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## **Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice**

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Reports on other activities

**Annual reports on technical reviews**

**Technical review on information reported under the Convention by  
Parties included in Annex I to the Convention in their biennial  
reports and national communications**

### **Technical review on information reported under the Convention by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention in their biennial reports and national communications**

**Report by the secretariat**

#### *Summary*

This report describes the activities relating to the preparations for the technical review of information to be reported under the Convention in the third biennial reports and seventh national communications of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, which were due by 1 January 2018. The activities include the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of lead reviewers and the training of reviewers for the review of biennial reports and national communications. Information on the status of submissions and reviews of the third biennial reports and seventh national communications is contained in document FCCC/SBI/2019/INF.2.

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

Annex I Party	Party included in Annex I to the Convention
BR	biennial report
BTR	biennial transparency report
BUR	biennial update report
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
COP	Conference of the Parties
ERT	expert review team
ETF	enhanced transparency framework
FTC	finance, technology and capacity-building
GHG	greenhouse gas
LDC	least developed countries
LR	lead reviewer
MRV	measurement, reporting and verification
NC	national communication
non-Annex I Party	Party not included in Annex I to the Convention
PaMs	policies and measures
RPG	review practice guidance
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
SIDS	small island developing States
UNFCCC review guidelines	“Guidelines for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to greenhouse gas inventories, biennial reports and national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention”

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Mandate**

1. The COP, by decision 13/CP.20, requested the secretariat to prepare an annual report to the SBSTA on the composition of ERTs performing the review of NCs and BRs, including on the selection of ERTs and the LRs and on the action taken to ensure the application of the selection criteria<sup>1</sup> defined in the UNFCCC review guidelines.<sup>2</sup>
2. The UNFCCC review guidelines stipulate that the LRs shall collectively prepare an annual report to the SBSTA as part of the report referred to in paragraph 1 above, containing suggestions on how to improve the quality, efficiency and consistency of the reviews of GHG inventories, BRs and NCs.<sup>3</sup>

### **B. Scope of the note**

3. This is a report on activities relating to the preparations for the technical review of information to be reported under the Convention in the BR3s and NC7s of Annex I Parties, which were due by 1 January 2018, including the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs (11 and 12 March 2019). The report also reflects the data on experts nominated and eligible for BR reviews at the time of preparation of this document, as well as information on experts who have expressed an interest in participating in reviews of BR4s in 2020–2021. Further, the report reflects the training of reviewers of BRs and NCs conducted in 2019.
4. In total, 41 Party reviews of NC7s and BR3s (31 in-country reviews and 10 centralized reviews) were completed in 2018–2019. Additionally, one Party resubmitted its NC7 in August 2019,<sup>4</sup> and another Party submitted its NC7 and BR3 in September and October 2019, respectively.<sup>5</sup> The reviews of these submissions are planned in conjunction with the BR4 reviews due to take place from 1 January 2020. Information on the status of submissions and reviews of NC7s and BR3s is contained in document FCCC/SBI/2019/INF.2.

### **C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice**

5. The SBSTA will be invited to take note of the information contained in this report.

## **II. Composition of the expert review teams**

### **A. The 2018–2019 review cycle for the third biennial reports and seventh national communications**

6. In accordance with the UNFCCC review guidelines,<sup>6</sup> the ERTs shall be composed of eligible experts selected on an ad hoc basis from the UNFCCC roster of experts, nominated by Parties and, as appropriate, by intergovernmental organizations. Participating experts shall have recognized competence in the area to be reviewed and shall neither be nationals of the Party under review nor be nominated or funded by that Party. The experts must have undertaken the necessary training and passed examinations as part of the training programme<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Decision 13/CP.20, annex, paras. 36 and 37.

<sup>2</sup> Decision 13/CP.20, annex.

<sup>3</sup> Decision 13/CP.20, annex, para. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Turkey resubmitted its NC7 on 26 August 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Belarus submitted its NC7 on 5 September 2019 and its BR3 on 4 October 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Decision 13/CP.20, annex, paras. 26 and 28–30.

<sup>7</sup> “Training programme for review experts for the technical review of biennial reports and national communications of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention” (decision 15/CP.20, annex).

or have experience in the relevant reviews and therefore be eligible to serve as reviewers of BRs and/or NCs.

