



# Options to revise reporting guidelines for Annex I and non-Annex I National Communications: Excerpt<sup>1</sup>

November 2010, Paris

OECD/IEA Project for the  
Climate Change Expert Group on the UNFCCC

*The ideas expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent views of the OECD, the IEA, or their member countries, or the endorsement of any approach described herein.*

---

<sup>1</sup> This document is an excerpt from a working paper that was prepared in November 2010 by Jane Ellis (OECD), Sara Moarif (IEA), Gregory Briner (OECD), Barbara Buchner (Climate Policy Initiative) and Eric Massey (S&E Associates). The full paper can be downloaded at [www.oecd.org/env/cc/ccxg](http://www.oecd.org/env/cc/ccxg).

## 1. Introduction

Under Articles 4 and 12 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), all Parties are required to prepare “National Communications” (NCs). The Convention requires NCs to include a national inventory of greenhouse gases (GHGs), steps taken or envisaged by the Party to implement the FCCC and other relevant information. Parties subsequently agreed to detailed guidelines on the structure, content and frequency of National Communications, establishing different requirements and guidelines for Annex I (AI) and non-Annex I (NAI) Parties. These guidelines have structured the provision of information needed: to assess compliance with reporting requirements under Article 12 of the FCCC; to facilitate the sharing of information between Parties; and to assess the implementation of actions and progress towards the objectives of the Convention. The reporting guidance for National Communications, as well as the review structures surrounding AI NCs, also aim to enhance transparency and accountability and build trust among Parties and other stakeholders about how well countries are working - together and separately - to address the problem of climate change.

Current reporting guidelines are relatively old, dating from 1999 and 2002 for Annex I and non-Annex I Parties respectively. They differ in terms of both content and reporting timetable. This has led to significant gaps in the current climate reporting framework. These gaps are particularly marked for non-Annex I Parties in terms of GHG emissions and trends, mitigation and adaptation actions. There are also gaps in terms of the effect of mitigation actions and support provided and received for climate-related activities, including for technology transfer and capacity building.<sup>2</sup>

International climate-related reporting is not limited to National Communications, and can also include other reports or information under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol (*e.g.* Annex I National Inventory Reports, Annex B reports on supplementary information). The number of climate-relevant information repositories is likely to further increase in future, *e.g.* with the development of a registry on mitigation actions in developing countries that are seeking support. This means that the international community may also need to identify the role and function of National Communications in the overall climate reporting framework.

Revising the current UNFCCC guidelines for international reporting could enable the international community to:

- better reflect the current priorities of the international community by enhancing the type of data and other information requested;
- facilitate the timely provision of relevant information by identifying which parameters need to be reported more frequently (*e.g.* in biennial NC "updates"), and which can be reported less frequently (*e.g.* in full National Communications);
- improve the completeness of information provided by expanding regular reporting to a wide variety of countries, through use of a reporting system focusing on core elements with flexibility in the details of how these are reported;
- enhance flexibility to align reporting with variations in country circumstances, capabilities, priorities and goals, allowing all countries to begin reporting core information and to improve reporting over time;
- increase the transparency and accuracy of reports, and therefore international confidence in the information that they contain;

---

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Ellis, Moarif and Briner (2010), “Core Elements of National Reports”.

- streamline reports to increase their usefulness to the national and international community, to ensure that information presented is comparable and to facilitate subsequent review/international consultations and analysis.

It is therefore timely to assess whether current reporting guidelines could be modified to better reflect the needs of the international community. This excerpt identifies key questions for consideration when developing new guidelines for NCs from Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, and suggests changes to the current reporting guidelines in order to produce more relevant, timely, user-friendly, transparent and comprehensive reports. This analysis suggests that there are common elements (such as GHG emissions and GHG mitigation activities) that will need to be reported by both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, but that there are likely to be differences as to how these common elements are reported.

## 2. Key Questions to Guide Decisions

In order to reflect Parties' "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities", it is important that future reporting guidelines for National Communications continue to provide for flexibility in reporting. Such flexibility could be in terms of:

- **when** different items are reported (with *e.g.* less frequent reports for least developed countries);
- **which** items are reported (with *e.g.* emission projections optional for Parties without national and/or sectoral GHG commitments, goals or targets); and
- **how** the information is developed and/or presented (with *e.g.* more complex methods and/or comprehensive information presented on key issues).

While current guidelines outline *what* "shall", "should" or is "encouraged" to be reported, they generally do not indicate a format for *how* such information is to be presented. This lack of specificity – particularly marked for the sections on national circumstances, projections of climate impacts, mitigation and adaptation measures – means that the information reported in different Parties' NCs can vary widely. This includes variations not only in terms of what is reported (as not all items are mandatory for all Parties), but also how it is reported, and where the information is placed in a NC.

If – as is suggested in current negotiation texts – all Parties<sup>3</sup> are to produce NCs or other reports on a more frequent, potentially biennial, basis in future, this will represent a significant increase in both information availability and the number of reports: while Annex I Parties generally produce NCs on a three to five-year timescale, the gap between NCs for non-Annex I Parties can currently stretch to a decade or more. This excerpt identifies possible changes for new reporting guidelines for NCs from Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, both for "updates" that could be produced biennially, and for "full" NCs that could be developed on a longer time-scale. If all NCs are subject to some form of review or international consultation and analysis, it will be important that the information contained in future NCs is both concise and consistent across reports in terms of both structure and content.

