

Decision -/CP.19

Guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels

The Conference of the Parties,

Reaffirming that, in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support to developing country Parties, Parties should collectively aim to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss, in accordance with national circumstances, consistent with the ultimate objective of the Convention, as stated in its Article 2,

Noting the urgent need for enhanced training for developing country Parties in the assessment of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels,

Recalling the provisions of decisions 4/CP.15, 1/CP.16 and 12/CP.17,

Also recalling that in accordance with decision 2/CP.17, paragraphs 66 and 67, both appropriate market-based approaches and non-market-based approaches could be developed to support the results-based actions by developing country Parties referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 73,

1. *Decides* that each submission referred to in decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 13, shall be subject to a technical assessment;
2. *Recalls* that in accordance with decision 12/CP.17, developing countries may, on a voluntary basis and when deemed appropriate, submit a proposed forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level, and that such proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels might be technically assessed in the context of results-based payments;
3. *Adopts* the guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels contained in the annex;
4. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a synthesis report on the technical assessment process, for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice after the first year of technical assessments;
5. *Invites* Parties, in particular developing country Parties, and, as appropriate, intergovernmental organizations to nominate technical experts with the relevant qualifications to the UNFCCC roster of experts;
6. *Invites* Parties, in particular developed country Parties, and relevant international organizations to support capacity-building in relation to the development and assessment of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, taking into account the work of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention;
7. *Takes note* of the estimated budgetary implications of the activities to be undertaken by the secretariat as referred to in paragraphs 1 to 4 above;
8. *Requests* that the actions of the secretariat called for in this decision be undertaken subject to the availability of financial resources.

Annex

Guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels

Guidelines for technical assessment

Objectives

1. The objectives of the technical assessment are:
 - (a) To assess the degree to which information provided by Parties is in accordance with the guidelines for submissions of information on forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels contained in the annex to decision 12/CP.17 for the construction of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels;
 - (b) To offer a facilitative, non-intrusive, technical exchange of information on the construction of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels with a view to supporting the capacity of developing country Parties for the construction and future improvements, as appropriate, of their forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, subject to national capabilities and policy.

Scope

2. The technical assessment of the data, methodologies, and procedures used by the developing country Party under assessment in the construction of its forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level in accordance with decision 12/CP.17, chapter II, and its annex, will assess the following:
 - (a) The extent to which the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level maintains consistency with corresponding anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks as contained in the national greenhouse gas inventories;
 - (b) How historical data have been taken into account in the establishment of the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level;
 - (c) The extent to which the information provided was transparent, complete,¹ consistent and accurate, including methodological information, description of data sets, approaches, methods, models, if applicable, and assumptions used and whether the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels are national or cover less than the entire national territory of forest area;
 - (d) Whether a description of relevant policies and plans has been provided, as appropriate;
 - (e) If applicable, whether descriptions of changes to previously submitted forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels have been provided, taking into account the stepwise approach;²

¹ Complete here means the provision of information that allows for the reconstruction of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels.

² Decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 10.

(f) Pools and gases, and activities included in the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level, and justification of why omitted pools and/or activities were deemed not significant;

(g) Whether the definition of forest used in the construction of the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level has been provided and, if it is different from the one used in the national greenhouse gas inventory or from the one reported to other international organizations, why and how the definition used was chosen;

(h) Whether assumptions about future changes to domestic policies have been included in the construction of the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level;

(i) The extent to which the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level value is consistent with the information and descriptions provided by the Party.

3. As part of the technical assessment process, areas for technical improvement may be identified and these areas and capacity-building needs for the construction of future forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels may be noted by the Party concerned.

4. The assessment team shall refrain from making any judgment on domestic policies taken into account in the construction of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels.

Procedures for technical assessment

General procedures

5. Each submission will be technically assessed by an assessment team in accordance with the procedures and timeframes established in these guidelines.

6. Each assessment team will conduct a thorough and comprehensive assessment of the submitted forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level and will prepare a report under its collective responsibility.

7. The technical assessment process will be coordinated by the secretariat. The assessment team will be composed of land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) experts selected from the UNFCCC roster of experts. Participating experts will serve in their personal capacity and will be neither nationals of the Party undergoing the technical assessment nor funded by that Party.

8. In order to facilitate the secretariat's work, each Party should confirm to the secretariat, who their active experts on the LULUCF roster of experts are who will be able to participate in the technical assessment of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels.

Composition of the assessment team

9. The secretariat shall ensure a balanced representation of LULUCF experts from developing and developed countries. The Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention may nominate one of its experts from a developing country Party with relevant expertise to participate in the technical assessment as an observer. 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.

Timing

10. Assessment sessions will be organized once a year. Submissions received no later than 10 weeks ahead of a session will be assessed at that session. The assessment sessions will take place in Bonn, Germany.
11. The secretariat should forward all relevant information to the assessment team at least eight weeks before the start of the assessment session.
12. Prior to the assessment session, the assessment team should identify any preliminary issues requiring clarifications from the Party, as appropriate.
13. The Party that submitted the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level may interact with the assessment team during the assessment of its submission to provide clarification and additional information to facilitate the assessment by the assessment team.
14. The assessment team may seek additional clarifications from the Party no later than one week following the assessment session. This may result in the provision of technical inputs to the Party on the construction of its forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level. The Party is to provide clarifications to the assessment team no later than eight weeks following the request. As a result of the facilitative process referred to above, the Party may modify its submitted forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level in response to the technical inputs of the assessment team.
15. In the event that the Party modifies its submitted forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level in response to the technical inputs of the assessment team, the assessment team will consider this information within four weeks from the submission of the modified forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level.
16. The assessment team will prepare a draft report and make it available to the Party no later than 12 weeks³ following the assessment session. The report should include a short summary.
17. The Party will have 12 weeks to respond to the draft report of the assessment team.
18. The assessment team will prepare a final report within four weeks following the Party's response and the report will be sent to the secretariat for publication via the web platform on the UNFCCC website.⁴ The report should contain an assessed forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level and, if appropriate, areas identified for further technical improvement, and capacity-building needs if noted by the Party concerned, for the construction of future forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, incorporating the Party's response.

³ In the case that a Party modifies its submitted forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level in accordance with paragraph 15, this period will be extended to no later than 16 weeks.

⁴ <<http://unfccc.int/redd>>.