

IPCC Factsheet: How does the IPCC review process work?

The IPCC is committed to preparing reports that aim for the highest standards of scientific excellence, balance, and clarity. Multiple stages of review are an essential part of the IPCC process to ensure a comprehensive, objective and transparent assessment of the current state of knowledge of the science related to climate change¹. Expert Reviewers and governments are invited at different stages to comment on the scientific, technical and socio-economic assessment and the overall balance of the drafts. The review process includes wide participation, with hundreds of reviewers critiquing the accuracy and completeness of the scientific assessment contained in the drafts.

Assessment Reports and Special Reports are prepared by chapter teams of authors and Review Editors. (See IPCC Factsheet – *How does the IPCC select its authors?*) The Review Editors ensure that all substantive comments received during review are given appropriate consideration by the author teams and ensure that genuine diversity in perspectives in the literature is reflected adequately in the report.

The first draft of a report is prepared by the authors based on scientific, technical and socio-economic literature in scientific journals and other relevant publications. (See IPCC Factsheet – *What literature does the IPCC assess?*) This First Order Draft is reviewed by experts. Every interested expert is encouraged to submit comments. Working Groups, members of the author teams, governments, IPCC observer organizations, and other organizations can all encourage experts to register as reviewers, facilitating the participation of experts encompassing as wide a range of views, expertise and geographical representation as possible. For the Fifth Assessment Report, experts could register as reviewers through a process of self-declaration of expertise.

After the expert review of the First Order Draft, author teams prepare a Second Order Draft of the report, taking into account the review comments received; a first draft of the report's Summary for Policymakers (SPM) is also prepared. These are subject to simultaneous review by experts and governments. Experts who registered for the review of the First Order Draft of the report are automatically registered for this round of review; further experts may register at this stage.

Following receipt of the review comments, author teams then prepare final drafts of the full report and SPM, taking into account review comments received. The final draft of the report is distributed to governments for a final round of written comments on the SPM, before governments meet in plenary session to approve the SPM line by line and accept the underlying report. (See IPCC Factsheet – *How does the IPCC approve reports?*)

¹ The review process is described in sections 4.2, 4.3.4, 4.4 and 4.6 of Appendix A to the Principles Governing IPCC Work, the Procedures for the Preparation, Review, Acceptance, Adoption, Approval and Publication of IPCC Reports:

<http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ipcc-principles/ipcc-principles-appendix-a-final.pdf>

All comments submitted through this review process are addressed by authors, and a written response is provided to each comment on the First Order and Second Order Drafts for later publication.

There are special procedures for the review of the Synthesis Report and its SPM, which undergo one round of simultaneous expert and government review. After revision the Synthesis Report and SPM are sent to governments and IPCC observer organizations for consideration before governments meet in Plenary Session to approve the SPM and adopt the Synthesis Report.

During the review period, access to the First Order and Second Order Drafts is provided to those who register as Expert Reviewers on condition that the drafts are not cited, quoted or distributed. The drafts are not made public before the final document is approved because they are works in progress and may not yet meet IPCC quality and accuracy standards. Draft text will necessarily change as review comments are addressed and the latest literature is assessed. The IPCC sets cut-off dates for literature to be accepted for publication by scientific journals, if it is to be included in the current assessment: for the Fifth Assessment Report, literature must be accepted for publication approximately two-three months before completion of the final draft. To assure transparency, First and Second Order Drafts are made publicly available, along with the reviewer comments and the responses of the author teams to all comments, when the final reports are published.

Number of review comments on Fifth Assessment Report

		Number of comments	Experts	Governments
Working Group I	First Order Draft	21,400	659	-
	Second Order Draft	31,422	800	26
Working Group II	First Order Draft	19,598	563	-
	Second Order Draft	28,544	452	33
Working Group III	First Order Draft	16,169	602	-
	Second Order Draft	19,554	444	24
Synthesis Report	First Order Draft	5,944	85	42
Total		142,631	-	-

Note: some experts register for more than one Working Group and the Synthesis Report

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