

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): Key information for understanding its role and functioning

May 2025

What is the role of the IPCC?

- The IPCC is the United Nations body established in 1988 that produces Assessment Reports and Special Reports covering all aspects related to climate change, from the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts, and future risks, as well as adaptation and mitigation options. Through its assessments, the IPCC identifies the strength of scientific agreement in different areas and indicates where further research is needed. IPCC Reports provide authoritative information for governments and policymakers.

Does the IPCC produce new research?

- IPCC does not conduct new research. Instead, it assesses already available scientific, technical, and socio-economic knowledge on climate change.

How does the IPCC produce robust, scientifically sound, and politically relevant assessments?

- IPCC reports are written by authors coming from all around the world and from diverse types of expertise. They ensure an objective and comprehensive assessment of knowledge. In addition, review is an essential part of the IPCC assessment process: drafts undergo multiple rounds of review that integrate feedback from experts and governments to ensure accuracy, transparency, and policy relevance. All comments are responded to by chapter author teams, and at

the end of the process, when the reports are accepted by the Panel and are published, the review comments and responses are made available publicly.

How is the IPCC work internally structured?

- The IPCC assessment is undertaken by three Working Groups (WGs). A Task Force provides guidance on methodological aspects related to greenhouse gas inventories. The activities of each WG and of the Task Force are coordinated and administrated by a Technical Support Unit (TSU).

What is the difference between the three different WGs?

- [WG I](#) assesses the scientific aspects of the climate system and climate change; [WG II](#) looks at impacts, adaptation and vulnerability to climate change; and [WG III](#) assesses the mitigation of climate change.

How many assessment reports has the IPCC released so far?

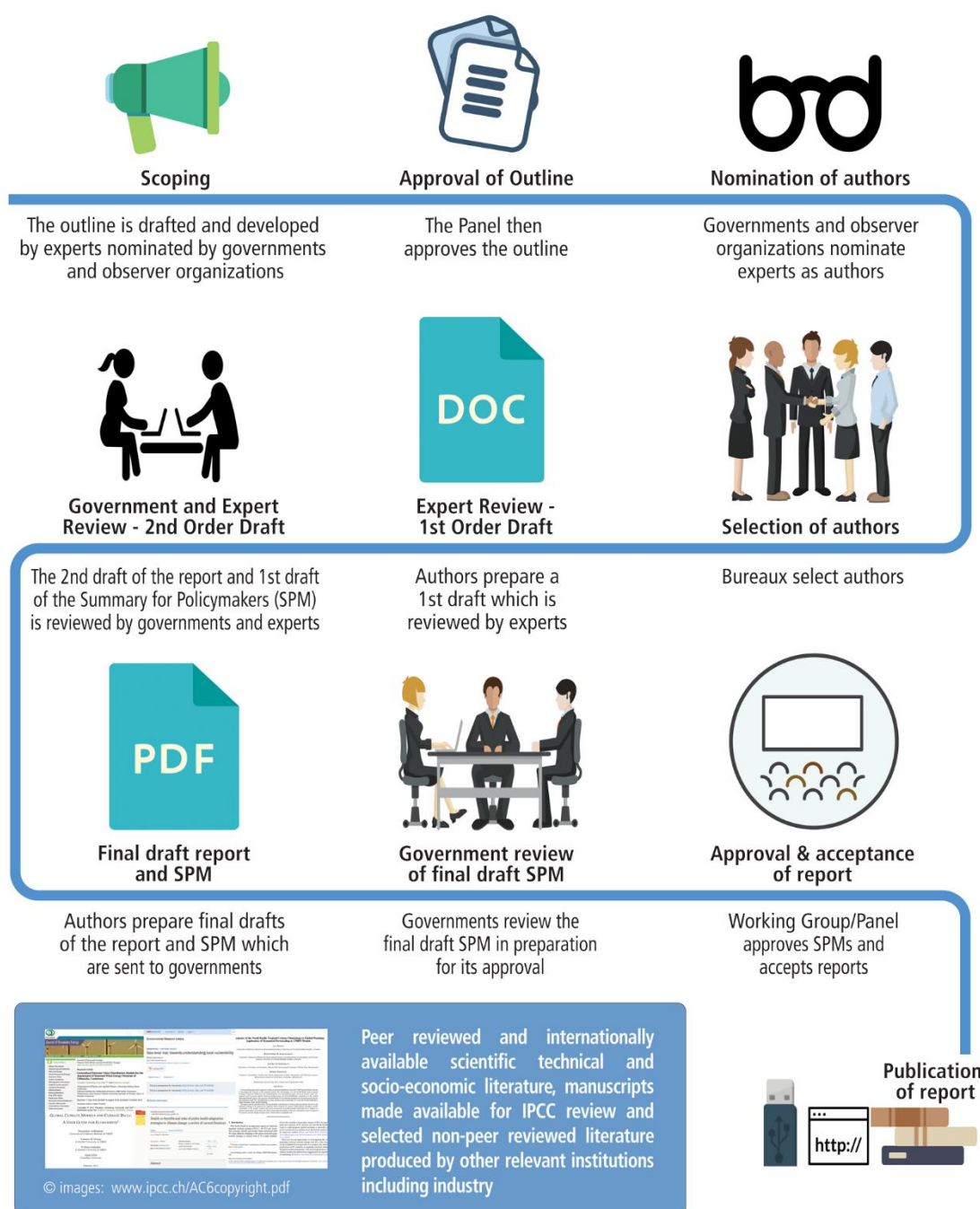
- Between 1990 and 2023, the IPCC released [six comprehensive assessment reports](#) reviewing the latest climate science. The IPCC has also produced [14 special reports](#) on particular topics. Each assessment report has four parts. These are contributions from each of the three WGs, plus a [synthesis report](#). Comprehensive scientific assessment reports by the IPCC are published every 5 to 7 years. The IPCC is currently in its [seventh assessment cycle](#), which formally began in July 2023.

