



## AUSTRALIA

Submission under FCCC/SBSTA/2012/2 | September 2012

### Work programme on the revision of the guidelines for the review of biennial reports and national communications, including national inventory reviews for developed country Parties | SBSTA

#### I. Overview

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This submission contains the views of the Australian Government on a work programme on the revision of the guidelines for the review of biennial reports and national communications, including national inventory reviews for developed country Parties (hereafter the review work programme), as invited under FCCC/SBSTA/2012/2 in accordance with decision 1/CP.16 (paragraph 46(b)).

Australia considers that achieving transparency of all countries' mitigation efforts and, where applicable, of support provided to developing countries is the overarching purpose of the Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) framework agreed in Decision 1/CP.16. The review processes are a cornerstone of MRV. Coupled with regular reporting, they provide visibility of what countries are doing and generate confidence that all countries are playing their part in overall mitigation efforts.

Review processes also provide an important learning opportunity. They can facilitate improved policy making by encouraging Parties to collaborate and adopt best practice. Australia has benefited significantly from the review processes it has been involved in, and learnings from reviews have improved our national systems and processes.

Australia supports a coherent review system that streamlines existing processes and guidelines to ensure transparency and optimise the effectiveness of the review process. Such a system will benefit all Parties, experts who perform reviews and the Secretariat as coordinator of review processes. The review work programme should be designed with this goal in mind.

#### II. Key elements of the revision of the guidelines for the review

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Australia has identified the following principles that should underpin our approach to the review work program:

- Any reporting should be subject to only one form of review
- Avoid duplication with other processes;
- Ensure a cost effective, efficient and practical process; and
- Take into account experience with reporting and review under the Convention.



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GPO Box 854 Canberra ACT 2601 Tel: 02 6159 7000 [www.climatechange.gov.au](http://www.climatechange.gov.au)

Australia considers that it will be important to build on and learn from the existing processes and guidelines under the Convention, including the guidance in decisions 2/CP.1, 9/CP.2, 6/CP.3, 33/CP.7 and 2/CP.17. Our aim should be to enhance and consolidate these existing processes and guidelines, and to ensure a coherent approach across them. This will help to aid understanding and avoid duplication.

In order to allow for better management and allocation of the time and resources of both the Secretariat and expert reviewers, including financial experts where appropriate, streamlining of review processes needs to occur. This could include coordination of reviews on biennial reports and national communications with in-country reviews of national inventories. There are timing and resourcing issues to be resolved if this approach is adopted, given the current requirements for a review of biennial reports to commence two months after the submission of the first round of biennial reports compared to national communications which should be subject to an in-depth review as soon as possible, but within one year of receipt by the secretariat in accordance with decision 2/CP.1.

Centralised reviews would occur in all other years as appropriate. Such an approach may help ensure that all Parties have access to quality reviewers and experts, including financial experts, in a regular and predictable way.

Common rules, procedures and standards for reporting by reviewers would help simplify and increase the efficiency, effectiveness and comparability of the outcomes of review processes. The development of templates for reviewers, such as a 'tick box' form to assess if all elements of reporting guidelines have been addressed, could enable easier interpretation and comparison of outcomes. The guidelines for review should clearly identify the depth of review that is to be undertaken for each review type (centralised versus in-country) and component of the biennial report.

### **III. Elements of a work programme and timeline of proposed activities**

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It is important that this work programme is completed in a timely manner so that the revised review guidelines can be used for the 2015 national inventory review process.

With this timeframe in mind, and to ensure an effective and efficient work programme, Australia proposes a number of additional activities, building upon those already agreed by the SBSTA (FCCC/SBSTA/2012/2). The SBSTA has already requested the Secretariat to prepare a synthesis paper of Parties' submissions and a technical paper summarising the current review processes under the Convention and the Secretariat's experience with coordinating reviews, for consideration by the SBSTA at its thirty-seventh session.

In addition, Australia proposes:

- Technical workshop 1 on opportunities and methods to streamline existing review guidelines, including identify overlaps and gaps in the processes.
  - This workshop would be informed by the Secretariat technical paper referred to above.

- Could be held in the first quarter of 2013 to enable outcomes of the workshop to be considered by the SBSTA at its thirty-eighth session.
- Submissions from Parties after Technical Workshop 1, with Parties' further views on the framework for reviews, including common rules, procedures and standards for reporting by expert reviewers.
- Technical workshop 2 on common rules, procedures and standards for reporting by expert reviewers.
  - This workshop would be informed by a submissions process referred to above.
  - Could be held in the third quarter of 2013 to enable outcomes of the workshop to be considered by the SBSTA at its thirty-ninth session and for a decision at COP 19.

