

ipcc

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change

THIRTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE IPCC
Abu Dhabi, 10-13 May 2011

IPCC-XXXIII/Doc. 12, Add.1
(14.IV.2011)
Agenda Item: 5.1
ENGLISH ONLY

REVIEW OF THE IPCC PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors in IPCC Assessment Reports, Special Reports or Inventory Guidelines

(Submitted by the Co-Chairs of the IPCC Working Groups I, II and III)

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REVIEW OF THE IPCC PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES
IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors
in IPCC Assessment Reports, Special Reports or Inventory Guidelines

Preamble

At its 32nd Session (October 2010), the IPCC Panel noted the proposed protocol for addressing errors in previous assessment reports (IPCC-XXXII/INF.8). The Panel tasked the IPCC Chairman, the IPCC Vice-Chairs, the Co-Chairs of Working Groups I, II and III and the Task Force on Inventories to take any necessary steps to ensure that this protocol is finalized and then used for evaluation of potential errors and developing errata as appropriate. The protocol is presented below.

This protocol is intended to be used only to correct errors that could have been avoided in the context of the information available at the time the report was written. Its use should be reserved for errors of fact or accuracy. The protocol 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. 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 difference in opinion compared with an author team or a new interpretation of knowledge or scientific information.

This protocol is intended to address the full range of possible errors from typographical errors through complicated issues of sourcing, interpretation, analysis, or assessment, arising from the previously mentioned errors of fact or accuracy.

Responsibility for implementing the error correction protocol rests with the current Co-Chairs of the relevant Working Group or Task Force product containing the putative error. If the error is in a Synthesis Report, responsibility rests with the current IPCC Chairman. In all cases, the relevant Coordinating Lead Authors and Co-Chairs of the report containing the putative error or, in the case of the Synthesis Report, the IPCC Chairman and relevant Working Group Co-Chairs at the time of that assessment, will be kept informed of the evaluation and participate as appropriate.

The protocol is presented as a decision tree, which is based on a set of underlying principles. The procedure to be followed for investigating the claimed error and, if appropriate, implementing its correction depends on the location of the claimed error, i.e., whether it resides in a Chapter or the Technical Summary of a Working Group Contribution to an Assessment Report or of a Special Report, or in the Inventory Guidelines, in the Summary for Policymakers of a Working Group Contribution or of a Special Report, or in the Overview Chapter of the Inventory Guidelines, or in a Synthesis Report.

Principles underlying this protocol for handling errors:

1. The IPCC Secretariat is the entry point for all error reporting.
2. The IPCC Secretariat maintains an internal error tracking system. Entries are made in consultation with the current Co-Chairs of the relevant Working Group (WG) or Task Force (TF) or in case of an error in a Synthesis Report in consultation with the current IPCC Chairman. This system informs the leadership of IPCC and the Technical Support Units (TSUs), via a protected website, about the current status of all active error handling processes.
3. To the extent possible, corrections should be based on consensus, consistent with the IPCC principles that form the foundation for the underlying reports.
4. Responsibility for decisions at steps during the process is with the current WG or TF Bureau of the WG or TF product in which the putative error resides. If the error is in a Synthesis Report, responsibility rests with the current IPCC Bureau.
5. Responsibility for implementation is with the current Co-Chairs of the WG or TF product in which the putative error resides. If the error is in a Synthesis Report, responsibility rests with the current IPCC Chairman.
6. Original authors (Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs), and Lead Authors (LAs) if necessary) must be involved as appropriate. Communication with them is via the current Co-Chairs of the relevant WG or TF (the IPCC Chairman in the case of the Synthesis Report). If any of the individuals identified as playing leading roles on behalf of author teams of previous reports are not available, then the current Co-Chairs of the WG or TF (the IPCC Chairman in the case of the Synthesis Report) will identify an individual or individuals best qualified to take over those roles.
7. For putative errors regarding the previous assessment cycles, the previous Co-Chairs of the relevant WG or TF and the previous IPCC Chairman need to be kept informed and may be consulted as appropriate.
8. Handling of putative errors must be coordinated across Chapters, Executive Summaries of Chapters, Technical Summaries of WG Contributions, Summaries for Policymakers for Working Groups, Synthesis Reports, Summaries for Policymakers for Synthesis Reports, and Overview Chapters of Inventory Guidelines.
9. At the start of the process, the claimant is informed by the IPCC Secretariat about the next steps in a general way, and referred to this "IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors in IPCC Assessment Reports, Special Reports or Inventory Guidelines". The claimant will again be informed at the conclusion of the process.
10. Errata are posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites after the conclusion of the process. A short explanatory statement about the error may also be posted.

