



Introduction

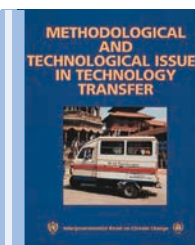
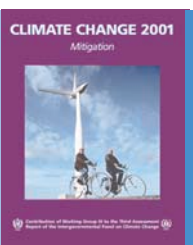
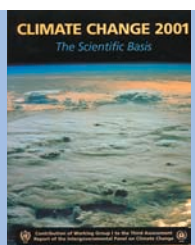
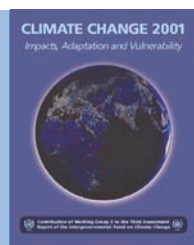
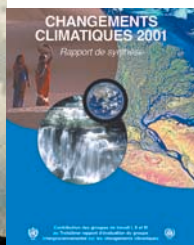
The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Why the IPCC was created

Human activities now occur on a scale that is starting to interfere with natural systems such as the global climate. Because climate change is such a complex and challenging issue, policy-makers need an objective source of information about the causes of climate change, its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts, and possible response options.

Recognizing this, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988. The Panel's role is to assess on a comprehensive, objective, open and transpar-

ent basis the best available scientific, technical and socio-economic information on climate change from around the world. The assessments are based on information contained in peer-reviewed literature and, where appropriately documented, in industry literature and traditional practices. They draw on the work of hundreds of experts from all regions of the world. IPCC reports seek to ensure a balanced reporting of existing viewpoints and to be policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive. Since its establishment the IPCC has produced a series of publications, which have become standard works of reference, widely used by policymakers, scientists, other experts and students.



How the IPCC is organized

The IPCC is an intergovernmental body that is open to all member countries of the UNEP and of WMO. The Panel meets in plenary sessions about once a year. It decides on the IPCC's structure, principles, procedures and work programme, and it elects the IPCC Chair and the Bureau. It also agrees on the scope of IPCC reports and accepts reports. Plenary sessions are conducted in the six official languages of the United Nations and are generally attended by hundreds of representatives from governments and participating organizations. The IPCC, the IPCC Chair and the Bureau are supported by the IPCC Secretariat.

The IPCC has three working groups and a [Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#). [Working Group I](#) assesses the scientific aspects of the climate system and of climate change. [Working Group II](#) addresses the vulnerability of socio-economic and natural systems to climate change, the negative and positive consequences of climate change and options for adapting to them. [Working Group III](#) assesses options for limiting greenhouse gas emissions and otherwise mitigating climate change. Each Working Group and the Task Force have two co-chairs, one from the developed and one from the developing world, and a technical support unit.

IPCC activities, including travel costs for experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, are financed through voluntary contributions from governments. WMO, UNEP and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change provide additional support.

IPCC products

The main IPCC products are Assessment Reports, Special Reports, Methodology Reports and Technical Papers. Each IPCC report includes a Summary for Policymakers published in all official UN languages. These summaries reflect the state-of-the-art understanding of the subject matter and are written so that they are comprehensible to the non-specialist.

[Assessment Reports](#) consist of several volumes and provide comprehensive scientific, technical and socio-economic information on climate change, its causes, possible impacts and related response measures.

□ The IPCC's [First Assessment Report](#) was released in 1990 and confirmed the scientific basis for concern about climate change. This led to the decision by the UN General Assembly to prepare a UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Convention entered into force in March 1994.

□ The [Second Assessment Report, "Climate Change 1995"](#) was made available to the Second Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and provided input to the negotiations for the Convention's Kyoto Protocol. It consists of three working group reports and a synthesis of scientific-technical information relevant to interpreting Article 2 (the objective) of the UNFCCC.

□ The [Third Assessment Report, "Climate Change 2001"](#) consists also of three working group reports on "The Scientific Basis", "Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability" and "Mitigation", and a Synthesis Report, which



addresses a range of policy-relevant scientific and technical questions.

☐ In November 2003 the Panel agreed on the outlines for the working group contributions to the [Fourth Assessment Report](#). This Report will be completed in the year 2007.

Special Reports provide an assessment of a specific issue and are often prepared in response to a request from the Parties to the UNFCCC. Since the completion of the Second Assessment Report in 1995 the IPCC published the following Special Reports:

- ☐ The Regional Impacts of Climate Change (1997)
- ☐ Aviation and the Global Atmosphere (1999)
- ☐ Methodological and Technological Aspects of Technology Transfer (2000)
- ☐ Emissions Scenarios (2000)
- ☐ Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (2000)

Two Special Reports are currently being prepared for release in 2005:

- ☐ Safeguarding the Ozone Layer and the Global Climate System: Issues Related to Hydrofluorocarbons and Perfluorocarbons
- ☐ Carbon Dioxide Capture and Storage

Methodology Reports describe methodologies and practices for national greenhouse gas inventories and are used by Parties to the UNFCCC for preparing their national communications. The first [IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#) were prepared in 1994 and revised in 1996. They are currently undergoing another major revision and new IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories will be available in 2006.

