

Framework and criteria for establishing priorities for Special Reports, Methodology Reports and Technical Papers for the period of the Fourth Assessment:

1. The Panel decided that for the period of preparation of the AR4:
 - Priority should be given to the AR4;
 - The IPCC should continue to be responsive to the information needs of UN conventions addressing climate change issues that require some under-pinning scientific and/or technical assessment. Requests from UNFCCC should be accorded higher priority than requests from other Conventions and organisations;
 - The IPCC's own initiative would be a key element in formulating and choosing Special Reports. Where appropriate, the IPCC strives to serve the policy community (UNFCCC and other) with relevant information in a pro-active fashion; and,
 - The reports need to be consistent with the mandate, the role and the procedures of the IPCC.
2. Based on the above considerations, the Panel further decided that:
 - (A) The following should be considered in guiding decisions relating to Special Reports and Methodological Reports. The:
 - Availability of sufficient scientific literature/technical advance to merit analysis at the Special Report/Methodological Report level – i.e enough information available to provide an authoritative scientific/technical assessment on the topic, which is different from that presented elsewhere (e.g., in an earlier IPCC reports);
 - Origin of the request (e.g., request from the UNFCCC);
 - Subject is directly relevant to the understanding of climate change;
 - Relevance of the subject for policy considerations including methodologies and other inputs for decision-making;
 - Availability of experts;
 - Preparation of this report would not limit the availability of experts for the AR4;
 - Timeliness of, and financial and personnel resources required for, preparation of the report, especially if the subject of the report is relevant to AR4; and,
 - Issue merits explicit consideration outside the framework of AR4.
 - (B) Taking into consideration that Technical Papers are based on material already in IPCC Assessment Reports or Special Reports, the following should be considered in guiding decisions relating to Technical Papers:
 - An objective, international scientific/technical perspective is essential for the topic in question;
 - The origin of the request (e.g., request from the UNFCCC);
 - Sufficient information exists in published IPCC reports to address the topic through possible repackaging and the information in published reports is still up to date.
 - The level of complexity;
 - The relevance of the subject for policy considerations including methodologies and other inputs for decision-making;
 - The availability of experts;
 - The availability of financial and personnel resources are in coherence with the work plan; and,
 - The issue could be better addressed within the framework of AR4 or as a Special Report.