Who funds the IPCC?

- The IPCC is funded by regular contributions from its founding organizations, the [World Meteorological Organization \(WMO\)](#) and the [UN Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#), and voluntary contributions from its [member governments](#) and the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#).

What are the main steps in the preparation of an IPCC report?

- The IPCC graphic below describes the main steps in the preparation of an IPCC report. The graphic and further information on IPCC procedures are on the [dedicated IPCC web page](#).



How can experts contribute to the work of the IPCC?

- Climate change experts can contribute to the work of the IPCC in many different capacities:
 - **Author roles:** These roles are selected by the WG and TF Bureaux. The roles are that of Lead Author (LA), working on the assessment and preparation of parts of report chapters; Coordinating Lead Author (CLA), coordinating chapter teams and the oversight of the assessment process of their chapter; Review Editor (RE), to provide guidance to author teams on addressing review comments and confirming that the process has been fulfilled before the reports are published;
 - **Contributing author (CA):** Experts may be invited by authors to provide input on specific topics within a chapter.
 - **Expert reviewer:** Expert reviewers submit comments on report drafts and consider the scientific and technical substance or the structure of the report.
 - **Chapter Scientist (CS):** This role is usually encouraged for early career scientists, working as a scientific assistant who provides technical and logistical support to author teams. CSs support authors, particularly CLAs, to support their work in preparing the chapters.
 - **Data science expert:** Experts can also participate to help with data management and be nominated and selected by the WG Bureaux as members of the Task Group on Data (TG-Data).

Is it always possible to apply to contribute to the IPCC process, or are there specific calls?

- At the start of the preparation of an IPCC report, the IPCC will launch open calls for applications. For example, at the time of writing this document (May 2025), the IPCC has just closed the call for nominations of authors to contribute to the [IPCC Seventh Assessment Report \(AR7\)](#). During the drafting process, once drafts are ready, the IPCC invites expert reviewers to participate in the process.

