

## **A Communications Strategy for the IPCC**

### **Implementation Plan**

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## Introduction

The IPCC Communications Strategy adopted by the Panel at its 35th Session, Geneva, June 2012,<sup>1</sup> is intended to provide direction on the full range of IPCC communications with the main IPCC user groups as well as with media and the public and on establishing and maintaining rapid, clear, and consistent communications. The Communications Strategy is based on the “Guidance on IPCC Communications Strategy” accepted at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Panel, Abu Dhabi, May 2011.<sup>2</sup> The working arrangements described below embody a significant amount of flexibility while adhering to the principles and philosophy of the approved guidance underlying the Communications Strategy.

While the ultimate responsibility for communications activities lies with the Panel and fundamental communications issues should be discussed within the Bureau and/or Panel, the Bureau and Executive Committee will act on the Panel’s behalf between sessions. The Executive Committee is responsible for communications on a day-to-day basis. As a practical working arrangement, and to facilitate timely and efficient decision-making, the Executive Committee will establish a fully representative subgroup, the Communications Action Team (CAT).<sup>3</sup>

The essence of a flexible implementation is that it should deal as effectively as possible with novel situations. Some of the issues these pose will be handled effectively within the existing working arrangements. Other will require new elements or new perspectives.

Whenever communications work involves novel challenges, it is important to take advantage of the collective vision of the IPCC Senior Communications Manager, the Communications Action Team, the Executive Committee and the Bureau. Even where broader consultation is not required by the Communications Strategy, it may provide great value. Pitfalls, especially for communications involving novel issues, can be avoided by expanding the range of those people commenting on tone, balance, complexity, and content.

This implementation plan covers:

- Who can speak for the IPCC;
- The decision-making process;
- Core communications tasks;
- Other implementation issues including tools and resources.

This note aims to provide clear accountability for decision-making under the communications strategy. At the same time, all who use it should exercise judgment to ensure that necessary action is carried out in an efficient and timely manner and that the working arrangements do not become a barrier to action. The decision-making process is broadly illustrated in a flowchart (Appendix I).

This implementation plan includes provision for review of communications activities but it may be that the plan itself will need to evolve over time and to be adapted, if experience shows this to be necessary. In accordance with the decision of the Panel at its 35th Session, the Executive Committee will update and develop the implementation plan as circumstances require, and will report to the Panel on any updates.

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session35/IAC\\_CommunicationStrategy.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session35/IAC_CommunicationStrategy.pdf); references to this document are as follows: CS §nn – nn indicating paragraph number

<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session33/ipcc\\_p33\\_decisions\\_taken\\_comm\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session33/ipcc_p33_decisions_taken_comm_strategy.pdf) ; references to this document are as follows: P33G x.py – indicating the paragraph (x) and page (y) respectively

<sup>3</sup> The composition and role of the Communications Action Team are explained in detail in Section 1.3.2 of this note on implementation.

# 1 PRINCIPLES, SPOKESPEOPLE AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

## 1.1 Overall Principles

1. The timeliness of different communications activities, and the people who draft and authorize them, vary with the type of activity. (CS §2)
2. The Secretariat will advise the Executive Committee, Bureau and Focal Points about new communications materials in a timely fashion, including sending copies of materials as appropriate, and will also report to them regularly on communications activities. (CS §16)
3. All those who undertake communications and information activities on behalf of the IPCC<sup>4</sup> should pay attention to any potential conflict of interest or bias, or the perception of them. (CS §21)
4. Effective external communications depend on effective internal communications. The Communications Strategy aims to foster an open and timely exchange of information among all parts of the organization. The Bureau is invited to regularly review and discuss the efficiency of internal communications (CS §9)
5. To communicate effectively, the IPCC will follow clear and consistent working arrangements that set out who is responsible for initiating, preparing and authorizing communications materials and activities, and who should be consulted or informed. (P33G 5.p6)
6. As discussed in the introduction to this note, this consistency should not be at the expense of the flexibility that allows a given communications team to draw on the insights and experience of other people in the IPCC.

## 1.2 Spokespeople and representing the IPCC

### 1.2.1 Spokespeople

7. The IPCC Chair and IPCC Vice-Chairs are the lead spokespeople for the organization as a whole, and may delegate. (CS §19)
8. The Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs<sup>5</sup> (and, in the case of the Synthesis Report, the IPCC Chair) are the lead spokespeople for their reports and related matters, and may delegate. After publication, Co-Chairs or the IPCC Chair may ask Working Group Vice-Chairs and report authors to speak on behalf of the IPCC on their areas of expertise. (CS §§10, 19-20)
9. The Secretary reports on the IPCC to United Nations meetings and may represent it at such meetings, with the concurrence of the Chair.
10. The Secretary may also speak on activities and Procedures of the IPCC and institutional matters. (CS §19) The IPCC Chair or Co-Chairs may ask the Secretary to speak about the content of IPCC products.
11. The Senior Communications Manager is the initial point of contact for media. In some instances, media will make direct contact with people associated with the IPCC (see footnote 4). In cases where they are approached as representatives of the IPCC, they should inform the Senior Communications Manager and are encouraged to consult with him/her. (P33G 5.p6, CS §11)
12. The Senior Communications Manager may also provide background and procedural information on approved reports and IPCC Procedures. (P33G 5.p6)

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<sup>4</sup> This may include the IPCC Executive Committee, other elected members of the IPCC Bureau, and staff members of the IPCC Secretariat and of any of the Technical Support Units, as well as Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors and Review Editors involved in preparing the reports.

<sup>5</sup> The Technical Support Units play an important role in communications for their respective Working Groups/Task Force (or Synthesis Report). References to the Co-Chairs in this note will often in practice mean their TSUs, where the Co-Chairs have delegated responsibility for communications to the TSUs.

