

## Role and Responsibilities of Editorial Board

### Emission Factor Database – Procedures

(Revised at the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of Editorial Board and updated with the conclusions of the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Editorial Board meetings)

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# 1 Background

The overall objective of the Emission Factor Database (EFDB) is to be:

*an always up-to-date companion for the IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventory that is seen as a worldwide resource for greenhouse gas inventory developers.*

This implies:

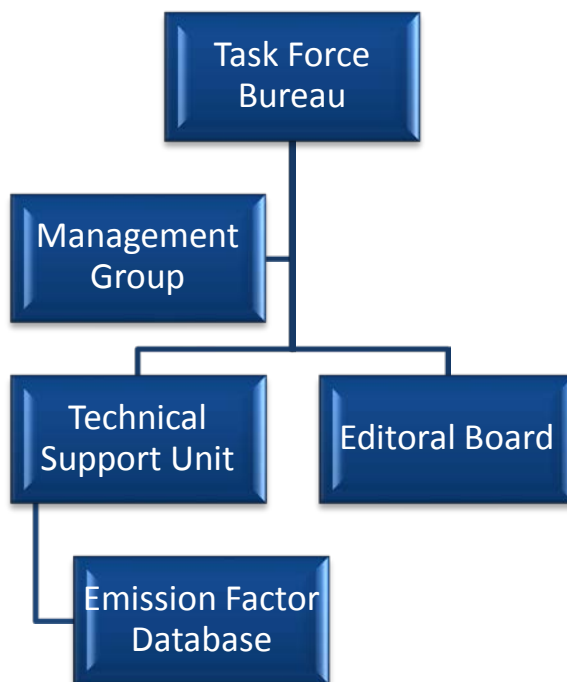
- A database with a wide range of useful data included
- A system that is added to regularly and
- A fast response to users' needs and to data submissions.

Thus an overall criterion for data acceptance should be that data is useful to users – users should be able to determine how to apply the data and how it may reduce uncertainty.

## 2 Management Structure

The management structure is outlined in Figure 1. The Technical Support Unit (TSU) has an active and central role in the day-to-day activities needed to consider new data for the EFDB. The Editorial Board can then concentrate on scientific matters rather than procedural ones. The responsibility for managing the data approval process and ensuring that the information exchange proceeds quickly is with the TSU. The Editorial Board has the final decision making powers over acceptance or rejection of new data with the final authority residing with the Editorial Board Co-Chairs. The Task Force Bureau (TFB) has a supervisory role as they are responsible for the activities of the IPCC's Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI) as a whole.

Figure 1 - Management Structure



TFB = Task Force Bureau  
TSU = Technical Support Unit  
EFDB = Emission Factor Database

## 2.1 Editorial Board Role

The role of the Editorial Board is to:

- Oversight of data acceptance process
  - ❖ See proposals
  - ❖ Opportunity to comment
  - ❖ Final say in accepting data
- Review database contents
  - ❖ Identify gaps / areas for improvement
- Identify new data to be added
  - ❖ Make specific proposals
- Publicise EFDB

## 2.2 Management Group Role

The management group consists of the two Editorial Board Co-Chairs, the two TFB Co-Chairs and two members of the TSU. If necessary the management group will meet in margins of Editorial Board meetings. Their role is to:

- Provide strategic direction
- Give advice and oversight of TSU and Editorial Board
- Make decisions on database developments
- Propose developments
- Publicise EFDB

## 2.3 TSU Role in EFDB

The role of the TSU is to:

- Receive data proposals
- Manage the review process
- Facilitate communication, ensure speedy notification of receipt of information provide support to EFDB
- To review data and check it meets general criteria and applicability and documentation requirements
- Prepare draft decisions for consideration of EFDB
- Manage and support database itself
- Support users

# 3 Reviewing Data Submissions

While the Editorial Board has responsibility for the review and acceptance of any data, the TSU has overall responsibility for ensuring the data evaluation proceeds in a smoothly and will try to ensure data is dealt with in a timely manner. Figure 2 shows how this would work.

The Editorial Board Co-chairs shall have oversight of the entire process. This process has five steps and entails the TSU and Editorial Board work in parallel:

1. A data proposal is received.
2. After receipt the TSU will give advance notice to the Editorial Board member concerned. A list of Editorial Board members with responsibility for individual sectors is maintained<sup>1</sup> and thus one designated Editorial Board member would have a central role. However the data will be circulated through all Editorial Board members in the appropriate sector<sup>2</sup>.
3. The TSU will check that the data meets general criteria. The TSU will prepare a draft proposal. The TSU will then forward the data proposal to the Editorial Board.

