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Annex(es): 1

To designated IPCC Focal Points and
Ministries of Foreign Affairs
(if no focal point has been designated)

COPY

Geneva, 3 May 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in relation to the changes to the schedule of the Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report as well as those of Working Group II and the Synthesis Report.

Following consultation with authors and Coordinating Lead Authors, the Working Group III Co-Chairs have informed that the Working Group III Bureau has determined that it is not possible to submit a Final Draft for Final Government Distribution (FGD) and second draft Summary for Policymakers (SPM) for review by governments by 9 August 2021, the date in the current schedule.

Working Group III Co-Chairs noted that changes to the schedule of Working Group III would have an impact on the schedules of Working Group II and the Synthesis Report.

In light of this, the Technical Support Units of the Working Groups, Synthesis Report and the Secretariat have worked together to revise the schedule with the view to address the above-mentioned impacts as well as concerns raised recently by the Bureau and the Panel regarding the overlaps of government review periods and congestion of activities around the COP26 period, as outlined in the attached Annex to this letter.

The IPCC Executive Committee at its 92nd meeting (14 April 2021) agreed on the following changes to the Working Group III schedule as well as the changes to Working Group II and the Synthesis Report schedules, and invited the Secretariat to take the next necessary steps including seeking Panel's approval by correspondence after consultation with the Bureau.

Further to the consultation with the IPCC Bureau, we are now seeking your approval for the following changes to the schedule of Working Group III as well as the changes to Working Group II and the Synthesis Report schedules by **Friday 14 May 2021**.

- The Working Group III Government Review of the SPM postponed to 29 November 2021 to 30 January 2022 from 9 August to 3 October 2021.
- The Synthesis Report Government and Expert Review postponed to 10 January to 20 March 2022 from 15 November 2021 to 9 January 2022.
- The Working Group II Approval Plenary moves to an earlier date, to 14-18 February 2022 from 28 February to 4 March 2022 and would consequently now fall during the Synthesis Report review period.

- To mitigate impacts of the overlap between the Working Group III and Synthesis Report reviews, and to take into account further congestion from the Working Group II Approval Plenary falling during the Synthesis Report review, the durations of the Working Group III and Synthesis Report review periods have been extended beyond the normal eight weeks to nine weeks and ten weeks respectively.
- The Working Group III Approval Plenary is moved later to 21-25 March 2022 instead of 5 days between 10-30 January 2022.
- As a result of the delay to the Synthesis Report Government and Expert Review, CWT 3 would be delayed by two weeks (from 21-25 March to 4-8 April 2022) and the commencement of the Final Government Distribution and Government review of the SPM would be delayed by one week (from 6 June to 13 June 2022).
- Due to logistical constraints in the host country for the Synthesis Report Approval Plenary, the Synthesis Report Approval Plenary will take place in the last week of September 2022 (26 September to 30 September 2022), and CWT-4 will take place the week before that (19 to 23 September).

The Secretariat notes that the current adjustments present the shortest possible delay to the Working Group III schedule with the least disruption to Working Group II as well as the Synthesis Report.

A copy of this letter is being sent for information to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the Permanent Representatives from your country to the World Meteorological Organization and to the United Nations Environment Programme.

Yours sincerely,



(Abdalah Mokssit)
Secretary of the IPCC

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE AR6 STRATEGIC PLANNING SCHEDULE IN LIGHT OF THE DELAY TO THE WORKING GROUP III SCHEDULE, INCLUDING ANALYSIS OF CONSTRAINTS

Introduction

This document summarises the proposed changes to IPCC AR6 Strategic Planning Schedule (SPS) in light of the delay in the Working Group III (WG III) schedule. Excerpts from the SPS summarising changes are provided in Annex A.

The revised SPS includes proposed changes to the Working Group II (WG II), Working Group III and Synthesis Report (SYR) schedules, and refers to:

- Plan A – the current schedules presented to Bureau (at B60) and Panel (at P53-bis)
- Plan B – the proposed alternate schedule

Plan B has been discussed with the Heads of TSU for WG II and the SYR and Deputy Secretary on 19 March and further revised and then discussed again with those parties and the Head of TSU for Working Group I on 12 April 2021.

Identified constraints

The alternate Plan B schedule was developed with a view to known or perceived constraints that the Panel may have around the acceptability of a revised AR6 SPS. These constraints include that:

- Congestion of activity around COP 26 (1-12 November 2021) has been a noted cause for concern;
- The schedule should minimise activities running concurrently (i.e. minimise overlaps where possible); however
- Overlaps and congestion appear preferable to delaying the SYR approval beyond September 2022.

With this in mind:

- A two-week overlap between review periods has been previously found acceptable (e.g. between WG II and WG III SOD reviews in January 2021).
- The most intensive period for government activity during a review is the last two weeks (i.e. other activities should be avoided during this time).
- The extension of review periods beyond the standard eight weeks could alleviate pressures and this was a suggestion raised at B60-bis.
- Holding an approval session during a review period should be acceptable (as long as it does not fall during the last two weeks of a review).
- Governments would like a minimum of five weeks between commencement dates for Approval Sessions.