How do I find out when calls for applications are open?

- It is recommended to follow the IPCC updates/announcements, especially on [LinkedIn](#) and [Social Media](#), to stay up-to-date. IAP will also advertise IPCC calls to its network and explain their functioning through webinars with IPCC representatives. IPCC calls will also be disseminated in the [IAP LinkedIn group](#). If you would like to join this group, please send a request to snitti@twas.org.

Is there a single way to apply for all the roles listed above?

- No, based on the role, there are different times and ways of applying. See below.

How can I apply as an author (CLA, LA) or review editor?

- Authors and review editors are nominated by governments through National Focal Points and accredited Observer Organisations. Therefore, you can submit your nomination via two channels: **i)** either via the Focal Point of your member country; **ii)** or via an Observer Organization. The Focal Point route is recommended. A list of Focal Points for IPCC member governments and IPCC Observer Organizations is available [here](#). The call to apply is advertised by the IPCC at the appropriate time.

How can I apply to be an expert reviewer?

- Expert Reviewers are invited to register for the review role through the website of the IPCC WG or Task Force responsible for the report. Because the aim of the expert review is to get the widest possible participation and broadest possible expertise, those who register are accepted unless they fail to demonstrate any relevant qualification related to the draft contents. The form to register as an expert reviewer is advertised by the IPCC WG or Task Force when the time is right to apply. For the AR7 process, the expert review of the First Order Draft (FOD) will begin in October 2025. The review of the Second Order Draft (SOD) will begin May 2026. Reviews will continue until 2027 with some overlap periods between FOD and SOD to allow for cross-WG reviews. Stay tuned to upcoming calls issued by the IPCC. IAP will also advertise the call.

How can I apply as a chapter scientist?

- Chapter scientists to support author teams are invited to apply by WG TSU when the time is right and depending on specific needs. The form to apply as a chapter scientist is advertised by the IPCC WG TSU at the appropriate time. IAP will also share this information, likely to be some time between August and October this year.

How can I apply as a data scientist expert?

- Experts to serve as members of the Task Group on TG-Data to support author teams are nominated by member governments through National Focal Points and accredited Observer Organizations. Therefore, you can submit your nomination via two channels: **i)** either via the Focal Point of your member country; **ii)** or via an Observer Organization. The Focal Point route is recommended. A list of Focal Points for IPCC member governments and IPCC Observer Organizations is available [here](#). The call to apply is advertised by the IPCC at the appropriate time.

In terms of author roles, how do I choose which kind of role (LA, CLA, RE) to apply for?

- Before applying, it is recommended that you gain a full understanding of what the commitment and expectations are for taking on the roles of Coordinating Lead Author, Lead Author and Review Editor (see Annex 1 of Appendix A to the [Principles Governing IPCC Work](#)).

You can then self-assess whether you have the experience and knowledge in the topics identified in the [chapters](#) you are interested in applying for.

In terms of eligibility, anyone having a proven expertise in topics relevant to the Reports can participate. This is not restricted to academics, and IPCC also encourages relevant practitioner expertise in some cases.

How do I choose which Working Group to apply for?

- To understand which WG you are suitable for, you should check the approved content outlines of the three WG contributions – both chapters and cross-chapter

papers. For instance, content outlines of the three WG contributions to AR7 currently under preparation, are available [here](#).

Is it possible to apply for more than one Working Group?

- Yes, it is possible to apply for more than one WG. For each one, you have to submit a separate application using the dedicated WG nomination xls form, plus your CV.

In terms of author roles, what do I need to prepare to apply?

- You need to: **i)** fill out the nomination form (download the nomination form under the ‘How do I apply?’ section on the [IPCC dedicated webpage](#); **ii)** prepare your CV in English (max 4 pages in PDF format). Please note: the nomination form must be complete in all its fields otherwise it will not be valid.

Where can I find the contact of my National Focal Point?