7. The ERTs may vary in size and composition, considering the national circumstances of the Party under review,<sup>8</sup> and the review experts shall be selected in such a way that the collective skills and competences of the ERTs address all areas under review. For the review of BRs, competence in reviewing PaMs, GHG emission trends and projections, and the provision of financial, technological and capacity-building support, as well as an understanding of the quantitative economy-wide emission reduction target and the progress made towards achieving it, are required. For the review of NCs, an additional expert with expertise in vulnerability and adaptation, and research and systematic observation was involved in the review process.

8. An ERT composed of 12–18 experts reviewed the NC7/BR3 submissions during centralized reviews, and each in-country review was conducted by 4–6 experts. Typically, with regard to the division of tasks within an ERT, one expert was assigned to review the information provided in each of the following parts of the BR and NC: (1) generalist/cross-cutting matters; (2) mitigation actions, PaMs, the economy-wide target and progress towards achieving it; (3) projections; (4) the provision of support to developing country Parties; and (5) vulnerability and adaptation, and research and systematic observation (see table 1 for a further breakdown of the competences of experts and the associated review areas).

Table 1

**Competences of experts participating in the reviews of the seventh national communications and third biennial reports in 2018–2019**

<i>Competences/experience</i>	<i>Number of experts</i>	<i>Review area</i>
General	1	National circumstances Supplementary information under the Kyoto Protocol Other reporting requirements Education, training and public awareness
Mitigation actions, PaMs	1–2	PaMs Quantified economy-wide emission reduction target and progress made in achieving the target
Projections	1	GHG inventories and emission trends GHG emission projections and the total effects of PaMs
Support	1	Provision of financial technological and capacity-building support
Adaptation	1	Vulnerability assessment, impacts and adaptation measures Research and systematic observation

9. Pursuant to the UNFCCC review guidelines, the secretariat shall select the members of an ERT with a view to achieving a balance between experts from Annex I Parties and non-Annex I Parties in the overall composition and will make every effort to ensure a geographical balance among the experts selected from non-Annex I Parties and among those selected from Annex I Parties.<sup>9</sup>

10. To this end, the composition of the ERTs in 2018–2019 was broadly balanced, taking into account the limitations with regard to the areas of expertise needed, experience in

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According to the provisions of the programme set out in this decision, to be eligible for the reviews, an expert must successfully complete the training programme by passing examinations for the course on general and cross-cutting matters and for at least one sectoral course.

<sup>8</sup> Decision 13/CP.30, annex, para. 26.

<sup>9</sup> Decision 13/CP.20, annex, para. 37.

reviews, language and availability of experts. A total of 182<sup>10</sup> experts from 74 Parties were involved in the 41 Party reviews conducted for this cycle.

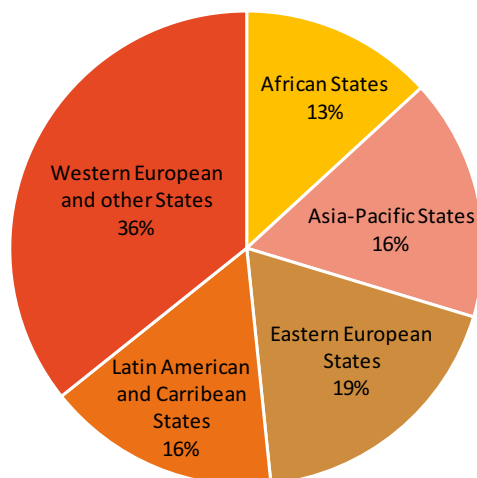
11. The secretariat ensured the balance between experts from Annex I Parties and non-Annex I Parties, with 92 (51 per cent) experts from Annex I Parties and 90 (49 per cent) from non-Annex I Parties. The ERTs also were balanced in terms of gender, with 86 female experts (48 per cent) and 96 male experts (52 per cent). The gender balance has improved since the BR2 cycle (2016–2017), with an increase of 6 per cent in the number of women involved.

12. Of the 182 experts involved in the BR3/NC7 reviews, 68 (36 per cent) experts were participating in the process for the first time, of whom 33 were from non-Annex I Parties and 35 from Annex I Parties. This practice of including new experts helps to increase the pool of experienced reviewers and to provide opportunities for a larger number of experts to build their capacity in MRV systems.