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<sup>1</sup> The maintenance of this list is the responsibility of the Editorial Board Co-Chairs.

<sup>2</sup> The five sectors are: Energy; Industrial Processes & Solvent and Other Product Use; Agriculture; Land-Use Change and Forestry; and Waste

4. The designated Editorial Board member will check that the proposed data meets robustness and applicability criteria. (The criteria section below gives more details on the criteria and who checks what.) The designated Editorial Board member can contact the data provider directly but in doing so MUST copy this to the TSU. The TSU may also need to get clarifications from the data provider and multiple enquiries to the data provider should be avoided if possible. The TSU has responsibility for tracking communications and responses. The TSU proposal will be considered by the Editorial Board and revised if necessary. The final responsibility for any decision lies with the Editorial Board. The designated Editorial Board member shall circulate the draft decision to the Editorial Board for approval by other sectoral Editorial Board members for 3 weeks<sup>3</sup>. In the case of differing opinions, with the TSU or members of the Editorial Board the final authority for decisions is with the Editorial Board Co-Chairs<sup>4</sup>. The decision can be “accept”, “reject” or “pending awaiting response from data provider” (for a fixed number of weeks).
5. The approved data is published in the EFDB.

Figure 2 Steps in Data Review Process

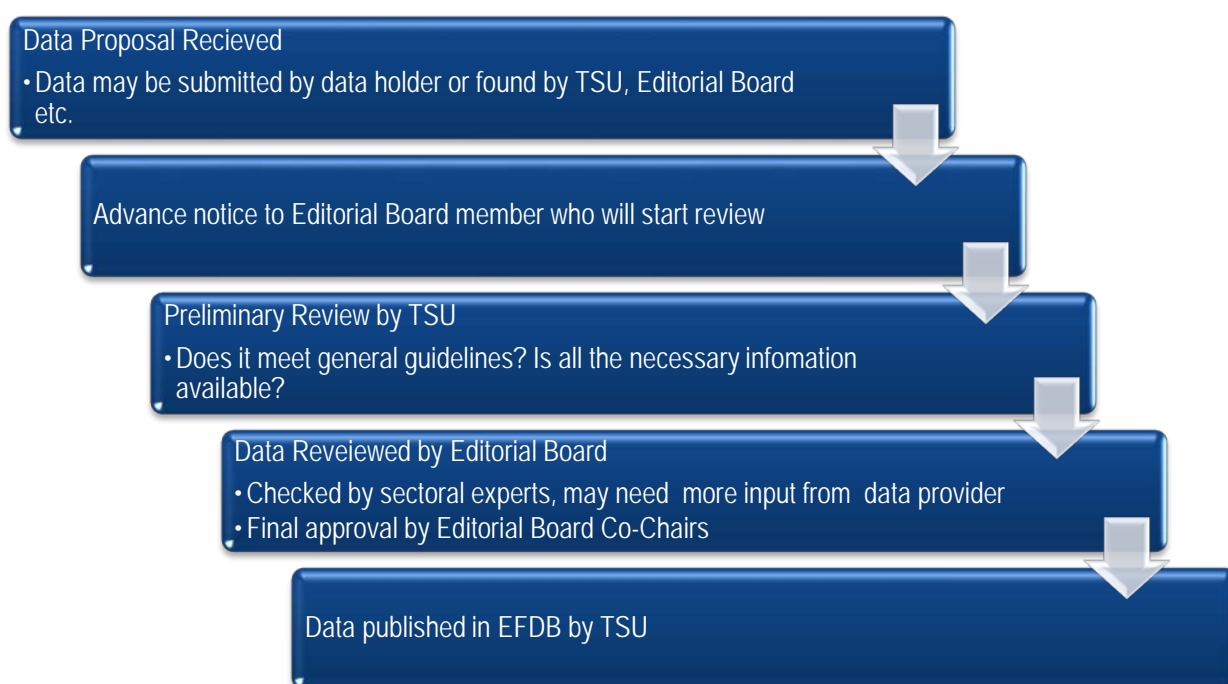


Table 1 shows the time scale. It is important to note that, to date, one source of delay has been the time taken for data providers to respond. As this is outside TSU’s or Editorial Board’s control this cannot be timetabled accurately and so it is not included in these time scales.