As form generally follows function, agreement on the purpose of both full NCs and biennial reports could help determine the details of what information is included in each. Such agreement may also depend on the purpose and form of other current or planned repositories for climate-related information under the UNFCCC or elsewhere.

Key questions that could help to guide decisions on different points are outlined in Table 1 below.

---

<sup>3</sup> Except Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Table 1: Potential purposes and key questions to guide decisions on content of reporting guidelines

Topic	Potential purpose(s)	Key questions for consideration
NCs (general)	Fulfil reporting obligations under the FCCC and subsequently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do all NCs need to cover all items in the current guidelines, or should biennial reports focus on mitigation commitments/actions/goals indicated to the international community, and on data or circumstances that change rapidly?</li> <li>- Should the NC be a detailed repository of information on all obligations and commitments under the Convention, or should it include summaries of key points for some or all of these activities?</li> <li>- What level of flexibility regarding elements to be reported should a NC include, for example to reflect national circumstances?</li> <li>- What should be the relation between the “full” NC and the biennial “update” reports? What is the relation between these NCs and other potential future reports under the FCCC (e.g. biennial National Inventory Reports for non-Annex I Parties)</li> </ul>
GHG Emissions	Identify emission levels and historical trends, key sources, key drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How frequently is GHG information needed from different NAI parties?</li> <li>- What level of emissions detail is needed in NCs (biennial or full)?</li> <li>- How much methodological information should be provided in NCs?</li> </ul>
Emissions Projections	Identify future emission trends; impact of measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to improve transparency and encourage increased reporting in assessing the impact of measures?</li> </ul>
Progress on Mitigation Commitments /Actions/ Goals	Identify a Party’s overall progress towards its mitigation commitments/actions/ goals indicated to the international community, including via offset use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What information is necessary to convey progress towards or status of implementation of mitigation commitments/actions/targets indicated to the international community?</li> <li>- How to avoid double-counting of offsets?</li> <li>- Should NCs include information on current/planned offset use in order to identify efforts made domestically and internationally?</li> </ul>
Mitigation Actions	Demonstrate current/ planned mitigation measures in key areas, and that the effectiveness of these measures is being monitored and evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to streamline this (often long) section?</li> <li>- Should discussion of mitigation measures focus on/clearly link to key emission categories?</li> <li>- What level of detail is needed for description of MRV procedures?</li> </ul>
	Identify climate targets, goals and policy priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Should long-term mitigation strategies/targets/goals (e.g. low-emissions development strategies) be included in the NC? If so, how?</li> </ul>
Climate Impacts and Vulnerability	Identify key vulnerable areas and adaptation priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What information is necessary to identify most vulnerable areas? Can this be done qualitatively for some countries?</li> </ul>
Adaptation Actions and Programmes	Describe adaptation strategies and demonstrate that key adaptation priorities are being addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Should discussion focus on key nationally-relevant priorities, or be requested for all adaptation-relevant areas?</li> <li>- Should Parties explicitly report on how adaptation concerns are being integrated into policy development?</li> </ul>

Topic	Potential purpose(s)	Key questions for consideration
Financial Resources, Technology and Capacity Building	Track public flows from Annex II Parties and other Parties that are donors Facilitate transparency and understanding of amounts and types of international financial flows, key priorities for this support and possible gaps	- Should NCs focus on finance pledges, actual flows (committed and/or disbursed) or all of these? - Is “double book-keeping” ( <i>i.e.</i> financial accounting by both donors and recipients) needed as a means of cross-verification between donor and partner Parties? - Is information on finance from public and private sources needed (including via the CDM or other mechanism)? If so, are Parties the best source of information on private sources? What level of detail is needed in NCs? How could NCs fit within a broader MRV framework for finance and other support?
	Identify support received and any needs in NAI. Identify use and effectiveness of support provided	- What level of detail is needed in NCs? How could NCs fit within a broader MRV framework for finance and other support? - Would information be needed or requested on the use of finance?
Research and Systematic Observation	Indicate climate policy and technology- related research activities as well as contributions to Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)	- How much detail is needed in the NC, given that AI Parties produce a separate GCOS report?

### 3. Suggestions for future National Communications

To reflect some of the lessons learned from past NC experience, as well as new changes in the information requested by the international community, this excerpt suggests a number of changes to the current set of reporting guidelines for National Communications. These are that:

- Reporting guidelines are revised to **improve transparency about mitigation commitments/goals/actions that countries have indicated to the international community**, how these commitments, goals and actions are being met, and how countries are fulfilling other obligations taken under the UNFCCC and subsequently. By boosting the forward-looking aspects of a NC, this will help to increase accountability and trust and enhance the usefulness of NCs to both the national and international community.
- **National Communications are produced more frequently (*e.g.* on a biennial basis) while their focus is streamlined and enhanced** compared to current National Communications. Thus, as outlined in Ellis, Moarif and Briner (2010), biennial NC updates could focus on issues related to mitigation commitments, actions or targets indicated to the international community, as well as support provided/received. Streamlining NCs will help make them more accessible and useful to readers, as well as minimise the increase in reporting burden. Full NCs, also streamlined, that include a wider range of information would continue to be developed *e.g.* every 4 to 6 years.
- **Standard reporting formats are used to present information as far as is practical, *i.e.* tables of qualitative and quantitative information.** This can help to facilitate report preparation and increase consistency across different reports, without reducing flexibility on how particular items are estimated. Increased standardisation of reporting could also help facilitate review or international consultations and analysis of these reports.

