

Notes for authors preparing technical guidelines for the IPCC Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impact and Climate Analysis (TGICA)

One of the core activities included within the mandate of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impact and Climate Analysis (TGICA) is the provision of technical guidelines on the use of data and scenarios¹. Technical guidelines qualify as "supporting material" under the Principles Governing IPCC work (Appendix A)². These notes have been prepared by the Task Group to assist authors in the drafting and presentation of technical guidelines and related supporting material.

Target audience

The primary target audience for technical guidelines is intended to be the climate change research community, especially those researchers engaged in accessing, interpreting and applying data and scenarios in studies of climate change vulnerability, impacts, adaptation and mitigation. However, in drafting guidelines, authors should be aware that the documents will be publically available through the IPCC Data Distribution Centre (DDC) website, and may be accessed by persons with a wide range of interests and knowledge in the field of climate change.

Authorship

At least one of the authors of a guidelines document shall be drawn from the TGICA membership³. A lead author shall be designated. This can be either a TGICA member or, if a more suitable candidate can be identified and is willing, an expert from outside the Task Group. Guidelines documents may be authored exclusively by TGICA members where they hold sufficient collective expertise.

Relevance and timeliness

Technical guidelines are prepared to assist the climate change research community in compiling and interpreting different types of observed and projected information for application in climate change research. As methods and tools of assessment evolve and as new data and scenarios become available, so any guidance on their application must keep abreast of developments. For this reason, if authors agree to produce technical guidelines at the request of the TGICA, they should do so on the understanding that a full draft can be prepared in a timely manner, usually during the period between TGICA meetings (typically 6-9 months). The longer the writing process proceeds, the more likely it is that the intended recipients of such guidance will turn to other sources for assistance, and the less likely the guidelines remain relevant.

Some content in a guidelines document may have a limited lifetime and relevance. The Task Group undertakes regular reviews of all guidelines documents posted at the DDC website, and authors should be prepared to undertake periodic revisions and/or updates of the original document. It is therefore important to label each guidelines document with a version number and date. Minor updates merit addition or revision of a suffix to the existing version (e.g.

¹ http://www.ipcc-data.org/docs/TGICA_Mandate_031207.pdf

² http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization_procedures.htm

³ <http://www.ipcc.ch/activities/activities.shtml#tabs-4>

Version 1.2, Version 1.3). Major revisions (including re-structuring of the document or the introduction of significant new material) requires a new version number (e.g. Version 2, Version 3).

Scope

Authors should take note of the relationship between technical guidelines and assessment reports. The primary task of the IPCC, at the behest of governments, is to undertake periodic reviews and assessments of the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information about climate change produced worldwide. Assessment reports are authored by thousands of scientists from around the world. Reports are subjected to rigorous scientific review by experts worldwide, and are accepted, adopted and approved by governments in sessions of the IPCC plenary.

In contrast, technical guidelines constitute IPCC "supporting material", which is not subject to the same drafting and review processes as assessment reports. Guidelines build on information contained in IPCC assessment reports, offering guidance and illustrations of how to apply data and scenarios generated out of and/or associated with those reports. Guidelines should not be used to review and assess new literature appearing since the latest IPCC assessment report – that is a task for the next full assessment process. Where new literature is consulted, this should be exclusively for purposes of clarifying, illustrating or quantifying information that has already been assessed, at least in a qualitative manner, in the assessment reports. Guidelines can also make use of outputs from other IPCC Supporting Material such as reports from IPCC Expert Meetings and Workshops and Good Practice Guidance Papers.

Length

Guidelines should be written as clearly and concisely as the subject matter allows. Most guidelines documents are intended to introduce readers to topics that potentially may be quite technical in nature. They should do this by raising the relevant issues and illustrating these using examples. They should not attempt to cover all aspects of a topic in fine detail; rather they should point to other documents in the literature for those readers who wish to pursue a topic further.

For guidelines treating specialised fields, a document length of 10 pages can be considered a useful target length (excluding references and appendices). For more general guidelines covering a wider range of topics, documents of greater length will probably be required. In all cases, authors are encouraged to consider: (i) using boxes for brief examples or definitions, (ii) moving lengthier examples and more detailed tables or figures into appendices, and (iii) including a glossary, as appropriate. In addition, the option of producing a fact sheet (see corresponding "Notes for authors preparing Fact Sheets for TGICA") that distils the main issues covered in the technical guidelines into a concise format, might also be considered.

Structure and format

All guidance notes consist of a Document history, Preface, Executive Summary (less than 1 page), main text, and potential annexes. Guidelines that cover a substantial amount of material and exceed 50 pages in length may also include a Technical Summary of between 2 and 3 pages.

Drafts of guidelines documents should include page numbers and line numbers to assist reviewers. The standard format for a cover page, Document history and Executive Summary (and Technical Summary where applicable) is given in Appendix 1 along with other recommended formatting. Responsibility for final production of the document will be designated to the Working Group (WG) Technical Support Unit (TSU) that administers TGICA. The TSU can also provide formatting advice and assistance to authors.