Table 1 Schedule of Data Acceptance (time spent waiting for response from data provided ignored)

Task	Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Step 1&2 - TSU receives data & notifies Editorial Board								
Step 3 - TSU evaluates proposed data & communicates with data provider								
Step 3 - TSU prepares draft proposal & forwards to Editorial Board								
Step 4 - Editorial Board evaluates robustness and applicability & reaches decision								
Step 5 - Publish new information in the EFDB								

<sup>3</sup> Editorial Board members will have an opportunity to agree or disagree with a decision. If they do not comment they will be deemed to have agreed.

<sup>4</sup> All decisions shall be of the Editorial Board as a whole, not as individual Editorial Board members.

Table 2 Data Review Actions and Responsibilities

TSU	Editorial Board
Acknowledge receipt Check completeness of supplied data Distribute to Editorial Board Check Criteria Is documentation supplied (Section 4.3)? Is information about robustness (Section 4.1) supplied? Is information about applicability (Section 4.2) supplied? Prepare proposal Publish decision, inform data provider and add to database	Review proposal Check data robustness (Section 4.1) Is this demonstrated by the supplied data? Is the information supplied about applicability (Section 4.2) sufficient? Consult with TSU, review proposal and take final decision & forward decision to TSU. <i>(The Editorial Board has complete oversight of the process and the final say in decisions)</i>

The designated expert of the Editorial Board shall have responsibility to review the data on behalf of the Editorial Board and to co-ordinate the decision making process.

### 3.1 Non-English Data and Documentation

Currently it is difficult to evaluate documentation that is not in English. In these cases the TSU should ask for an abstract in English. This should, in principle, provide the information required by the Editorial Board to evaluate the data<sup>5</sup> in relation to the criteria. If the data collection and/or modelling are acceptable based on this abstract and other information (if required) the data can then be accepted without translation of all the background documentation. Editorial Board members are encouraged to search out datasets in non-English literature as these may be less accessible to those who do not use the language concerned.

### 3.2 Data in Other (non-EFDB) Formats

The Editorial Board should consider non-EFDB format submissions. Originally, all data had to be entered into the database by the proposer, a time consuming and off-putting process. The Editorial Board will accept paper and/or email submissions but this would require someone to spend the time entering the data<sup>6</sup>. The data review could be before data entry to avoid wasting effort. Formatting and entering the data will be the responsibility of the TSU who may do it themselves or use consultants. Where a report contains many data the report itself could be reviewed and accepted as a whole. Then the TSU will ensure the data is added one by one. This would be a significant saving over accepting each data item one by one.

### 3.3 2006 Guidelines Data

Default data from the *Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines* and the *2006 IPCC Guidelines* have been added to the EFDB. The acceptance and adoption of the underlying reports by the IPCC Panel is sufficient without further consideration by the TFB. This will apply to any upcoming methodology reports such as the *2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands*.

<sup>5</sup> This abstract should include information on how data was measured and/or compiled. Methodologies and statistical methods and uncertainty estimations should be described.

<sup>6</sup> Hence this like the other proposals here is critically dependant on resources being available to edit and enter the data manually.

### *Updating Existing data<sup>7</sup>*

In principle once a data record has been approved and included in the database it should not be removed<sup>8</sup>. Where a clear error is identified this needs to be indicated in the appropriate record. Where new data replaces older, less accurate data the old data should be marked as superseded.

### **3.4 Peer-reviewed Data (i.e. from a peer-reviewed journal)**

Data from peer reviewed journals are likely to be accurate but may not be useful for compiling inventories. Therefore all the documentation is required to demonstrate the data meets the criteria described above.

### **3.5 Data from National Inventories for the UNFCCC**

Data from national inventories submitted to the UNFCCC have been used and believed to be useful by at least one inventory compiler. However their use in a national inventory is not evidence of the data meeting any other criteria.

## **4 Acceptance Criteria**

One important concept is that it is up to the users to determine if particular data in the EFDB are appropriate to their specific situation (which may be national, regional or project based estimates). It is **not** for the Editorial Board to decide if numbers are suitable – they cannot know or foresee all possible situations where data may be needed.

