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MESSAGE TO PARTIES

Information on the submission of proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels by developing country Parties, on a voluntary basis, when implementing the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, and on the technical assessments of these submitted reference levels in 2022 and 2023

Parties will recall that the COP, in its decision 12/CP.17,¹ paragraph 13, invited developing country Parties, on a voluntary basis and when deemed appropriate, to submit proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, in accordance with decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71(b), when undertaking the activities referred to in paragraph 70 of that same decision. Parties will also recall that the COP, in its decision 13/CP.19, adopted the guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels. In accordance with decision 13/CP.19, paragraphs 1 and 2, each submission shall be subject to a technical assessment and such proposed reference levels may be technically assessed in the context of results-based payments.

The secretariat, in response to the mandate set out in decision 13/CP.19, is pleased to inform Parties of the proposed **timing for the technical assessments** to be conducted in **2022** and **2023**.² This information is being provided to facilitate the planning for submission of reference levels by developing country Parties and to ensure the efficient and effective organization of the technical assessment sessions by the secretariat in accordance with the procedures and time frames established in the annex of that decision.

Distribution: To Parties and observer States through their national focal points for climate change and diplomatic missions accredited to the Federal Republic of Germany.

¹ All decisions mentioned in this message are available at <https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/resources/unfccc-documents-in-relation-to-reducing-emissions-from-deforestation-and-forest-degradation-in-developing-countries>.

² Dates for 2022–2023 are indicative and the exact dates may still change in case of clashes with events or any other unforeseen circumstances which are difficult to envisage at this point of time.



To that end, and particularly to ensure the successful organization of the technical assessment sessions, the secretariat will be taking several actions, including the following:

1. Organize assessment sessions once a year in Bonn, as mandated by paragraph 10 of the annex to decision 13/CP.19. In accordance with the same paragraph, submissions received no later than 10 weeks before a session will be assessed at that session. Parties should note that submissions received after the 10 weeks ahead of a session will be scheduled for assessment the following year;
2. Coordinate the technical assessment process;
3. Ensure a balanced representation of LULUCF experts from developing countries and developed countries, whereby each submission shall be assessed by two LULUCF experts selected from the UNFCCC roster of experts, one from a developed country and one from a developing country.

In line with point 1 above, the secretariat would appreciate an early notification from developing country Parties intending to submit their proposed reference levels for a technical assessment. In addition, the secretariat will need to receive submissions **at least ten (10) weeks** before the start of the assessment session to ensure adequate and effective logistical preparation and organization of the technical assessment (e.g. identifying, inviting and confirming relevant experts). Parties should also note that all relevant information pertaining to the submission needs to be forwarded to the assessment team of LULUCF experts **at least eight (8) weeks** before the start of the assessment session, allowing the participating LULUCF experts sufficient time to adequately prepare for the one-week centralized assessment session in Bonn. The technical assessment process itself spans approximately **forty-three (43) weeks** (including interaction time between the assessment team and Party concerned, response time by Party and the time for preparation of draft and final reports).

After careful consideration of several factors that have implications for the timing of the technical assessments, such as the timing of all technical review processes being organized under the Convention and Kyoto Protocol in any given year, the timing of UNFCCC negotiation sessions, the availability of active LULUCF experts during the year and the need for on-going fund raising to support the organization of the technical assessments, the secretariat has identified the most feasible dates for the assessment sessions in 2022 and 2023 and the corresponding submission deadlines for these sessions. The detailed steps and time frames of each technical assessment session in 2022 and 2023 are presented in the annex to this message. Submissions of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels should be sent by the UNFCCC national focal point to the secretariat at secretariat@unfccc.int, with a copy to TARL@unfccc.int.

In addition to the guidance contained in decision 13/CP.19 on the technical assessment process, the COP invited Parties to nominate technical experts with the relevant qualifications to the UNFCCC roster of experts. Each Party should also confirm to the secretariat the names of their active LULUCF experts on the roster, and which experts will be able to participate in the technical assessment of the submitted reference levels. Parties are invited to refer to the roster at <http://www4.unfccc.int/sites/roe/Pages/Home.aspx> to nominate new experts and/or update the information on those already nominated.



The secretariat would also like to recall paragraphs 7 and 8 of decision 13/CP.19, in which the COP noted the budgetary implications related to the activities undertaken by the secretariat in paragraphs 1–3 and the annex of the same decision. The secretariat is only able to undertake these activities subject to the availability of supplementary funding. Hence, the secretariat would like to take this opportunity to request Parties in a position to do so to support the technical assessment process, which is a critical step in developing country Parties' implementation of the Warsaw Framework for REDD-plus that is also fully embodied in Article 5 of the Paris Agreement.

The secretariat requests the kind cooperation of Parties in meeting the time frames of the planned technical assessment sessions for 2022 and 2023, with a view to facilitating the organization and coordination of the technical assessments of submitted forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels and ensuring successful outcomes. In addition, the secretariat would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to Parties for their continuing support for this important process.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed by)

Patricia Espinosa



Annex
Overview table on the indicative time frames of the technical assessment of reference levels in 2022 and 2023¹

	Technical assessment 2022	Technical assessment 2023
Early notice to the secretariat	Latest by 1 November 2021	Latest by 31 October 2022
Deadline for reference level submission (no later than 10 weeks before the assessment session)	Latest by 10 January	Latest by 9 January
Information forwarded to assessment team (8 weeks before the assessment session)	Latest by 24 January	Latest by 23 January
Assessment session in Bonn (1 week)	21 – 25 March 2022	20 – 24 March 2023
Seeking additional clarifications from the Party (up to 1 week)	28 March – 1 April	27 – 31 March
Party to provide clarifications (8 weeks), including submission of a modified submission, if appropriate.	Latest by 30 May	Latest by 29 May
4 weeks for assessment team to consider modified reference level (applicable in the case that the Party modifies its submitted reference level)	30 May – 27 June	29 May – 26 June
Assessment team to prepare draft report	Latest by 25 July	Latest by 24 July
Party to respond to draft report (12 weeks)	Latest by 21 October	Latest by 20 October
Assessment team to prepare final report within four weeks following the Party's response	Latest by 21 November	Latest by 20 November
Final report published and technical assessment completed	12 December	11 December

For planning purposes, dates indicate the maximum time frames required as per decision 13/CP.19 and its annex. Dates relating to the preparation of the draft report are based on the assumption that a modified submission will be made.

¹ Dates for 2022–2023 are indicative and the exact dates may still change in case of clashes with events which are difficult to envisage at this point of time.