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Official statistics as data sources for national greenhouse gas inventories – classification issues and quality requirements

The national greenhouse gas inventories are prepared according to the rules and modalities agreed in the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the EU Monitoring Mechanism for greenhouse gas emissions. National greenhouse gas inventories should be transparent, consistent, comparable, complete and accurate as well as timely. The inventories should be prepared using methodologies developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In addition, they should meet specific requirements on quality control and quality assurance measures as well as requirements on institutional, legal and procedural arrangements.

The inventories are reviewed annually by international expert review teams. The review process is a vital part for continuous improvement of the inventory as well as in assessing compliance with the commitments under the international agreements.

In Finland, Statistics Finland is responsible for the coordination, compilation and reporting of Finland's national greenhouse gas inventory. This work has gained much from the established statistical data validation processes and procedures, as well as from having good access to statistical data. The long-term experiences and knowledge gained from environmental and energy statistics have been an advantage. Good collaboration with the relevant ministries and the research community has also been an important factor for successful inventory preparation.

Greenhouse gas inventory preparation is heavily relying on data from national statistics. The timing and level of detail of statistical data don't always meet the needs of the inventories. Harmonisation of classifications (e.g. fuel classification for energy statistics and greenhouse gas inventories), data collection and timetables has been important and increased the efficiency of both the inventory and the statistical processes.

The target of the paper is to describe and analyse the national inventory preparation from the view point of official statistics. Future demands for input from national statistics to the UNFCCC process and for the IPCC will also be discussed shortly. Provision of applicable and more specific data for scenario and climate strategy development, as well as providing input to monitoring impacts of climate policies and measures are areas where the role of statistical data could be strengthened.