questions_of_implementation/application/pdf/cc-2011-3-14_ltu_eb_dec_on_req_re_reinst.pdf>.

B. Additional information provided by the Party

Responses to questions during the review were received from Ms. Jolanta Merkeliene (Ministry of the Environment of Lithuania), including additional material on the methodology and assumptions used. The following documents¹ were also provided by Lithuania:

State Forest Service of the Ministry of Environment. *Lithuanian statistical yearbook of forestry 2011*. Kaunas: State Forest Service of the Ministry of Environment

State Forest Survey Service of the Ministry of Environment. *Lithuanian National Forest Inventory 2003-2007. Forest resources and their dynamic*. Kaunas: State Forest Survey Service of the Ministry of Environment

Report for measure 2 “First afforestation of agricultural lands” of the “Rural development programme for Lithuania 2007–2013”. Available at <<http://www.nma.lt/index.php/support/rural-development-programme-2007-2013/685>>.

Report for measure 3 “First afforestation of non-agricultural and abandoned lands” of the “Rural development programme for Lithuania 2007–2013”. Available at <<http://www.nma.lt/index.php/support/rural-development-programme-2007-2013/685>>.

Extracts from the State Forest Cadastre: maps and associated statistical data. Available for registered users at <<http://www.amvmt.lt:81/vmtgis>>.

Additional information relevant to paragraphs 5 to 9 of the Article 7 guidelines, submitted by Lithuania during the expedited review.

K Armolaitis, V Zekaite, J Aleinikoviene, R Cesnuleviciene (2011). *Renaturalization of Arenosols in the land afforested with Scots pine (Pinus sylvestris L.) and abandoned arable land*. Zemdirbyste=Agriculture, Vol. 98, No. 3. Pages 275-282.

¹ Reproduced as received from the Party.

Annex II

Acronyms and abbreviations

CH ₄	methane
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CRF	common reporting format
ERT	expert review team
GHG	greenhouse gas; unless indicated otherwise, GHG emissions are the sum of CO ₂ , CH ₄ , N ₂ O, HFCs, PFCs and SF ₆ without GHG emissions and removals from LULUCF
HFCs	hydrofluorocarbons
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LULUCF	land use, land-use change and forestry
N ₂ O	nitrous oxide
NFI	national forest inventory
PFCs	perfluorocarbons
QA/QC	quality assurance/quality control
SF ₆	sulphur hexafluoride
SFI	stand-wise forest inventory
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