Section 1: If the putative error is in a Working Group Contribution or Special Report (Chapter or Technical Summary) or in the Inventory Guidelines, start here. Otherwise, go to Section 2.

For all putative errors, it is essential to evaluate the possibility of consequences for the Summary for Policymakers of a WG Contribution to an Assessment Report, for the Summary for Policymakers of a Special Report, for the Overview Chapter of the Inventory Guidelines, or for a Synthesis Report.

Note: This section describes the procedure that is followed to address errors in a Working Group Contribution or a Special Report (Chapter or Technical Summary) or to the Inventory Guidelines. Figure 1 provides an overview of the protocol for section 1.

Step 1:

A putative error is reported to the IPCC Secretariat. If received elsewhere, it is passed to the IPCC Secretariat. A new entry is made in the internal error tracking system.

Step 2:

The IPCC Secretariat forwards the claim to the current Co-Chairs of the relevant WG (or TF). The IPCC Secretariat acknowledges receipt to the claimant, providing information about the next steps in a general way, and refers the claimant to the “IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors in IPCC Assessment Reports, Special Reports or Inventory Guidelines”.

Step 3:

The current WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant Bureau decide whether action on the claim is warranted. They may consult previous Co-Chairs or CLAs of the relevant chapter. The condition for further processing is that one or more of the relevant current WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant Bureau find that action is warranted.

If consensus is reached that action is not warranted, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant and closes the case.

If no consensus is reached or if the consensus is reached that action is warranted, the current WG or TF Co-Chairs consult the CLAs (or LAs if necessary) of the chapter.

If the CLAs of the chapter with the putative error agree that there is an error, continue with step 4A.

If the CLAs of the chapter with the putative error do not agree that there is an error, continue with step 4B.

Step 4A: (for cases where the authors agree that there is an error)

For typographical errors, decisions on and posting of errata are handled by the current Technical Support Unit of the relevant WG or TF under the supervision of its Co-Chairs. The CLAs of the relevant chapters and WG or TF Bureau are informed. The IPCC Secretariat is informed, posts the errata, and closes the case.

Otherwise, go to step 5A.

Step 5A: (for cases where the authors agree that there is an error)

The current WG or TF Co-chairs and CLAs (and LAs if necessary) of the chapter with the putative error evaluate the error and decide whether the correction requires expertise beyond the author team.

If the author team has the appropriate expertise to construct an erratum, then one is constructed by the CLAs and submitted to the current WG or TF Bureau for approval. Following approval, the Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites. The case is then closed.

If further expertise is required, then the relevant Co-Chairs and WG or TF Bureau appoint a Review Team containing, as a minimum, two experts who were not involved in drafting the chapter, plus at least one CLA or Lead Author (LA) from the chapter with the error, and charges that Review Team with proposing, within one month's time, an erratum statement. The Co-Chairs then submit this to the relevant WG or TF Bureau for approval. Following approval, the Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites. The case is then closed.

If the authors, Review Team, and WG or TF Bureau fail to reach consensus on an erratum statement, then the WG or TF Co-Chairs inform the "Executive Committee" of the disagreement, and they ask the IPCC Chairman to appoint, within one month, an Independent Review Committee. This committee should consist of at least three experts not involved in drafting the chapter with the putative error and not involved as a Bureau Member, CLA, or LA on the assessment with the putative error or the current assessment. The Independent Review Committee, after consultation with the authors, the Review Team, the Co-Chairs, and the WG or TF Bureau, is tasked to propose a revised erratum. If consensus is now reached with the authors, the Co-Chairs then submit this to the relevant WG or TF Bureau for approval. Following approval, the Secretariat informs the claimant, and the erratum is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites. The case is then closed.