13. Similarly to previous review cycles, the number of experts from the five United Nations geopolitical regional groups was balanced in the ERTs, with 24 experts from African States, 30 from Asia-Pacific States,<sup>11</sup> 34 from Eastern European States,<sup>12</sup> 29 from Latin American and Caribbean States and 65 from Western European and other States<sup>13</sup> (see figure 1).

Figure 1

**Distribution of experts participating in the technical reviews of the seventh national communications and third biennial reports for 2018–2019, by United Nations geopolitical regional group**



14. The number of reviews in which experts nominated by a Party participated varies (see table 2).

<sup>10</sup> A total of 180 individual experts, where 2 experts have participated twice in the review cycle due to a last-minute change to one ERT, adding up to 182 review experts.

<sup>11</sup> Asia-Pacific States include, among other Parties, Bhutan, China, Fiji, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia and Thailand.

<sup>12</sup> Eastern European States include, among other Parties, Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

<sup>13</sup> Western European and other States include, among other Parties, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Table 2

**Number of experts participating in the technical reviews of the seventh national communications and third biennial reports for 2018–2019, by nominating Party**

<i>No. of participating experts per Party</i>	<i>Nominating Parties</i>
6	Austria, Brazil, China, Georgia, Japan, Thailand, Turkey
5	Belgium, Canada
4	Argentina, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, Romania, Sudan, United States, Zimbabwe
3	Algeria, Australia, Bulgaria, Chile, Cuba, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
2	Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Greece, India, Lithuania, Mongolia, Morocco, Nigeria, Spain
1	Albania, Armenia, Bahamas, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Philippines, Poland, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkmenistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay

## **B. The 2020–2021 review cycle for the fourth biennial reports**

15. BR4s are due to be submitted by 1 January 2020, with the review weeks scheduled for between March 2020 and April 2021. The number and distribution by region, gender and expertise of the experts eligible to participate in the BR4 reviews will predefine the composition of the ERTs and, therefore, may make it difficult to ensure a balanced composition.

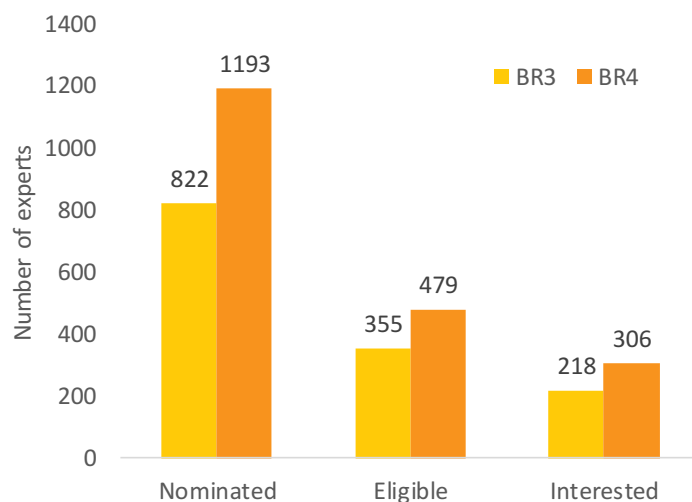
16. At the time of preparation of this report, 1,193 experts had been nominated for BR/NC reviews by the respective national focal points of 147 Parties. A total of 51 Parties had not nominated any experts, of which four are developed Parties with emission levels below 10,000 Mt carbon dioxide equivalent and 47 are developing country Parties, including 23 SIDS and/or LDCs.

17. Figure 2 shows the number of experts who were nominated or eligible to participate in the BR3 and BR4 review cycles, or are interested in participating. It is apparent that many experts face challenges in undertaking and completing the training programme for BR/NC reviewers to become eligible to participate in the reviews. Of those nominated, only 479 experts are currently eligible for the reviews, that is, have prior experience of NC reviews or have passed the necessary examinations for BR reviews. Although 1,193 experts were nominated by Parties for the BR/NC reviews, just 30 per cent (332) have passed the necessary examinations.

18. Further, of the 479 experts eligible, at the time of the publication of this report only 306 had expressed an interest in participating in the next cycle of BR4 reviews in 2020–2021.