Changes between Plan A and Plan B

Seeking to take into account the constraints above, the Plan B schedule amends the Plan A schedule as follows:

- The WG III Government Review of the SPM commences on 29 November 2021 and ends 30 January 2022 (N.B. the approximate time period in Plan A when the SYR Government and Expert Review was to be held).
- The SYR Government and Expert Review commences later on 10 January and ends 20 March 2022.
- The WG II Approval Plenary moves earlier to 14-18 February 2022 and would now fall during the SYR review period.
- To mitigate impacts of the overlap between the WG III and SYR reviews, and to take into account further congestion from the WG II Approval Plenary falling during the SYR review, the durations of the WG III and SYR reviews have been extended beyond the normal eight weeks to nine weeks and ten weeks respectively.
- The WG III Approval Plenary is moved later to 21-25 March 2022.
- As a result of the delay to the SYR Government and Expert Review, CWT 3 would be delayed by two weeks (from 21-25 March to 4-8 April 2022) and the commencement of the Final Government Distribution and government review would be delayed by one week (from 6 June to 13 June 2022).

To note:

- WG III is about to commence its LAM4 at which it is engaging with its Bureau and authors on the dates of its SPM Drafting Workshop, which may as a result be subject to change from that stated in Annex A.

Unrelated to the WG III delay, the revised plan also incorporates one further amendment:

- The WG II SPM Drafting Workshop is moved earlier to 21-27 June 2021 (previously 12-18 July 2021)
- Due to logistical constraints in the host country for the SYR approval, the SYR approval will take place in the last week of September 2022 (26 September to 30 September), and CWT-4 will take place the week before that (19 to 23 September).

Perceived advantages and disadvantages of Plan B

In terms of how Plan B might be received by governments:

Advantages:

- ***Presents the shortest possible delay to the WG III schedule*** (at least one that does not disrupt WG II as well as SYR)
- ***Avoids change to timing of WG II Government Review of the SPM*** (commences 1 October and ends 26 November)
- ***Avoids overlap between WG II Government Review of the SPM and another review*** (originally SYR Government and Expert Review; now the WG III Government Review of SPM will commence immediately after the WG II review closes)
- ***Reduces congestion around COP 26*** (there are two weeks after the end of COP 26 before the close of the WG II review)

- **Ensures a five-week gap between commencement of approval sessions** (WG II approval on 14 February; WG III on 21 March 2022)
- **Retains a September 2022 approval for the SYR** (as understood to be the key priority for many governments)

Disadvantages:

- **Creates a new overlap of three weeks between WG III Government Review of the SPM and SYR Government and Expert Review** (although the proposed extended durations of the WG III (nine weeks) and SYR reviews (ten weeks) are intended to mitigate against the congested activity in this period)
- **WG II Approval Session falls within the SYR Government and Expert Review** (although it does not fall during the final two weeks of the SYR review; there is a gap of two weeks after the close of the WG III Government Review of the SPM; and the extended duration of the WG III and SYR reviews further seeks to mitigate this congestion)

Next steps

As per the established precedent on changes to the SPS, changes to the AR6 SPS require the agreement of the IPCC Executive Committee, with IPCC Secretariat consulting with the IPCC Bureau before seeking approval by correspondence by the Panel.

Changes associated with the delay to the WG III schedule March 2022 to September 2022:

Year	Month	Week	WORKING GROUP III		WORKING GROUP II		Synthesis Report		COMMENTS	
			WG III Plan A	WG III Plan B	WG II Plan A	WG II Plan B	SYR Plan A	SYR Plan B		
2022	March	28-6			IPCC acceptance/ adoption/approval 28 March- 4 February (TBC)			SYR Government and Expert review 10 Jan - 20 March (10 weeks) (TBC)		
		7-13								
		14-20		SPM Write-shop (TBC)						
		21-27		IPCC acceptance/ adoption/approval (21-25 March)			CWT 3 (21-25Mar) (TBC)			
		28-3								
	April	4-10						CWT 3 (4-8 April) (TBC)		
		11-17							17 Apr - Easter Sunday	
		18-24								
		25-1								
	May	2-8							2 May - Eid Al- Fitr Holiday	
		9-15								
		16-22								
		23-29								
	June	30-5								
		6-12								
		13-19								
		20-26								
		27-3								
	July	4-10					FGD (8 weeks) 6 June - 31 July (TBC)	FGD (8 weeks) 13 June - 7 August (TBC)	9 July - Eid Al- Adha Holiday	
		11-17								
		18-24								
		25-31								
	August	1-7								
		8-14								
		15-21								
		22-28								
September	29-4					CWT 4 and SPM + Approval Plenary (29 Aug- 9 September 2022) (TBC)				
	5-11									
	12-18									
	19-25						CWT 4 and SPM + Approval Plenary (19 September - 30 September 2022) (TBC)			
	26-2									