## 1.2.2 Representing the IPCC

13. All those speaking on behalf of the IPCC should be mindful that publicly advocating or expressing personal opinions about climate change, and especially climate change policies, may jeopardize the reputation of the IPCC.
14. Bureau members, authors and review editors must make it clear when they are talking in another capacity and not representing the IPCC. The media and public will not always observe this distinction so speakers should bear in mind when talking that they may be perceived as representing the IPCC in any case. (CS §21). Authors are encouraged to talk about their areas of expertise, but must make it clear when they are speaking in their own right as an expert, rather than representing the IPCC. (P33G 6.p7)
15. The most visible IPCC officials (Chair, Vice-Chairs, Co-Chairs) should be particularly careful as their statements are likely to be attributed to the IPCC, in whatever capacity they speak, and because even carefully phrased statements may be misunderstood. If possible such officials should consult with the Senior Communications Manager before making public statements. (CS §21)
16. Bureau members, staff, authors and review editors must make it clear that honours attributed to the IPCC are attributed to the organization, and not to any individual. The Secretariat will prepare a standard clarification that can be used by IPCC speakers and issued to media, conference organizers, etc when honours are wrongly attributed. (P33G 6.p7)
17. Bureau members are advised to refrain from writing prefaces, forewords or recommendations in reports of interest groups in their capacity as an IPCC Bureau member, because others may perceive this as a form of advocacy. In case a Bureau member still wants to write a preface, foreword or recommendation in his /her capacity as an IPCC Bureau member, he/she is encouraged to consult with the Senior Communications Manager, and in all cases will inform the Senior Communications Manager. (P33G 6.p7)
18. All those who speak on behalf of the IPCC are strongly encouraged to undergo media training. This can range from general training for lead authors at a meeting to one-off specific training. Media training will include the distinction between speaking for the IPCC and for other bodies. (CS §22)

## 1.3 Decision-making process

### 1.3.1 Principles

19. The decision-making process for communications materials and activities varies with the type of document or activity and the time available. It must be fully representative, timely and efficient. It respects the IPCC's commitment to objectivity, accuracy, transparency and high scientific standards. It also relies on the Senior Communications Manager for expert advice, to ensure that media needs and practices as well as coordination and coherence are respected, in order to be fully effective. (CS §2)
20. The decision-making process for core communications tasks is described in the section 2, and broadly illustrated in the flowchart in Appendix I.
21. The authorization of communications products needs tailor-made planning that is agreed in advance for each product to ensure a smooth process that may take place under high time pressure, taking into account logistical and practical challenges. The general steps that need to be considered are:
  - a. *Description of tasks and responsibilities* of the individuals involved.  
Normally these tasks will be:
    - i. Co-ordination of the preparation, production, and release of the communications product;
    - ii. Drafting the text;
    - iii. Consultations;

- iv. Checks that essential consultations have taken place;
- v. Authorization;
- vi. Before releasing the product to the public, checks that correct authorization has taken place.

b. *Documentation.* During preparation it is essential to have master version management, and to keep everyone who is involved informed about content and process. Preferably this should be in the hands of one person with back-up. It is recommended to archive all correspondence related to the preparation of a communications product, as that may be useful for a possible subsequent evaluation. The checks on consultation and authorization before the actual release must be documented as well. The person that provides the final authorization of the content will seek consensus, and will take full responsibility for the final version. Issued communication material will be recorded by the Secretariat.

### **1.3.2 Communications Action Team (CAT) (CS §12)**

- 22. To facilitate timely and efficient decision-making, the Executive Committee operates through a sub-group called the Communications Action Team (CAT) as a practical working arrangement for communications activities.
- 23. The CAT has a number of roles. It is responsible for taking decisions when rapid responses are required (section 2.3.2). It may be consulted on the preparation of launch plans for reports and of communications materials for the launch and further communication of reports (section 2.2.1), and on plans to participate in major conferences (section 2.2.2). It may also be consulted on responses to complex queries, on interview requests, and other proactive communications activities as appropriate. Otherwise its role is to share information and to help coordinate communications activities
- 24. The CAT is fully representative of all parts of the IPCC, as reflected in the Executive Committee, enabling it to see the broad perspective, but it is small enough to be agile and fast. The IPCC Chair will ensure that the composition of the CAT is fully representative.
- 25. The full CAT (with deputies in parentheses) comprises:
  - i. The IPCC Chair (one of the IPCC Vice-Chairs)<sup>6</sup>
  - ii. An IPCC Vice-Chair (another IPCC Vice-Chair)
  - iii. A Representative of each Working Group/Task Force (designated deputy). The respective Co-Chairs will designate the representative and deputy.
  - iv. The Secretary (Deputy Secretary)
  - v. The Senior Communications Manager (Communications Officer)
 Representatives of a Working Group/Task Force on the CAT will regularly consult with and inform all the relevant Co-Chairs.
- 26. If a member of the CAT is not available, the deputy takes their position automatically to ensure timeliness and efficiency. Members of the CAT representing a part of the IPCC are accountable to that part of the IPCC that they represent.
- 27. The CAT is chaired by the IPCC Chair or an IPCC Vice-Chair deputizing for the IPCC Chair, in line with the working arrangements for the Executive Committee.
- 28. The CAT operates by consensus, not by voting. If there is no consensus, the CAT Chair may take the final decision, having regard to the weight of opinion in the team, and recording the differences. The CAT Chair authorizes actions and the release of materials resulting from a CAT decision.

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<sup>6</sup> To ensure continuity, the IPCC Vice-Chair listed under point ii will be the one to deputize for the IPCC Chair. In this case another IPCC Vice-Chair will deputize for him or her.

