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A compilation of questions to - and answers by - Estonia
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UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Question by Brazil at Tuesday, 31 March 2015
Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target
Type: Before 31 of March
Title: Biofuels

It seems that the reliable supply of biofuels in competitive values can be an obstacle to greater participation of this type of fuel in the energy mix of transportation sector in Estonia. If feasible, Estonia is considering biofuel imports from other countries in order to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions?

Answer by Estonia at Monday, 18 May 2015

Even though Estonia is almost 100% dependent on fossil fuels we are still aiming towards greenhouse gas reduction through incentivising firstly the use of indigenous renewable resources and secondly by possibly setting blending obligations to fossil fuels. Estonia does not currently have any liquid biofuels production and/or refining plants, this means we are dependent on other countries' refineries' production. Thus we are developing our position and aligning ourselves regarding renewable fuel policies together with other EU Member States.

Question by China at Monday, 30 March 2015
Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target
Type: Before 31 of March
Title: oil shale

On the basis of the National Development Plan for the Use of Oil Shale (2008–2015), a limit on the annual amount of oil shale mined was set at 20 Mt. How many tons of oil shale was mined before this plan developed? If the number before is much bigger than 20Mt, what will be used to fill the gap of energy supply?

Answer by Estonia at Monday, 18 May 2015

The use of oil shale did not exceed 20Mt from 1990 to 2014. Before the National Development Plan for the Use of Oil Shale 2008-2015 was adopted, the amount of oil shale mined was between 10 -20 Mt. Since there are now ambitious plans regarding the development of shale oil production units (if fully realized, the amount of 20Mt might mainly be consumed in shale oil production), we are considering switching the power plants using oil shale to some other solid fossil fuel (e.g. peat or coal).

Question by China at Monday, 30 March 2015
Category: Assumptions, conditions and methodologies related to the attainment of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target
Type: Before 31 of March
Title: national mitigation target

As a member of EU bubble, Estonia doesn't pledge a national mitigation target under the UNFCCC. According to the BR, for those sectors not covered by EU-ETS, the emission limitation target for Estonia is not exceeding 11% above the verified emissions from the 2005. However, it is not clear how much effort Estonia is going to make on sectors covered by EU-ETS, nor the effort as a whole, compared with its base year level. What additional information would Estonia provide in order to make its effort transparent? What is the emission volume of those entities covered by EU-ETS in the base year, and in the target year?

Answer by Estonia at Monday, 18 May 2015

The EU ETS is an EU level market based mechanism and the cornerstone of the EU's strategy for climate change mitigation. It works on the 'cap and trade' principle. A 'cap' is set on the total amount of certain greenhouse gases that can be emitted by the installations. Emissions cannot exceed this cap and as this cap is reduced over time also total emissions fall. EU ETS currently covers over 10,000 installations in the energy and industrial sectors. In Estonia more than 45 biggest installations are covered by EU ETS. Over 79% of these installations (as of 2012) are in the energy sector, activity type: combustion of fuels. An amendment to the EU ETS Directive agreed in July 2008 brought the aviation sector into the system in 2012. Since then, there are 3 aviation operators in the system administrated by Estonia.

All the operators included in EU ETS system are annually reporting their emissions. At the end of each year, installations must surrender allowances equivalent to their emissions. Companies that keep their emissions below the level of their allowances can sell their excess allowances. Others have a choice between taking measures to reduce their own emissions – such as investing in more efficient technology or using less carbon-intensive energy sources – or buying the extra allowances they need on the market. The price of allowances is predicted to increase and this will motivate the operators to reduce their emissions.

In 2005 the emission of GHGs (without CO2 from LULUCF), measured as CO2-equivalents, was 18 422.3 Gg. Emission volume of installations covered by EU-ETS was ca 69%. From 1990 to 2005 the emissions decreased by 55%. In 2012 the total emissions of GHGs, measured as CO2 equivalents (without LULUCF) was 19 189.5 Gg. Emission volume of installations covered by EU-ETS was 71%. From 1990 to 2012 the emissions decreased by 53%.

Information about the emissions of the installations covered by EU ETS system is made publicly available. This includes information about free allowances, verified emissions, total of allowances surrendered and compliance.

About the effort that Estonia is planning to make on sectors covered by EU ETS, we highlight the National Development Plan of the Energy Sector until 2030 (hereafter ENMAK). The new plan drafts the benchmarks for renewable energy and energy efficiency operational programmes and also the vision for the renovation of buildings. Another prospective outcome of ENMAK is 66% decrease of Estonian economy´s energy intensity comparing to the base year 2012. It is also expected that by 2030 the production capacity of shale-oil increases to the level that all the excavated oil-shale can be used for the production of shale-oil. By materialising this plan, by-products of shale-oil can be used for producing low CO2 emissions electricity. Estonia is also following the Industrial Emissions Directive requirements.

