

Working Group I contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report

GUIDANCE NOTE ON COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC

The purpose of this Guidance Note is to address the issue of communicating with the media and other public fora. This Guidance Note provides Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs), Lead Authors (LAs), and Review Editors (REs) during the AR6 assessment cycle, with a set of recommendations to facilitate their work for IPCC, to ensure transparency and to avoid situations which could impact the integrity of the work.

IPCC authors are primarily scientists who continue research within their institutions and in collaboration with colleagues. Media work communicating scientific results from such research rests entirely in the responsibility and under the control of the scientist. As such, this media work is focused on the scientific results produced by the scientist or the research team.

The two roles of scientist and IPCC CLA, LA, and RE must be kept strictly separate in such media work. In consequence, one should not comment on the consequences of this research for the ongoing assessment. Doing so would constitute a conflict of interest (refer to IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy: <https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ipcc-principles/ipcc-conflict-of-interest-2016.pdf>).

Communication with the media is an important issue in IPCC work. The best spokespeople for the science are the scientists themselves, however the role of CLA, LA or RE does include the mandate to speak for or on behalf of the IPCC.

When speaking on climate science topics, CLAs, LAs and REs should make it clear that they are expressing their own personal views, not speaking for the IPCC and not prejudging the outcome of the assessment process. It is helpful to adopt this as a standard practice. Please be aware of the fact that the primary motivation of journalists to contact and interview you is because you are a scientist involved in IPCC work and not necessarily because of your own scientific research.

Communication with the media is an opportunity to inform on the IPCC process, that IPCC Reports undergo a multi-stage and transparent review process. Draft reports are reviewed by independent experts from all relevant fields of expertise and all regions to ensure a comprehensive and robust scientific assessment that represents a wide range of views. The openness of the review process provides a unique opportunity for any expert to provide comments on the drafts. To ensure objectivity and transparency, review comments and author team responses are made publicly available upon completion of the Report and are retained in an open archive for a period of at least five years.

Providing information to the media and the public about deliberations in IPCC meetings, including Expert Meetings and Workshops, and, in particular, Lead Author Meetings is inappropriate (refer to the IPCC Guidance Note on Confidentiality). These meetings are by invitation only and thus not open to the public. The purpose of these meetings is to enable free discussion among the IPCC authors and deliberations about consensus finding which must take place in an environment of trust among the authors. This can only be ensured if the authors refrain from speaking to the media about chapter team and contact group discussions and deliberations before, during, and after such meetings.

News conferences for the press prior to, during, or after Lead Author meetings will not be held. It must be recognized and understood that such meetings do not produce "news" and communicable results. A dedicated technical briefing for the media may be offered at the beginning of each Lead Author Meeting with the sole purpose to explain the process of IPCC, the role of that specific meeting in it (e.g., to address review comments to the First Order Draft), and to provide some

statistical information (e.g., number of IPCC authors present, number of comments to be dealt with). No information will be given about scientific substance and content, nor issues which need to be discussed and resolved across chapters.

Blogs, social networking sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) and news on the internet are a new opportunity, and also challenge, for IPCC work. As a CLA, LA, or RE, it is inappropriate to contribute information about the content and substance of IPCC meetings to blogs or social networking sites. It is also not advisable to provide comments and personal impressions about the meetings to blogs and social networking sites as this would undermine the trust relationship that is essential to the free exchange of opinion among the IPCC authors in their assessment work.

When the Summary for Policymakers is approved in April 2021, then the involvement of IPCC experts in communicating the outcomes of the assessment and key findings to a broad audience will be crucial.