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ENGLISH ONLY

**AR6 STRATEGIC PLANNING SCHEDULE**

**Background Note**

**Possible implications resulting from COVID19 on the IPCC Plenary Sessions and the proposed response**

(Submitted by the Secretary of the IPCC)

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<sup>1</sup> This version addresses the comments made by the Bureau members and government representatives at the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Bureau which took place from 16-18 March 2021.

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# AR6 STRATEGIC PLANNING SCHEDULE

## Background Note

### Possible implications resulting from COVID19 on the IPCC Plenary Sessions and the proposed response

## Contents

<b>1. Background .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Planning for IPCC Plenary Sessions.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.1 IPCC Plenary sessions in 2020 .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.2 IPCC plenary sessions in 2021 and the rest of the 6th cycle .....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.2.1 Timing and the number of Plenary sessions .....	3
2.2.2 Agenda items / work planned to be delivered in 2020/2021 .....	4
2.2.3 Format of plenary sessions .....	5
2.2.3.1 Proposal for an extended virtual approval for the 54th Session of IPCC/ 14th Session of WGI.....	5
2.2.3.2. Enhancing participation in the FGD review .....	6
<b>2.3. Additional considerations .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Moving forwards .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Annex I: Status, assessment of implications from delays, and ways forward in considering Plenary agenda items .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Annex II: Alternative options discussed by Executive Committee .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Annex III: Analysis of opportunities, limitations and risks of the proposed options.....</b>	<b>16</b>

## **1. Background**

This note provides an analysis of the possible implications resulting from COVID-19 pandemic on the organization of IPCC Plenary Sessions with a focus on Working Group approval sessions during the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) cycle and propose a way forward for conducting approval Session should a physical meeting be not possible.

The Background Note is prepared by the Secretariat in collaboration with IPCC Executive Committee and Working Group Technical Support Units. It reflects the views and addressed the comments of the Executive Committee members as well as the comments made by the Bureau members and government representatives during the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the IPCC Bureau (26-19 March 2021).

The aim of this note is to inform the discussions of the IPCC Bureau and Panel on the format and other details of the approval Sessions. The unprecedented impacts of COVID-19 have required the IPCC to keep the overall Strategic Planning Schedule (SPS) under continuous review. Such a situation has put the ExCom in a position of needing to address urgent issues that require prompt attention by the IPCC between Panel Sessions.

Since March 2020 the ExCom has approved milestones for three Working Group contributions to the AR6 which have been adjusted by 4-5 months from what was originally decided with the view to maintain the credibility of the reports and deliver as expected. All the changes agreed so far by the ExCom go through the end of the third quarter of 2021. At BUR-59 there were suggestions to seek the Panel's approval for further changes to the Working Group contributions to the AR6 beyond the first quarter of 2021.

Further changes involving milestones and deadlines beyond the third quarter of 2021 including the timing and format of the IPCC Plenary Sessions remain tentative and are under discussion.

## **2. Planning for IPCC Plenary Sessions**

### **2.1 IPCC Plenary sessions in 2020**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic circumstances, holding an in-person 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the IPCC (IPCC-53) in October 2020 as decided at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session was not feasible. In fulfilling its mandate of ensuring that the IPCC work programme is implemented and taking into account the operational limitations of holding a virtual Plenary session of the IPCC, lessons learnt from similar events, the Secretariat developed a few options on the format for IPCC-53 and shared them with the ExCom including their advantages and disadvantages.

A barrier identified is the possibility of a digital divide between developed and developing countries and that this would lead to disadvantaged participation. Similar concerns were shared by other UN Organizations including secretariats of Multilateral Environment Agreements which were consulted by the IPCC Secretariat.

Representatives of developing countries have suggested limiting decisions to those that they regard as essential. Others have raised concerns in relation to deferring the rest of agenda items to the next Plenary Session. A hybrid model, with participation by both electronic and written means, for IPCC-53 and the budget agenda item were the elements of the proposal that were not objected to by IPCC Focal Points.

The Secretariat sent a letter to IPCC Focal Points on 28 September informing them that IPCC-53 will be held as a hybrid plenary session, during the week of 7 to 13 December 2020 and inviting the Panel to consider the budget as an essential agenda item.

In order to address concerns raised in relation to deferring the rest of agenda to the next Plenary Session, the Secretariat proposed re-convening the IPCC-53 in a second session named 53<sup>rd</sup> (bis) Session of the IPCC (IPCC-53 bis), to be held in the first quarter of 2021. The proposal was initially shared with and supported by BUR-59 followed by a letter to IPCC Focal Points on 26 October 2020 inviting them to IPCC-53 and informing about the plans to hold IPCC-53 bis.