29. In matters involving a single Working Group/Task Force, or issues requiring speedy drafting, the CAT may work with smaller numbers as appropriate to the situation, at the suggestion of the Senior Communications Manager, while keeping the full Executive Committee and CAT informed.
30. The CAT may also decide to invite additional members, including external consultants.
31. The CAT will inform the Executive Committee of its decisions and activities and consult with the Executive Committee as needed. The Executive Committee reviews the activities of the CAT at regular intervals and at least every six months on the basis of reports from the CAT.
32. The Secretariat will provide reports on communication activities to the Panel and Bureau.
33. The CAT also meets regularly to coordinate and brainstorm on communications activities and at short notice on specific matters.
34. The Senior Communications Manager, who acts as secretary of the CAT, may call meetings of the CAT at the request of any member of the CAT and with the agreement of the CAT Chair.

## **2 HANDLING CORE COMMUNICATIONS TASKS**

### **2.1 Day-to-day communications (CS §3)**

#### **2.1.1 Activities**

35. Information on the way the IPCC works is an important opportunity to reinforce the message that the IPCC does not engage in advocacy, as well as highlighting its Procedures and adherence to them. The IPCC's communications aim to promote understanding in the media and among IPCC user groups of both the IPCC's scientific messages and of how the IPCC works as an organization.
36. The main IPCC users groups are governments and policy-makers. The IPCC also communicates with media, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, scientists and other stakeholders and user groups. (CS §§4,5,7)
37. Communications must be timely and can be proactive or reactive, for instance announcing forthcoming releases of reports, announcing decisions to prepare a new report, announcing important meetings or other activities such as the scholarship programme, informing and liaising with organizations in the United Nations system, responding to media queries, clarifying misunderstandings about the IPCC, tackling factual errors in reporting on the IPCC and its work and responding to requests for speakers at conferences. (CS §2)
38. The IPCC parent organizations – World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – may also be able to help clarify the IPCC's role in the public domain.
39. The Senior Communications Manager will maintain regular informal contact with the media, including media in developing countries, and promote outreach in all official United Nations languages. This will involve monitoring the media and drawing up a database of journalists who follow environment, climate and related issues. The Focal Points could be invited to assist in building this database. (CS §7)
40. The Senior Communications Manager will handle queries from the media or other IPCC user groups coming into the IPCC and consult as appropriate with the Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs (or IPCC Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report), the Secretary or other appropriate person in a timely manner.
41. If media queries or queries from other IPCC user groups seeking straightforward factual information come in directly to a Working Group/Task Force or the Secretariat, and the query falls squarely in their area, they can handle the query directly in the interests of timeliness and efficiency.

42. Interview requests received by the Senior Communications Manager or Secretariat will be passed to the most appropriate spokesperson. If members of the Executive Committee receive interview requests directly they should, in case of major interview requests and where time allows, consult with the Senior Communications Manager. This will allow a wider group to be informed and give the Senior Communications Manager the opportunity to provide advice and suggest points that could be highlighted.<sup>7</sup>
43. Where an interview request with a short deadline comes in directly to a Working Group/Task Force Co-Chair, or the IPCC Chair or IPCC Vice-Chairs, they may respond directly, and inform the Senior Communications Manager afterwards.
44. All such Executive Committee members or staff who are interviewed should request copies of the interview (print, pdf, link, or video/audio) and pass it on to the Senior Communications Manager, who will archive them and make them available to the Executive Committee. The Senior Communications Manager also will collect major questions raised in queries and interviews as well as answers provided and share them with the Executive Committee so that the IPCC can respond effectively and in a coherent manner to media concerns and requests for information from other users of IPCC material.
45. Bureau members, authors and review editors may be approached directly by the media, or while speaking at meetings, to give a comment on scientific advances since a report was approved, or to comment on a topical issue. They are free to speak about approved and accepted reports, the outline of reports under production, and the current stage of production of a report, but the scientific contents of a report remain confidential until approved. They may discuss their own research, and their understanding of the state of knowledge, in their own right (See section 1.2 on Spokespeople).
46. The Secretariat, in consultation with the IPCC Chair and Co-Chairs, will provide guidance to authors and other people who may speak on behalf of the IPCC that inter alia will cover the avoidance of advocacy, and speaking when also representing institutions other than the IPCC.
47. Bureau members and the Secretary who receive direct requests to speak at events or contribute media articles in their capacity as IPCC representatives may accept them (and delegate them). They must inform the Senior Communications Manager.
48. The Secretariat will maintain a Joint Outreach Activity Calendar listing planned and invited activities such as speaking at conferences. Bureau members and Technical Support Units are encouraged to enter relevant activities on this calendar.
49. The Senior Communications Manager will keep the CAT informed of major day-to-day communications activities.

### **2.1.2 Decision-making process for day-to-day communications**

50. The CAT provides overall guidance on the day-to-day communications activities discussed in the previous section (2.1.1).
51. The CAT delegates decision-making for these activities to the Senior Communications Manager, who provides regular reports to the CAT on them, and will consult with the CAT or individual Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs as appropriate. The Senior Communications Manager will consult the CAT on complex and contentious matters. In such cases it may be agreed to use a wider consultation and decision-making process as outlined in Appendix I and/or to seek advice from the Executive Committee.

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<sup>7</sup> These arrangements apply to members of the Executive Committee, Technical Support Units and Secretariat. See paragraphs 45 and 46 for arrangements for other Bureau members, authors and review editors.