In addition the following Methodology Reports have been published:

☐ Good Practice Guidance and Uncertainty Management in National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (2000)

☐ Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (2003)

☐ Definitions and Methodological Options related to Inventory Emissions from Direct Human-Induced 'Degradation' of Forests and 'Devegetation' of other Vegetation Types (2003)

Technical Papers provide a scientific or technical perspective on a specific topic and are based on material contained in IPCC Reports. The following IPCC Technical Papers have been published:

☐ Technologies, Policies and Measures for Mitigating Climate Change (1996)

☐ An Introduction to Simple Climate Models used in the IPCC Second Assessment Report (1997)

☐ Stabilization of Atmospheric Greenhouse Gases: Physical, Biological and Socio-Economic Implications (1997)

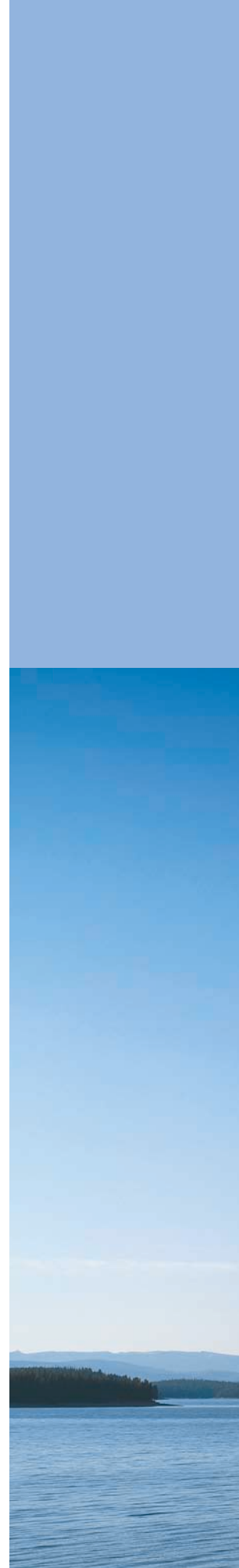
☐ Implications of Proposed CO₂ Emissions Limitations (1997)

☐ Climate Change and Biodiversity (2002).

A Technical Paper on Climate Change and Water is planned to be finalized in late 2007.

Other IPCC products and activities:

To support the IPCC assessment process various [workshops and expert meetings](#) are organized, sometimes in cooperation with other organizations. The proceedings are published as [IPCC Supporting Material](#). The [Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impact and Climate Analysis \(TGICA\)](#) facilitates the wide availability of climate change-related data and scenarios inter alia through its [Data Distribution Centre \(DDC\)](#).



How the IPCC reports are prepared

IPCC reports are written by teams of authors, which are nominated by governments and international organizations and selected for a specific task according to their expertise. They come from universities, research centers, business and environmental associations and other organizations from more than 100 countries. Several hundred experts from all over the world are normally involved in drafting IPCC reports. In addition, several hundred experts participate in the review process. The preparation of all reports follows clear procedures agreed by the Panel.

The writing process

The IPCC usually starts a new assessment by developing a general outline, often during a "scoping" meeting of experts. Policymakers and other users of IPCC reports are consulted in order to identify the key policy-relevant issues. After the outline is approved, teams of lead authors are assembled for each chapter. Chapter teams should include experts from all regions and represent a range of expertise and prevailing scientific-technical views.

Review and acceptance

To ensure that they are credible, transparent and objective, the IPCC reports must pass through a rigorous two-stage scientific and technical review process. For the first review, the drafts are circulated to specialists with significant expertise and publications in the field. Revised drafts are distributed for the second review to governments and to all authors and expert reviewers. After taking into account the expert and government comments, the final drafts are presented to plenary for acceptance of their content.

Summaries for Policymakers

Summaries for Policymakers are prepared concurrently with the main reports and undergo a simultaneous expert and government review. They are approved in plenary session line-by-line, with the concurrence of the lead authors, to ensure that they are consistent with the underlying scientific-technical report.

How to obtain IPCC reports

IPCC reports are published commercially and are widely available. Most recent IPCC reports are also available on CD-ROM and can be viewed on the Internet at www.ipcc.ch. Summaries for Policymakers, Synthesis Reports and some Technical Summaries of IPCC Reports and Methodology Reports are translated into all official UN languages. The Technical Papers are available in English, French and Spanish. A full list of IPCC publications and detailed ordering information can be obtained from the IPCC website www.ipcc.ch or directly from the IPCC Secretariat.

