

2. Evaluation of IPCC's assessment process

An IPCC assessment is a complex process by which experts review and synthesize available scientific and technical knowledge, and governments agree on the scope of the report, nominate authors, review the results, and approve the Summary for Policymakers (see ‘The IPCC Assessment Process in Brief’ in Chapter 1). This chapter identifies and recommends ways to address the most **significant shortcomings in each major step of IPCC's assessment process**, based on the Committee's analysis of current IPCC practices, of the literature on assessments, and community input.

Scoping

The preliminary scope and outline of IPCC assessment reports is developed by an invited group of scientists, other subject-matter experts, and government representatives. A detailed outline is then created by the Bureau and approved by the Panel. The involvement of both scientists and governments in the scoping process helps ensure that the assessment addresses issues both that can be supported by the existing scientific literature and that will be useful for supporting government decision making (NRC, 2007). IPCC's scoping process was generally supported by those who were interviewed or responded to the Committee's questionnaire (Appendix B). However, these individuals raised two concerns about the scoping process. First, the scoping process itself and the selection of participants for the scoping meeting(s) remain somewhat opaque to those who have not participated. Given that the assessment process is receiving close scrutiny and that the scoping process has a major influence on the mandate and goals for the assessment, it is essential that scoping be as transparent as possible.

Recommendation

- ▶ The IPCC should make the process and criteria for selecting participants for scoping meetings more transparent.