Figure 2

**Comparison of the number of experts nominated and eligible to participate, or interested in participating, in the review cycles of the third and fourth biennial reports**



19. The share of nominated and interested experts is not balanced between developed and developing countries. Of the nominated experts for the BR4 review cycle, there are more experts from non-Annex I Parties (740) than from Annex I Parties (453). However, with regard to those eligible to participate in the BR4 reviews, the share is almost the same for both groups of Parties (25 per cent for Annex I Parties and 23 per cent for non-Annex I Parties).

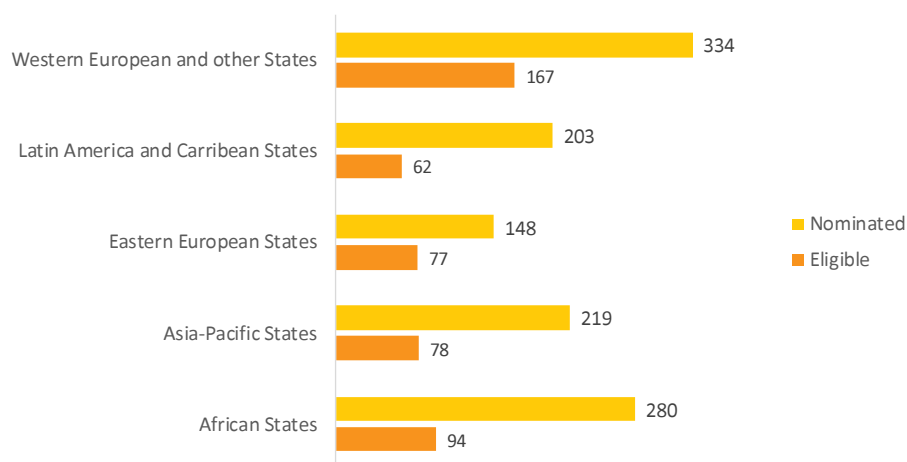
20. In terms of United Nations geopolitical regional groups, the share of nominated experts and share of eligible experts in BR4 reviews is not equally distributed. The majority of nominated experts<sup>14</sup> come from Western European and other States (334), followed by African States (280), Asia-Pacific States (219), Latin American and Caribbean States (203), and Eastern European States (148). The regional distribution of eligible experts was as follows:<sup>15</sup> African States (78), Asia-Pacific States (40), Eastern European States (46), Latin American and Caribbean States (47), and Western European and other States (94). Furthermore, 52 experts from SIDS and the LDCs are eligible and have expressed an interest in participating in the BR4 reviews. As a result of the proportionally fewer eligible experts from the Latin American States and Asia-Pacific States, it is difficult to ensure a regional balance within the ERTs. Figure 3 presents the regional distribution of nominated and eligible experts.

<sup>14</sup> Excludes experts nominated by the United Nations Development Programme, the International Energy Agency and the State of Palestine.

<sup>15</sup> Excludes eligible and interested participants from the State of Palestine.



Figure 3

**Regional distribution of nominated and eligible experts for technical reviews of national communications and biennial reports**

21. In terms of gender, the share of nominated experts and eligible experts is not equally balanced, with fewer female experts being nominated and eligible. Of the nominated experts, 455 were women and 735 were men. Of those who are eligible, 189 were women and 290 were men.

22. Of those who expressed an interest in participating in the BR4 review cycle, 165 experts had previous experience in BR/NC reviews and 141 did not have previous experience. A growing number of new experts are taking examinations as part of the training programme. The secretariat will make every effort to provide opportunities for newly qualified experts to take part in upcoming BR/NC reviews with a view to creating a pool of 750<sup>16</sup> experts with experience in reviews of PaMs, projections and FTC by 2026. It is expected that an average of 90 new experts will be invited to participate per review cycle until 2026.

