

ipcc

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change

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DECISION PATHWAY FOR CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION OR MEETINGS

(Submitted by the Acting Secretary of the IPCC)

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DECISION PATHWAY FOR CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION OR MEETINGS

Background

At its 37th Session (14 – 18 October 2013, Batumi, Georgia), the IPCC Panel requested the IPCC Executive Committee to initiate an Expert Meeting on potential studies of the IPCC process and to produce a report that recommends principles to guide the IPCC's engagement with such research. The Expert Meeting (28 – 29 January 2015, Geneva, Switzerland) produced a meeting report including a set of principles to guide the IPCC's engagement on potential studies of the IPCC process.

In Decision IPCC/XLI-5 the Panel "approved the Principles to guide the IPCC's engagement in potential studies of the IPCC process" as recommended by the Expert Meeting on Potential Studies of the IPCC Process (28-29 January 2015, Geneva, Switzerland)" as contained in Annex 1.

Paragraph 1 of "the Principles" provides that "the IPCC should develop a decision pathway for consideration of requests from researchers for access to non-public IPCC materials or meetings".

At its 42nd Session the Panel noted a report from the Acting Secretary of the IPCC with an update on the work being undertaken to draft such a "decision pathway".

Decision pathway for consideration of requests for access to IPCC non-public material or meetings

1. Access to IPCC non-public material

Most of the IPCC material is in the public domain and directly accessible through the IPCC webpage.

However Appendix A to the IPCC Principles Governing IPCC Work, the "Procedures for the Preparation, Review, Acceptance, Adoption, Approval and Publication of IPCC Reports", provides that "The 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."

Requests for access to any additional information or material should be made in writing and should be addressed to the Secretary of the IPCC. The IPCC Secretariat will handle such requests in the light of applicable national and international policies and rules.

It should be noted that the IPCC does not hold the ownership of many materials and information used during its operations. In these cases requests for access should be made directly to the owners of such information.

2. Access to IPCC meetings

Requests for access to IPCC meetings for the purposes of potential studies on the IPCC or the IPCC process should be made in writing and should be addressed to the Secretary of the IPCC.

2.1. Requests should include the following documentation or information:

- a) Proposal of planned research.
- b) Letter of support from supervisor or institution, credentials of supervisor and institution (where applicable).
- c) Information about composition of research team.

- d) Credentials of researchers/research team, including CVs and publication lists.
- e) Description of type, timing and duration of access required.
- f) Justification of enhanced value from requested access to meetings.
- g) Consideration of ethical issues and data management.
- h) Description of the process by which the proposal has been or is being evaluated and mechanisms for quality assurance.
- i) Information about funding sources.
- j) Declaration of any potential conflict of interest.
- k) Anticipated benefit to the broader public interest.

2.2. Researchers should comply with the following requirements:

- a) Researchers must obtain appropriate informed consent from all meeting participants prior to the participation in any meeting.
- b) All information identifying individuals, either directly or indirectly, will be kept confidential.
- c) The researchers will not intervene in IPCC deliberations.
- d) The researchers will study only activities for which they have prior informed consent.
- e) The IPCC Secretariat will be provided with the draft publication ahead of submission, for prompt comment by the relevant IPCC Working Group or Task Force Co-chairs or by the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies.
- f) The IPCC Secretariat will be provided with any draft public relations documents (e.g., press releases) for prompt comment by the Secretariat with input from the relevant IPCC Working Group or Task Force Co-chairs or by the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies prior to public dissemination.
- g) Researchers will not disclose their findings to the public, including the news media, prior to the publication of their study.
- h) Timing of publication of studies must be agreed by the relevant IPCC Working Group or Task Force Co-chairs or by the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies
- i) Conditions regarding confidentiality of information and/or data to which researchers will be subject to prior informed consent. Confidential information and/or data will be held in accordance with the conditions established in the prior informed consent.
- j) At the completion of the assessment cycle, collected information will be shared with the IPCC for long-term archiving, respecting agreed standards for confidentiality and any future uses of the information agreed during the prior informed consent.