Question by China at Monday, 30 March 2015
Category: All emissions and removals related to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target
Type: Before 31 of March
Title: QAQC process

The ERT pointed out that QAQC in the LULUCF sector could be further improved. Could Estonian carry out a further plan to make progress regarding this issue?

Answer by Estonia at Monday, 18 May 2015

Estonia has implemented and plans to implement in future submissions general inventory QC procedures in accordance with its QA/QC plan following the IPCC Guidelines, which include generic quality checks related to calculations, data processing, completeness, and documentation that are applicable to all inventory source and sink categories.
In addition, the QA/QC of Member States' submissions conducted under the European Community GHG Monitoring Mechanism (e.g. completeness checks, consistency checks and comparison across Member States) produces valuable information on errors and deficiencies, and the information is taken into account before Estonia submits its final inventory to the UNFCCC.
Estonia's GHG inventory (including the LULUCF and KP LULUCF sector) is reviewed annually by independent third parties not directly involved in the inventory compilation/development process. Reviews are performed upon a completed inventory following the implementation of QC procedures. According to the LULUCF Decision No 529/2013/EU the LULUCF accounting rules reflect efforts made in the agriculture and forestry sectors to enhance the contribution of changes made to the use of land resources to reducing emissions. This Decision provides for accounting

rules subject to specific provisions with a view to improving Member States' reporting and accounting systems during the first accounting period.
A public review is also carried out. The draft NIR is uploaded to the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) website, where all interested parties have the opportunity to comment on it. The comments received during these processes are reviewed and, as appropriate, incorporated into the inventory. In addition, the inventory is checked by different ministries and institutions (e.g. the Forest, Waste and Water Department of the MoE and Statistics Estonia).
UNFCCC reviews are part of QA. The reviews are performed by a team of experts from other countries. They examine the data and methods that Estonia is using and check the documentation, archiving system and national system. In conclusion they report on whether Estonia's overall performance is in accordance with current guidelines. The review report indicates the specific areas in which the inventory is in need of improvement.

In addition to the above-mentioned procedures, Estonia carried out the following QA/QC and verification related activities in the 2014 submission:

> In ARR2013 (§65), the ERT encouraged Estonia, for QA/QC purposes, to include a summary table consisting of a comparison matrix of the Convention and KP-LULUCF reporting areas in the NIR and explain any major differences. A comparison matrix of the Convention and KP-LULUCF reporting areas as well as explanations were provided in the NIR 2014 (chapter 11.2.2).
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> Reference carbon stocks were calculated for forest land, cropland and grassland based on available national research data and publications. For verification purposes, obtained values were compared (Table 7.14 in the NIR 2014) with the default SOC_{REF} values given in the IPCC 2006 calculated by applying default stock values according to soil type distribution on different land categories in Estonia.

Based on the difference in SOC_{REF} values and assuming default transition period of 20 years, mineral soil emission factors for land conversion from cropland to forest land (CF) and grassland to forest land (GF) were calculated. Obtained values were compared with respective EF-s of neighbouring countries – Finland and Sweden. There was less than a 2-fold difference between Estonian EF and Swedish EF for CF and 4.5-fold difference for GF emission factors, therefore only the country-specific CF emission factor was applied in the report calculations.

> Country-specific peat extraction soil emission factors were compared with GPG-LULUCF 2003 default factors (Table 7.31 in the NIR 2014).
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> ERT has recommended several times (ARR2013, §62 and §79), to verify the area of deforestation in Estonia, since detection of small and scattered events such as A/R or deforestation (D) may be underestimated due to the density of the NFI sampling grid (5km x 5km). In Table 11.9 of the NIR 2014, the comparison of deforestation areas and harvested

(merchantable) volumes according to submitted harvesting permits and the NFI was shown. For verification purposes, The Estonian Environment Agency has ordered studies on afforestation, reforestation (A/R) and deforestation (D). The aim of the studies is to give an overview of the A/R and D areas.

In the future submission, Estonia also plans to:

Possibly have a collaboration with neighbouring countries (e.g. Latvia) in conducting an expert peer review in the (KP) LULUCF sector.

Apply category-specific QC procedures according to the available resources, focusing on key categories and for those individual categories in which significant methodological changes and/or data revisions have occurred.