If the current WG or TF Co-Chairs, the WG or TF Bureau and the relevant CLAs still cannot come to consensus, the current WG or TF Co-Chairs and the IPCC Chairman draft a "Contested Erratum" statement, signed by the IPCC Chairman, which is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF erratum websites. This statement reports the claimed error, and explains that issues have been raised but these cannot be resolved before this matter is reassessed in the present or next cycle. The IPCC Chairman and relevant WG or TF Co-Chairs decide on a communications strategy if needed. The case is then closed.

Step 4B: *(for cases where the authors do not agree that there is an error)*

The WG or TF Co-Chairs inform the "Executive Committee" of the disagreement. The CLAs of the chapter with the putative error provide the WG or TF Co-Chairs with a brief document explaining why the text in question does not contain an error. The WG or TF Co-Chairs then appoint, within two weeks, an Initial Review Group of two Bureau members and at least one CLA or LA from the current assessment if available, otherwise at least one expert who was not involved in drafting the chapter. The Initial Review Group is tasked to analyze the text in question and decide if they agree with the CLAs of the chapter with the putative error. The response from the Initial Review Group is due in two weeks.

If the Initial Review Group agrees that there was no error, then the WG or TF Co-Chairs inform the relevant CLAs and task them with preparing, within two weeks, a brief document explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error. The current WG or TF Co-Chairs submit the document to the current WG or TF Bureau for approval. After approval by the WG or TF Bureau, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant, and the case is closed.

If the Initial Review Group finds there is an error, the WG or TF Bureau considers the report from the Initial Review Group, as well as from the authors, and aims to find consensus with the authors and the Initial Review Group on the development of an erratum.

If consensus is reached, the CLAs, in consultation with the Initial Review Group, develop an erratum statement, which is submitted to the WG or TF Bureau for approval. Following approval, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites. The case is then closed.

If consensus is not reached continue with step 5B.

Step 5B: *(for cases where the authors do not agree that there is an error)*

The WG or TF Co-Chairs inform the “Executive Committee” of the disagreement, and they ask the current IPCC Chairman to appoint, within one month, an Independent Review Committee. This committee should consist of at least three experts not involved in drafting the chapter with the putative error and not involved as a Bureau Member, CLA, or LA on the assessment with the putative error or the current assessment. The Independent Review Committee is tasked to evaluate the putative error.

If the Independent Review Committee agrees there is no error, they prepare, within two weeks, a brief document explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error. The current WG or TF Co-Chairs submit the document to the current WG or TF Bureau for approval. After approval by the current WG or TF Bureau, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant, and the case is closed.

If the Independent Review Committee finds there is an error, they are tasked with providing, within one month, a proposed course of action. The WG or TF Bureau informs the relevant CLAs about the proposed action and, if agreement is found with them that there is an error and how to handle it, the authors develop an erratum statement, which is submitted to the WG or TF Bureau for approval. Following approval, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites. The case is then closed.

If the current WG or TF Co-Chairs, the WG or TF Bureau and the relevant CLAs still cannot come to consensus, the current WG or TF Co-Chairs and the IPCC Chairman draft a “Contested Erratum” statement, signed by the IPCC Chairman, which is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF erratum websites. This statement reports the claimed error, and explains that issues have been raised but these cannot be resolved before this matter is reassessed in the present or next cycle. The IPCC Chairman and relevant WG or TF Co-Chairs decide on a communications strategy if needed. The case is then closed.

Note: before posting any erratum, the WG or TF Co-Chairs should evaluate possible consequences of the erratum for the Summary for Policymakers, Overview Chapter or Synthesis Report. If there are consequences, the relevant process in Sections 2 and/or 3 of this protocol needs to occur after the process in Section 1.

Section 2:

If the putative error is in the Summary for Policymakers of a Working Group Contribution or of a Special Report, or in the Overview Chapter of the Inventory Guidelines, start here. If it is in a Synthesis Report, go to Section 3.

Note: For errors in the Summary for Policymakers or Overview Chapter that arise from an underlying Chapter or the Technical Summary of a WG Contribution or of a Special Report or in the Inventory Guidelines, the error evaluation and correction process described in Section 1 of this protocol must be completed first to address the error in the underlying Chapter and/or Technical Summary or in the Inventory Guidelines.