General Criteria have been proposed in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Editorial Board. These are:

- a proposed emission factor or parameter should be in line with the fundamental principles and approaches of the guidelines;
  - Note that it may be for a source not identified by the guidelines, or only applicable for only a part of a sub-category in the guidelines
- be accompanied by documentation describing its derivation and the level of uncertainty, preferably quantified;
  - The most important part of the documentation is providing the ability to users to evaluate the data and its applicability for themselves. Uncertainty information is desirable but not mandatory.
- be unbiased and as accurate as possible;
  - However, even where data seems biased for an entire source or sink category, it may be possible to define a region where the data is applicable (e.g. for a specific machine type, management regime, fuel type, specific geographic or climate condition). The Editorial Board should define the properties fields so that the data can be used appropriately. Clearly data should be as accurate as possible. However, the EFDB has gaps in the coverage of emissions data (e.g. regions, mitigation techniques) and so data in these areas, even with relatively large uncertainties, will be useful. This uncertainty should be clearly described in the database fields even if it cannot be quantified.
- contribute to the EFDB by adding a value for a source not already covered or by providing a parameter;
  - One of the roles of the Editorial Board is to identify gaps in the EFDB and to identify relevant data that may fill them.

To meet these standards, the proposed emission factor or other parameter should be

- Documented
- Applicable
- Robust

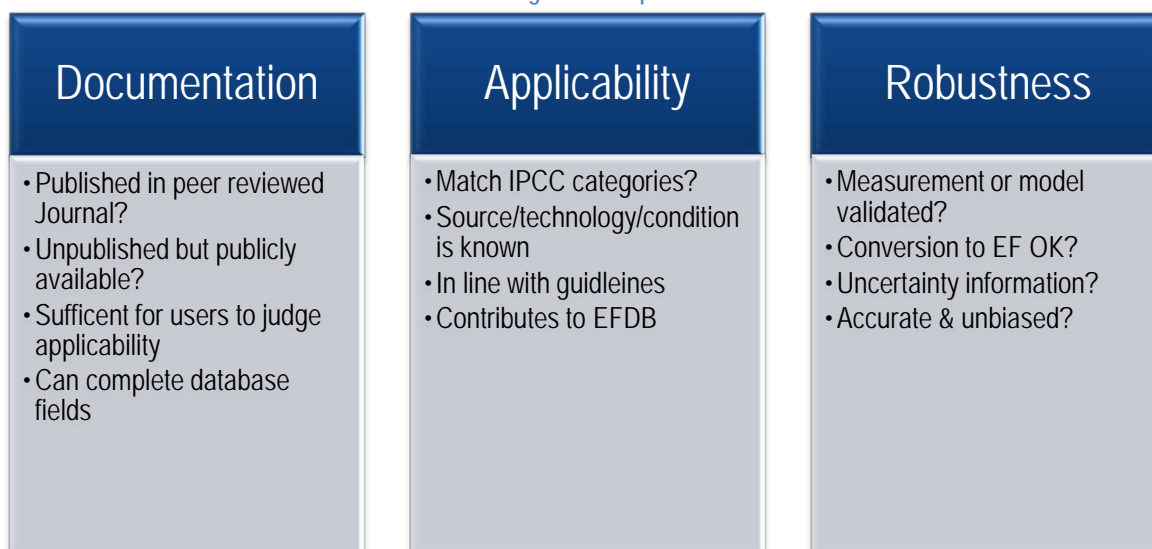
According to the ToR for the Editorial Board, data proposals should be assessed according to these three criteria.

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<sup>7</sup> All new or revised data has to be approved by the normal process.

<sup>8</sup> Where new information provides additional information to an existing data item (but does not change the value) this should be included in the existing record and a comment added to indicate the addition.

Figure 3 Acceptance Criteria



It never was the intention the Editorial Board would undertake a comprehensive peer review. However it has become apparent that there is no consistency in the determination of robustness. Essentially it should not be common for data from papers published in peer reviewed journals to be rejected on grounds of lack of robustness. If data are thought to be applicable in only limited circumstances this would be OK provided this was made clear in the “properties” fields where the applicability of the data is stated.

#### 4.1 Is the Emission Factor or Other Parameter Robust?

In evaluating data for the EFDB, the Editorial Board should consider robustness in a realistic and pragmatic way. The aim is not to undertake a full scientific assessment but to collect data that may be useful to potential EFDB users. Where there are gaps in the EFDB then data with large uncertainties is helpful and useful.