2.3. Procedure for consideration, approval and termination of proposals

The IPCC Secretary will check that all the information and documentation requested is appropriately addressed in the proposal. Complete proposals will be transmitted to the Panel together with a recommendation of the relevant Co-chairs of Working Groups and/or Task Forces and/or the Vice-chairs and/or the Chair of the IPCC as appropriate. This recommendation will address, inter alia, the following aspects:

- a) Benefit to broader public.
- b) Overall geographic balance and diversity of the research portfolio.
- c) Gender balance.
- d) Career stage balance.

The Secretary of the IPCC will inform applicants on the outcome of the deliberations by the Panel and will produce a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be signed by the applicant before the starting of the study. This MoU will constitute the formal instrument of approval of the application and will address the conditions under which access to any meeting would be granted. The MoU will also include clauses regarding termination of the agreement.

The proponent will liaise with the IPCC Secretariat or the Co-chairs of the relevant Working Group and/or Task Force as appropriate regarding the practical arrangements for obtaining prior informed consent from participants of specific meetings they wish to attend and regarding to access to in-session documentation.

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE IPCC`S ENGAGEMENT ON POTENTIAL STUDIES OF THE IPCC PROCESS

- (1) The IPCC should develop a decision pathway for consideration of requests from researchers for access to non-public IPCC materials or meetings. The pathway should ensure that the following information requirements are met, while acknowledging the needs of IPCC authors and the need of researchers for an efficient and timely decision process.
- (2) Information required when submitting a request should include:
 - a) Proposal of planned research.
 - b) Letter of support from supervisor or institution, credentials of supervisor and institution (where applicable).
 - c) Information about composition of research team.
 - d) Credentials of researchers/research team, incl. CVs and publication lists.
 - e) Description of type, timing and duration of access required.
 - f) Justification of enhanced value from requested access to non-public materials or meetings.
 - g) Consideration of ethical issues and data management.
 - h) Description of the process by which the proposal has been or is being evaluated and mechanisms for quality assurance.
 - i) Information about funding sources.
 - j) Declaration of any potential conflict of interest.
 - k) Anticipated benefit to the broader public interest.
- (3) Evaluation criteria for requests

The IPCC may consider the information outlined in (2) in its decision pathway, along with:

- a) Benefit to broader public.
 - b) Overall geographic balance and diversity of the research portfolio.
 - c) Gender balance.
 - d) Career stage balance.
- (4) Requirements for researchers conducting studies of the IPCC process

Note: Researchers should minimize the demands on IPCC authors

- a) Researchers must obtain appropriate informed consent from all subjects in the study.
- b) All identifying information will be kept confidential.
- c) The researchers may not intervene in IPCC deliberations.
- d) The researchers will only observe activities for which they have informed consent.
- e) IPCC will be provided draft publication ahead of submission, for prompt comment.
- f) IPCC will be provided any draft public relations documents (e.g., press releases) for prompt comment prior to their public dissemination.
- g) Researchers will not disclose their findings to the public, including the news media, prior to the publication of their study.
- h) Publication of studies will be embargoed until after the end of the assessment cycle, unless otherwise agreed to by the IPCC.
- i) Confidentiality of information and data to which researchers are granted access will be agreed during informed consent. Confidential information and data will be held in accordance with data protection requirements.
- j) 5 years after the completion of the assessment cycle, collected information will be shared with the IPCC for long term archiving.

- (5) The IPCC to consider developing a document and information management and conservation policy, which would apply to IPCC bodies and Technical Support Units (TSUs), taking into account:
- a) Organizational structure and institutional arrangements.
 - b) Materials such as document archives and data sets to be held by IPCC Secretariat and TSUs.
 - c) Limits of disclosure.
 - d) Time limits to confidentiality.

In doing so, the IPCC could explore those areas that may be insufficiently documented and consider ways to improve documentation.

Establishment of appropriate policy would allow IPCC to respond to potential studies requests in consistent and timely manner