

IPCC 33rd SESSION, 10-13 May 2011, ABU DHABI

**DECISIONS TAKEN WITH RESPECT TO THE REVIEW
OF IPCC PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES**

PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

The document presented here contains the decisions by the Panel based on consideration of the report of the IPCC Task Group on Procedures to the IPCC 33rd Session and building on the decisions of IPCC 32nd Session. The Task Group addressed the InterAcademy Council (IAC) recommendations as presented in the IAC report, chapter 2, "Evaluation of IPCC assessment process".

Each recommendation of the IAC is quoted, followed by the decision of the IPCC 32nd Session. Subsequently, the considerations by the Panel at its 33rd Session are briefly represented, followed by a decision of the IPCC 33rd Session.

2. Selection of participants to scoping meetings

The Panel noted that in its report the IAC has recommended:

"The IPCC should make the process and criteria for selecting participants for scoping meetings more transparent".

At its 32nd Session the Panel agreed with this recommendation and asked the Task Group on Procedures to determine an implementation plan with the view to make a decision at its next Session (IPCC 33rd Session).

The Panel noted that the current procedures do not describe the procedures for scoping meetings. Therefore amendments to the Procedures should be made, reflecting the purpose of scoping meetings and criteria for selecting its participants.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided to add to the list in Appendix A to the Principles Governing IPCC Work under the chapeau "To ensure proper preparation and review, the following steps should be taken" above current paragraph 4.2.1, as a first item:

1. Convening a scoping meeting to prepare an outline of the Report.

In addition, the Panel decided to insert a new paragraph preceding current paragraph 4.2.1:

Each IPCC Assessment Report, Special Report, Methodology Report and Synthesis Report as defined in section 2 of Appendix A to the Principles Governing IPCC work, should be preceded by a scoping meeting that develops its draft outline (and explanatory notes as appropriate). Nominations for participation will be solicited from governments Focal Points, participating organizations, and Bureau members. Participants should be selected by the relevant respective Working Group Bureau / Task Force Bureau and, in case of the Synthesis Report, by the IPCC Chair in consultation with the Working Group Co-Chairs. In selecting Scoping Meeting participants, consideration should be given to the following criteria: scientific, technical and socio-economic expertise, including the range of views; geographical representation; a mixture of experts with and without previous experience in IPCC; gender balance; experts with a background from relevant stakeholder and user groups, including governments. The Working Group Bureau / Task Force Bureau and in the case of the Synthesis Report, the IPCC Chair, will report to the Panel on the selection process including a description of how the selection criteria for participation and any other considerations have been applied, and including a list of participants.

3. Selection of Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) and Lead Authors (LAs)

3.1 The Panel noted that in its report the IAC has recommended:

“The IPCC should establish a formal set of criteria and processes for selecting Coordinating Lead Authors and Lead Authors”.

At its 32nd Session the Panel agreed with this recommendation. Formal criteria are included in the existing procedures. The Panel asked the Task Group on Procedures to consider enhancing implementation and transparency as well as potential additional criteria and procedures with the view to taking a decision at its next session (IPCC 33rd Session).

The Panel noted that paragraph 4.2.2 of Appendix A to the Principles Governing IPCC Work should be amended by including the notion that gender balance, and a balance in the mixture of scientific experts with and without experience in the IPCC process should be taken into account. Procedures should be amended to require a report on the selection process.

3.2 The Panel noted that in its report the IAC has recommended:

“The IPCC should make every effort to engage local experts on the author teams of the regional chapters of the Working Group II report, but should also engage experts from countries outside of the region when they can provide an essential contribution to the assessment”.

At its 32nd Session the Panel agreed with this recommendation. This is already implemented for the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). The Panel asked the Task Group on Procedures to consider further implementation of this recommendation.

The Panel noted that the current composition of the regional writing teams of the Working Group II report has already taken this recommendation into account. The IAC recommendation should be reflected in paragraph 4.2.2.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided to amend the existing text of paragraph 4.2.2 of Appendix A of the Principles Governing IPCC Work, Selection of Lead Authors as follows:

Coordinating Lead Authors and Lead Authors are selected by the relevant Working Group/Task Force Bureau, under general guidance provided by the Session of the Working Group or, in case of reports prepared by the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, the Panel, from those experts cited in the lists provided by governments and participating organizations, and other experts as appropriate, known through their publications and works. The composition of the group of Coordinating Lead Authors and Lead Authors for a chapter, a report or its summary shall aim to reflect:

- A range of scientific, technical and socio-economic views and expertise;
- Geographical representation (ensuring appropriate representation of experts from developing and developed countries and countries with economies in transition); there should be at least one and normally two or more from developing countries;
- A mixture of experts with and without previous experience in IPCC;
- Gender balance.

