

**AR5 Synthesis Report Scoping Meeting
Liege, Belgium, 25-27 August 2010**

AR5/SYR-SCOP/Doc. 3
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SYR IN PAST ASSESSMENTS - BRIEF OVERVIEW

(Submitted by the IPCC Secretariat)

1 Introduction

The Synthesis Report of the AR5, like all Synthesis Reports of IPCC Assessment Reports, should be planned as a “value-added” document. The intent of the Scoping meeting in Liege is to scope out the contents of the Synthesis Report for the AR5.

What procedures are relevant to preparing the Synthesis Report (SYR)?

The preparation of the Synthesis Report must be carried out in accordance with the Procedures for the Preparation, Review, Acceptance, Adoption, Approval and Publication of IPCC Reports, (para 4.4.1), which specified:

“The Synthesis Report will synthesise and integrate materials contained within the Assessment Reports and Special Reports and should be written in a non-technical style suitable for policymakers and address a broad range of policy-relevant but policy-neutral questions approved by the Panel. The Synthesis Report is composed of two sections as follows: (a) a Summary for Policymakers and (b) a longer report. The IPCC Chair will lead a writing team whose composition is agreed by the Bureau, noting the need to aim for a range of views, expertise and geographical representation. An approval and adoption procedure will allow Sessions of the Panel to approve the SPM line by line and to ensure that the SPM and the longer report of the Synthesis Report are consistent, and the Synthesis Report is consistent with the underlying Assessment Reports and Special Reports from which the information has been synthesized and integrated.”

See also document AR5/SYR-SCOP/INF.1 for further information.

Where we stand with AR5 SYR?

The scope of the Synthesis Report for the AR5 was first considered in Venice at the AR5 Scoping Meeting, held from 13-17 July 2009. It recommended that the Synthesis Report be organized around four major topic areas:

- 1) Observed Changes and their Causes
- 2) Future Changes (in the Short and Long-term)
- 3) Response, and
- 4) Transitions and Transformation.

Government submissions were taken into account and were considered in developing these major topic areas.

How has the concept of a Synthesis Report evolved in the past?

The structure, content, mode of preparation and adoption of the Synthesis Report has evolved over time, and different ways of approaching the SYR in the past are described below.

First Assessment Report 1990 (FAR)

The general structure of an IPCC Assessment Report and the relation between the various components originates from the First Assessment Report (FAR) which consists of:

- * Overview
- * The Policymakers Summaries of its three Working Groups and its Special Committee on the Participation of Developing Countries and
- * the full reports of its three Working Groups

The 10 pages Overview was drafted by the IPCC Chair as a synthesis, but in the course of the adoption process at the 4th Session of the Panel the text was reduced considerably. The Panel therefore recommended that it is not read in isolation but in conjunction with the rest of the FAR. The Overview and the four Summaries were published together in the year 1992, along with the 1992 IPCC Supplement.

Second Assessment Report 1995 (SAR)

The “IPCC Second Assessment Report Synthesis of Scientific-technical Information Relevant to Interpreting Article 2 of the UNFCCC” was prepared in response to a resolution of the WMO Executive Council, and taking into consideration the needs of the UNFCCC process. A dedicated workshop was held. The Synthesis Report was drafted by a writing team composed of SAR authors and external experts under the leadership of the IPCC Chair. It underwent simultaneously expert and government review and was approved line by line by the Panel at its 11th Session. The SAR SYR saw itself not as a summary of the SAR, but was drawing on the underlying Second Assessment Report to present information related to interpreting Article 2 of the UNFCCC. The 15 pages Synthesis Report was published together with the Summaries for Policymakers of the three Working Group Reports in the official UN languages.

Third Assessment Report 2001 (TAR)

The TAR Synthesis Report (SYR) was structured around a set of policy relevant scientific technical questions received from governments. The final formulation of the questions was approved by the Panel at its 15th Session. At that Session the Panel adopted also Appendix A to the Principles Governing IPCC Work, which in Section 4.4.1 contains specific procedures for the preparation, review, approval and adoption of the Synthesis Report and its Summary for Policymakers. Consistent with these procedures the TAR SYR draws together and integrates, for the benefit of policymakers information that has been approved and/or accepted by the IPCC. This means the TAR SYR draws on all previous Assessment and Special Reports as well as Technical Papers. Detailed references are identified clearly in the longer report of the TAR SYR. The TAR SYR was drafted by a core writing team composed of Co-Chairs and selected authors from the three Working Group Reports, under the leadership of the IPCC Chair. All authors of the three Working Group Reports were invited to provide comments on the draft SYR in the course of the review process. Further, after the approval Sessions of each of the three Working Groups Reports, so called extended writing team meetings were held with participation of CLAs/LAs present at the approval Session and the SYR core writing team. These additional meetings were held to ensure that the SYR is fully consistent with the approved/accepted Working Group Reports. The TAR SYR SPM has 34 pages, the longer report 110 pages. It was published as a stand alone document as well as together with the Summaries for Policymakers and Technical Summaries of the three Working Group Reports in the official UN languages.

Fourth Assessment Report 2007 (AR4)

The scope of the AR4 SYR was developed at a scoping meeting (Geneva, 2004). The SYR’s scope, content and process were agreed by the Panel at its 22nd Session. The Panel explicitly asked for the AR4 SYR to be focused and shorter. The report did not repeat the question and answer format used for the TAR SYR, but is structured around a set of policy relevant topics approved by the Panel while giving careful attention to cross cutting matters. It draws together and integrates information contained in the AR4 Working Groups Reports and draws also on other IPCC Reports in particular recently published Special Reports. The SYR was drafted by a core writing team composed of the Co-chairs and a limited number of authors from the three Working Group Reports, under the leadership of the IPCC Chair. Writing, review and approval/adoption were done according to the procedures referred to above. The authors of the three Working Group Reports were involved in the review of the SYR, but no extended writing team meetings were held. The AR4 SYR includes a 20 page Summary for Policymakers, 50 page longer report and Annexes. It was published as a stand-alone document in the official UN languages.