- **An increased emphasis is placed on reporting of “key” issues**, in relation to both mitigation and adaptation. The concept of “key categories” is already used for emission sources in Annex I National Inventory Reports, and that of “key areas” is used in non-Annex I vulnerability assessments. Expanding this approach to other parts of a Party’s National Communication could facilitate identification of priorities and gaps in mitigation and adaptation policy, or financial support, as well as international review and analysis of reports.
- **A flexible reporting framework is established for non-Annex I countries**, where the content and frequency of national reports is “tiered” according to national circumstances. While all countries would report basic or core information on Convention obligations, how exactly this is done could vary by country (*e.g.* types of indicators reported, number of sectors with projections, etc.). In addition, information provided on how a non-Annex I country is meeting any mitigation goal could be “tiered” according to the type of goal the country has (*e.g.* country-wide, sector-specific, individual actions). The frequency with which national reports are prepared could also vary, with *e.g.* least-developed countries producing them at a lower frequency than other countries.
- **Reporting of routinely-provided information on adaptation measures and policies is formalised**, in line with increasing emphasis on adaptation in climate negotiations. This is particularly important for Annex I Parties, where the reporting guidelines are weak and do not reflect current reporting practice.
- **Reporting on “support” is increased and its structure improved**, with an emphasis on providing a more comprehensive coverage of party-to-party financial flows (as well as other support) such as financial support provided by developed countries, and financial support received by developing countries.
- In reports from **non-Annex I Parties, the provision of information that is already routinely provided is formalised**, *i.e.* methods and approaches for inventory calculations. (This information is already required from Annex I Parties in their National Inventory Report).

A summary of the existing and possible future reporting timetables for AI and NAI Parties is shown in Figures 1 and 2. A more detailed outline of what would be included in each chapter of a full NC or biennial update is given in Figures 3 to 6. A summary of suggested changes for each section of a full National Communication is provided in Tables 2 to 10.

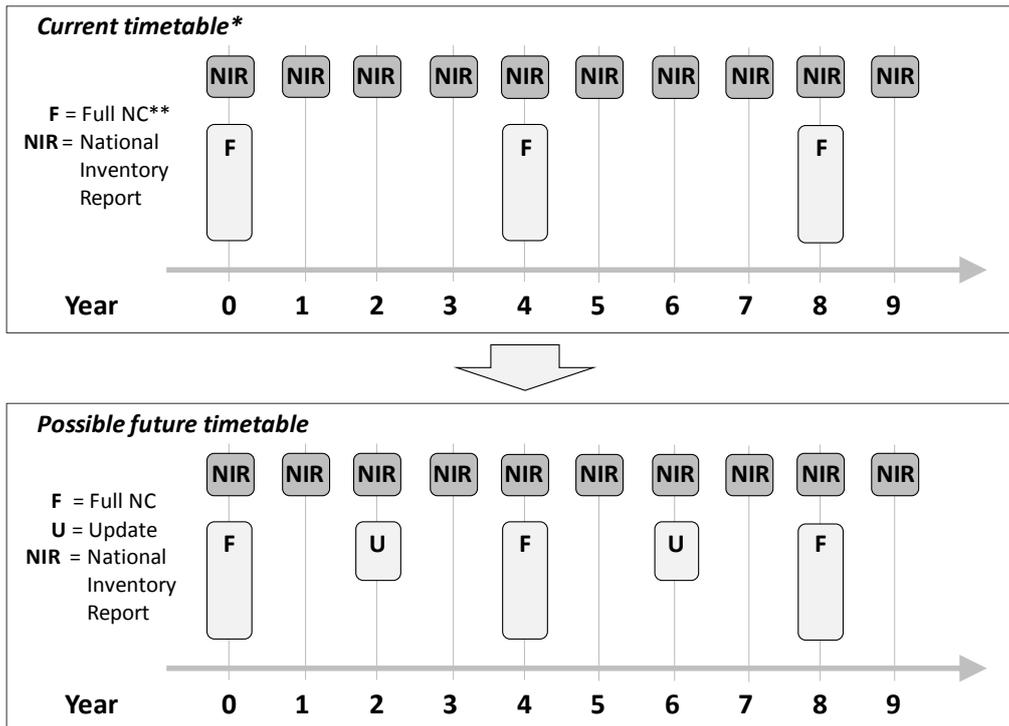
The proposals suggested here are designed to revise National Communications to improve their usefulness as a tool to support accountability and transparency, and to help to build trust among Parties. They would help both national and international audiences understand countries’ climate-related status and priorities, their current and future activities, and how these fit with any national or international climate-related pledges or targets. These proposals are aimed at ensuring National Communications continue to provide an understanding of whether the objective and specific obligations of the Convention and related agreements are being met.