52. Where complex and potentially contentious matters involve only one Working Group/Task Force, the representative or designated deputy of the relevant Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs and the Senior Communications Manager will handle them. They prepare responses jointly, the Co-Chairs or representative authorize them and decide with the Senior Communications Manager how they will be released; the Senior Communications Manager informs the CAT. The Senior Communications Manager may suggest expanding this group to other members of the CAT.
53. For simple, non-contentious matters involving a single Working Group/Task Force, and requiring a timely response, such as a simple factual media query or interview request targeting a specific area, the relevant Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs can act alone, while informing the CAT through the Senior Communications Manager, as appropriate. Again, they are encouraged to use the broader CAT membership as a resource as appropriate if time allows.
54. For complex or contentious queries on organizational matters, the Senior Communications Manager will consult with the Secretary, and will consult the Chair and/or Vice-Chairs and/or Co-Chairs. The CAT may be consulted if necessary. The Secretary and Senior Communications Manager prepare responses jointly. The Secretary authorizes the response; the Senior Communications Manager informs the CAT.
55. For other communications activities or materials, such as those in paragraph 37, the respective Co-Chairs will authorize those related to a report of their Working Group/Task Force, and the Secretary will authorize those related to general and organizational matters after consultations as appropriate.

## **2.2 Launch of reports, conference participation and other planned communications activities (CS §3)**

### **2.2.1 Launch of reports (P33G 5.p7)**

#### **2.2.1.1 Communications plans for the launch of reports**

56. Assessment Reports, Synthesis Reports, Special Reports, Methodology Reports and Technical Papers are the main products of the IPCC. The Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs are responsible for communications activities around reports in their areas, while the IPCC Chair is responsible for communications on the Synthesis Report.
57. Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs (or in the case of the Synthesis Report the IPCC Chair) will appoint a liaison person to work with the Secretariat on communications activities on that report.
58. Well in advance of the publication of a report, a communications plan will be drawn up to handle the launch and subsequent communications (See section 2.2.1.4 for the drafting and authorization procedures for this plan).
59. The plan will include budgeting for events from all sources (for example, funding may be possible through the approved IPCC budget, other United Nations organizations, earmarked bilateral funding or in-kind contributions) while maintaining IPCC independence. The plan will include budgeting for continuing outreach after the launch of the Summary for Policymakers, including the presentation of the underlying report and subsequent activities.
60. As far as is practical, people representing the IPCC at media events for the launch of reports should undergo media training before the event.
61. The CAT will evaluate the plan and its implementation after the release of the underlying report and related outreach activities.



### **2.2.1.2 Communications materials and activities for report launches**

62. The plan may include advance pro-active briefings and statements for the media by the Senior Communications Manager and the Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs (or the IPCC Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report) responsible for the report, to ensure that media are aware that the report is coming and understand the process underlying the assessment, without going into substance of the report. It will include where appropriate the launch of the Summary for Policymakers, release of the full report, and subsequent communications and outreach activities.
63. The plan will include press statements grounded in key messages from the approved report and supporting materials (such as the selection process for authors and their affiliations); briefings and presentations for various IPCC user groups; communications materials; and plans for partnership activities with United Nations organizations and others as appropriate. It should also indicate options on how the IPCC can support Focal Points in their communications activities (see also 2.2.1.3).
64. For a Summary for Policymakers, the plan should include a webcast global press conference to launch the report. If time allows this should be rehearsed. The webcast material may be archived for use on the website and elsewhere; alternatively, if time and funding allow, the press conference should be filmed for subsequent archiving on the website and elsewhere.
65. Press materials issued for the launch of reports should be made available in all six official United Nations languages to the extent feasible, although translations may not be available until later.
66. All such press materials, in the original or other languages, will be distributed to Bureau members and to Focal Points. The IPCC welcomes translations into other, non-United Nations languages by governments and will support these efforts e.g. by the provision of documents and figures. (CS §§15-16)

### **2.2.1.3 Local and regional events**

67. The plan should look at the possibility of local launches, briefings and seminars that can highlight regional issues, fully based on the IPCC report content. These would include briefings for policy-makers and the scientific community, as well as the media. The United Nations Department of Press and Information, the IPCC parent organizations UNEP and WMO, including their regional offices, and the Focal Points, among others, may be able to help with these events.
68. Briefings for policy-makers and the local scientific community are of particular value to developing countries. These countries can benefit from tailor-made outreach activities (subject to the availability of resources), taking into account their specific requirements: for example, it may be appropriate to focus on publicizing material via radio rather than print media.
69. To the extent feasible, materials for these events should be made available in the appropriate official United Nations language. The IPCC welcomes translations into other, non-United Nations languages by governments and will support these efforts, e.g. by the provision of documents and figures.

### **2.2.1.4 Decision-making process for launch and further communication of reports**

70. The Secretariat (including the Senior Communications Manager) and the Co-Chairs of the relevant Working Group/Task Force or their designated representatives jointly prepare communications plans for the release of Working Group/Task Force reports (see section 2.2.1.1). They may prepare these plans in consultation with the Bureau of the relevant Working Group/Task Force. The IPCC Chair together with the respective Co-Chairs authorize the plans.

71. The Secretariat (including the Senior Communications Manager) and the IPCC Chair jointly prepare communications plans for the Synthesis Report. The IPCC Chair in consultation with the IPCC Vice-Chairs and Working Group Co-Chairs authorizes the communications plans.
72. The Working Groups/Task Force Co-Chairs, or IPCC Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report, together with the Senior Communications Manager, and in consultation with the CAT as time allows prepare specific communications materials (i.e. press releases, media lines, key messages and slides for presentations) (see section 2.2.1.2). The respective Co-Chairs, or IPCC Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report, authorize them. (P33G 5.p7)
73. The Senior Communications Manager will inform the CAT of these plans and activities in a timely manner.

