



Future of the IPCC Review - UK Government 2014 Response to IPCC

A. What should be the future products of the IPCC?

What would be the optimal overall length of an assessment period?

The idea of an assessment cycle is tied to the current product list and may not need to be an enduring concept. However if comprehensive Assessment Reports were to continue in a similar form, the assessment cycle should not be more than 6-7 years as presently.

However there is great demand from policy-makers for more frequent updates so ways should be considered to bring these into the cycle. The optimal period will need to reflect any changes in the products as discussed below.

Whether emphasis should remain on comprehensive Assessment Reports (AR), supplemented with occasional Special Reports (SR) agreed according to the “Decision Framework for Special Reports, Methodology Reports and Technical Papers” (as agreed by the IPCC 20th Session and amended at the 29th Session)?

The major assessment reports (AR) have been the bedrock of the IPCC’s success over the years and they represent an enormous achievement which has supported Governments and provided a uniquely authoritative assessment of all aspects of climate change. Whatever we do in the future we need to ensure that we do not lose that reputation and standard.

However we believe that the time is ripe to rethink the IPCC products to address changing circumstances and requirements. We suggest that feedback on AR5 be collected from users and contributors, with a view to informing future work. Future products must address the challenge posed by the sheer volume of material now needing to be assessed; the availability of rapid means of dissemination by electronic means; and the need for policy makers to have answers to policy relevant questions, which don’t readily map to specific WG reports.

This leads us to the following suggestions:

- 1. The primary product of the IPCC in the future should be the Synthesis Report, prepared on 5 to 7 year timescales, drawing on all material prepared by the IPCC during the period but not constrained to be only based on such material. Indeed the SYR would be able to include newly assessed material itself to ensure it was as up to date and policy relevant as possible.*
- 2. The approach would be to reduce the amount of re-assessment when little has change. In that the regard the SYR could be treated like the edition of a book that would be updated subsequently and not written from scratch. We believe this is now possible as a lot of science is quite mature. Mostly we would see numerical values*



- updated, though clearly where the science is still evolving we would see greater changes. It might even allow more limited and more frequent updates to be made.*
- 3. The IPCC could then additionally focus on areas where the science is still fluid and prepare more but shorter special reports. In our view there seems to be a need for a more frequent update on the climate science and risks associated with climate change in specific areas such as, for example: “Observed Changes in the Climate System” and “Drivers of Climate Change” in Working Group 1, and “Observed Impacts, Vulnerability and Exposure” and “Adaptation Experience” in Working Group 2. In addition there is a need for regular analysis of global pathways to stabilisation and the mitigation requirements to meet long term objectives by Working Group 3.*
 - 4. The IPCC also needs to develop a product which enables it to respond quickly to questions relevant to policy makers and other users. This might include a fast response process to address questions from the UNFCCC.*
 - 5. Electronic media and Web-based tools may be useful for both report preparation and publication. We suggest the IPCC evaluates the idea to determine suitability and possibilities for use.*
 - 6. Working with others. In some areas of the IPCC’s remit there is quite a bit of international activity – for example in technology assessment and consideration should be given to avoiding unnecessary duplication.*

Whether additional fast track products are needed to respond to emerging science or policymakers needs or can these be accommodated through focused SRs prepared according to current procedures?

Yes see our response above. The aim should be an ability to be more flexible and nimble whilst maintaining rigour. The current procedures for producing a SR are probably too slow for this. Consideration could also be given to the role of Technical Papers and whether the rules governing the production of these should be revised to allow new information to be included beyond that in AR or SR reports.

Whether a mix of assessment reports and/or focused thematic assessments/SRs may be planned at the beginning of an assessment period?

At the beginning of a cycle it would be important to map out likely products but it should not preclude flexibility and an ability of IPCC to respond to new requests for information.



What would be optimal timing of preparation of reports within an assessment period?

That rather depends on the products we eventually agree to. We would not envisage a major change if we retained the current process.

What would be the role, scope and timing of Synthesis Reports?