Step 1:

A putative error is reported to the IPCC Secretariat. If received elsewhere, it is passed to the IPCC Secretariat. A new entry is made in the internal error tracking system.

Step 2:

The IPCC Secretariat forwards the claim to the current Co-Chairs of the relevant WG or TF. The IPCC Secretariat acknowledges receipt to the claimant, providing information about the next steps in a general way, and refers the claimant to the “IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors in IPCC Assessment Reports, Special Reports or Inventory Guidelines”.

Step 3:

The current WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant Bureau decide whether action on the claim is warranted. They may consult previous Co-Chairs or CLAs of the relevant chapter. The condition for further processing is that one or more of the relevant current WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant Bureau find that action is warranted.

If consensus is reached that action is not warranted, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant and closes the case.

If no consensus is reached or if the consensus is reached that action is warranted, the current WG or TF Co-Chairs consult the past WG or TF Co-Chairs who were authors of the Summary for Policymakers or Overview Chapter, as well as the CLAs of the relevant chapter of the underlying report.

If the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs agree that there is an error, continue with step 4A.

If the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs do not agree that there is an error, continue with step 4B.

Step 4A: *(for cases where the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs agree that there is an error)*

For typographical errors, decisions on and posting of errata are handled by the current Technical Support Unit of the relevant WG or TF under the supervision of its Co-Chairs. The WG or TF Bureau and the past WG or TF Co-Chairs who were authors of the Summary for Policymakers or Overview Chapter are informed. The IPCC Secretariat is informed, posts the errata, and closes the case.

Otherwise, go to step 5A.

Step 5A: *(for cases where the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs agree that there is an error)*

The current WG or TF Co-chairs and the past WG or TF Co-Chairs who were authors of the Summary for Policymakers or Overview Chapter with the putative error, as well as the CLAs of the relevant chapter of the underlying report, evaluate the error.

The past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs construct an erratum statement for the Summary for Policymakers or Overview Chapter and submit it to the current WG or TF Bureau for approval. Following WG or TF Bureau approval, the proposed erratum is submitted to the Panel for approval. To allow for rapid response, the Panel may delegate this approval step to the “Executive Committee”, which can decide that the erratum be posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites and that the claimant be informed, or can decide to defer to the next session of the IPCC Bureau or of the Panel. Following approval, the Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites. The case is then closed.

If the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs fail to reach consensus on an erratum statement with the WG or TF Bureau, the Panel, or the “Executive Committee”, then the WG or TF Co-Chairs inform the “Executive Committee” of the disagreement, and they ask the IPCC Chairman to appoint, within one month, an Independent Review Committee. This committee should consist of at least three experts not involved in drafting the Summary for Policymakers or Overview Chapter with the putative error and not involved as a Bureau Member, CLA, or LA on the assessment with the putative error or the current assessment. The Independent Review Committee, after consultation with the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs, the current WG or TF Co-Chairs, and the WG or TF Bureau, is tasked to propose a revised erratum. The current WG or TF Co-Chairs then submit this to the relevant WG or TF Bureau for approval. Following WG or TF Bureau approval, the proposed erratum statement is submitted to the Panel for approval. To allow for rapid response, the Panel may delegate this approval step to the “Executive Committee”, which can decide that the erratum be posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites and that the claimant be informed, or can decide to defer to the next session of the IPCC Bureau or of the Panel. Following approval, the Secretariat informs the claimant, and the erratum is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites. The case is then closed.

If the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs, the current WG or TF Co-Chairs, the WG or TF Bureau, and the Panel or the “Executive Committee” still cannot come to consensus, the current WG or TF Co-Chairs and the IPCC Chairman draft a “Contested Erratum” statement, signed by the IPCC Chairman, which is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF erratum websites. This statement reports the claimed error, and explains that issues have been raised but these cannot be resolved before this matter is reassessed in the present or next cycle. The IPCC Chairman and relevant WG or TF Co-Chairs decide on a communications strategy if needed. The case is then closed.