## **2.2.2 Conference participation (CS §3)**

### **2.2.2.1 Communication plans for conference participation**

74. When the Executive Committee decides that a major international conference, such as the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, warrants substantial IPCC representation, the Secretariat will prepare a plan to ensure that the IPCC makes the best use of those attending, and is effective in delivering its messages. See section 2.2.2.2 for the drafting and authorization procedures for this plan.
75. This plan would include liaison with other United Nations organizations or organizers as appropriate, budgeting, preparation of side events and exhibits, and planning for statements, speeches, media events and press releases.
76. To the extent possible, people delivering speeches and statements on behalf of the IPCC, especially to major international conferences, will circulate them in advance to the CAT for consultation and input.
77. Press statements for such conferences will be drafted and authorized in line with the procedures in section 2.2.2.2. The Secretariat will circulate them to the CAT in advance for comment, and distribute them to the Bureau and Focal Points.
78. Executive Committee and other Bureau members attending other major conferences in an IPCC role are requested to inform the Secretariat via the Outreach Calendar so that the best use can be made of their presence for outreach activities. (See paragraph 76 on the desirability of circulating materials to the CAT in advance if possible.)

### **2.2.2.2 Decision-making process for conference participation**

79. The Secretariat will prepare plans for participation in major international conferences and consult with the relevant Co-Chairs and IPCC Chair (see section 2.2.2.1). If needed, and time permitting, the CAT will be consulted. The relevant Co-Chairs, or in the case of over-arching activities, the IPCC Chair will authorize these plans.
80. The Secretariat and relevant Co-Chairs or IPCC Chair will draft press statements for major international conferences, and circulate them in advance to the CAT for comment. The relevant Co-Chairs or IPCC Chair will authorize them. The Secretariat will issue the press statements and distribute final materials to the Bureau and Focal Points, for information.

## **2.2.3 Other planned communications activities**

### **2.2.3.1 Examples of other planned communications activities**

81. Besides the core activities described in previous sections, the IPCC may want to undertake other planned communications activities. Such activities will often be directed towards the second goal described in §1 of the Communications

Strategy: explaining the way the IPCC works. These could include, but are not limited to:

- press releases on matters not related to reports, conferences or rapid response, for example on the Scholarship Programme;
  - other situations where the IPCC Executive Committee takes the initiative to communicate proactively, because an appropriate opportunity presents itself; and
  - material explaining how the IPCC works, including addressing common misunderstandings.
82. Other communications activities also include workshops and briefings on the way the IPCC works and the process for preparing reports for media and other IPCC user groups including briefings or seminars for host countries on the occasion of IPCC Sessions and meetings.
83. Such workshops, especially in developing countries, could include training on climate science and briefings for media, junior scientists and decision-makers. The IPCC's meetings schedule offers many opportunities to include these activities, perhaps bringing in outside media experts or working with partners.
84. The Secretariat may produce additional information materials such as brochures and posters, and will consult with the Working Groups/Task Force (and Synthesis Report TSU) on scientific content as appropriate. The Working Groups/Task Force will inform the IPCC Secretariat about information material produced by them and provide the Secretariat with copies for archiving.
85. The Senior Communications Manager will inform the CAT of these plans and activities in a timely manner.

#### **2.2.3.2 Decision-making process for other planned activities**

86. Briefings or seminars organized on the occasion of Lead Author meetings, expert meetings and workshops are prepared by the relevant Working Group/Task Force in consultation with the Senior Communications Manager.
87. Any member of the Executive Committee in consultation with the Senior Communications Manager, and the Senior Communications Manager him/herself, may make a proposal to the CAT for a specific proactive communications activity.
88. For major new communications activities, the Secretariat or Working Groups/Task Force will consult the CAT. The CAT will specify who is responsible for drafting and authorizing such activities, in line with the principles laid out elsewhere in this note for core communications in section 1.3 and relevant subsections of sections 2.1 and 2.2.
89. All major proactive communications activities must be brought to the attention of the Senior Communications Manager and co-ordinated as required to assure consistency with other communication activities and to prevent interference with them.

### **2.3 Rapid response (P33G 5.p6, CS §3)**

#### **2.3.1 General considerations**

90. Sometimes the IPCC needs to respond rapidly to media enquiries or breaking stories, including acknowledging allegations of errors in IPCC reports, and responding to incorrect coverage of IPCC work or Procedures. This may affect a single Working Group/Task Force or the whole organization.
91. Where a thorough investigation under the error protocol conflicts with the need for a rapid response to media, the Senior Communications Manager, in consultation with the current Co-Chairs (or Chair for an alleged error in the Synthesis Report), will issue follow-up statements as appropriate until it is possible to issue a final statement saying whether the alleged error has been upheld or not.
92. It is understood that not all critical or erroneous reports require a rapid response, or any response at all.

93. After a media incident has been handled with a rapid response, the Senior Communications Manager will review the case and prepare an analysis for the Executive Committee to ensure that appropriate lessons are learnt.