A robust emission factor or other parameter is one that, within the accepted uncertainty, is unlikely to change if there was repetition of the original measurement programme or modelling activity (Editorial Board ToR). While this sounds straightforward it is not easy to understand how to apply this in practice. In fact the Editorial Board terms of reference go on to list some specific issues concerning robustness which avoid this definition. They are:

1. Are the measurement techniques including raw data validated and/or verified?
2. Are the modelling techniques including supporting data validated and/or verified?
3. Is the conversion (if any) from model assumptions or measurement conditions to annual or other forms of emission factors or other parameters sufficiently explained and justified?
4. Is an uncertainty assessment on the emission factor or other parameter presented?

Items 1 and 2 would be met if standard measurement and modelling techniques were met. It would be exceptional for a peer reviewed paper not to meet this standard. 3 should be clear in most papers and as mentioned below, 4, while desirable, is not absolutely required.

Given past inconsistencies in determining robustness it will be useful to consider it in greater depth here. While the aim of the Editorial Board is to ensure the robustness of the data entered into the EFDB, there is also a need not to omit any data that may be useful. Even if data does not appear to be robust for national greenhouse gas inventories, it may still be useful for other purposes:

- Project level estimates (where data relating to the specific conditions are needed rather than national defaults);
- Development of models covering different conditions;
- Researchers making similar measurements;
- Providing information on a specific situation (if this is the only measured data from a particular region it is useful even if it may not be very representative).

If the Editorial Board are not satisfied with the robustness of a dataset for use as a national emission factor then they should consider if it can be entered into the EFDB by qualifying the situation it applies to; e.g. by entering appropriate uncertainties and qualifications or by entering it as data rather than derived factors.

The definition of robust parameters is in two parts:

*A robust emission factor or other parameter is one that,*

- i. within the accepted uncertainty,*
- ii. is unlikely to change if there was repetition of the original measurement programme or modelling activity.*

#### **4.1.1 Accepted uncertainty**

By "accepted uncertainty" we are referring to the uncertainty of IPCC defaults for that category. For example, we would expect fuel carbon contents to be known within a few per cent while soil N<sub>2</sub>O estimates may have uncertainties of an order of magnitude. For many emission factors, the uncertainty is determined by the measurement technique and, where there are standards, this could give a criterion for "accepted uncertainty". However, for some source and sinks, there is so little data that any new data should be welcomed. In practice it seems difficult to apply this in a uniform and standard way.

It is reasonable to expect measurement and modelling studies to at least achieve the same level of accuracy as for the default values in the IPCC guidelines. However, if the parameter is for a source/sink for which there is no data in the EFDB, any data may be useful and large uncertainties can be tolerated. If the data is for a part of an existing source/sink category (e.g. a new mitigation technique), data will often be useful even if it does not meet this level of accuracy.

Questions may arise if measurement data is truly representative or is, in some way, biased. Too few samples may have been taken to support the estimation of a regional or national emission factor or not all types of plant or conditions sampled. In this case there are some ways the data can be still be used in the EFDB.

- i. the small number of samples is reflected in the uncertainty field where it clearly refers to the limited number of samples;
- ii. the property fields should reflect the limited situations in which the data was measured. In this case it might be better to enter the individual sample data rather than any regional national factor that has been derived from them;
- iii. the data can be flagged as measurements rather than emission factors;
- iv. a combination of the above.

#### **4.1.2 Are the measurement techniques including raw data validated and/or verified?**

If the measurement follows a standard technique (e.g. ISO etc.) then the answer to this question will be "Yes". However, more generally this will not be the case.

It is not clear what constitutes "validated and/or verified" for measurements. Editorial Board reviewers would not expect to see a full discussion of any QA/QC in a peer reviewed paper but would expect to see the method clearly described. If there were replicate measurements and if equipment used is clearly identified and if the method is clear and appears reasonable then again the answer is "Yes".

#### **4.1.3 Are the modeling techniques including supporting data validated and/or verified?**

Models should have been calibrated, validated and verified. If it is a widely used model, then this is not a problem but if the model was specifically developed then some evidence of its evaluation is needed.

#### **4.1.4 Conversion (if any) to emission factors**

This should be clearly documented and reasonable to the Editorial Board.

