

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

TGICA agreed (TGICA-16, Boulder, August 4-6, 2010) that further work on Technical Guidelines could include the development of “Fact Sheets” on some topics. Fact Sheets would constitute "supporting material" as defined in Appendix A of the Principles Governing IPCC work.¹ These process guidelines for the preparation of Fact Sheets have been prepared by the Task Group to assist authors in the drafting and presentation of Fact Sheets and to ensure consistency with the TGICA mandate and quality assurance.

Definition

Fact Sheets are essentially short Technical Guidelines or topic summaries. They could be shortened versions of existing more detailed TGICA Technical Guidelines (see corresponding "Notes for authors preparing technical guidelines for TGICA"), act in place of full Technical Guidelines for well-contained issues, or provide summary overviews of specific topics or research processes that fall within the TGICA mandate. Their goal is generally to help non-experts obtain a quick yet comprehensive overview of a subject matter, which may help them decide whether and where to access more detailed Technical Guidelines or other relevant material that may be provided on the Data Distribution Centre (DDC) or through other sources of information.

Target audience

The primary target audience for Fact Sheets would be similar to that of Technical Guidelines but have a potentially stronger emphasis on providing quick access to key information for experts lacking specific knowledge of a topic. This means the target audience includes not only the climate change research community but also decision-makers who commission and respond to climate change research. Authors should be aware that the documents will be publically available and may be accessed by persons with a wide range of interests and differing degrees of background knowledge in the field of climate change.

Authorship

At least one of the authors of a Fact Sheet shall be drawn from the TGICA membership.² A lead author shall be designated. This can be either a TGICA member or, if a more suitable candidate can be identified, an expert from outside the Task Group. Fact Sheets may be authored exclusively by TGICA members where they hold sufficient collective expertise.

Relevance and timeliness

Fact Sheets are prepared to assist the climate change research community and end-users of research in gaining a quick overview of particular subject areas relevant to climate change scenarios and impacts, adaptation and vulnerability assessments. Given their intended short and focused nature, they need to be specific to a particular topic and recognise that they provide a snapshot and overview of relevant knowledge. They cannot provide extensive coverage of a complex subject.

¹ http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization_procedures.shtml

² <http://www.ipcc.ch/activities/activities.shtml#tabs-4>

For this reason, if authors agree to produce a Fact Sheet at the request of the TGICA, they should do so on the understanding that a full draft can be prepared rapidly, usually within 2 months, with a goal of completing the Fact Sheet including all review stages within at most 6 months. Delays in the writing process could result in intended recipients of such Fact Sheets turning to other sources for assistance and the Fact Sheet becoming less relevant.

Some content in a Fact Sheet may have a limited useful lifetime and relevance. The Task Group undertakes regular reviews of all Technical Guidelines and Fact Sheets posted on 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 Fact Sheet with a version number and date. Minor updates merit addition or revision of a suffix to the existing version (e.g. Version 1.2). Major revisions (including re-structuring of the document or the introduction of significant new material) require a new version number (e.g. Version 2).

Scope

Authors should take note of the relationship between Fact Sheets and Assessment Reports. The primary task of the IPCC 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 and are subjected to rigorous review by experts worldwide, and are accepted, adopted and approved by governments in sessions of the IPCC plenary.

In contrast, Fact Sheets constitute IPCC "supporting material", which is not subject to the same drafting and review processes. Fact Sheets 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, or they might provide an overview of key areas of research and scenario development. Fact Sheets 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.

Fact Sheets are generally intended to provide a summary or overview of topics, explain interdependencies of areas of knowledge and research and uncertainties, and point to key issues and other relevant sources of information, but not normally attempt to provide all this information. They should not provide detailed technical discussions, which would be more suitable for Technical Guidelines. 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. Fact Sheets can also make use of outputs from other IPCC Supporting Material such as Technical Guidelines, reports from IPCC Expert Meetings and Workshops and Good Practice Guidance Papers.

Length

Fact Sheets should be written as clearly and concisely as the subject matter allows and should be no more than 6 pages in length excluding references. They should not normally require the use of appendices, but may use boxes or short case studies to illustrate special points of interest or the application of a general principle. A glossary and table of acronyms may be appropriate where a significant number of technical terms is used.

Structure and format

All Fact Sheets consist of a Document History, Executive Summary (less than 1 page), main text, and references (plus glossary and table of acronyms where applicable). Drafts of Fact Sheets should include page numbers and line numbers to assist reviewers. 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. A general template for Fact Sheets is provided in Appendix 1.

Review process

Scientific review of all Fact Sheets is accorded high priority. 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 Fact Sheet is made available to the full TGICA committee for consideration via email.
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 tasked with organising the review, with 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). The duration of a review should 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 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 Fact Sheet. TGICA reviewers can offer a recommendation either to approve the Fact Sheet, 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. To support a timely completion of these tasks, they can be carried out via email exchanges.
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. To enhance the appeal of Fact Sheets to the intended wider audience, options for producing hard copies of Fact Sheets and user-friendly layout 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 Fact Sheets

Recommended general formatting instructions³

Formatting of Fact Sheets 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 Fact Sheet

Author list (Names only – no affiliations on cover)

Version ??

Date (e.g. August 2010)

This Fact Sheet is 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

Acknowledgement text and disclaimers

Details of TSU or other organisation responsible for publishing the document

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

This document should be referenced as: *full reference*

First page (page 1)

TITLE OF DOCUMENT

Authors (including numerical footnotes for author affiliations)

³ These are to ensure consistency of submitted documents and may differ from the final published format

Executive Summary

Maximum 300 words (no more than 1 page)

Author affiliations (Footnoted)

Main text (*page 2–6*)

1 Introduction (*Level 1 section heading*)

Main body of text begins here

Last page (BACK COVER) in a box:

Document history

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 Fact Sheet was 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)*