The Working Group Bureau / Task Force Bureau will report to the Panel on the selection process and the extent to which the aims were achieved.

The IPCC should make every effort to engage experts from the region on the author teams of chapters addressing specific regions, but should also engage experts from countries outside of the region when they can provide an essential contribution to the assessment.

The Coordinating Lead Authors and Lead Authors selected by the Working Group/Task Force Bureau may enlist other experts as Contributing Authors to assist with the work.

4. Sources of Data and Literature

The Panel noted that in its report the IAC has recommended:

“The IPCC should strengthen and enforce its procedure for the use of unpublished and non-peer-reviewed literature, including providing more specific guidance on how to evaluate such information, adding guidelines on what types of literature are unacceptable, and ensuring that unpublished and non-peer-reviewed literature is appropriately flagged in the report”.

At its 32nd Session the Panel agreed with this recommendation. The Panel decided to strengthen the application of its procedures on the use of unpublished and non-peer reviewed literature. It decided to implement this recommendation and further key elements through its procedures and guidance notes. The Panel noted the General Guidance on the Use of Literature in IPCC Reports (contained in IPCC-XXXII/INF.4) as revised in General Guidance on the Use of Literature in IPCC Reports (Appendix 1 of the decision of IPCC-32) which addresses the related aspects in the IAC recommendations and decided to endorse them as a Guidance Note. The Panel urged the Co-Chairs of Working Group I, II, III and Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI) to take any necessary steps to ensure that this guidance note is applied in the development of IPCC reports.

The Panel noted that changes to the procedures are warranted to respond to this IAC recommendation.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided to replace the current Annex 2 of the Appendix A to the Principles Governing IPCC Work (“Procedure for using non-published/non-peer-reviewed sources in IPCC reports”) by a new Annex 2 as described below:

ANNEX 2: PROCEDURE ON THE USE OF LITERATURE IN IPCC REPORTS

This annex is provided to ensure that the IPCC process for the use of literature is open and transparent. In the assessment process, emphasis is to be placed on the assurance of the quality of all cited literature. Priority should be given to peer-reviewed scientific, technical and socio-economic literature if available.

It is recognized that other sources provide crucial information for IPCC Reports. These sources may include reports from governments, industry, and research institutions, international and other organizations, or conference proceedings. Use of this literature brings with it an extra responsibility for the author teams to ensure the quality and validity of cited sources and information¹. In general, newspapers and magazines are not valid sources of scientific information. Blogs, social networking sites, and broadcast media are not acceptable sources of information for IPCC Reports. Personal communications of scientific results are also not acceptable sources.

The following additional procedures are specified:

1. Responsibilities of Coordinating, Lead and Contributing Authors

The Coordinating Lead Authors will ensure that all sources are selected and used in accordance with the procedures in this Annex.

The author team is required to critically assess information they would like to include from any source. Each chapter team should review the quality and validity of each source before incorporating information into an IPCC Report. Authors who wish to include information that is not publicly or commercially available are required to send the full reference and a copy, preferably electronically, to the relevant Technical Support Unit. For any source written in a language other than English, an executive summary or abstract in English is required.

¹ see IPCC-XXII/INF.4, Notes on the Informal Task Group on Procedures, containing general guidance on the use of literature in IPCC, page 7, section 2.

These procedures also apply to papers undergoing the publication process in peer-reviewed journals at the time of the government or expert review.

All sources will be integrated into the reference section of the IPCC Report.

2. Responsibilities of the Review Editors

The Review Editors will support and provide guidance to the author team in ensuring the consistent application of the procedures in this Annex.

3. Responsibilities of the Working Group /Task Force Bureau Co-Chairs

For sources that are not publicly or commercially available, the Working Group/Task Force Bureau Co-Chairs coordinating the Report will make these sources available to reviewers who request them during the review process.

4. Responsibilities of the IPCC Secretariat

For sources that are not publicly or commercially available, the IPCC Secretariat will store these sources after publication of an IPCC report, in order to support the “IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors in IPCC Assessment Reports, Synthesis Reports, Special Reports or Methodology Reports”.

5. Handling the full range of views

The Panel noted that in its report the IAC has recommended:

“Lead Authors should explicitly document that a range of scientific viewpoints has been considered, and Coordinating Lead Authors and Review Editors should satisfy themselves that due consideration was given to properly documented alternative views”.

At its 32nd Session the Panel agreed with this recommendation. The Panel emphasized that handling the full range of scientific views is a core principle of the IPCC. Its procedures clearly require the representation of differing scientific viewpoints and encourages rigorous adherence by the CLAs, LAs, and REs. The Panel asked the Task Group on Procedures to consider further implementation with the view to make a decision at its next Session (IPCC 33rd Session).