Several questions will need to be answered collectively before agreement can be reached on how to revise NC guidelines. These concern the purpose and scope of National Communications and their role with respect to other reporting instruments, for example, biennial National Inventory Reports for non-Annex I Parties.

The international community is increasingly requesting more and better information from countries on their actions taken to implement the Convention, as well as on elements that will improve understanding of future GHG emission trends, climate support flows and adaptation needs. However, including information relevant to the implementation of all Convention obligations and other climate-related targets/goals in National Communications will mean an increased reporting burden on countries, as well as potentially unwieldy documents. Revising the current National Communication guidelines to

provide for standardised formats to report key information and to focus biennial reports on specific issues (*e.g.* mitigation commitments and goals; support) could be a promising path forward and lead to more concise reports. A reformed National Communication system that is more streamlined yet more comprehensive on topics of greater interest to the international community could then be complemented by other repositories for more detailed information, such as on GHG inventories and on support provided and received. Developing a modular system of reporting climate-related information could help to produce NCs that balance the need for reports that are concise, user-friendly and timely, with those that are stand-alone, comprehensive and transparent.

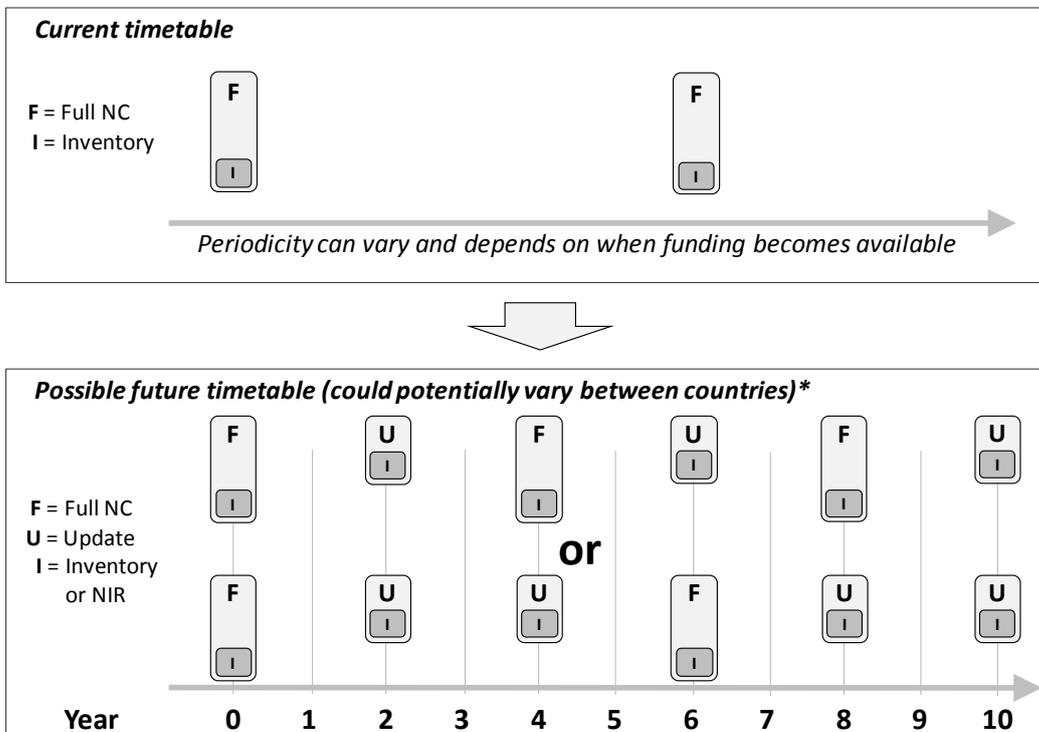
Figure 1: Current and possible future reporting timetable for Annex I Parties



\*It is also mandatory for OECD-DAC (Development Assistance Committee) members to provide annual information on financial flows to the DAC.

\*\* Exact timing of full National Communications from Annex I Parties depends on COP decisions.

Figure 2: Current and possible future reporting timetable for non-Annex I Parties



\*The timing shown is an illustration, and could vary depending on country circumstances and availability of support.

Figure 3: Detailed suggested outline for future full Annex I National Communications