- The e-mail address of your National Focal Point can be found by searching by region and country under the ‘Who is my Focal Point?’ section on the [IPCC dedicated webpage](#).

If there is no National Focal Point in my country, how can I apply?

- You can submit your application to an Observer Organization, you can find the Observer Organizations [here](#). IAP is an official IPCC Observer and may be able to assist with submitting an application if no other suitable interface can be found.

Can I send my application to the IPCC Secretariat?

- The IPCC Secretariat does not have the capacity to receive applications. However, if you require guidance on specific issues, it can be useful to contact the IPCC Secretariat. You can use this email address: ipcc-sec@wmo.int

If I apply for author roles, is it difficult to be selected?

- The selection of participants is undertaken by the IPCC Bureau, giving due consideration to the following criteria: • scientific, technical, and socio-economic expertise, including the range of views; • geographical representation; • a mixture of experts with and without previous experience in IPCC; • gender balance; • experts with a background from relevant stakeholder and user groups, including urban practitioners and planners, representatives of civil society organizations, and local/regional governments. We can say that the selection is highly competitive.

Am I paid if I am selected as an IPCC author?

- Thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC on a voluntary basis as authors, contributors and reviewers. None are paid by the IPCC. However, this is a high-level experience that you will benefit from by working with internationally recognized scientists at the science-policy interface. For AR7, IPCC and its supporters are investigating ways to provide financial support to early career scientists from the Global South selected as Chapter Scientists.

If I send my nomination to my national Focal Point and do not receive any response, what should I do?

- You could send a follow-up email to request an acknowledgment, but once they receive your application, they would probably submit it. You could choose to also approach an Observer Organization with your application.

If I apply for the Lead Author role and I am not selected, can I be automatically considered for Coordinating Lead Author, or do I need to submit a separate application for that role?

- Select wisely what role you would like to be considered for. If you have the ability and institutional support to fulfil the Coordinating Lead Author role, then please do so. In case you are not selected for that role, the Bureau will nonetheless directly consider you for the role of Lead Author. In other cases, the Bureau may suggest that someone nominated to be a Lead Author could be a Coordinating

Lead Author. In this case, they will reach out to the candidate to discuss this and whether they would be available.

What is the most important factor in the selection process for author roles for scientists from developing countries?

- Peer-reviewed relevant publications on specific thematic areas are among the most important factors for consideration. Grey literature such as reports, or regional or national assessments, as well as Indigenous and Local Knowledge are also important.

Is there a CV template to use for my application for author roles?

- There is no template, the instructions say that it must not exceed 4 pages and remain under 2 MB. The CV must be in pdf format. It is recommended to clearly highlight the expertise, experience and publications that are particularly relevant for the chapters you would like to be considered for.

What is the expected time commitment associated with the three author roles (CLA, CA, RE)?

- Authors are required to commit their time over the approximately 3-year time period for the preparation of the report. At peak times, when drafts are brought together, it may require full-time attention. Engagement will require regular online chapter and focused meetings, drafting text, undertaking calculations and developing figures and tables to present the assessment. For Review Editors, work is concentrated in periods following the reviews of the drafts. Authors are required to attend four 1-week in-person Lead Author Meetings. Review Editors are required to attend the last two Lead Author Meetings. Coordinating Lead Authors will also develop the Summary for Policymakers and will need to attend the IPCC plenary session where the Summary for Policymakers will be approved.

I am originally from a country in the Global South but currently reside in Europe. Would it still make sense to apply as an author?

- Yes, you are encouraged to apply and to contact the National Focal Points of both countries.

Is it possible to be nominated simultaneously for author roles by a National Focal Point and from an Observer Organization?

- Yes, it is possible to get multiple nominations, e.g., from the National Focal Point and from an Observer Organization.

Where can I find information about the author nomination process on the IPCC website?

- More information on the nomination process is [here](#) and how the IPCC selects its authors is available [here](#).