



Subject to revision

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## Translating IPCC AR5 to Business Audiences

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**The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) together with the [Cambridge Judge Business School](#) (JBS) and the [European Climate Foundation](#) (ECF) undertook to summarise the latest climate science for the business community by developing a series of business briefings based on the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). The briefings condense the key findings of the IPCC's AR5 report into clear, short and sector-specific summaries, produced in a variety of different languages.**

The briefings distil the key findings of the IPCC's AR5 report into sector-relevant insights on both mitigation and adaptation for an industry audience into short (12 pages), punchy documents. 11 sectors were covered: Buildings, Cities, Energy, Fisheries & Aquaculture, Investment and Banking, Tourism, Agriculture, Transport, Employment and Industry. The sectoral reports were produced over a short period after the IPCC Working Group III findings were published. Two more general reports were also published after the IPCC Working Group I report. One describes the process of the IPCC and the AR5, and the other summarises the physical science presented in WGI.

Each briefing report had an author with some familiarity with the topic, but also strong writing skills. They were all reviewed by both academic experts and also supportive business representatives, to ensure both accuracy and accessibility. The University of Cambridge and ECF both took a strong editorial role to maintain quality. Finally IPCC authors were consulted in each case to ensure the result was a faithful translation of IPCC findings. Each briefing also had a partner organisation with relevant expertise and networks who 'owned' that document and could help develop and promote it.

The briefings were produced in a brief, journalistic style, accessible language, and with a strong graphical content, including an infographic to summarise the key findings. All the reports are available at [www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/ipcc](http://www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/ipcc), along with standalone infographics, and pre-prepared presentations. All materials were produced on a creative commons license to encourage wide usage.

## Response

It is difficult to establish exactly how the summaries were received beyond anecdotal evidence, but, below I present some statistics and indications:

- Over 170 articles and blogs were written on the summaries worldwide
- The summaries were featured at more than 30 events, including ministerial level discussions
- The summaries were reposted on more than 120 websites within 3 months of their publication (we stopped tracking website posts after a while, so the total may be much higher)
- Supportive responses and quotes were provided from a number of businesses including Philips Sainsbury's, Asda, Ferrovial and Standard Bank

The German development agency, "Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit" (GIZ), funded a reprint and translation of the summaries into German, French and Spanish for dissemination at COP20 (Lima) and COP21 (Paris). The Clean Energy Wire (CLEW) sought national partners for the German summaries and launched the German versions in a number of high-level forums.

In the run up to COP21, CISL and ECF organised a series of five webinars – discussing the summary briefings on finance, energy, cities, agriculture and extractive industries. Over 500 people registered to attend in total, and the events had strong participation, with senior executives from a wide variety of businesses (e.g. a director of environmental risk from a major bank, an energy director from a major chemicals company, a large number of analysts and researchers from investment companies and more).



## Key insights

In delivering this project there were a number of insights that the team delivering this work identified. There is a business audience for accessibly presented climate science, but brevity, targeting and strong presentation

are all key to reach that audience. In particular:

- Business is not a single audience. The implications of climate change vary from sector to sector.
- Business readers will not be primarily interested in the detail of the scientific process, or breadth of debate, but instead want indications about what the science is saying about their activities or plans. Given that they may take the time to delve deeper, should they feel it to be required.
- Language about risk and uncertainty is fine, but needs to be presented in a form that is accessible and understood without primers or excessive detail.