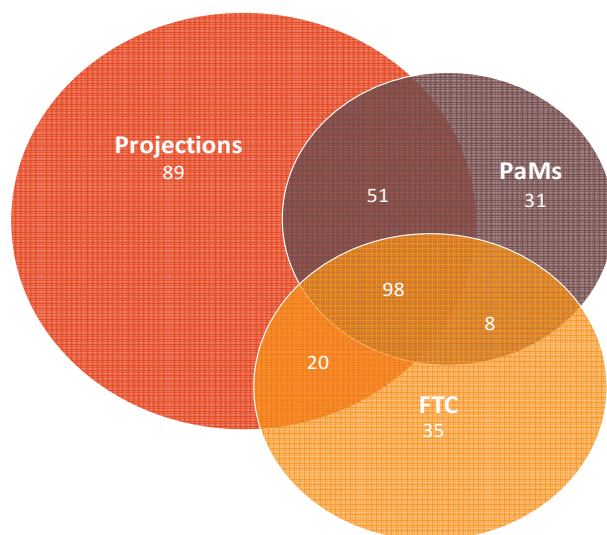
23. The majority of eligible experts have expertise in projections, followed by PaMs and FTC. Of those experts eligible because they have passed the necessary examinations (332), the number of experts in projections and PaMs is almost the same for both Annex I Parties and non-Annex I Parties, whereas for experts with qualified skills in FTC, there are more experts from non-Annex I Parties than from Annex I Parties. Overall, 188 were eligible for PaMs (97 Annex I Parties and 91 non-Annex I Parties), 258 for projections (129 each for Annex I Parties and non-Annex I Parties) and 161 for FTC (50 from Annex I Parties and 111 from non-Annex I Parties), with many having taken examinations in two or more areas of expertise.<sup>17</sup> This shows that more experts in FTC are required to achieve a balance in terms of expertise. Figure 4 shows the balance of eligible experts per expertise.

<sup>16</sup> Estimated need for the ETF.

<sup>17</sup> The areas of expertise examined are FTC support, PaMs and projections.

Figure 4

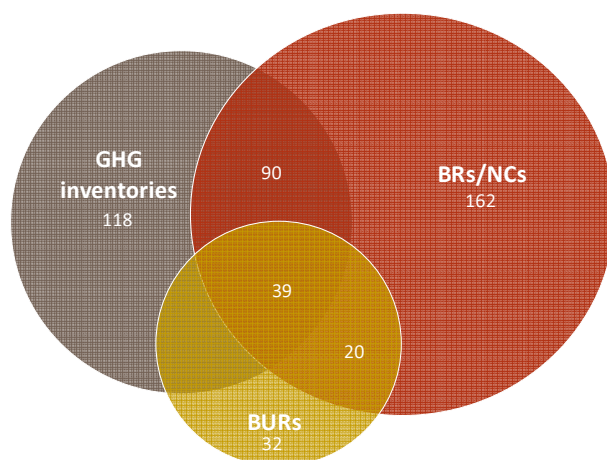
**Number of eligible experts who have completed the training programme for national communications and biennial reports, by expertise**



24. The current MRV process under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol largely uses the same pool of experts. Often, an expert is able to participate in just one review event per year, which creates unhelpful competition among the different reviews that need to be carried out (BUR technical analyses, NCs/BRs and GHG inventories). Of the experts who are experienced BR/NC experts in the BR4 reviews (311), 129 are also experienced experts for GHG inventory reviews and 59 for BUR technical analyses. In total, 39 experts have taken part in all three MRV processes at least once. It is worth noting that for the simultaneous review processes under the current MRV system and the future ETF, more qualified review experts are needed. Figure 5 shows the number of experienced BR/NC experts who are also experienced experts in other processes.

Figure 5

**Number of experts with experience in other review processes**



### III. Sixth meeting of lead reviewers for the review of biennial reports and national communications

25. The 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs for the review of BRs and NCs of developed country Parties was held in Bonn, Germany, on 11 and 12 March 2019. A total of 81 experts were invited to the meeting. Of the 66 experts who attended, 35 were from non-Annex I Parties and 31 were from Annex I Parties.

26. In accordance with the UNFCCC review guidelines and taking into account decision 22/CMP.1 in conjunction with decisions 4/CMP.11 and 23/CMP.1, as appropriate, the meeting addressed both procedural and technical issues relating to the review of BRs and NCs of Annex I Parties with a view to facilitating the work of the LRs to ensure consistency of reviews across Parties. In addition, information was presented at the meeting on the implementation of the international consultation and analysis process.

