

IPCC Factsheet: How does the IPCC approve reports?

IPCC reports are developed through multiple rounds of drafting and review. (See IPCC Factsheet – *How does the IPCC review process work?*) As the culmination of a report's development, IPCC member governments endorse the report. The endorsement process is based on a dialogue between those who will use the report – the governments – and those who write it – the scientists. Endorsement by governments acknowledges that the report is a definitive assessment that has been developed following the IPCC's defined procedures, underpinning the report's authority. The IPCC has different levels of endorsement, including "approval", "adoption" and "acceptance"¹.

"Approval" is the process used for IPCC Summaries for Policymakers (SPMs). Approval signifies that the material has been subject to detailed, line-by-line discussion, leading to agreement among the participating IPCC member countries, in consultation with the scientists responsible for drafting the report. This process strengthens the SPM by ensuring that SPM statements are as direct, clear and unambiguous as possible in summarizing the material contained in the corresponding Working Group Assessment Report or Special Report. Participation of assessment authors ensures that any changes to the SPM are consistent with the underlying report and are scientifically robust.

"Adoption" is the process used for IPCC Synthesis Reports. Adoption is a section-by-section discussion leading to agreement among participating governments in consultation with the authors. This process ensures that the Synthesis Report effectively integrates material from the underlying Working Group Assessment Reports and Special Reports. The SPM of a Synthesis Report is approved line by line, as described above.

"Acceptance" is the process used for the full underlying report in a Working Group Assessment Report or a Special Report after its SPM has been approved. Acceptance by governments signifies that the Technical Summary and chapters of the underlying report present a comprehensive, objective and balanced view of the subject matter. Acceptance does not involve line-by-line discussion and consultation between the scientists and the governments. Changes (other than grammatical or minor editorial changes) after acceptance are limited to those necessary to ensure consistency with the Summary for Policymakers, and are identified in writing after SPM approval.

¹ The approval, adoption and acceptance process is described in sections 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 of Appendix A to the Principles Governing IPCC Work, the Procedures for the Preparation, Review, Acceptance, Adoption, Approval and Publication of IPCC Reports: <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ipcc-principles/ipcc-principles-appendix-a-final.pdf>

Assessment Reports and Special Reports are approved and accepted by the responsible Working Group, with the government representatives to the Panel coming together in a Plenary Session of the Working Group. (For a description of the Working Groups see IPCC Factsheet – *What is the IPCC?*)

For an SPM approved by a Working Group to be endorsed as an IPCC Report, it must also be accepted at a Session of the Panel. Because the Working Group approval process is open to all governments, Working Group approval of an SPM means that the Panel cannot change it. However, it is necessary for the Panel to review the Report at a Session, note any substantial disagreements, and formally accept it.

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