#### **4.1.5 Is an uncertainty assessment on the emission presented?**

Although this is desirable, this is not a requirement. If no uncertainty data is available, the Editorial Board may wish to add some textual comment (see above) describing any limitations of the data (e.g. few measurement replicates, potential for bias, variability of measurements).



## 4.2 Is the Emission Factor or Other Parameter Applicable?

An applicable emission factor or other parameter is:

- one that matches either a specific IPCC Source/Sink Category or subcategory, or another well-defined source category that can be used in a national inventory compilation or other relevant purposes.
- one for which the source and its mix of technology, operating and environmental conditions and abatement and control technologies under which the emission factor was measured or modelled are clear and allow the user to see how it can be applied.

Data for a source or sink not explicitly identified by the IPCC Guidelines can also be included in accordance with the IPCC Guidelines. However, special attention needs to be taken when the data are relevant to the sources/sinks identified as issues for future methodological development in Appendices in the *2006 IPCC Guidelines*.

## 4.3 Is the Emission Factor or Other Parameter Documented?

For emission factors or other parameters to be transparent, access information to the original technical reference must be provided to evaluate the robustness and applicability as described above. Preferably, this can be done by providing sufficient information through a scientific or technical publication in an internationally available journal or a report or book with an ISBN number. Otherwise, sufficient information in the proposal document fields of the database to satisfy the acceptance requirements will be needed.

The information provided in the database should be detailed and comprehensive enough so that users may be able to evaluate the applicability to a national GHG inventory.

## 4.4 Repetition

If the data has the same value as existing data in the EFDB for the same category, this should not be considered a reason for rejection where the underlying source of the data is different.

## 4.5 Checklist

A checklist (Table 3) has been developed to assist in answering these questions and assessing data. See below.

Table 3 Checklist for Assessment of Data Proposals

	If Yes, actions	If No, actions that may allow the data to be used
<b>Documentation</b>		
Is the data from a peer reviewed journal, or book with an ISBN number <i>OR</i> Is the data from a freely available report, available either from the data provider or through the TSU?	Provide reference For non-English documents provide English translation of Abstract	Ask the data provider if they can provide sufficient documentation be given to the TSU and made publicly available via the TSU web site?
<b>Applicability</b>		
Does the data match either an IPCC source/sink category or another well-defined source category that could be used in a national inventory?	Check that details of source/sink category are given.	Can the data provider supply the source/sink category?
Is the mix of technology, operating and environmental conditions and abatement and control technologies under which the emission factor was measured or modelled clear?	Check that the properties field is filled with sufficient information for the user to be able to determine if the data is applicable or not.	Can the data provider supply and document this information?
<b>Robustness</b>		
Are standard methods or models used <i>OR</i> Is the measurement and/or modelling approach well described?		Is more information available from the data provider?
For measurements: were there replicate measurements, was equipment used described?		Is more information available from the data provider?
For models: has the model been validated and verified? A reference to a publication describing the model, for example.		Is more information available from the data provider?
Is the conversion (if any) from model assumptions or measurement conditions to annual or other forms of emission factors or other parameters sufficiently explained and justified?		If the conversion to an emission factor is not reasonable, are the original data still useful? Is more information available from the data provider?
Can the results be used in the EFDB as they are or can they be used with limitations in described in the parameters and uncertainties fields?		

## 5 Publicity and Outreach

Two important roles of members of the Editorial Board are to search out new data and to publicise the EFDB.

The Editorial Board should lead in publicising the EFDB and in encouraging as wide range of users as possible. A large user base is required to ensure the success of the database. To support this publicity and outreach the TSU can prepare material such as CD ROMs, posters and electronic presentations. The TSU shall ensure that the information on the EFDB is kept up to date and that publicity information is available on the EFDB web site. The TSU will continue promoting the EFDB at international meetings where opportunities arise specifically at inventory training workshops. Assistance from UNFCCC in doing this is appreciated.

The Editorial Board and Management Group should:

- Identify suitable data for inclusion in the database. The Editorial Board should not be passive and wait for data. It should be proactive and seek out new data. The Editorial Board, the TFB and authors of the guidelines etc. could be asked to propose datasets
- Editorial Board members are encouraged to search out datasets in non-English literature as these may be less accessible to those who do not use the language concerned.
- Promote to potential users the EFDB, both for data entry and as a resource for use by inventory compilers.
- Identify and prepare promotional material (along with the TSU) for use at international meetings and conferences.
- Consider using the EFDB at meetings and conferences.