#### **A. Katowice outcomes on transparency and the evolving role of lead reviewers**

27. The LRs took note of the information presented by the secretariat on the outcomes from CMA 1.3, held in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018, and the implications for the review process. In particular, the CMA adopted the modalities, procedures and guidelines for the ETF and thus made the Paris Agreement operational.<sup>18</sup> The CMA requested the SBSTA to undertake further technical work to operationalize the modalities, procedures and guidelines by CMA 3 (November 2020), namely to prepare (1) common reporting tables for national GHG inventories; (2) common tabular format tables for tracking progress towards nationally determined contributions; (3) common tabular format tables for information on financial, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building support provided and mobilized, and needed and received; (4) outlines of the BTR, the national inventory document and the technical expert review report; and (5) a training programme for technical experts participating in the technical expert review.

28. Through the same decision, the CMA also decided that BTRs are to be submitted by all Parties to the Paris Agreement (SIDS and the LDCs may submit the information at their discretion), on a biennial basis, at the latest by 31 December 2024; final BURs are to be submitted not later than 31 December 2024 and final BRs are to be submitted not later than 31 December 2022. These timelines suggest that, even though the ETF under the Paris Agreement will supersede the current MRV system under the Convention for each Party to the Paris Agreement, this may occur at different points in time for individual Parties, and both systems may need to operate in parallel at least during 2022–2024. Moreover, some Parties that choose to submit their BTRs early under the ETF (i.e. well before 2024) may be expected to submit their final BR/BUR in 2022 and their first BTR in conjunction to avoid placing an undue burden on themselves and on the secretariat.

29. The LRs noted that, for the SBSTA to fulfil its mandate and complete its work on the ETF by the end of 2020, it is critical to advance work in 2019 through comprehensive submissions from Parties. The LRs also noted that it has been good practice for the secretariat to provide a template of a review report.<sup>19</sup> This allows review reports to flexibly reflect the evolving review process, taking into account, on a continuous basis, advice from the LRs in updating the template of the review report.

30. The LRs recalled that, in accordance with the modalities, procedures and guidelines for the ETF, the LRs, as a forum of the ETF, are to discuss how to improve the quality, efficiency and consistency of technical expert reviews under the Paris Agreement and develop conclusions. The LRs noted that, in accordance with existing review practices, the engagement of the LRs in finalizing and enhancing the training programmes prepared by the secretariat for reviewers under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol has ensured that the training has been fit for purpose and has reflected both a good understanding of the requirements and examples of best practice in terms of reporting and review.

31. With regard to reporting under the ETF, the LRs noted that, from 1 January 2019, the Consultative Group of Experts also serves the Paris Agreement by providing support for the implementation of Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, for example by facilitating the provision of technical advice and support to developing country Parties, as applicable,

<sup>18</sup> Draft decision 18/CMA.1 on the modalities, procedures and guidelines for the transparency framework for action and support referred to in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.

<sup>19</sup> Based on the elements for such reports outlined in relevant decisions by the COP and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (e.g. decision 22/CMP.1, annex, para. 48).

including for the preparation and submission of their BTRs, and by facilitating improved reporting over time.

## **B. Experience from the reviews of third biennial reports and seventh national communications**

32. The LRs acknowledged the continuous strengthening of the review process under the existing MRV under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol with active engagement from Parties and experts and support from the secretariat. They noted the multiple benefits resulting from the reviews, such as (1) a higher reporting quality (e.g. through the resubmission of BR common tabular format tables by 10 Parties triggered by the review), (2) an increased understanding of the reporting requirements and review modalities and practices both by national experts from the country under review and by the ERT, and (3) increased interest from national experts from the countries under review in becoming part of the ERTs. The LRs noted that Parties could make greater use of their BRs and NCs as a communication channel through which to share their experience and enhance the visibility of their achievements and success stories. The LRs also noted that the ERTs undertaking preparatory work before the review week is essential to delivering a timely review report. The LRs requested the secretariat to prepare a concise review report template for the review of BR4s.