As noted above, we consider the Synthesis Report to be the most important IPCC Product which is comprehensive, deal adequately with cross-cutting issues, avoids the disciplinary constraints of the WG reports and ideally provides answers to policy-makers' questions in a single location. But we think it is not given the attention it deserves at present. It is at the end point of the process but it is constrained by the contents of the WG reports. We believe it needs to become the main product, prepared by a writing team focussed on answering these questions across Working Group boundaries. The focus of the IPCC work would be synthesis from the start.

Whether the IPCC should continue to prepare Methodology Reports (MR) on national greenhouse gas inventories?

The UK notes the reliance of the UNFCCC reporting and review process on IPCC inventory methods, and the importance of continuity in the Inventory Task Force and the Technical Support Unit (especially given emergence of new requirements e.g. unconventional oil and gas or CCS), and emerging developments in verification and remote sensing. The UK suggests these developments should be handled by reports that are supplementary to the 2006 Guidelines, with consideration of a full update of guidelines post 2015.

Whether the IPCC should prepare MRs on other topics?

We do not think that the IPCC should add more to its portfolio of work but rather concentrate on re-engineering its assessment process.



B. What would be the appropriate structure and modus operandi for the production of these IPCC products?

Changes in the IPCC Working Group (WG) structure and/or adjustments to the mandates of the current Working Groups?

The current three working group (WG) report structure attracts specialists and delivers comprehensive knowledge across these areas; we do not propose fundamental change to the three WG structure. However we think there may be fewer WG only products and that increasingly IPCC products will be prepared by cross- WG teams.

Means to enhance cooperation, consistency and integration among WGs?

Consideration should be given to:

- *Integration between WGs at very early stages on particular projects to bring information together in a more synergistic way;*
- *Reports being produced by multi-disciplinary, cross-working group author teams;*
- *Developing the process for preparation and publication of the IPCC cross cutting products such as the synthesis Report. For example, this might require an additional cross cutting working group. It could also eventually oversee all publication matters to ensure consistency of style and approach.*

Effective ways to cover cross-cutting matters?

An effective way to cover cross-cutting matters would be to make the Synthesis Report the focus of the IPCC's activities, with a writing team responsible for its preparation from the beginning, working closely with the Working Groups.

Adjustments to the IPCC Bureau structure and terms of reference, including definition of more specific tasks for Bureau positions?

The UK has no specific proposals for the next IPCC Bureau at this stage, but note that it is likely to be shaped by the outcome of this review. We would be reluctant to increase its size. The UK considers a Task Force Bureau (TFB) should continue to direct the Task Force for Greenhouse Gas Inventories work. Any issues raised for assessment reports could also be considered with respect to the development of Methodologies.



Adjustments to the IPCC Executive Committee composition, terms of reference and modus operandi?

The UK has no suggestions to make at this time.

Ways to address the challenge of dramatic increase in literature?

The workload for authors in preparing reports is already considerable. The IPCC should consider opportunities to simplify the preparation process:

- *By having more frequent subject focussed reports*
- *Moving to a synthesis report which is regularly updated, avoiding doing everything from scratch.*
- *Working with other organisations to avoid duplication of work and products particularly in the mitigation area of WG3*
- *Consider the appointment of more full time specialists to assist preparation and reduce the burden on voluntary authors.*
- *We note that experienced experts are important to the success of the IPCC, but that they may find work load too great to continue full participation in future. We suggest the IPCC further considers how to retain and use experienced experts, whilst introducing new authors to the report preparation process.*
- *The approach taken by the IPCC should capitalise on advances in methodology for systematically reviewing scientific evidence. For example, in the health sector it is considered good practice to use pre-defined search strategies and quality criteria for systematically synthesizing the findings of research. Consider providing or increasing financial assistance to CLAs (e.g. to appoint research assistants or full time junior scientists)*
- *The writing process should operate as efficiently as possible e.g. using new technology to encourage participation by all.*

Further clarification of the respective roles and interrelations of the IPCC Secretariat and the Technical Support Units (TSU)?

Nothing to add at this stage

Adjustments to the structure and support of TSUs?

