

Understanding and addressing the barriers to entry of Global South researchers to becoming expert reviewers of the IPCC Assessment Reports

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Project:

Coordination, Capacity Development and Knowledge Exchange Unit

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IMPACT

For the 2018 IPCC e-learning course there were 121 attendees and 24 of those went on to submit IPCC review comments. The 2019 IPCC e-learning course had 283 attendees and 36 of those submitted review comments.

The e-learning courses can be considered a success based on the number of participants, the hosting of the course on the UN CC: e-Learn platform (the first non-UN resources included on the platform) and the increase of African participation in the IPCC review process.

However, Global South review comments remain low and a post-training survey to course registrants indicates the main barriers as:

- lack of quality mentorship,
- lack of institutional incentive to participate,
- lack of observational data to reflect local knowledge,
- inability to volunteer time

Potential solutions that were noted by survey respondents to address these barriers are:

- a dedicated workshop for review support where participants could receive feedback and guidance on review comments
- mentorship where participants are paired with experienced expert reviewers
- better curated course content that includes case studies of successful review comments and tests or assignments after each training session.

E-learning
Reviewing of draft IPCC Assessment Reports

Tuesday 5 June 2018 1-2 pm CEST / 11-12 am GMT



Webinar 1: How does the IPCC Work?

Moderator:
Karen Morris, SSN



Presenters:
Leo Meyer, CC-C



Prof. Jean-Pascal
van Ypersele, UCLouvain



THE CHANGE STORY

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports undergo an open, international peer-review mechanism that benefits from the participation of the global climate science community. This strive for global participation helps to ensure inclusion of diverse disciplines and backgrounds, providing regional context and information.

Despite this effort, the review process by the international scientific community is disproportionately undertaken by reviewers from the Global North, missing input from the Global South.

To promote the participation of experts from developing countries, particularly Africa, Future Climate for Africa (FCFA) hosted two e-learning courses to encourage Global South participants to contribute valuable review comments to the IPCC 6th Assessment Reports. The courses were delivered between June - August 2018 and October - December 2019, in parallel to the review periods of the First Order Draft of the Special Report on Climate Change and Land and First Order Draft of the Working Group II on climate change: impacts, adaptation and vulnerability.

Although hosting these training workshops has helped to increase participation from the Global South to a certain degree, more effort is required to increase this number as overall review figures from the Global South remain low in comparison to the Global North. Following discussions with the IPCC Working Group 2 Technical Support Unit (TSU), FCFA agreed to disseminate a survey to past workshop or training registrants to further understand the barriers limiting participation of reviewers from the Global South and possible solutions and lessons to resolve or reduce these barriers in the future.

FCFA area of change 2:

Strengthening scientists' capacities to develop decision-relevant climate information.



FURTHER RESOURCES

[UN CC: e- Learn: How to Review IPCC Assessment Reports: Webinars and Guidance for Climate Experts](#)

[Mini E-course Webinar 1: How does the IPCC work?](#)

[Mini e-course Webinar 2: How to conduct an IPCC review](#)

LEARNING

Training courses and workshops are a valuable means to raise the awareness and capacity to participate in the IPCC expert review process. Future trainings should include assessments and assignments after the training session, case studies of successful review comments and include an aspect of mentorship. Course developers should also consider repeating trainings in relevant languages to the target audience as well as at a time that is accessible to the target audiences' time zone.

There is a steep drop off in the number of people who register to the training and carry-on to submit expert review comments. The drop off rates could be mitigated by clearly advertising the vital role of including expert review comments from diverse disciplines and backgrounds and the relevance of completing the course with the end goal to submit expert review comments to the IPCC reports.

Limited institutional incentive, inability to volunteer time and lack of local observational data to reflect local knowledge are significant barriers to participating in the IPCC expert review process. These barriers are broad and systemic and addressing these may not be within the remit of training, but could be noted in the training to make participants aware of these challenges ahead of their journey from training to submitting review comments.

There are several lessons taken from the survey responses that are relevant when considering future capacity building initiatives. Training is a practical means to improve the capacity of climate change experts to participate in the IPCC process. Notably, there is a lot of interest from climate experts in the Global South to participate in the IPCC expert review process and more training initiatives should be held in the future to help meet this need.

Future Climate for Africa's Areas of Change are:

1. Enhancing scientific knowledge and prediction of African climate and new understanding of the resulting impact on the robustness of future climate change scenarios.
2. Strengthening scientists' capacities to develop decision-relevant climate information.
3. Increasing the capacities of users/decision making bodies/institutions to appropriately integrate climate information within medium-term decision-making.
4. Approaches that support co-production of decision-relevant climate information and enable channels for on-going dialogue between the providers and users of climate information.
5. Identifying social, political, behavioural and economic barriers to the use of climate information in long-term decision-making, working to elicit solutions which support effective integration of climate risks within decision making across scales, sectors and social groups.
6. Approaches to climate science research and climate-sensitive risks within medium-term decision making which enable active participation and address the specific concerns of women and marginalised groups.

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