Review process

Once the draft of a guidelines document has been submitted to the TGICA, it is available for review. Review of all guidelines documents is accorded high priority and seriousness by the Task Group and by the IPCC. Although these documents are not regarded as "accepted", "adopted" or "approved" IPCC reports, they nevertheless constitute "supporting material" and carry an IPCC imprimatur.

The review process proceeds as follows:

1. Submission to TGICA. The draft guidelines document is made available to the full TGICA committee for consideration (ideally four weeks before a scheduled TGICA meeting).
2. TGICA decision on review. The Task Group decides if the document is of sufficient quality to be subjected to a formal review. If not, the draft is returned to the authors with general instructions for revision. If the go ahead is given, a TGICA member is assigned the task of organising the review (either an author of the report or an independent member of the committee), with advice and assistance from the designated WG TSU.
3. Expert review. The document should be sent to at least three independent TGICA members (non authors) and at least three international experts that are not TGICA members. These are minimum recommendations – more reviewers can be selected, as deemed appropriate by the Task Group (e.g. lead authors from chapters of relevant IPCC assessment and special reports upon which the guidance note relies). Standard IPCC reviewer forms can be used (MS-EXCEL files). The duration of a review should normally not exceed four weeks and would be administered by the designated WG TSU.
4. Author revisions. Reviewers' comments should be collated and numbered by the designated TGICA editorial representative and TSU and returned to the authors. The authors should then undertake revisions according to the reviewers' comments, providing responses to each numbered comment (following IPCC Assessment Report procedures). They should submit a revised version of the document to TGICA members four weeks ahead of the subsequent TGICA meeting (or earlier if the Task Group agrees on a more rapid assessment process), together with their responses to each numbered review comment.
5. Submission of revised draft for TGICA approval. The revised draft should be re-reviewed by the same TGICA members who undertook the first review. In addition, if the Task Group deems it necessary, a subset of the original external expert reviewers may also be requested to undertake a second review. Other TGICA members will also have the possibility to review the draft guidelines. It is desirable for this second review to be carried out ahead of the TGICA meeting so that the TGICA reviewers can offer a recommendation to the meeting, either to approve the report, or to defer its

approval pending minor revisions (to be adjudicated by the designated TGICA representative) or, exceptionally, to require major revisions and a third review.

6. Publication and posting. The final version of the document should be formatted using a consistent style (to be determined by TGICA and subject to available resources) and posted as a PDF downloadable file on the DDC website. Options for producing hard copies of guidelines documents can be explored by the Task Group, if desired and will depend on available resources and likely demand on a case by case basis.

Appendix 1: A general template for guidelines documents

Recommended general formatting instructions⁴

Formatting of technical guidelines should follow the *Abridged Style Guide* adopted for the IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX). Documents should be structured as indicated below.

Cover page

The following template should be adopted for the cover page (*italics indicate text or logos to be substituted*):

IPCC/TGICA heading and logos

Title of Guidelines Document

Author list (Names only – no affiliations on cover)

Version ??

Date (e.g. August 2010)

These technical guidelines are an agreed product of the IPCC Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impacts and Climate Analysis (TGICA). The mandate of the TGICA is agreed in advance as part of the IPCC workplan, but this does not imply Working Group or Panel endorsement or approval of documents emanating from the Task Group or any recommendations or conclusions contained herein

Supporting material prepared for consideration by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This material has not been subjected to formal IPCC review processes

Details of TSU or other organisation responsible for publishing the document

Document history (page i)

This document, *Title....* constitutes "Supporting material" of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (as defined in the Procedures for the Preparation, Review, Acceptance, Adoption, Approval, and Publication of IPCC Reports). The guidelines were prepared at the request of its Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impacts and Climate Analysis (TGICA).

This supporting material has not been subject to the formal intergovernmental IPCC review process. However, the document was made available for expert review for four weeks and review comments were received from *?? international experts: names (countries)...* and by the following members of TGICA: *names (countries)*

⁴ These are to ensure consistency of submitted documents and may differ from the final published format

Acknowledgement text and disclaimers

The final version was uploaded at the IPCC Data Distribution Centre website on *date*

This document should be referenced as: *full reference*

Preface (*page iii, optional*)

Table of contents (*page v–*)

List sections headings down to level three

First page (*page 1*)

TITLE OF DOCUMENT

Authors (including numerical footnotes for author affiliations)

Executive Summary

Maximum 300 words (no more than 1 page)

Author affiliations (Footnoted)

Technical Summary (*where relevant*)

Maximum 1200 words (no more than 3 pages)

Main text (*page 3–*)

TITLE OF DOCUMENT

1 Introduction (*Level 1 section heading*)

Main body of text begins here