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## **FUTURE OF THE TASK GROUP ON DATA AND SCENARIO SUPPORT FOR IMPACT AND CLIMATE ANALYSIS (TGICA)**

### **Options for Discussion and Decision on the Future Role of TGICA**

(Submitted by the Acting Secretary of the IPCC)

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# FUTURE OF THE TASK GROUP ON DATA AND SCENARIO SUPPORT FOR IMPACT AND CLIMATE ANALYSIS (TGICA)

## Options for Discussion and Decision on the Future Role of TGICA<sup>1</sup>

### Background

At its 41<sup>st</sup> Session (Nairobi, Kenya, 24 – 27 February 2015), the Panel decided to revisit the mandate of the Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impact and Climate Analysis (TGICA) at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the IPCC. The Secretariat was requested, in consultation with the TGICA Co-chairs, to update the TGICA vision paper for the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session, taking into account views from scientists, IPCC Bureau, submissions from governments and IPCC observer organizations, and recommendations from an IPCC meeting of experts on this issue, organized by the Secretariat (paragraph 15 of Decision IPCC/XLI-4 on the Future Work of the IPCC).

Consistent with the aforementioned Panel decision, the Secretariat in consultation with the TGICA Co-chairs updated the TGICA vision paper taking into consideration comments received during the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the IPCC. A letter was sent by the Secretariat on 14 October 2015 to Governments, Observer Organizations and the IPCC Bureau, inviting them to comment on the updated vision paper. The collated comments which were received by the Secretariat are contained in IPCC-XLIII/INF. 18.

Furthermore, the Secretariat organized an Expert Meeting on the Future of TGICA (Geneva, 26-27 January 2016). Collated comments from governments were provided to Expert Meeting participants among a number of background documents that were discussed during the meeting. Key points and recommendations from the Expert Meeting are presented in IPCC-XLIII/INF. 10, Rev.1. The main recommendation was for TGICA and the DDC<sup>2</sup> to continue their work, addressing the identified needs and gaps, and capitalizing on emerging opportunities and possibilities for partnerships.

The Expert Meeting key points were submitted by the Acting Secretary of the IPCC to the Bureau for information at its 51<sup>st</sup> Session held in Geneva on 16-17 February 2016. The Bureau took note of the report.

This Options paper, with supporting documents (IPCC-XLIII/INF.10, Rev.1, IPCC-XLIII/INF. 15, IPCC-XLIII/INF.16, IPCC-XLIII/INF.17 and IPCC-XLIII/INF.18), represents the final updating of the TGICA vision paper.

### Identified Challenges

The previous TGICA vision paper, the institutional assessment commissioned by TGICA (IPCC-XLIII/ INF. 16), and the report of the 2016 Expert Meeting on TGICA (IPCC-XLIII/ INF. 10, Rev.1) identify challenges related to the work of TGICA, which include:

#### a) Knowledge exchange across IPCC Working Groups

The importance of facilitating enhanced cross-Working Group exchanges of data and scenario information, including new modes of delivery, is becoming increasingly apparent, and TGICA is mandated to contribute to this, complementing the direct interactions between Working Group authors that already occur.

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<sup>1</sup> For background information on TGICA and the DDC, see IPCC-XLIII/INF. 15

<sup>2</sup> IPCC Data Distribution Centre

## **b) Increased engagement with users and accessibility of IPCC information**

Users requiring access include authors within and across Working Groups (especially those for whom access is currently limited), the research community on which IPCC assessments depend, and user-communities in adaptation, policy, and decision making. All depend on high quality data used in IPCC assessments that is quality controlled, curated, and archived, backed by authoritative guidance.

## **c) Alignment of IPCC's work on data and scenario support with other international fora**

There is a burgeoning number of initiatives internationally to coordinate data and scenario information for use in climate change assessments. However, there are also important differences with IPCC/TGICA activities in terms of objectives, target audiences, topical scope and quality assurance. There are substantial opportunities and benefits to be found in building partnerships between the IPCC/TGICA and relevant international organizations to achieve significant added value.

In order to address these requirements effectively, a fundamental challenge concerns the need for adequate resourcing of TGICA and the DDC, as outlined in the previous TGICA vision paper. The paper highlighted three potential options for TGICA's future: 1) discontinue or severely curtail TGICA and discontinue the DDC; 2) maintain the status quo; 3) strengthen TGICA and upgrade the DDC. Across all of the feedback received, of these options there is no support for option 1 (discontinuation), while opinions differed among possible variants of options 2 and 3. However, rather than selecting one of the three options in the vision paper, a preferred approach articulated in the Expert Meeting would be to have TGICA undertake a prioritization of activities based on a mapping of the needs of various functions and tasks in relation to the resources they would entail as presented in IPCC-XLIII/INF. 17.

## **Proposed Pathways for the Future of TGICA**

If the Panel approves the continuation of TGICA and the DDC, there is a need to decide on the degree to which the following areas of potential development are supported, recognizing that the DDC necessarily requires a management/ oversight body (currently TGICA) with competency spanning the breadth of the three IPCC Working Groups as well as other appropriate technical and institutional expertise.

### **1. Approving an addendum or revision to the TGICA mandate**

Considering that the landscape within which TGICA operates has evolved since the current mandate was approved in 2003, there is a need to sharpen the TGICA profile of activities. This may involve a process to supplement or revise the current mandate. The Expert Meeting suggested that this could be addressed through a prioritization of TGICA and DDC activities, accounting for IPCC internal needs and acknowledging growing external needs. A suggested prioritization of objectives for TGICA and the DDC is included as Addendum 1. The Panel may wish to approve these priorities as an addendum to the current mandate, or to establish a task group to revise the priorities in this addendum and/ or consider a revision to the TGICA mandate.