Step 4B: *(for cases where the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs do not agree that there is an error)*

The current WG or TF Co-Chairs inform the “Executive Committee” of the disagreement. The past WG or TF Co-Chairs who were authors of the Summary for Policymakers or Overview Chapter with the putative error, as well as the CLAs of the relevant chapter of the underlying report, provide the current WG or TF Co-Chairs with a brief document explaining why the text in question does not contain an error. The current WG or TF Co-Chairs then appoint, within two weeks, an Initial Review Group of two Bureau members and at least one CLA or LA from the current assessment if available, otherwise at least one expert who was not involved in drafting the Summary for Policymakers or Overview Chapter with the putative error or relevant chapter of the underlying report. The Initial Review Group is tasked to analyze the text in question and decide if they agree with the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs. The response from the Initial Review Group is due in two weeks.

If the Initial Review Group agrees that there was no error, then the current WG or TF Co-Chairs inform the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs and task them with preparing, within two weeks, a brief document explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error. The current WG or TF Co-Chairs submit the document to the current WG or TF Bureau for approval. After

approval by the WG or TF Bureau, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant, and the case is closed.

If the Initial Review Group finds there is an error, the WG or TF Bureau considers the report from the Initial Review Group, as well as from the authors, and aims to find consensus with the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs and the Initial Review Group on the development of an erratum.

If consensus is reached, the current WG or TF Co-Chairs, in consultation with the Initial Review Group, develop an erratum statement, which is submitted to the WG or TF Bureau for approval. Following WG or TF Bureau approval, the proposed erratum statement is submitted to the Panel for approval. To allow for rapid response, the Panel may delegate this approval step to the “Executive Committee”, which can decide that the erratum be posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites and that the claimant be informed, or can decide to defer to the next session of the IPCC Bureau or of the Panel. Following approval, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites. The case is then closed.

If consensus is not reached continue with step 5B.

Step 5B: *(for cases where the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs do not agree that there is an error)*

The current WG or TF Co-Chairs inform the “Executive Committee” of the disagreement, and they ask the current IPCC Chairman to appoint, within one month, an Independent Review Committee. This committee should consist of at least three experts not involved in drafting the Summary for Policymakers or Overview Chapter with the putative error and not involved as a Bureau Member, CLA, or LA on the assessment with the putative error or the current assessment. The Independent Review Committee is tasked to evaluate the putative error.

If the Independent Review Committee agrees there is no error, they prepare, within two weeks, a brief document explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error. The current WG or TF Co-Chairs submit the document to the current WG or TF Bureau for approval. After approval by the current WG or TF Bureau, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant, and the case is closed.

If the Independent Review Committee finds there is an error, they are tasked with providing, within one month, a proposed course of action. The WG or TF Bureau informs the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs about the proposed action and, if agreement is found with them that there is an error and how to handle it, the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs develop an erratum statement, which is submitted to the WG or TF Bureau for approval. Following WG or TF Bureau approval, the proposed erratum statement is submitted to the Panel for approval. To allow for rapid response, the Panel may delegate this approval step to the “Executive Committee”, which can decide that the erratum be posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites and that the claimant be informed, or can decide to defer to the next session of the IPCC Bureau or of the Panel. Following approval, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites. The case is then closed.

If the current WG or TF Co-Chairs, the WG or TF Bureau and the past WG or TF Co-Chairs and relevant CLAs still cannot come to consensus, the current WG or TF Co-Chairs and the IPCC Chairman draft a “Contested Erratum” statement, signed by the IPCC Chairman, which is posted on the IPCC and WG or TF erratum websites. This statement reports the claimed error, and explains that issues have been raised but these cannot be resolved before this matter is reassessed in the present or next cycle. The IPCC Chairman and relevant WG or TF Co-Chairs decide on a communications strategy if needed. The case is then closed.

Section 3:

If the putative error is in a Synthesis Report

Note: For errors in the Synthesis Report that arise from an underlying Chapter or the Technical Summary or the Summary for Policymakers of a WG Contribution, the error evaluation and correction process described in Sections 1 and/or 2 of this protocol must be completed first to address the error in the underlying Chapter, Technical Summary and/or Summary for Policymakers.

Step 1:

A putative error is reported to the IPCC Secretariat. If received elsewhere, it is passed to the IPCC Secretariat. A new entry is made in the internal error tracking system.