The Panel noted that the current language concerning the range of views in the procedures should be more precise. Instead of “aiming for a range of views”, the authors and experts should make every effort to take in to account, or represent, the full range of views available in scientific literature, even if these views are contradicting.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided to amend sections 4.2.2 Selection of Lead Authors, 4.2.4.1 First Review (by Experts), and 4.4.1 The Synthesis Report, and decided to create a new sub-section handling the diversity of views under section 4 of Appendix A as follows:

4.2.2: Selection of Lead Authors

...The composition of the group of Coordinating Lead Authors and Lead Authors for a section or chapter of a Report shall reflect the need to consider the range of scientific, technical and socio-economic views, expertise and geographical representation...

4.2.4.1 First Review (by Experts)

... First draft Reports should be circulated by Working Group/Task Force Bureau Co-Chairs for review. The review shall be undertaken by experts nominated by governments and participating organizations. In addition, the Working Group/Task Force Bureaus shall seek the participation of the range of scientific, technical and socio-economic views, expertise, and geographical representation....

4.4.1 The Synthesis report

...The IPCC Chair will lead a writing team whose composition is agreed by the Bureau, noting the need to consider the range of scientific, technical and socio-economic views, expertise, gender and geographical representation.

Handling the diversity of views

In Assessment Reports, Synthesis Reports, and Special Reports, chapter teams Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs), Lead Authors (LAs), and Review Editors (REs) are required to consider the range of scientific, technical and socio-economic views, expressed in balanced assessments. Authors should use calibrated uncertainty language that expresses the diversity of the scientifically and technically valid evidence, based mainly on the strength of the evidence and the level of agreement in the scientific, technical, and socio-economic literature.

6. Report review

6.1 The Panel noted that in its report the IAC has recommended:

“The IPCC should adopt a more targeted and effective process for responding to reviewer comments. In such a process, Review Editors would prepare a written summary of the most significant issues raised by reviewers shortly after review comments have been received. Authors would be required to provide detailed written responses to the most significant review issues identified by the Review Editors, abbreviated responses to all non-editorial comments, and no written responses to editorial comments”.

At its 32nd Session the Panel agreed with this recommendation in principle and asked the Task Group on Procedures to consider implementation options with the view to make a decision at its next Session (IPCC 33rd Session).

6.2 The Panel noted that in its report the IAC has recommended:

“The IPCC should encourage Review Editors to fully exercise their authority to ensure that reviewers’ comments are adequately considered by the authors and that genuine controversies are adequately reflected in the report”.

At its 32nd Session the Panel agreed with this recommendation. The Panel decided to strengthen its application of procedures, and amend them where necessary, to enable Review Editors to fully exercise their role. The Panel noted the new Guidance Note on the Role of Review Editors (Appendix 2 of the decision of IPCC 32nd Session) which addresses the related aspects in the IAC recommendations. The Panel urges the Co-Chairs of Working Group I, II, III and TFI to take steps to ensure that this guidance note is implemented in the development of its work.

The Panel considered that a staged response to the above mentioned two recommendations is needed, first through the development of additional guidance, and then through subsequent consideration of the relevant section of the Procedures (Section 4.2.4).

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided to request the Bureaus of Working Group I, II and III and TFI to develop and agree an additional guidance document that fully responds to these recommendations in time for implementation in the AR5 assessment process. The Working Group /TFI Bureaus should consider the guidance document “Role of Review Editors”² The Panel may subsequently revise the Procedures as required at a future session.

7. Further assuring quality of the review

The Panel noted that during the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), some parts of the Working Group II reports have not been sufficiently reviewed by experts. The review process should be organized in a way to ensure complete coverage of the report. The expert reviews should also include cross checking by lead authors of other Working groups where relevant.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided that the Working Group/TFI Co-Chairs should arrange a comprehensive review of reports in each review phase, seeking to ensure complete coverage of all content. Those parts of a Working Group report that are crosscutting with other Working Group reports should be crosschecked through the relevant Authors and Co-Chairs of that other Working Group.

8. Confidentiality of draft reports

The Panel noted that issues related to confidentiality of draft reports is important and that clear guidance is needed on what the rules for the confidentiality of draft reports during drafting and review.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided that the drafts of IPCC Reports and Technical Papers which have been submitted for formal expert and/or government review, the expert and government review comments, and the author responses to those comments will be made available on the IPCC website as soon as possible after the acceptance by the Panel and the finalization of the report. IPCC considers its draft reports, prior to acceptance, to be pre-decisional, provided in confidence to reviewers, and not for public distribution, quotation or citation.

9. Summary for Policymakers (SPM)

The Panel noted that in its report the IAC has recommended:

“The IPCC should revise its process for the approval of the Summary for Policymakers so that governments provide written comments prior to the Plenary”.