### **2.3.2 Decision-making processes for rapid response (P33G 5.p6)**

94. Informing the CAT, working on a response, and authorizing action, are three different processes that may involve different sets of people, as laid out in the flowchart in Appendix I.
95. Any member of the CAT who believes a situation is developing that requires a rapid response will contact the CAT Chair and Senior Communications Manager requesting an immediate meeting of the CAT preferably within 12 hours and no later than 24 hours. This meeting would comprise at least the CAT Chair, a representative of relevant Co-Chairs, and the Senior Communications Manager in the case of a report-related issue, (in the case of the Synthesis Report at least the IPCC Chair, an IPCC Vice-Chair and the Senior Communications Manager), and at least the CAT Chair, Secretary and Senior Communications Manager in the case of organizational issues.
96. If Focal Points or members of the Bureau believe a situation is developing that merits a rapid response, they are invited to alert the Senior Communications Manager or Secretary who will consult the CAT and recommend whether to initiate a meeting, as described in paragraph 95. The Senior Communications Manager or Secretary will inform the Focal Point or Bureau member whether the matter is to be handled as a rapid response or dealt with under day-to-day queries, and keep them informed of the outcome. The Secretariat will set up a specific communications address to ensure that such alerts are not overlooked.
97. Unless a factual statement that resolves a situation can be issued within four hours, the Senior Communications Manager is authorized, without further consultation, to issue a holding statement on the lines of: "We are aware of the issue and we are investigating." The next statement will be issued within 24 hours in accordance with what is described in the following paragraphs.
98. The CAT will draft a response. It may delegate the drafting of a response to one or more people, paying due regard to timeliness and scientific accuracy.
99. The CAT Chair will authorize statements or courses of action, working to a deadline. It is encouraged to operate as broadly as possible, in the spirit of consultation mentioned in the introduction: The composition of the CAT for these meetings is as in paragraph 95. See paragraph 28 for the resolution of disagreement within the CAT and accountability for its decisions.
100. In rapid response cases, the CAT will work with a checklist<sup>8</sup>, which *inter alia* describes how to respond, frequency of meetings, whether to bring in external experts or other organizations and informing the Executive Committee. It works to firm deadlines respecting the media cycle.

## **2.4 Provision of scientific and technical advice and guidelines to relevant United Nations bodies (CS §3)**

101. IPCC Reports and Technical Papers are the main products to be provided to United Nations bodies. They should be made available, to the extent feasible in the 6 official UN languages, to the IPCC parent organizations WMO and UNEP, the UNFCCC, the Office of the UN Secretary-General and all UN bodies registered as IPCC observer organizations, as well as to any other UN body upon request.
102. UN bodies may also ask for presentations and briefings on IPCC activities and about the content of IPCC reports. The IPCC Secretariat as the principle point of contact and liaison with any UN body will consult with the relevant Working

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<sup>8</sup> The checklist will be a separate document

103. To enhance overall cooperation with the UN system and facilitate the provision of IPCC information, the Senior Communications Manager will participate in the UN communications group on climate change.
104. If the Secretariat receives a specific request for information, e.g. input to a speech by the UN Secretary-General, the Senior Communications Manager will consult with the relevant Working Groups/Task Force on how to respond. Should such a request be received directly by a Working Group/Task Force they will refer it to the Secretariat and consult with the Senior Communications Manager and Secretary on how to respond. The working arrangements outlined in 2.1.2 should be used in case of complex queries.
105. UN bodies offer an opportunity to disseminate IPCC knowledge to wider audiences. Therefore the Secretariat will explore partnership activities with the WMO, UNEP and other relevant UN bodies.

### **3 TOOLS AND RESOURCES**

#### **3.1 Communications tools**

##### **3.1.1 General considerations**

106. The Secretariat will monitor, evaluate and where appropriate take advantage of new technologies and practices to enhance IPCC communications activities.

##### **3.1.2 Websites (CS §18)**

107. The Secretariat will regularly review the IPCC website to ensure content is up to date, to improve user-friendliness and navigability and to benefit where useful from the latest technology and practices. The Working Groups, Task Force and Synthesis Report Technical Support Units will ensure their websites are as consistent as possible with the IPCC website and keep content, navigation and technology under review.
108. The websites serve different stakeholders, including (but not only) governments, the scientific community and the media.
109. The main IPCC site should be the principal point of entry, and the Secretariat will work to ensure that it provides access to all IPCC products in easy to navigate and searchable form. Given that many people start with Working Group/Task Force or Synthesis Report sites, the Working Groups/Task Force and Synthesis Report TSU will ensure that navigation is easy from there too.
110. The Secretariat will ensure that core IPCC documents such as the IPCC Principles and Procedures (including the Error Protocol and Conflict of Interest Policy), all completed reports and other relevant material including the calendar of events and meetings are clearly signposted.
111. Public information about works in progress will reside on Working Group/Task Force sites, while published products will also migrate to the main site, mirrored on the relevant Working Group/Task Force (and Synthesis Report TSU) site. The Secretariat and Working Groups/Task Force (and Synthesis Report TSU) will cooperate to ensure that this happens.
112. The Working Groups/Task Force (and Synthesis Report TSU) will publish the names and affiliations of authors on websites as soon as the selection process is completed, with a link to the relevant procedures governing selection, and to the relevant report. This material too will migrate to the main site in the same way as the report (see paragraph 111).

113. After finalization of a report, the IPCC website and relevant Working Group/Task Force website will post first and second-order drafts, comments and responses, all clearly signposted.
114. Working Groups (and the Synthesis Report TSU) will display accepted FAQs from their reports separately on their websites, and the Task Force will display FAQs relating to technical matters addressed by the Task Force, besides their inclusion in the reports published on the websites. This material too will migrate to the main site in the same way as the report (see paragraph 111).
115. Material describing the organization and processes of the IPCC will be posted on the main IPCC website. For consistency, Working Group/Task Force websites should use this material.
116. The websites will also provide glossaries from the reports and IPCC Supporting Material (including material prepared by the Task Group on Scenarios for Climate and Impact Assessment (TGICA) and the Database of Greenhouse Gas Emission Factors (EFDB) as well as material authorized for this purpose by the CAT in consultation with the relevant Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs or IPCC Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report.
117. The IPCC main website will provide clear entry points for users of IPCC material that has been translated into other United Nations languages, while indicating that the English-language pages carry a greater volume of material that is more regularly updated.
118. The website will include a clear entry point for media to facilitate their enquiries about the IPCC and its products.