To maintain expertise, consideration should be given to trying to retain some WG TSU staff between one assessment cycle and the next

Consideration should be given to alternate funding models to increase the diversity of host countries.



Specific needs for revisions, and streamlining of the Principles Governing IPCC Work and its Appendices?

The Principles may require revision, depending upon the outcomes of this consultation, particularly if new products are developed.

The process for identifying, selecting and appointing contributors could benefit from revision, to promote greater inclusivity and transparency. Specific criteria could be developed to improve geographical distribution, the range of experience and gender balance of contributors.

Consideration should be given to increasing the open review of draft reports, recognising that we primarily need to attract expert views.

Other governance and administrative matters?

The role of Review Editors should be re-considered, such that they are allocated to chapters outside their own immediate speciality. They would then they'd be free to contribute their expertise to the most appropriate chapter. Consideration should be given to publishing Review Editors' reports.

C. Ways to ensure enhancement of the participation and contribution of developing countries in the future work of the IPCC

This is a long-term issue which ultimately rests on wider capacity building in the scientific world.

Strengthened support for developing country Co-chairs (e.g. through Panel guidance on the establishment and governance of TSUs, co-hosting or hosting of TSUs in developing countries)?

Support for developing country Bureau members and authors (CLS, LA, RE)?

Ways and means to utilize and enhance involvement of Bureau Members and Co-Chairs from developing countries in their respective regions?

Co-chairs could be given a definite responsibility to engage developing countries in TSUs, author teams and as reviewers. They could be asked to report to Plenary the initiatives they have undertaken and how successful they have been.



Which additional role can the IPCC Secretariat play?

We don't see an additional role for the Secretariat.

Access to literature and facilitation of assessment of literature in languages other than English?

IPCC should consider a strategy for working with other organisations to increase developing country participation e.g. National Academies might help identify potential participants and non-English literature, and facilitate translation.

Other ways and means to facilitate engagement of developing country scientists and experts?

IPCC should consider working with other organisations to increase developing country participation e.g. National Academies might help identify potential participants

The writing process should be as efficient as possible e.g. using new technology to encourage wide participation.

Other ways and means to enhance coverage of knowledge from developing countries, including both published and government reports, and in languages other than English?

Ways to support and expand access to knowledge to fill existing gaps in data?

Ways to enhance research in developing countries without jeopardizing IPCC objectivity?

Ways to contribute to capacity building and knowledge sharing in developing countries, including expansion of the IPCC Scholarship Programme?

D. Other matters

Cooperation with UN bodies and other relevant international organizations?

- *A fast response process is required to address questions from the UNFCCC and other UN bodies (e.g. CBD, ICAO, IMO...).*

Matters related to communication?



Communication and outreach work is of fundamental importance to the IPCC deliverables and vital to ensuring the work has maximum impact, reaching the largest number and range of stakeholders and different language speakers possible. The following ideas should be considered:

- Better communication of the nature of the IPCC assessment process and its findings, across a range of levels and types of audience (e.g. public, industry, government, NGO).*
- Electronic media and Web-based tools may be useful for both report preparation and publication. We suggest the IPCC evaluates the idea to determine suitability and possibilities for use.*
- Including independent professional writer(s) in SPM author teams, to facilitate production of SPMs more accessible to non-specialists.*
- The IPCC developing new partnerships, to catalyse educational activities (e.g. UNEP education programme).*
- IPCC should look for opportunities to engage with stakeholders and the public both before and after assessments.*
- Greater use of digital and social media as tools to increase accessibility and enhance awareness of the results of the assessments.*
- There should always be clear published information at the outset of every report on what underlying materials will be published e.g. Review Editors' reports.*
- A working group of media professionals to advise on dissemination and social scientists involved in the study of research – policy interface to advise on maximising policy impact.*
- An advisory group of current or recent policymakers in relevant sectors could also provide useful input.*

Process to discuss future IPCC work, including input from wider user groups and feedback on value and use of IPCC reports

We suggest users be consulted about their requirements and opinions of the AR5, and their views made available to the Task Group.