*Suggested minimum frequency: every 4 years*

Executive Summary
<p>National Circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative data table <b>(NEW)</b></li> <li>• Population, geographic, climate, economic profile</li> <li>• Climate policy-making process, including cross-cutting MRV procedures <b>(PARTLY NEW)</b></li> </ul>
<p>GHG Inventory Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National GHG emissions</li> <li>• Key source categories <b>(NEW)</b></li> <li>• Description of how National Circumstances affect key categories</li> </ul>
<p>Emissions Projections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emissions trajectory (with measures, and with additional measures)</li> <li>• Assessment of aggregate effects</li> <li>• Mapping between inventory and projection “sectors” <b>(NEW)</b></li> </ul>
<p>Progress Towards Post-2012 Mitigation Commitments <b>(NEW)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline of mitigation commitments (short, medium, long-term emission levels)</li> <li>• Status of implementation of mitigation commitments</li> <li>• Current/recent acquisition, transfer and retirement of units, including offsets (if applicable)</li> </ul>
<p>Mitigation Actions Taken and Envisaged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigation-specific policy context and processes including MRV procedures</li> <li>• Mitigation policy priorities summary table <b>(NEW)</b></li> <li>• Description of sector categories</li> <li>• Description of new mitigation actions and/or major changes to mitigation actions since last NC</li> <li>• Summary tables of actions and their effects; new since last NC and those reported in previous NC</li> </ul>
<p>Climate Impacts and Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projected key impacts and vulnerabilities <b>(PARTLY NEW)</b></li> <li>• Priorities for adaptation <b>(PARTLY NEW)</b></li> <li>• Explanation of how these are established <b>(NEW)</b></li> </ul>
<p>Adaptation Programmes and Actions <b>(ENHANCED)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation-specific policy context (e.g. goals and priorities)</li> <li>• Key adaptation policies and measures</li> <li>• Integration of adaptation into relevant policies</li> </ul>
<p>Financial Resources, Technology and Capacity Building Provided (for developed countries providing support)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary information on funding levels, sources, purpose (mitigation/adaptation), recipients (countries/sectors) <b>(PARTLY NEW)</b></li> </ul>
<p>Research and Systematic Observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background and context</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Systematic observation</li> </ul>

Figure 4: Detailed suggested outline for future full non-Annex I National Communications

Suggested minimum frequency: every 4-6 years\*

Executive Summary
<p>National Circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative data table <b>(NEW)</b></li> <li>Population, geographic, climate, economic profile</li> <li>Climate policy-making process (Including cross-cutting MRV procedures)</li> </ul>
<p>GHG Inventory Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National GHG emissions **</li> <li>Key source categories <b>(NEW)</b></li> <li>Description of how National Circumstances affect key categories</li> </ul>
<p>Emissions Projections <i>(not required for all Parties***)</i> <b>(NEW)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping between inventory and projection “sectors”</li> <li>Tiered elements, including use/transfer of offsets (depending on mitigation action type)</li> </ul> <p><i>Parties with sectoral quantified emissions goal(s)</i> Relevant sectoral-level projections, units</p> <p><i>Parties with a relative quantified economy-wide emissions goal</i> Projections relevant to goal type, e.g. BAU, “with unilateral mitigation actions”, intensity emissions projections, units</p> <p><i>Parties with an absolute quantified economy-wide emissions goal</i> Relevant projections, e.g. baseline and with measures projections, units</p>
<p>Progress Towards Mitigation Actions/Goals <b>(NEW)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline of mitigation actions/goals (short, medium, long-term), with reference to projections (as appropriate)</li> <li>Status and/or outcome of mitigation actions (for Parties with mitigation actions)</li> </ul>
<p>Mitigation Actions Taken and Envisaged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mitigation-specific policy context and processes including MRV procedures <b>(PARTLY NEW)</b></li> <li>Mitigation policy priorities summary table <b>(NEW)</b></li> <li>Description of sector categories <b>(NEW)</b></li> <li>Description of mitigation assessment</li> <li>Description of mitigation actions (new and/or significant changes)</li> <li>Summary tables of actions and their effects; since last NC and those included in last NC</li> </ul>
<p>Climate Impacts and Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projected key impacts and vulnerabilities</li> <li>Priorities for adaptation</li> </ul>
<p>Adaptation Programmes and Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adaptation-specific policy context (e.g. goals and priorities)</li> <li>Key adaptation policies and measures</li> <li>Integration of adaptation into relevant policies</li> </ul>
Other Relevant Information, e.g. TT activities, RSO, education, training and public awareness (encouraged)
Financial Resources, Technology and Capacity Building Needed/Received/Provided <b>(ENHANCED)</b>

\* LDCs and SIDS, due to their limited resources and capacity for reporting, could be invited to follow these timing and content guidelines to the extent that their capacities permit.

\*\* A national inventory report containing additional information on methodologies should be provided by Parties listed in the chapeau of the CA and other non-Annex I Parties with sufficient reporting capacity. Coverage of inventories in key sources may differ between Parties. The scope of a national inventory report for non-Annex I Parties has not yet been determined.

\*\*\* For Non-Annex I Parties with economy-wide or sectoral-level emissions goals/actions. Encouraged for other NAI Parties.

Figure 5: Detailed suggested outline for future biennial “update” Annex I National Communications

*Suggested minimum frequency: every 2 years in between full NCs*

Executive Summary
GHG Inventory Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National GHG emissions</li><li>• Key source categories</li><li>• Check to see if national circumstances affect key sources categories</li></ul>
<i>Emissions Projections (optional)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Update to emissions trajectory</i></li><li>• <i>Assessment of aggregate effects</i></li></ul>
Progress Towards Post-2012 Mitigation Commitments <b>(NEW)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summary of what mitigation commitments are (coverage, timeline etc), how they are to be met, and progress towards meeting them</li><li>• Acquisition, transfer and retirement of units, including offsets (if applicable)</li></ul>
Mitigation Actions Taken and Envisaged <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summary table and brief description of key new actions since last NC and their effects</li><li>• Summary table and brief description of major changes and status of previous actions</li></ul>
<i>Progress With Implementing Adaptation Programmes and Actions (optional) (NEW)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Key new adaptation policies and measures</i></li><li>• <i>Integration of adaptation into relevant policies</i></li></ul>
Financial Resources, Technology and Capacity Building Provided (for developed countries providing support) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summary information on provision of funding, funding sources, purpose (mitigation/adaptation), recipients (countries/sectors) <b>(PARTLY NEW)</b></li></ul>

