

IPCC Factsheet: How does the IPCC deal with alleged errors?

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has clear procedures for investigating, and if necessary, correcting alleged errors in its published reports.

The **IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors in IPCC Assessment Reports, Synthesis Reports, Special Reports or Methodology Reports** (http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ipcc-principles/ipcc_error_protocol.pdf), the "Error Protocol", is used to correct errors of fact or accuracy that could have been avoided in the context of the information available at the time the report was written. It cannot 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. (See IPCC Factsheet – *What literature does the IPCC assess?*) It cannot be used to propose the consideration of additional sources not cited in the existing assessment, unless directly relevant to an error of fact or accuracy. It must also not be invoked to reflect a new interpretation of knowledge or scientific information presented in the assessment.

Reports of alleged errors are sent to the IPCC Secretariat (see the Error Protocol at http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization_procedures.shtml for details). The Secretariat maintains an internal error tracking system.

The precise steps to be followed vary according to the category of publication in which the alleged error occurs, e.g. a Summary for Policymakers, Technical Summary or Chapter in an Assessment Report or Special Report; a Synthesis Report; or an Overview Chapter in a Methodology Report. Full details about the handling of alleged errors are given in the Error Protocol.

Consensus decisions on whether action is necessary are taken by the current Co-Chairs and the Bureau of the relevant Working Group or Task Force, or by the IPCC Chairman and the IPCC Bureau if the alleged error is in a Synthesis Report. The relevant Coordinating Lead Authors of the report containing the alleged error are involved as appropriate, as are the previous Co-Chairs and previous IPCC Chairman for alleged errors regarding previous assessment cycles.

In cases where consensus cannot be reached on whether action is warranted, the IPCC Chair appoints an Independent Review Committee consisting of at least three experts not involved in drafting the original material to evaluate the alleged error.

If it is agreed that action is necessary, errata are posted on the IPCC and Working Group or Task Force websites after conclusion of the process. A short explanatory statement about the error may also be posted. The claimant is informed by the IPCC Secretariat at the conclusion of the process.

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