### **2. Appointment of TGICA Co-chairs and selection of TGICA members**

To ensure transparency in the appointment of TGICA Co-chairs (one from a developed country and one from a developing country or economy in transition), the Secretary of the IPCC will solicit nominations from governments and observer organizations. Co-chair nominations could be solicited following the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Panel. Following previous practice, the IPCC Chair and Bureau would be tasked with selecting recommended appointments from the list of nominations (with due consideration of the need to sustain continuity of ongoing activity and institutional knowledge), for endorsement by the Panel. In the current cycle, the appointment of TGICA Co-chairs may take place at the 44<sup>th</sup> Session of the Panel. The Panel may also consider the status of TGICA in sessions of the IPCC Bureau.

The nomination of TGICA members could continue to be aligned with the IPCC assessment cycle, lagging it by a few months to allow certain selected IPCC Lead Authors across the three Working Groups to form part of the Task Group. The Co-chairs of TGICA and of the three Working Groups will develop a slate of approximately 20 members that will be selected by the IPCC Bureau, under general guidance and review provided by the Panel.

If a TGICA member is unable to continue serving in the group part-way through the assessment cycle, the TGICA Co-chairs in consultation with the Secretariat may recommend a replacement to the IPCC Chair for approval by the IPCC Bureau and endorsement by the Panel. The recommendation should be guided by the need to maintain a regional, Working Group and gender balance in the group.

### **3. Enhancing resourcing for TGICA**

There are currently no assigned technical support resources for the ongoing TGICA operations moving into the IPCC's sixth assessment (AR6) cycle. Viable ways to address these needs are:

For near-term continuity (until any changes in TGICA are completed), to provide an equivalent of one FTE<sup>3</sup> of technical support (approximately 150k USD/year) going into the AR6 cycle. This would cover the period during which priorities and budgets for the future work of TGICA are developed for consideration in later IPCC Panel Sessions.

As one possibility, professional staff support for TGICA during the interim period could be located at the Secretariat, funded out of the IPCC Trust Fund. Alternatively, this support could be sought by the Secretariat approaching member states to second professional staff to the Secretariat or to some other appropriate institution.

For the AR6 and beyond, subject to clarity on the future composition and needs of TGICA, budgets should be developed to provide long-term continuity of support for TGICA at an appropriate level.

### **4. Enhancing resourcing for the DDC**

The DDC is currently operating at maximum capacity. There is no additional capacity to accommodate emerging AR6 needs, particularly those related to curatorship of new data used in the assessment reports or for facilitating access to new data appropriate at the decision scale. Furthermore, countries that currently provide support for the DDC operations will be revisiting their commitments and their support is not guaranteed for the AR6 cycle, which carries with it a range of consequences. To address this, the IPCC could seek support for DDC operations from a wider base of countries and/or other funders to sustain DDC operations for the existing tasks, and to enhance capacity to an appropriate level for the evolving needs of the AR6. The Panel may also request one or more other countries to support additional DDC components that will provide new regional climate data and information as well as relevant guidance material.

The document IPCC-XLIII/INF. 15, prepared by the Co-chairs of TGICA, includes a background to TGICA and the DDC.

The document IPCC-XLIII/INF. 18, includes the collated comments from governments and observer organizations on the revised TGICA vision document.

The document IPCC-XLIII/INF. 10, Rev.1, includes a summary report on the Expert Meeting on the Future of TGICA, 26-27 January 2016, Geneva.

The document IPCC-XLIII/INF. 16, includes an institutional analysis of TGICA.

The document IPCC-XLIII/INF. 17, prepared by the Co-chairs of TGICA includes information on priority objectives for TGICA and the DDC.

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<sup>3</sup> Full-time equivalent

## Priority objectives for TGICA and the DDC

As proposed at the IPCC Expert Meeting on the Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impact and Climate Analysis (TGICA) in Geneva on 26-27 January 2016, the TGICA Co-chairs have carried out a detailed mapping and prioritization of the activities of TGICA and the Data Distribution Centre (DDC) that TGICA oversees (IPCC-XLIII/ INF. 17). This has been used to identify seven priority objectives for TGICA and five priority objectives for the DDC:

### Objectives for TGICA

1. To provide oversight of the activities of the DDC, in close liaison with IPCC Working Groups.
2. To facilitate cross-Working Group access to and exchange and analysis of relevant data sets through documentation, guidance, expert meetings, workshops and training.
3. To undertake mapping exercises to identify significant external sources of data and scenario information and guidance in support of IPCC activities as well as key users of and target audiences for such information.
4. To develop and update good practice guidance materials in support of IPCC assessments.
5. To prepare and update protocols for linking to external data and preparing guidance.
6. To contribute to capacity development activities by the IPCC and other relevant organizations.
7. To build partnerships with external organizations for supporting specialist, good practice guidance on data and scenario selection, application and interpretation.

### Objectives for the DDC

1. To archive and curate IPCC-assessed datasets, including data still outstanding from the Fifth Assessment Report.
2. To curate new data sets, in close co-operation with Working Groups, for author analysis, exchange, incorporation in new assessments reports and development of derivative data products.
3. To improve accessibility to DDC materials for supporting IPCC authors as well as external users, especially in developing countries.
4. To catalogue and link reference data for key figures and tables in assessments.
5. To link to external data sets of relevance for upcoming assessments, such as the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 and Shared Socioeconomic Pathways.

These twelve objectives, backed up by the prioritized activities detailed in IPCC-XLIII/ INF. 17, form a basis for decisions concerning the future development and resourcing of TGICA and the DDC. All twelve objectives fall within the scope of the current TGICA mandate, and this prioritization hence serves to sharpen that mandate.