**Figure 6: Detailed suggested outline for future biennial “update” non-Annex I National Communications**

*Suggested minimum frequency: every 2 years in between full NCs\**

Executive Summary
GHG Inventory Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National GHG emissions **</li> <li>• Key source categories</li> </ul>
<i>Emissions Projections (optional***) (NEW)</i>
Progress Towards Mitigation Actions/Goals <b>(NEW)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of what mitigation actions/goals are (coverage, timeline etc), how they are to be met (including offsets if applicable), with reference to projections (as appropriate)</li> </ul>
Mitigation Actions Taken and Envisaged <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary table and brief description of key new actions since last NC and their effects</li> <li>• Summary table and brief description of major changes and status of previous actions</li> </ul>
Key New Adaptation Programmes and Actions <b>(NEW)</b>
Financial Resources, Technology and Capacity Building Needed/Received/Provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary tables <b>(PARTLY NEW)</b></li> </ul>

\*LDCs and SIDS, due to their limited resources and capacity for reporting, could be invited to follow these timing and content guidelines to the extent that their capacities permit.

\*\* For Non-Annex I Parties with economy-wide or sectoral-level emissions goals/actions. Encouraged for other NAI Parties.

\*\*\* For Non-Annex I Parties with economy-wide or sectoral-level emissions goals/actions. Encouraged for other NAI Parties.

The following tables suggest changes in terms of what, where and how information could be reported in National Communications.

Table 2: Suggestions for changes to the national circumstances section

Which Parties?	Suggestion	Justification
AI and NAI	Include a table of quantitative indicators at the front of the national circumstances section	Including a quantitative table of key indicators or data would help promote consistency between different reports, could also help streamline textual descriptions in the reports themselves and would help facilitate review. The list of indicators could either be prescribed ( <i>e.g.</i> population, rate of population growth, total land area, GDP, GDP per capita, rate of GDP growth, etc) or left to each country to select the indicators which to them are most relevant
AI	Shift the focus of the national circumstances section to information related to both mitigation and adaptation activities (not just mitigation)	At present the national circumstances section for Annex I Parties tends to focus on information relevant to mitigation policies, rather than adaptation policies. Non-Annex I Parties already tend to focus on both.
AI and NAI	Include data on rapidly-changing national circumstances in biennial updates	Information on national circumstances that is likely to change on a biennial basis ( <i>e.g.</i> GDP data) may need to be reported in biennial updates to national communications, though perhaps not in a dedicated national circumstances section.
AI and NAI	Move sector-specific information on drivers of emissions from national circumstances to GHG inventory section	Presenting information about historic emissions trends and their drivers could help facilitate understanding if presented together.
AI and NAI	Clarify that information on sector-specific policies should be reported in the sections on mitigation and adaptation actions	Could reduce overlap as many Parties are currently reporting information on sector-specific policies in both the national circumstances and the policies and measures section (UNFCCC, 2007b).
NAI	Include a recommended sub-section on government profile and policy-making	The section could contain information on government type and structure, policy-making and legislative process, committees and line ministries responsible for mitigation and adaptation policies, roles and responsibilities of different levels of government and other relevant information. Already recommended for AI.
AI and NAI	Include quantitative and qualitative geographic, climate, population and economic profiles	This information would provide important context for understanding: emission trends and drivers, climate impacts and vulnerabilities, assumptions made in projections, policy priorities and choices.

Table 3: Suggestions for changes to the inventory section

Which Parties?	Suggestion	Justification
AI and NAI	Add new GHG and sources, consistent with 2006 IPCC guidelines	This is needed in order for inventories to better reflect the current situation. Flexibility can be provided, as at present, for NAI Parties to focus on key sources/gases.
AI and NAI	Highlight key emission source categories and drivers	This would help facilitate international understanding (and therefore review/consultations) of reports. Key sources are already identified by AI in their Natl. Inventory Reports, and information on drivers is also present (often in several places in a NC).
AI and NAI	Add information on (or references to) methods used in inventory calculation	This will help to provide confidence in data reported. Reporting on methods is already required for AI, and often reported for NAI (although not mandatory).
AI and NAI	Add information on national systems to establish and report GHG emissions	This information (currently reported in Annex I National Inventory Reports) is needed to establish confidence in numbers reported by all Parties, particularly non-Annex I Parties, who do not currently report on these as part of their inventories.
AI and NAI	Description of how national circumstances affect key categories	Some of this information is currently reported in the national circumstances section. It would be useful to regroup information specific to “key categories” in one place.
NAI	Provide guidance on which years to be reported	(Such guidance already exists for AI). As NCs become more frequently produced by NAI, it would be helpful if they reported information for the same years, <i>e.g.</i> 2005 and then “even” years from 2008.

