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PROGRESS REPORTS

Preparations for the Expert Meeting on potential studies of the IPCC process

(Submitted by the IPCC Executive-Committee)

PROGRESS REPORTS

Preparations for the Expert Meeting on Potential Studies of the IPCC Process

The Panel at its 39th Session discussed the matter of potential studies of the IPCC process and it requested the Executive Committee to initiate an expert meeting which should produce a report that recommends principles to guide the IPCC's engagement with such research.

The Executive Committee addressed this issue at its 27th, 28th and 29th meetings and approved the paper on the Scope of the IPCC Expert Meeting on Studies of the IPCC Process contained in **Annex 1**.

Furthermore, a Scientific Steering Committee was established by the Executive Committee to assist in the preparation of the Expert meeting. The Scientific Steering Committee consists of (listed alphabetically):

- Shardul Agrawala, CLA, Working Group III (India)
- Eduardo Calvo, Working Group II Vice-Chair (Peru)
- Renate Christ, Secretary of the IPCC
- Cathy Johnson, UK Government representative, Co-Chair of the contact group at IPCC-37 (United Kingdom)
- Youba Sokona, Co-Chair Working Group III (Mali)
- Naomi Orestes, Harvard University (representing social scientists interested in conducting studies) (United States of America)
- Jongikhaya Witi, South Africa Government representative, Co-Chair of the contact group at IPCC-37 (South Africa)
- David Wratt, Working Group I Vice-Chair (New Zealand)

The Scientific Steering Committee will meet on 6th October 2014 in order to consider the draft agenda for the Expert Meeting as well as the list of expert to be recommended to the IPCC Chair to be invited to the Expert Meeting.

Following the advice from the IPCC Executive Committee, the Expert Meeting is scheduled to take place in February 2015 at the premises of the World Meteorological Organization. The meeting report will be submitted to the 42nd Session of the IPCC.

Scope of IPCC Expert Meeting on studies of the IPCC process
(Submitted by the Executive Committee)

Based on a request from the IPCC-37 and in line with section 7.1 on IPCC Workshops and Expert Meetings of Appendix A to the Principles Governing IPCC Work

Background

The IPCC is in many ways a unique institution. It has operated successfully for more than 25 years at the science policy interface. The role of the IPCC is to assess on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of risk of human-induced climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation. IPCC reports should be policy relevant but not policy prescriptive. IPCC reports provide a balanced assessment of what is known and what is not known. The process engages scientists in a manner that assures development of the report contents by the entire scientific community, while at the same time the procedures allow governments to trust the process and “own” the reports when they are complete.

The IPCC process is an attractive target for serious studies by social scientists from a range of disciplines. Potentially interesting and valuable studies might address history, organizational dynamics, sociology, political science, psychology, or a combination of these disciplines. At least three kinds of considerations motivate studies of the IPCC. One is that the institution combines importance with unique features. IPCC is simply different from all of the other entities that provide scientific information at the interface with policy. A second motivation is providing information to support improving the process. The ongoing evolution of technology for generating reports, geographic spread of authors, publishing technology, and stakeholder needs all point to the value of information to underlie future changes to the IPCC process. A third motivation is the historical and ongoing attacks on the IPCC, especially from organizations with concerns about the messages. High quality research on the IPCC process could potentially help address some of these criticisms and improve the depth of public understanding of the IPCC.

The IPCC has been the subject of several studies, ranging from historical narratives (Bolin 2007) to the psychology of risk communication (Budescu et al. 2009). None of the past studies has, however, used careful scholarly methods to study the inner workings of the IPCC process. There are a lot of first-person narratives based on the experiences of authors and country delegates, but there are no systematic studies based on observations in writing meetings and at approval sessions.