33. The LRs noted the actions taken by the secretariat to coordinate the reviews of BR3s and NC7s, including 10 centralized and 31 in-country reviews organized between February 2018 and April 2019. This timeline has allowed Parties a period of at least nine months to address the BR3 review findings, which are usually shared with Parties at the end of the review week, in the BR4 submissions due by 1 January 2020. All review reports are scheduled to be finalized by the ERTs by August 2019, well within two years of the submission due date for BR3s/NC7s (1 January 2018). The LRs also noted that the secretariat organized multilateral assessment sessions for 11 Parties at SBI 49 and for 20 Parties at SBI 50, and is planning another such session for 9 Parties at SBI 51.

34. The LRs further noted that the ERTs were balanced in terms of regional distribution and gender. In total, 184<sup>20</sup> experts were involved in the reviews. The composition of the ERTs was as follows: 91 experts from non-Annex I Parties and 93 from Annex I Parties; and 88 female experts and 96 male experts. In total, 24 experts were from African States, 29 from Asia-Pacific States, 35 from Eastern European States, 31 from Latin American and Caribbean States, and 65 from Western European and other States. The involvement of 88 female experts in the BR3/NC7 review cycle resulted in a 6 per cent increase in the number of female experts compared with in the BR2 review cycle. Furthermore, the 70 new experts participating for the first time in the BR3/NC7 review cycle have resulted in a 39 per cent increase in new experts involved in reviews compared with in the BR2 review cycle.

35. The LRs welcomed the information provided by the secretariat on the status of the 972 experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts for the BR/NC reviews. However, the LRs noted with concern that, since 2015, only 25 per cent, or 239 experts, have enrolled in the training programme and successfully completed the required training modules, thereby becoming eligible to take part in BR/NC reviews. The LRs acknowledged the usefulness of the training programme in fostering an understanding of the review process and facilitating consistent reviews. Since the existing training programme provides a good understanding of the assessment of Parties' progress towards their emission reduction target and their provision of financial, technological and capacity-building support, the experience gained from this programme could inform the development of the training programme for the ETF. The most recent opportunity for experts to participate in the training programme was in August–September 2019.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Provisional total based on the data available as at 1 March 2019.

<sup>21</sup> More information on upcoming training opportunities is available at <https://unfccc.int/process/transparency-and-reporting/reporting-and-review-under-the-convention/training-of-review-experts/training-programmes-for-the-review-of-information-submitted-by-annex-i-parties>.

36. The LRs noted that, in the light of the increasing demand for reviewers under the ETF, the number of experts should in turn be increased to maintain and enhance the quality and effectiveness of future reviews. To this end, the LRs encouraged the national focal points to nominate new experts to the UNFCCC roster of experts,<sup>22</sup> in particular experts involved in the national institutional arrangements for MRV, so as to enable the respective governments to benefit from the expertise gained by these individuals during the BR/NC reviews. The LRs encouraged the experts nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts to enrol in the training courses and complete the relevant examinations, which will make them eligible for participation in future BR reviews. The LRs also strongly encouraged Parties to allocate sufficient support to their experts to enable them to participate in the review process.

37. The LRs acknowledged that the secretariat's efforts to compose the ERTs on the basis of feedback from experts on their availability for participation in ERTs, requested well before the review week, as well as to streamline review practices and fine-tune the review tools, facilitated the effectiveness, consistency and efficiency of the reviews. In particular, the LRs found the use of the virtual team room and the improved template and checklist very helpful.

38. The LRs noted that the involvement of an increased number of new experts required the LRs and review coordinators to spend more time guiding the ERTs and coordinating the workflow. The LRs also noted that the involvement of between five and six experts in one ERT and the even distribution of review tasks among the experts, as well as the coordination of a review by two review officers, was an effective practice. The LRs requested the secretariat to take these findings into account when updating the review tools and adjusting review practices.

39. The LRs took note of the submission due date for the BR4s of 1 January 2020 and the plan by the secretariat to make available to Parties as of June 2019 the BR common tabular format application adjusted for the BR4 submission. The LRs recalled that Parties are expected to address the recommendations and encouragements of the report on the technical review of the BR3 when preparing their BR4s. Parties are also expected to submit the BR4 on time to allow for timely arrangements to be made for the reviews, including for the centralized reviews of BR4s that are planned to take place from March 2020 to March 2021.