Table 4: Suggestions for changes to the projections section

Which Parties?	Suggestion	Justification
AI, and those NAI with absolute nationwide goals	Provide quantified projections, associated methodological information and mapping between inventories, measures and projections in NCs	Helps to identify progress towards target/goal
NAI with national GHG goals relative to a baseline	Provide a without measures/reference projection and associated methodology	Needed in order to identify progress towards a quantified goal; several NAI Parties with a relative goal ( <i>e.g.</i> Indonesia and Brazil) have already developed such baselines
AI, and NAI with sectoral emission goals	Provide sector-wide projections for all sectors (AI) or those sectors covered by such goals (NAI)	Needed in order to identify progress towards a goal
AI	Extend the time period for analysis by requiring Annex I Parties to develop projections for N+20 ( <i>i.e.</i> to 2030)	Corresponds to timeframe of projections in current AI guidelines (agreed in 1999 requiring projections to 2020)

Table 5: Suggestions for information to be included in a new section on “progress with mitigation commitments/actions/goals”

Annex I Parties

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Information on the type, status, coverage, timeline of GHG emissions commitment	There is at present no requirement to submit information internationally on post-2012 mitigation commitments, targets, goals or actions (although several Annex I Parties have included information on emission commitments in their 5 <sup>th</sup> NC).
Add information on transfers, acquisitions, retirement of units	This would help facilitate understanding of a Party’s progress towards its national GHG commitment.
Add information on AAU (or other unit) associated with the type of commitment	This, in conjunction with information on domestic emissions and offset use, will help to identify progress towards an emissions target.

Non-Annex I Parties

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Justification</b>	<b>Cross-reference to other parts of the National Communication</b>
Information on the type, status, coverage, timeline of GHG emissions actions/goals	Some of this information has already been submitted to the UNFCCC (although not necessarily within a NC) by several countries, and there is at present no requirement to submit further information internationally on updates or the evolution of goals and actions	While this information could also be in the mitigation actions section of the NC, details on rules governing coverage of the action/goal ( <i>e.g.</i> sectors) or how it is to be met should be provided here, notably rules determining offset use
Information on how the action/goal is to be met; progress to date with meeting the goal/objectives; and information on offset use	This would help facilitate understanding of a country’s progress towards its national GHG target or mitigation actions, and avoid double-counting of offsets	Projections section for countries with sectoral or economy-wide GHG reduction or limitation targets (absolute, relative or intensity-based). Mitigation actions section and potentially specific rows of the summary table. Information on CDM or other offset use to be added in mitigation action summary table where appropriate for actions

Table 6: Suggestions for changes to the mitigation actions section

Which Parties?	Suggestion	Justification
AI and NAI	Include information on mitigation-relevant policy aims and mitigation-related targets and strategies in a tabular format	Some of this information may also be included in the National Circumstances section, but policy information, including on monitoring and evaluation, specific to mitigation actions should be included here, as currently for AI. Providing information on major strategies and priorities in table format with reference to associated actions will make the link between the two clearer.
AI and NAI	Include information on mitigation-related RD&D and education, training and public awareness activities	Avoids duplication of reporting; information currently often reported in sections on policies as measures, as well as in RSO; education, training and public awareness
AI and NAI	Provide more specific guidance as to sector classifications and request that Parties provide a brief explanation of their sector definition	Parties tend to disaggregate the suggested sector categories in different manners; it is often unclear as to what is included in the different classifications and how these may relate to sectors used in projections and inventories Could require more work for the reporting Party, in order to coordinate understanding of sectors and be able to clarify distinctions between them
AI and NAI	Reduce the amount of textual description and include more of this information in the summary table	The information provided in text and in the summary table can overlap, whereas it is easier to search for and find information in the table. Information in text can be moved to the summary table, and can focus on information not easily reported in the table, on key new policies and/or on major changes since previous NC. Any policy process information should be kept for the front of the chapter. If information is not provided succinctly in the table, this could become unwieldy and difficult to read and assess
AI and NAI	Indicate the key emissions sources targeted by a policy or measure	Will link this section to those on inventories and projections, providing a better understanding of how actions taken are guided by data on sources and drivers
AI and NAI	Clearly distinguish between policies and measures implemented or planned since the last NC, and those still in place that were reported in the last NC	Provides more continuity between NCs, making it easier to update and track changes in information previously reported. Easier to find information that has changed since previous report.
AI	Provide clear guidance on whether and how Parties shall provide information on policies and practices that may have a negative impact on GHG emissions, and what this impact might be	Reporting on this is currently far from systematic; if it is decided that this information is important, clear guidance on reporting it, including a summary table, should be provided Systematically including this will not only mean providing more guidance, but would increase the reporting Party's workload
NAI	Clearly separate sub-section on mitigation assessment (including any projections) with those on policies and measures; report on mitigation assessment by sector	Currently, some national communications have information on assessments, projections and lists of actions for different sectors, without it being clear if the actions are part of the assessment or being undertaken. This paper suggests that Parties with projections report these in a separate "projections" section, for example those that have quantified economy-wide or sectoral GHG reduction or limitation goals.
NAI	For Parties that have indicated to the international community that they will undertake specific mitigation actions, clearly indicate these in the summary table	Explicitly and clearly presents the Party's progress with meeting the actions it has indicated that it will implement; can more easily be pulled out for biennial updates An additional column is to be used for these actions, indicating to what extent CDM or other offsets will be used for their implementation
NAI	Indicate national MRV procedures	This would help improve transparency, and increase confidence in the information provided.