### **3.1.3 Social media**

119. Social media have become an essential tool for communicating with the media. Disciplined use of social media can spread awareness among the media of IPCC activities, for instance forthcoming press conferences and report releases, as well as communicating key messages from the reports.
120. The Secretariat will keep the use of social media under review to ensure the IPCC is benefiting from up-to-date technology and practices. (CS §18)

## **3.2 Communications resources (CS § 23)**

121. Financial and human resources for communication activities will be provided by the budget allocated from the IPCC Trust Fund and may be supplemented through additional funds that the Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs or IPCC Chair are able to secure from other sources for specific communications activities, while maintaining IPCC independence. Obtaining such funds must not affect the IPCC adversely. The Secretariat will provide the Panel with reports about resources available and activities carried out. (CS §23)
122. The Secretariat and Working Groups/Task Force may use consultants to supplement IPCC staff if needed, provided there is full transparency about their role and how they were selected. (CS §23, P33G 7.p8)
123. The IPCC Secretariat should make standby arrangements to access crisis communications services that can support rapid responses. It will select an individual or company according to WMO rules, and the Chair and Co-Chairs will be consulted to the extent feasible. The Secretariat will brief the selected individual or company about how the IPCC works. (CS §23)
124. The Secretariat and Working Groups/Task Force Co-Chairs should also look at the possibility of sharing media resources used in one part of the organization, taking budgetary implications into account.
125. For regional or complex communications issues, the IPCC can draw on the resources of the United Nations Department of Press and Information (DPI) and of partner and parent organizations such as the United Nations Environment

Programme (UNEP) or the United Nations Economic Commissions. Other similar forms of cooperation should be sought.

126. Networks of communications experts from the United Nations system, the academic community, business and NGOs can also provide advice.
127. It is important not to overlook the specific communications needs of all countries, especially developing countries, and linguistic challenges. (CS §8)
128. IPCC media resources and planning should strive to reflect the fact that different countries have different media requirements and needs (see for example paragraph 68). (CS §8)
129. DPI, UNEP, WMO and United Nations Economic Commissions and informal expert networks can help with IPCC communications. The flexibility to add regional resources, even on a consultant basis, should be retained in order to better serve the communications needs of a group of countries.

## **4 OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

### **4.1 Evaluation metrics (P33G 8.p8)**

130. The Secretariat will provide the Panel with a consolidated progress report including forward-looking proposals on communications. (CS §13)
131. This report will consider metrics looking at the impact of the IPCC in the media. Options could include quantitative monitoring of reports mentioning IPCC, in general and tied to specific events, and impact assessments. However, many such metrics are heavily weighted to online and social media. Reliable qualitative metrics that are affordable and not too labour-intensive need to be identified.

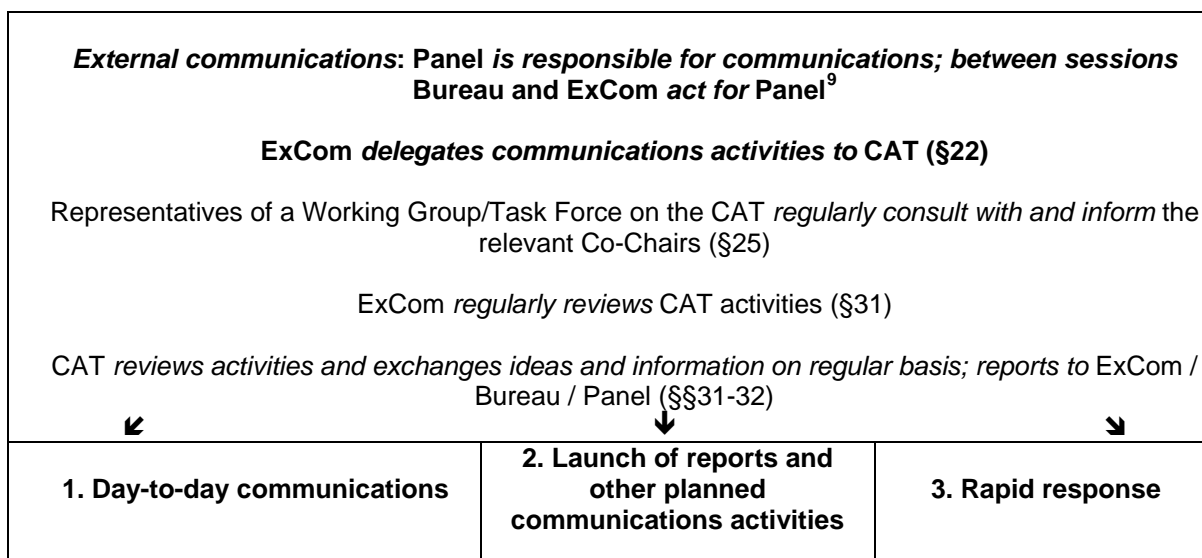
### **4.2 Media training (P33G 5.p7)**

132. The Secretariat, working with the Working Groups/Task Force Co-Chairs, will endeavour to offer media training to all those who may speak for the IPCC. All are encouraged to take this training before speaking on behalf of the IPCC. (CS §22)
133. Media training will be offered both generally and for one-off needs. The provision of media training is subject to available resources. (CS §22)

### **4.3 Language (P33G 4.p5)**

134. The Secretariat will issue major press and other statements, as far as practically feasible, in all six United Nations languages. In many cases, especially in rapid response, they will be issued first in English. (CS §15)

**Appendix I – Flowchart broadly illustrating the decision-making process**



**Key**

- Authorizes Takes the decision to approve the text of a statement and issue it, or approve a plan or action, and arranges to have it released through the appropriate channels (see paragraph 21)
- CAT Communications Action Team (The CAT operates by consensus, in the configurations described in this note, with the CAT Chair taking decisions in line with the prevailing view in case of deadlock, as in the ExCom. Effectively, the CAT Chair is responsible for CAT decisions. It is fully representative of the ExCom.)
- Chair Understood to be IPCC Chair unless CAT Chair is specified
- CM Senior Communications Manager
- Co-Chair Understood to be one or more relevant Working Group/Task Force Co-Chairs
- Drafting Team One or more people appointed by the CAT to draft a statement or response; the CAT could also make itself the drafting team
- ExCom Executive Committee
- Launch Plan The plan for communicating a report on publication and subsequent outreach activities (**not** a plan for approving the report itself!)
- Organizational Relating to questions about procedures, the institution, the organization, or questions affecting the whole IPCC
- Report-related Relating to an individual report; typically in the area of responsibility of a single Working Group
- S/IPCC Secretary of the IPCC
- WG Working Group/Task Force (if not specified, the relevant Working Group or Task Force or their Co-Chairs)

