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REVIEW OF THE IPCC PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES
REPORT BY THE INTER ACADEMY COUNCIL

Proposed IPCC protocol for addressing errors in previous
assessment reports

(Submitted by the IPCC Chair)

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Proposed IPCC protocol for addressing errors in previous assessment reports

At its 40th Session (May 2010) the IPCC Bureau discussed a protocol for correcting errors in reports already released. The specific protocol below was prepared by Working Group II (WGII) Co-chairs to assist further consideration of that matter.

This protocol is intended to be used only to correct errors that could have been avoided in the context of the information available at the time the report was written. It should not be used to make changes that reflect new knowledge or scientific information that became available only after the literature cut-off date for the report in question. It should also not be invoked to reflect a change in opinion. Rather, it should be reserved for errors of fact or accuracy in representing the underlying science.

This protocol is intended to address the full range of possible errors from simple typos through complicated issues of sourcing, interpretation, analysis, or assessment. The protocol is intended to be invoked when at least one Co-Chair of the report containing the putative error, one Coordinating Lead Author (CLA) of the chapter containing the putative error, or one member of the current Bureau requests evaluation of a putative error.

The protocol is presented as a dichotomous tree (if condition n (where n is 1-9) is met), follow the tree below the condition. If condition n is not met, go to option a, with the same number value. For example, if statement 1 is correct, go to statement 2. If statement 2 is incorrect, go to statement 2a, etc.

Proposed protocol

- 1) If the putative error is in a working Group (WG) report, the CLAs of the relevant chapter are approached and asked whether they agree that there is an error.
- 2) If the CLAs agree that there is an error, then they are asked to decide whether the fix requires a simple erratum or a more thorough evaluation.
- 3) If the fix is a simple erratum, then one is constructed by the CLAs and submitted to the current WG Bureau for approval.
- 3a) If a more complicated evaluation is required, then the current Chair appoints a Review Team containing, as a minimum, two experts who were not involved in drafting the chapter, plus at least one CLA or Lead Author (LA) from the chapter with the error, and charges that Review Team with proposing, within one month's time, a simple erratum statement. The Chair then submits this to the relevant WG Bureau for approval.
- 2a) If the CLAs of the chapter containing the putative error feel there is no error, then the current Chair appoints, within two weeks, an Initial Review Group of three Bureau members and/or CLAs/LAs from the current assessment to analyze the text in question and see if they agree with the CLAs of the chapter with the putative error. The response from the Initial Review Group is due in two weeks.
- 4) If the Initial Review Group agrees that there was no error, then the CLAs of the chapter with the putative error are tasked with preparing, within two weeks, a brief document, to be posted on the IPCC and WG web sites, explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error.

- 4a) If the Initial Review Group feels there is an error, they ask the current Chair to appoint, within one month, an Independent Review Committee. This committee should consist of at least three experts not involved in drafting the chapter with the putative error and not involved as a Bureau Member, CLA, or LA on the assessment with the putative error or the current assessment.
 - 5) If the Independent Review Committee decides there is no error, then the CLAs of the chapter with the putative error are tasked with preparing, within two weeks, a brief document, to be posted on the IPCC and WG web sites, explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error.
 - 5a) If the Independent Review Committee decides that there is an error, they are tasked with providing, within one month, an erratum statement. If the erratum is approved by the current WG bureau, Co-chairs, and Chair, then the Chair makes a decision on whether the erratum can be posted at that point or needs to be approved by the plenary.
- 1a) If the putative error is in a Synthesis Report, then the Chair and Co-chairs (from the assessment cycle with the putative error) and CLAs of the chapter that was the source of the underlying information are approached and asked whether they agree that there is an error.
 - 6) If all agree that there is an error, then the Chair (from the assessment cycle with the putative error) is asked to decide whether the fix requires a simple erratum or a more thorough evaluation
 - 7) If the fix is a simple erratum, then one is constructed by the Chair (from the assessment cycle with the putative error) and submitted to the current Bureau for approval.
 - 7a) If a more complicated evaluation is required, then the current Chair appoints a Review Team containing, as a minimum, two experts who were not involved in drafting the chapter, plus at least one CLA or LA from the chapter with the underlying information, and charges that review team with proposing, within one month's time, a simple erratum statement. The current Chair then submits this to the current Bureau for approval.
 - 6a) If any of the Chair and Co-chairs (from the assessment cycle with the putative error), and the CLAs of the chapter that was the source of the underlying information feel there is no error, then the current Chair appoints, within two weeks, an Initial Review Group of three Bureau members and/or CLAs/LAs from the current assessment to analyze the text in question and see if they agree that there was no error. The response from the Initial Review Group is due in two weeks.
 - 8) If the Initial Review Group agrees that there was no error, then the Chair (from the assessment cycle with the putative error) is tasked with preparing, within two weeks, a brief document, to be posted on the IPCC and WG web sites, explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error.
 - 8a) If the Initial Review Group feels there is an error, they ask the current Chair to appoint, within one month, an Independent Review Committee. This committee should consist of at least three experts not involved in drafting the chapter with the putative error and not involved as a Bureau Member, CLA, or LA on the assessment with the putative error or the current assessment.
 - 9) If the Independent Review Committee decides there is no error, then the Chair (from the assessment cycle with the putative error) is tasked with preparing, within two weeks, a brief document, to be posted on the IPCC

and WG web sites, explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error.

- 9a) If the Independent Review Committee decides that there is an error, they are tasked with providing, within one month, an erratum statement. If the erratum is approved by the current WG bureau, Co-chairs, and Chair, then the current Chair makes a decision on whether the erratum can be posted at that point or needs to be approved by the plenary.

If any of the individuals identified as playing leading roles on behalf of author teams of previous reports are not available, then the current Chair will identify an individual or individuals best qualified to play those roles.