## **2.2 IPCC plenary sessions in 2021 and the rest of the 6th cycle**

The Secretariat has assessed the implications of and lessons learnt from holding the IPCC-53 session in a hybrid format with one agenda item, and will continue to monitor Working Group virtual activities and also the first Core Writing Team (CWT-1), to inform the process, continue delivering progress in the IPCC work plan with as little disruption as possible, while making sure that sessions are inclusive and transparent to all participants.

A lesson learnt from IPCC-53, the first hybrid plenary session held by the IPCC, is that a virtual session requires a considerable amount of time dedicated to each agenda item as well as time and dedicated support to facilitate and enhance remote participation. During the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the IPCC, the Financial Task Team (FiTT) spent 2-hours each day over a period of 5 working days in order to complete the discussions and prepare a decision document for consideration and approval by the Plenary. While this lesson remains valid for the future, efforts should be made to keep the discussions focused including through pre-sessional preparations and consultations with Panel members.

The Secretariat has assessed the implications from COVID-19 pandemic on the number, timing, format and agenda items of the Plenary Sessions in 2020, which are summarized in [Annex I](#).

### **2.2.1 Timing and the number of Plenary sessions**

According to the Strategic Planning Schedule, IPCC is due to hold two Plenary Sessions, the 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the IPCC (IPCC-54) and the 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the IPCC (IPCC-55) in 2021. IPCC-53 will reconvene its second part (IPCC-53 bis), in the first quarter of 2021. The dates and other details for IPCC-53 bis will be confirmed following a consultation with the Panel.

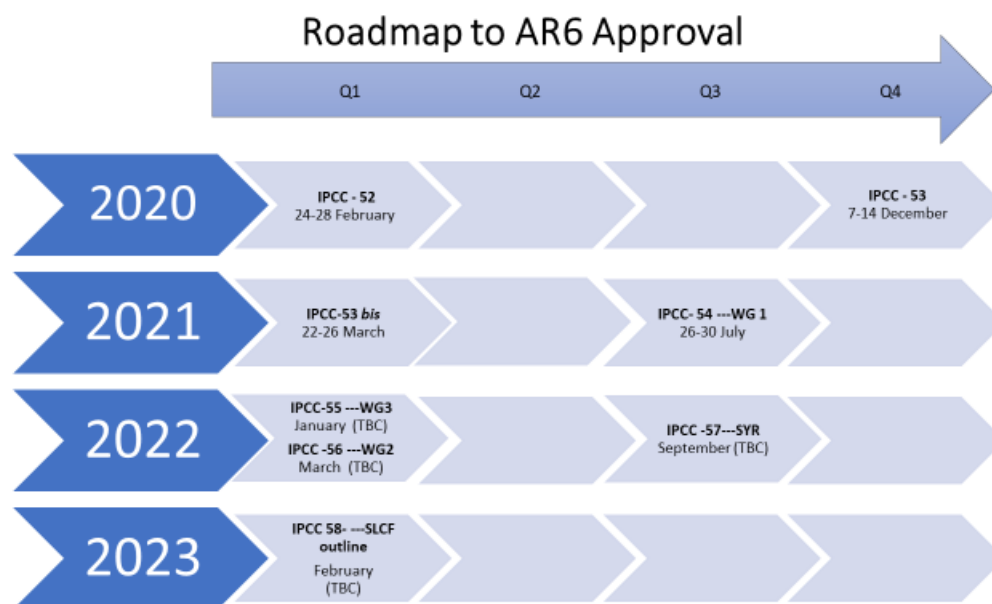
IPCC-54, which will also include the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of Working Group I (WGI) approval, was initially planned for April 2021 and due to the adjustments approved for WGI milestones it is now planned for July 2021.

While dates of the IPCC-54 were approved<sup>2</sup> by the Panel by correspondence in January 2021, those for IPCC-55 and the rest of the Panel Sessions for the AR6 cycle are tentative, pending agreement by the Panel. The diagram below shows the roadmap to AR6 approval process with dates for Plenary Sessions which remain tentative starting from the third quarter of 2021 through the end of the AR6 cycle.