Table 7: Suggestions for changes to the climate impacts and vulnerability section

Which Parties?	Suggestion	Justification
AI and NAI	Include qualitative and quantitative information on the potential impacts of climate change on key areas	The guidelines could provide flexibility in allowing different Parties to use different methods/ approaches to assess key vulnerabilities, and to report on them in different ways.
AI; NAI according to capacity	Include summary information on key vulnerabilities of key areas, e.g. based upon impact assessments	Information identifying key vulnerable areas is important, and will also help in review/consultations of a National Communication. However, such key areas can be identified in different ways, and the guidelines could reflect this.
AI and NAI	To rate the level of vulnerability (high, medium, low) of the selected sectors. Rating information can be included in an “Action-impact” table in the “Adaptation Actions and Programmes” section	Rating the level of vulnerability (which is already requested for non-Annex I Parties) can help to ensure that resources and attention in adopting adaptation actions are directed in an efficient manner to the most vulnerable sectors. Use of an “Action-impact” table for the rating may also reveal that some of the most vulnerable areas have (or not) appropriate adaptation measures in place or conversely that less vulnerable sectors are receiving too much attention <sup>4</sup> .

Table 8: Suggestions for changes to the adaptation actions and programmes section

Which Parties?	Suggestion	Justification
AI ; NAI according to capacity	Include descriptive text on the existing or proposed institutional and legal framework for adaptation. Including a description of who is responsible for implementing any adaptation strategies and/or plans	Many AI National Communications already provide this information, which allows readers to become acquainted with the goals, purposes and expectations of governments towards instituting and implementing adaptation actions.
AI ; NAI according to capacity	Include a description of existing and/or planned strategies, programmes etc. for adaptation. The information should be presented in similar areas to those for which vulnerability to climate impacts was assessed	Many AI National Communications have already adopted this format which provides a good overview of how Parties are implementing actions to address impacts and vulnerabilities to key socio-economic sectors. Some NAI also identify existing and possible strategies for adaptation in areas identified as vulnerable.
AI ; NAI according to capacity	Provide detailed information on the objective, scale, timeline, type of instrument etc., used to address adaptation	Providing this information will facilitate consistency of reporting.

<sup>4</sup> A country’s adaptation actions will need to be aligned with other energy, environmental and developmental policy priorities; these may also explain which sectors are receiving more or less attention.

Table 9: Suggestions for changes to the support section

<b>Which Parties?</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Justification</b>
AII and other donors	A new sub-section comprising a brief description of the Party's financing and other support strategy and priorities	Would increase understanding of what sectors, activities, countries and institutions are targeted by a given donor, as well as any constraints it faces. It would also include relevant information on institutional structures and processes.
AII and other donors	Streamline common reporting tables for support provided, incorporating relevant data and information on climate-specific financial support flows, including bilateral and multilateral flows	Given the complexities of the subject, this section of NCs will not be comprehensive; this paper suggests focusing on more consistent reporting of elements considered most important – focusing in particular on international public financial support Should increase readability and reduce double-reporting of support when this is provided through more than one channel and for more than one purpose.
NAI primarily, other recipients of support	Provide a standardised reporting table for support received, mirroring information reported in support tables	This is also information that helps determine whether AII and other developed country parties are meeting their goals and commitments regarding provision of support; it could also link to actions and activities reported elsewhere in the NC if relevant Could require more resources for reporting for NAI Parties if this information is not systematically gathered for other purposes; could result in less textual description and more table-based information.
NAI	Provide a standardised reporting format to report gaps, constraints and support needs	Focus information, currently spread out throughout NAI NCs. If more detail is provided elsewhere in the NC (as it is currently), a table here could at a minimum summarise this information in a more useable format.

Table 10: Suggested changes to the Research and Systematic Observation section

Which Parties?	Suggestion	Justification
AI and NAI	Report on the results of vulnerability, mitigation-related and adaptation-related research activities in the mitigation and adaptation sections of the NC; and report capacity building activities in the financial, technology and capacity support section of the NC	Avoids duplication of reporting; links research to policy actions, priorities, targets and strategic plans, leading to a better understanding of needs and gaps addressed by research; would help in having all support (financial, technology and capacity building) information in one section. This would leave the RSO section to comprise information on basic research and systematic observation, and would necessitate more guidance on which types of activities to report in the RSO section and the adaptation and mitigation actions and programmes sections.
AI	Provide more guidance as to how information could be summarised and presented in the RSO section of the National Communication	Information on systematic observation is currently reported elsewhere in a detailed manner according to specific guidelines; this information could be summarised in the NC. The RSO section could still include information on research not included in other sections of the NC.
AI (but potentially NAI with significant systematic observation activities)	Report on systematic observation activities exclusively through their GCOS report	In practice, GCOS report is a stand-alone document which already contains this information; it may not be useful to also include in a NC though it is meant to be submitted alongside it. The RSO section in the NC could be removed; GCOS report would provide information on systematic observation, while information on research could be divided between vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation sections, as well as in the section on financial, technology and capacity building support.