Step 2:

The IPCC Secretariat forwards the claim to the current IPCC Chairman, all WG Co-Chairs, and the “Executive Committee”. The IPCC Secretariat acknowledges receipt to the claimant, providing information about the next steps in a general way, and refers the claimant to the “IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors in IPCC Assessment Reports, Special Reports or Inventory Guidelines”.

Step 3:

The current IPCC Chairman, WG Co-Chairs, and IPCC Bureau decide whether action on the claim is warranted. They may consult previous Chairs, relevant WG Co-Chairs, or CLAs of the relevant chapter. The condition for further processing is that the current IPCC Chairman or one or more of the relevant current WG Co-Chairs and Bureau find that action is warranted.

If consensus is reached that action is not warranted, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant and closes the case.

If no consensus is reached or if the consensus is reached that action is warranted, the current IPCC Chairman consults the Chairman and the relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error.

If the Chairman and the relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error agree that there is an error, continue with step 4A.

If the Chairman and the relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error do not agree that there is an error, continue with step 4B.

Step 4A: *(for cases where the Chairman and the relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error agree that there is an error)*

For typographical errors, decisions on and posting of errata are handled by the current Technical Support Unit of the Synthesis Report or of the relevant WG under the supervision of the IPCC Chairman and WG Co-Chairs as appropriate. The past Chairman as leader of the writing team for the Synthesis Report is informed. The IPCC Secretariat is informed, posts the errata, and closes the case.

Otherwise, go to step 5A.

Step 5A: *(for cases where the Chairman and the relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error agree that there is an error)*

The current IPCC Chairman and WG Co-chairs, in collaboration with the Chairman and the relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error, evaluate the error.

The past Chairman and relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error (with relevant CLAs if appropriate) construct an erratum statement for the Synthesis Report and submit it to the current IPCC Bureau for approval. Following IPCC Bureau approval, the proposed erratum is submitted to the Panel for approval. To allow for rapid response, the Panel may delegate this approval step to the “Executive Committee”, which can decide that the erratum be posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites and that the claimant be informed, or can decide to defer to the next session of the IPCC Bureau or of the Panel. Following approval, the Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC website. The case is then closed.

If the past Chairman and relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error (with relevant CLAs if appropriate) fail to reach consensus on an erratum statement with the IPCC Bureau, the Panel, or the “Executive Committee”, then the current IPCC Chairman informs the “Executive Committee” of the disagreement, and appoints, within one month, an Independent Review Committee. This committee should consist of at least three experts not involved in drafting the Synthesis Report with the putative error and not involved as a Bureau Member, CLA, or LA on the assessment with the putative error or the current assessment. The Independent Review Committee, after consultation with the past Chairman and relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error (with relevant CLAs if appropriate), the current IPCC Chairman and WG Co-Chairs, and the IPCC Bureau, is tasked to propose a revised erratum. The current IPCC Chairman then submits this to the IPCC Bureau for approval. Following IPCC Bureau approval, the proposed erratum statement is submitted to the Panel for approval. To allow for rapid response, the Panel may delegate this approval step to the “Executive Committee”, which can decide that the erratum be posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites and that the claimant be informed, or can decide to defer to the next session of the IPCC Bureau or of the Panel. Following approval, the Secretariat informs the claimant, and the erratum is posted on the IPCC website. The case is then closed.

If the past Chairman and relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error (with relevant CLAs if appropriate), the current WG Co-Chairs, the IPCC Bureau, and the Panel or the “Executive Committee” still cannot come to consensus, the IPCC Chairman and the relevant WG Co-Chairs draft a “Contested Erratum” statement, signed by the IPCC Chairman, which is posted on the IPCC and WG erratum websites. This statement reports the claimed error, and explains that issues have been raised but these cannot be resolved before this matter is reassessed in the present or next cycle. The current IPCC Chairman and WG Co-Chairs decide on a communications strategy if needed. The case is then closed.

Step 4B: *(for cases where the Chairman and the relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error do not agree that there is an error)*

The current IPCC Chairman informs the “Executive Committee” of the disagreement. The past Chairman and relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error (with relevant CLAs if appropriate) provide the current IPCC Chairman with a brief document explaining why the text in question does not contain an error. The current IPCC Chairman then appoints, within two weeks, an Initial Review Group of two Bureau members and at least one CLA or LA from the current assessment if available, otherwise at least one expert who was not involved in drafting the Synthesis Report with the putative error or relevant chapter of an underlying WG report. The Initial Review Group is tasked to analyze the text in question and decide if they agree with the past Chairman, relevant WG Co-Chairs, and relevant CLAs. The response from the Initial Review Group is due in two weeks.