While there may be much to be gained from systematic studies of the IPCC process, there are also some important challenges that need to be addressed. Perhaps the most important of these is finding a way to open options for including observers into author meetings while also assuring that authors feel fully empowered to express their views and allow discussions to mature, without concern that some entity is looking over their shoulders. A second concern is assuring that the discussions in author teams are limited to authors and that embedding non-authors in the author meetings might distort the discussions or balance of the writing team. A third possible concern is whether the IPCC culture of openness and supportiveness is somehow threatened by embedding non-authors. A fourth is the status of documents to which the researchers are given access to by IPCC during their work, and the status of their own notes and documents on Lead Authors and other IPCC meetings or discussions with authors. Finally, the large number of authors makes it challenging to assure informed consent. The presence of non-authors in writing meetings, and perhaps at Bureau and Plenary meetings, should not come as a surprise to anyone.

Finding a way to facilitate studies of the IPCC process while also recognizing the challenges is a subtle task. Following a discussion of the IPCC Panel at its 37th Session, the Panel requested the IPCC Executive Committee to initiate an Expert Meeting on studies of the IPCC process and to produce a report that recommends principles to guide the IPCC's engagement in such research.

Aim of Expert Meeting

The specific aims should include:

- 1) Collecting perspectives on useful targets of study and research questions
- 2) Clarifying potential and real concerns about informed consent and other challenges
- 3) Suggesting processes and guidelines for decision by the IPCC Panel on whether to accept particular future requests for studies of the IPCC process that involve embedding non-authors in writing team meetings or in other IPCC activities.
- 4) Suggesting guidelines for undertaking such studies.
- 5) To inform the work of the Task Group on the Future Work of IPCC.

Scientific Steering Committee

The Scientific Steering Committee will meet by phone to consider the list of experts drafted by the Secretariat and to be recommended to the IPCC Chair for decision and the draft agenda for the meeting prepared by the Secretariat. The Scientific Steering Committee will consist of (listed alphabetically).

Shardul Agrawala	CLA, WGIII	(India)
Eduardo Calvo	WGII Vice-Chair	(Peru)
Renate Christ	Secretary of the IPCC	(IPCC)
Cathy Johnson	UK Government representative Co-Chair of the contact group at P37	(UK)
Youba Sokona	Co-Chair WGIII	(Mali)
Naomi Oreskes	Harvard University (representing social scientists interested in conducting studies)	(USA)
Jongikhaya Witi	South Africa Government representative Co-Chair of the contact group at P37	(South Africa)
David Wratt	WGI Vice -Chair	(New Zealand)

Product

The primary product of the Expert Meeting will be a report that recommends principles to guide the IPCC's engagement in potential studies of the IPCC process, for consideration by the IPCC Panel. The report of the meeting will explain the motivation behind the suggestions. The suggested guidelines and the report of the meeting will be available on the internet and in printed form. The outcomes will be available in time to inform the work of the Task Group on the Future of the IPCC.

Timetable and Location

(Amended in the light of discussions at the Executive Committee on 18 September 2014)

The meeting will be held in Geneva in February 2015

2014

1 August	Nominations from the Executive Committee and Working Group/Task Force Bureaux
6 October	Meeting of the Scientific Steering Committee

2015

February	Expert Meeting in Geneva
April	Draft suggested guidelines and meeting report
June	Final suggested guidelines and meeting report
IPCC-42	Consideration of the Expert Meeting suggestions by the Panel

Participants

The Panel requested a meeting of 40 participants (IPCC-37 report). Participants should include IPCC authors, country delegates, Executive Committee, Working Group and Technical Support Unit members, experts with published research in the field, and social scientists potentially interested in proposing studies of the IPCC process.

Participants should be suggested by Executive Committee, as well as Working Group/Task Force Bureaux through their respective Co-Chairs.

Financial Resources

Funds required will include participant support for up to 16 experts eligible for support from the IPCC Trust Fund (confirm details), plus funds for facilitating a meeting at WMO Headquarters.

References

Bolin, B. 2007. A history of the science and politics of climate change: the role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK; New York.

Budescu, D., S. Broomell, and H. Por. 2009. Improving communication of uncertainty in the reports of the intergovernmental panel on climate change. *Psychological Science* 20:299.