## C. Improvements in the consistency of reviews

40. The LRs welcomed the 2019 background paper on the completeness and transparency assessment of information reported in technical review reports of BR3s<sup>23</sup> prepared by the secretariat. On the basis of the results of the analysis presented during the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs, the overall completeness and transparency of information provided in the BR3s has increased compared with the BR2s.<sup>24</sup> The consistency of assessment across the third technical review reports has improved since the second technical review reports, owing mainly to the experience gained and expertise refined during the course of the three BR review cycles; the use of the suggested review approaches from the RPG based on real examples; and the guidance<sup>25</sup> provided by the LRs on assessing completeness and transparency in line with the guiding principles and the assessment scoreboard. The LRs requested the secretariat to continue compiling the review findings, update the analysis carried out in the background paper on the basis of the results of the remaining technical reviews of the BR3s and present the analysis as an input for discussion during the next meeting of LRs in the context of the update of the RPG.

41. The LRs considered several issues identified during the BR3 review cycle, including (1) the contribution of units from market-based mechanisms towards achieving the emission reduction target (guidance for the member States of the European Union); (2) the assessment

<sup>22</sup> Information on the UNFCCC roster of experts is available at <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/roestaging/Pages/RosterOfExperts.aspx>.

<sup>23</sup> Available at [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/2019UpdatePaper\\_final.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/2019UpdatePaper_final.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> This analysis is based on the technical review reports of 32 Parties whose review reports were published or were in the final phase before publication at the time of preparation of the secretariat's background paper (i.e. 15 February 2019).

<sup>25</sup> Available at [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/2019UpdatePaper\\_final.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/2019UpdatePaper_final.pdf).

of impacts of individual mitigation measures; (3) consistency among GHG emission trends and projections and the economy-wide emission reduction target when land use, land-use change and forestry and nitrogen trifluoride are included in the target; (4) the descriptions of success and failure stories when reporting on the provision of technological support; (5) consistency between the textual part of the BR and the common tabular format tables; (6) the financial support provided to Annex I Parties; (7) the distinction between support provided to non-Annex I Parties through public and through private channels; and (8) the presentation of ‘with additional measures’ projections on a gas-by-gas basis. The LRs requested the secretariat to incorporate into the RPG 2019<sup>26</sup> the approaches discussed and agreed at the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs. The LRs agreed that the review approaches presented in the RPG 2019 would be applied by ERTs in ongoing and future reviews.

42. The LRs also requested the secretariat to continue collecting information on and analysing the review-related issues raised by ERTs during reviews, with a view to presenting them for discussion at the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs, including examples of best practice in formulating recommendations and encouragements to Parties.

#### **D. Organization of the meetings of lead reviewers**

43. The LRs acknowledged the usefulness of the hands-on practice in addressing the challenging reporting and review issues and the opportunity for LRs to exchange knowledge and share review skills among their peers. The LRs requested the secretariat to continue organizing interactive and practical activities on relevant topics based on the suggestions of the reviewers and LRs during the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, as appropriate.

44. The LRs also requested the secretariat to provide opportunities for sharing and discussing the experience gained in the international consultation and analysis process that might be of relevance both to LRs engaged in BR reviews and to co-leads engaged in the technical analysis of BURs.

### **IV. Training of reviewers of biennial reports and national communications**

45. Training materials for the review of BR1s/NC6s were originally developed in 2014, and the implementation of the online courses of the training programme referred to in paragraph 6 above was initiated by the secretariat in 2015. The online courses were then updated and made available in September 2017, as requested in the annex to decision 19/CP.23, to enhance the training materials on the basis of mandates arising from decisions 24/CP.19 and 9/CP.21, and taking into account the experience gained from conducting BR/NC reviews since 2014. In addition, the final examinations of the training programme were also revised to improve clarity with a view to assisting experts whose mother tongue is not English.

46. In order to prepare for the reviews of BR3s/NC7s, both new and experienced expert reviewers have been invited to participate in the updated courses and take the final examinations.

47. Since the previous annual reporting to the SBSTA,<sup>27</sup> two rounds of the training programme have been implemented, with the online examinations held from 18 to 21 November 2018 and from 15 to 18 September 2019 resulting in 120 newly qualified experts to take part in the review of BRs/NCs by 4 October 2019.

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<sup>26</sup> The RPG 2019 is available at <https://unfccc.int/node/64687>.

<sup>27</sup> FCCC/SBSTA/2018/INF.5.