If the Initial Review Group agrees that there was no error, then the current IPCC Chairman informs the past Chairman and relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error (with relevant CLAs if appropriate) and tasks them with preparing, within two weeks, a brief document explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error. The current IPCC Chairman submits the document to the current IPCC Bureau for approval. After approval by the IPCC Bureau, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant, and the case is closed.

If the Initial Review Group finds there is an error, the IPCC Bureau considers the report from the Initial Review Group, as well as from the past Chairman, relevant WG Co-Chairs, and relevant CLAs, and aims to find consensus with the past Chairman, relevant WG Co-Chairs, relevant CLAs, and the Initial Review Group on the development of an erratum.

If consensus is reached, the current IPCC Chairman, in consultation with the Initial Review Group, develops an erratum statement, which is submitted to the IPCC Bureau for approval. Following IPCC Bureau approval, the proposed erratum statement is submitted to the Panel for approval. To allow for rapid response, the Panel may delegate this approval step to the “Executive Committee”, which can decide that the erratum be posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites and that the claimant be informed, or can decide to defer to the next session of the IPCC Bureau or of the Panel. Following approval, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC website. The case is then closed.

If consensus is not reached continue with step 5B.

Step 5B: *(for cases where the Chairman and the relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error do not agree that there is an error)*

The current IPCC Chairman informs the “Executive Committee” of the disagreement, and appoints, within one month, an Independent Review Committee. This committee should consist of at least three experts not involved in drafting the Synthesis Report with the putative error and not involved as a Bureau Member, CLA, or LA on the assessment with the putative error or the current assessment. The Independent Review Committee is tasked to evaluate the putative error.

If the Independent Review Committee agrees there is no error, they prepare, within two weeks, a brief document explaining why the text in question was in fact not an error. The current IPCC Chairman submits the document to the current IPCC Bureau for approval. After approval by the IPCC Bureau, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant, and the case is closed.

If the Independent Review Committee finds there is an error, they are tasked with providing, within one month, a proposed course of action. The IPCC Bureau informs the past Chairman and relevant WG Co-Chairs of the assessment with the putative error (and relevant CLAs if appropriate) about the proposed action and, if agreement is found with them that there is an error and how to handle it, the past Chairman, relevant WG Co-Chairs, and relevant CLAs develop an erratum statement, which is submitted to the IPCC Bureau for approval. Following IPCC Bureau approval, the proposed erratum statement is submitted to the Panel for approval. To allow for rapid response, the Panel may delegate this approval step to the “Executive Committee”, which can decide that the erratum be posted on the IPCC and WG or TF websites and that the claimant be informed, or can decide to defer to the next session of the IPCC Bureau or of the Panel. Following approval, the IPCC Secretariat informs the claimant and the erratum is posted on the IPCC website. The case is then closed.

If the current IPCC Chairman, the IPCC Bureau, and the past Chairman, relevant WG Co-Chairs, and relevant CLAs still cannot come to consensus, the IPCC Chairman and the relevant Co-Chairs draft a “Contested Erratum” statement, signed by the IPCC Chairman, which is posted on the IPCC erratum website. This statement reports the claimed error, and explains that issues have been raised but these cannot be resolved before this matter is reassessed in the present or next cycle. The IPCC Chairman and WG Co-Chairs decide on a communications strategy if needed. The case is then closed.

Figure 1: Schematic representation of IPCC Protocol for Addressing Possible Errors in IPCC Assessment Reports and Inventory Guidelines

The blue blue box represents the domain where authors agree that there is something to address. The red box is the domain where the authors, at least initially, do not agree that an error is present. The figure is designed for a putative error in the Chapters or Technical Summary of a WG contribution (Section 1 in the protocol). The process for a Summary for Policymakers or the Synthesis report parallels that for a potential error in a WG report, but with the responsible parties adjusted to reflect responsibility and expertise.