At its 32nd Session the Panel acknowledged the importance of both written comments and inputs from the floor, which are current practice.

The Panel noted that current IPCC practice already allows for governments to provide written comments on the Summary for Policymakers prior to the plenary approval session.

² General Guidance on the Role of Review Editors, Decisions taken at 32nd Session of the IPCC, appendix 3.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided that the existing Procedures (section 4.3 of the Procedures) should be amended to clarify the current practices related to submitting written comments prior to the plenary approval session.

The Panel further noted that the procedures should be further amended to reflect the important role of Coordinating Lead Authors at the SPM approval session.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided that the existing Procedures should be amended to clarify the current practices related to the role of the Coordinating Lead Authors during the approval session. The existing text: “Coordinating lead authors may be asked to provide technical assistance in ensuring that consistency has been achieved” (section 4.3, second paragraph) should be replaced by: “Coordinating Lead Authors should be consulted in order to ensure that the Summary for Policymakers is fully consistent with the findings in the main report”.

10. Procedure for handling possible errors identified after approval of IPCC reports

At its 32nd Session, the Panel agreed on the need to establish a process for evaluating, addressing and correcting, if necessary, possible errors and further developing errata as appropriate.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided to adopt the IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors in IPCC Assessment Reports, Synthesis Reports, Special Reports or Methodology Reports. The agreed protocol is adopted as an Annex to the Procedures. The IPCC should prominently display the procedure for submitting possible errors by the public at its website. The Executive Committee will oversee the implementation of the procedures regarding possible errors including a report to the plenary on errors that were corrected.

11. IPCC Evaluation of Evidence and Treatment of Uncertainty

The Panel noted that in its report the IAC has recommended:

1. All Working Groups should use the qualitative level-of-understanding scale in their Summary for Policymakers and Technical Summary, as suggested in IPCC uncertainty guidance for the Fourth Assessment Report. This scale may be supplemented by a quantitative probability scale, if appropriate.
2. Chapter Lead Authors should provide a traceable account of how they arrived at their ratings for level of scientific understanding and likelihood that an outcome will occur.
3. Quantitative probabilities (as in the likelihood scale) should be used to describe the probability of well-defined outcomes only when there is sufficient evidence. Authors should indicate the basis for assigning a probability to an outcome or event (e.g. based on measurement, expert judgment, and/or model runs).
4. The confidence scale should not be used to assign subjective probabilities to ill-defined outcomes. The likelihood scale should be stated in terms of probabilities (numbers) in addition to words to improve understanding of uncertainty.
5. Where practical, formal expert elicitation procedures should be used to obtain subjective probabilities for key results.

The Panel noted that these recommendations have been addressed by the 32nd Session in a draft guidance note by Working Group Co-chairs, see Appendix 4 to the 32nd Panel decisions. This guidance provides a common approach to the treatment of uncertainty in the Working Groups; it applies to Assessment Reports, Special Reports, Synthesis Reports and Technical Papers. The Panel noted that the final guidance paper is available on the IPCC website and should be considered as an Addendum to this document. The Panel noted that the guidance paper may be updated in future.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel endorsed the common approach to the treatment of uncertainty in the Working Groups as described in the Guidance Note for Lead Authors of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report on Consistent Treatment of Uncertainties. The Panel affirmed that the guidance applies to assessment reports, special reports, synthesis reports and technical papers.

12. IPCC guidance material

The Panel noted that some IPCC guidance material now plays a significant role in the processes of IPCC and that there is a need for transparency related to the development of such material. The IAC Review has elevated the importance of such guidance.

The Panel noted that some of this material has until this point not been classified or has been classified as supporting material.

At its 33rd Session, the Panel decided that the procedure for developing, revising, and classifying guidance materials need to be further considered with the aim of improving appropriate procedures. The Panel will decide about the appropriate connection between the guidance material and the Procedures.

13. Extension of mandate of the Task Group on Procedures

1. The Panel decided that the mandate of the Task Group on Procedures, as established at IPCC 32nd Session, will be extended to IPCC 34th Session in order to develop revised procedures reflecting the decisions on the procedures taken at IPCC 33rd Session. This revision should also take into account internal consistency, editorial improvement, and legal consistency. This work should be carried out in consultation with the IPCC Secretariat. The Task Group will produce draft decisions for IPCC 34th Session. The Panel agreed to consider the resource implications of its procedural decisions.

2. The Task Group may also consider, taking note of the deliberations during IPCC 33rd Session:

- o Proposals to address relevant inconsistencies in current procedures
- o Selection of participants to IPCC workshops and expert meetings
- o Matters relating to the transparency, quantity and efficiency of the review process
- o Anonymous expert review
- o Summary for Policymakers Approval Sessions