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**UPDATE ON THE DECISION PATHWAY FOR CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FROM
RESEARCHERS FOR ACCESS TO NON-PUBLIC MATERIAL OR MEETINGS**

(Submitted by the Acting Secretary of the IPCC)
(Prepared by the Co-Chairs of Working Group III)

UPDATE ON THE DECISION PATHWAY FOR CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FROM RESEARCHERS FOR ACCESS TO NON-PUBLIC MATERIAL OR MEETINGS

(Note by the Acting Secretary of the IPCC)

At its 37th Session (October 2013), the IPCC Panel requested the Executive Committee to initiate an Expert Meeting on potential studies of the IPCC process and to produce a report that recommends principles to guide the IPCC's engagement with such research. The Expert Meeting (January 2015) produced a meeting report including a set of principles to guide the IPCC's engagement on potential studies of the IPCC process. At its 41st Session (IPCC-41), (February 2015), the IPCC Panel agreed to the principles, including the development of a Decision Pathway for consideration of requests from researchers for access to non-public materials or meetings.

Following the request of IPCC-41 (paragraph 1 of Annex 1 to Decision IPCC/XLI-5), work on the Decision Pathway has been progressed by the Co-Chair of Working Group III in consultation with some members of the IPCC Executive Committee. The material below has been provided to the IPCC Secretariat as an update on the progress achieved to date.

UPDATE ON THE DECISION PATHWAY FOR CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FROM RESEARCHERS FOR ACCESS TO NON-PUBLIC MATERIAL OR MEETINGS

(Prepared by the Co-Chairs of Working Group III)

Preamble

The IPCC is a unique institution whose accomplishments are founded in scientific integrity and transparency. The Panel welcomes interest from the social science community in how the IPCC works and draws its conclusions.

Background

This decision pathway for consideration of requests from researchers for access to non-public IPCC materials or meetings ensures that the following information requirements are met, while respecting the needs of IPCC authors and acknowledging the need of researchers for an efficient and timely decision process.

In all cases, researchers provided access to non-public IPCC materials or meetings should minimize the demands on IPCC authors and should not interfere with the assessment process.

The following requirements apply to all researchers conducting studies of the IPCC process:

- a) Researchers must obtain appropriate informed consent from all subjects prior to the start of an approved study.
- b) All information identifying individuals, either directly or indirectly, will be kept confidential.
- c) The researchers may not intervene in IPCC deliberations.
- d) The researchers will study only activities for which they have informed consent.
- e) The IPCC Secretariat will be provided draft publication ahead of submission, for prompt comment by the relevant IPCC Working Group or Task Force Co-chairs or by the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies.
- f) The IPCC Secretariat will be provided any draft public relations documents (e.g., press releases) for prompt comment by the relevant IPCC Working Group or Task Force Co-chairs or by the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies prior to public dissemination.
- g) Researchers will not disclose their findings to the public, including the news media, prior to the publication of their study.
- h) Timing of publication of studies must be agreed by the relevant IPCC Working Group or Task Force Co-chairs or by the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies. At its discretion, the IPCC may embargo a publication for the duration of the assessment cycle.
- i) Confidentiality of information and data to which researchers are granted access will be agreed during informed consent. Confidential information and data will be held in accordance with data protection requirements agreed during informed consent.
- j) At the completion of the assessment cycle, collected information will be shared with the IPCC for long term archiving, respecting agreed standards for confidentiality and any future uses of the information agreed during informed consent.

Researchers requesting access to non-public IPCC materials or meetings should submit the following information to the IPCC Secretariat:

- a) Proposal of planned research.
- b) Letter of support from supervisor or institution, credentials of supervisor and institution (where applicable).
- c) Information about composition of research team.
- d) Credentials of researchers/research team, including CVs and publication lists.
- e) Description of type, timing and duration of access required.
- f) Justification of enhanced value from requested access to non-public materials or meetings.
- g) Consideration of ethical issues and data management.
- h) Description of the process by which the proposal has been or is being evaluated and mechanisms for quality assurance.
- i) Information about funding sources.
- j) Declaration of any potential conflict of interest.
- k) Anticipated benefit to the broader public interest.

The decision pathway for consideration of requests from researchers for access to non-public IPCC material or meetings is as follows:

(1) The IPCC Secretariat will provide each complete application to the IPCC Executive Committee for its review. If a submitted application is not complete, the Secretariat will request the needed information (a–k above) from the researchers before providing the application to the Executive Committee.

(2) Following receipt of a researcher request, the IPCC Executive Committee will review the request, ideally at its next meeting, considering the submitted information along with:

- a) Benefit to broader public.
- b) Overall geographic balance and diversity of the research portfolio.
- c) Gender balance.
- d) Career stage balance.

(3) The IPCC Executive Committee will decide whether a request is mature enough for further consideration. If so, it will determine the relevant IPCC working group(s), task force bureau(x), or other IPCC bodies for the proposed study of the IPCC process. If further information is required, the IPCC Executive Committee will ask the IPCC Secretariat to secure the needed information from the researchers.

(4) The relevant IPCC working group(s) or task force bureau(x), or the IPCC Bureau in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies, will make a determination on each request, considering the submitted information (a–k above) and criteria (a–d above), in collaboration with the relevant IPCC Working Group or Task Force Bureau Co-chairs, or the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies.

(5) The IPCC Secretariat will inform the researchers of the outcome of the request.

For approved requests:

(6) The Co-Chairs of the relevant Working Group(s) or Task Force Bureau, or Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies, will communicate with the researchers to discuss the overall process, arrange possible access to non-public IPCC materials or meetings, and determine the steps for obtaining informed consent of all subjects prior to the study.

(7) The Co-Chairs of the relevant Working Group(s) or Task Force Bureau, or the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies, may consult the subjects of the study to help inform the overall process.

(8) The Co-Chairs of the relevant Working Group(s) or Task Force Bureau, or the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies, will introduce to the subjects the planned study and the process of obtaining informed consent.

(9) The Co-Chairs of the relevant Working Group(s) or Task Force Bureau, or the Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report or other IPCC bodies, in consultation with the associated Bureau(x) can suspend or terminate all or part of any study, requiring destruction of data already collected, if the research team is not abiding by the agreed requirements or if the subjects revoke informed consent.

(10) The IPCC Executive Committee will revisit each approved request on an annual basis, for the duration of the research, with the right to withdraw access if the research team is not abiding by the agreed requirements.