*See Tables 1-3 below*

<sup>9</sup> IPCC-33 Guidance; Preamble, last paragraph



<b>1. Day-to-day communications (section 2.1)</b>					
↓		↓		↓	
<b>Report-related</b> <i>(if query comes into Secretariat, CM refers to appropriate WG)</i> ↙ ↘		<b>Organizational</b> <i>(if query comes into WG, WG refers to CM)</i> ↓ CM consults with S/IPCC ↙ ↘		<b>Interviews</b> ↙ ↘	
<b>Complex query</b> <i>(Non-routine and potentially contentious) (§52)</i> ↓	<b>Simple query</b> <i>(Simple non-contentious request for factual data) (§§41, 53)</i> ↓	↙ ↘		<b>Wide-ranging interview</b> <i>(Request would benefit from broader consultation)</i> ↓	<b>Simple, urgent</b> <i>(Sent directly to Chair, Vice-Chairs or Co-Chair, non-contentious, local media and/or urgent deadline) (§43)</i> ↓
Co-Chairs and CM <i>draft and may consult</i> CAT (§23) ↓ Co-Chairs <i>authorize response</i> (§52) ↓ Secretariat or WG <i>issue response</i> ↓ Secretariat <i>records response</i> ↓ CM <i>informs</i> CAT (§21)	Co-Chairs <i>draft</i> ↓  Co-Chairs <i>authorize response</i> (§53) ↓ Co-Chair <i>informs</i> CAT through CM as <i>appropriate</i>	<b>Complex or contentious query</b> (§54) ↓  S/IPCC and CM <i>draft, consult Chair/Vice-chairs/Co-chairs and may consult</i> CAT ↓ S/IPCC <i>authorizes response</i> (§54) ↓ Secretariat <i>issues and records response</i>  CM <i>informs</i> CAT (§21)	<b>Straightforward factual request about procedures or organization</b> (§41) ↓  CM <i>drafts</i> ↓ S/IPCC <i>authorizes response</i> (§55) ↓ CM <i>issues response</i> ↓ CM <i>informs</i> CAT as <i>appropriate</i>	Whoever receives request <i>consults</i> CM; <i>if received in Secretariat</i> CM passes to <i>appropriate</i> ExCom member (§42) ↓ CM <i>may consult</i> CAT (§23) ↓ CM <i>forwards comments and suggestions to interviewee</i> ↓ Interviewee <i>requests copy, forwards to</i> CM (§44)	Chair, Vice-Chair or Co-Chair <i>conducts interview</i> ↓ <i>informs</i> CM ↓ <i>forwards copy if available to</i> CM (§44)

<b>2. Launch of reports and other planned communications activities (section 2.2)</b>		
↙		↘
↙		↘
<b>Report launch (section 2.2.1)</b>		<b>Participation in major international conferences (section 2.2.2)</b>
<b>Working Group reports</b> ↓	<b>Synthesis reports</b> ↓	ExCom <i>authorizes participation in major event</i> (2.2.2.1, §74) ↓
<b>Launch plan</b> (section 2.2.1.1, §70)  CM and Co-Chair <i>initiate</i> ↓ Co-Chairs, Secretariat <i>draft</i> ↓ They <i>may consult with</i> relevant WG Bureau, ↓ Chair, relevant Co-Chairs <i>authorize</i> ↓ CM <i>informs</i> CAT, WG <i>informs</i> WG Bureau	<b>Launch plan</b> (section 2.2.1.1, §71)  CM and Chair <i>initiate</i> ↓ Chair, Secretariat <i>draft</i> ↓ They <i>consult with</i> Vice-Chairs, Co-Chairs ↓ Chair <i>authorizes</i> ↓ CM <i>informs</i> CAT	Secretariat <i>drafts communications plan, consults</i> Chair/Co-Chairs; <i>may consult</i> CAT (§79) ↓ Co-Chairs or Chair <i>authorize communications plan</i> ↓ CM <i>informs</i> CAT
<b>Press materials for launch</b> (sections 2.2.1.2, 2.2.1.3, §72) <b>(and subsequent communications/outreach events)</b>  Relevant Co-Chairs, CM <i>draft</i> ↓ They <i>may consult</i> CAT ↓ Co-Chairs <i>authorize</i> ↓ Secretariat <i>issues and records materials</i> (§21) ↓ CM <i>informs</i> Bureau, Focal Points (§66)	<b>Press materials for launch</b> (sections 2.2.1.2, 2.2.1.3, §72) <b>(and subsequent communications/outreach events)</b>  Chair, CM <i>draft</i> ↓ They <i>may consult</i> CAT ↓ Chair <i>authorizes</i> ↓ Secretariat <i>issues and records materials</i> (§21) ↓ CM <i>informs</i> Bureau, Focal Points (§66)	<b>Press and other statements for major international conferences</b> (section 2.2.2.2, §80)  Secretariat, relevant Co-Chair or Chair <i>draft</i> ↓ Circulate to CAT for comments ↓ Co-Chairs or Chair <i>authorize</i> ↓ Secretariat <i>issues and records materials</i> (§21) ↓ CM <i>informs</i> Bureau, Focal Points (§80)