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<sup>2</sup> On January 2021, after consultations with the Bureau, the Panel approved by correspondence to postpone the Final Draft Government Review period by one week (from 7 December 2020 -31 January 2021 to 3 May - 20 June 2021) and postpone the IPCC-54 / 14<sup>th</sup> session of WG I from 12-18 April 2021 to 26-30 July 2021.

Tentative dates are used for internal planning of work within Working Groups (WGs) and Technical Support Units (TSUs) and authors have adjusted their schedules accordingly. For example, for many WGI authors, flexibility is limited for shifts in the approval schedule, especially at the start of university academic year in September 2021 given their teaching responsibilities, homeschooling as well as dependent care.



## 2.2.2 Agenda items / work planned to be delivered in 2020/2021

With IPCC-53 addressing one agenda item and other items deferred to the IPCC-53 bis, and both IPCC-54 and IPCC-55 Sessions that include WG report approval sessions, it is necessary to assess the implications from any potential delays in making progress in Plenary agenda items with the view to minimize any disruption to the AR6 cycle and the transition to the Seventh Assessment Report (AR7).

Annex I provides an assessment of implications from delays in considering agenda items and proposes the way forward in advancing the work on them.

This assessment has informed the discussions in developing the Provisional Agenda for the IPCC-53 bis. Four clusters of agenda items identified include 1) essential items requiring attention in 2020 (for example: budget); 2) items requiring attention in 2021 (for example review of principles and procedures); 3) items that do not require Panel decisions (progress reports) or standing agenda items (reports of the previous sessions); 4) New items (changes to the SPS etc.).

### 2.2.3 Format of plenary sessions

The Secretariat and the ExCom have explored the feasibility of holding virtual approval sessions in 2021 if face to face meetings are not possible and have developed a few options.

In developing such options, the Secretariat and ExCom, are continuously building on the experience and lessons learnt from the first virtual Panel Session (IPCC-53), two virtual Bureau Sessions, the Synthesis Report (SYR) CWT-1 and virtual WG activities, noting that IPCC Plenary and approval Sessions have specific requirements for which there is limited flexibility.

Any proposed option for with a non-physical approval session would need to be in line with the IPCC principles and procedures<sup>3</sup>.

#### ***2.2.3.1 Proposal for an extended virtual approval for the 54<sup>th</sup> Session of IPCC/ 14<sup>th</sup> Session of Working Group I***

Three options were initially identified by the Secretariat and ExCom for the approval session of WGI. Option 1) – a hybrid session (written-virtual-physical activities) with multiple rounds of review/comments; Option 2) – an extended hybrid (written-virtual-physical activities) approval session; and Option 3) – to delay the approval until a physical meeting is possible.

Option 1) was initially proposed by the Secretariat. This option includes an extended informal ‘pre-Plenary session’ followed by one week approval session. The pre-Plenary session would take place during the finalization of the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) in response to Final Government Draft (FGD) review comments, ahead of the approval session taking place.

Option 2) was a proposal initially submitted by WGI Co-Chairs and Bureau. It envisages extending the duration of the session to take into account the longer time needed to contribute to the process remotely. The duration of the approval session is estimated be 10 working days, separated by a 2-day break.

Further details on these options are presented in [Annex II](#) and [Annex III](#) describes opportunities, limitations and risks in implementing these options.

Some aspects of Option 1) such as the duration of informal “pre-plenary consultations” which would put an additional burden on authors (two extra weeks would need to be added to the timeline ensure time is not lost from the SPM drafting work due to the consultations), and the feasibility of a week-long duration of the virtual approval session were not supported by ExCom and significant concerns were expressed by ExCom members regarding Option 3) due to the uncertainty in when normal conditions will return, so detrimentally withholding IPCC findings for input to climate negotiations and other policy spheres for an unknown period of time. There are also concerns about the availability of volunteer report authors well beyond the initial timeline (SPM authors), chapter scientists, and TSU members as well as the reports becoming out – dated quickly because of the emergence of new literature after the cutoff date (end of January 2021) for literature and datasets assessed.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/documentation/procedures/>

Options 1) and 2) share some common design elements. There are trade-offs between the different approaches as summarized in [Annex III](#).

Both options consist of a hybrid activity. In-person participation would be supported where possible according to the requirements of the host country. This may consist of an in-person venue organized by the host country, regional in-person meeting arrangements, for example supported by UN Headquarters, or national in-person arrangements

Option 1+2) could be developed building on positive aspects of options 1) and 2). The "pre-Plenary session" objective of enhancing interactions between delegations and the drafting team could be implemented through an interactive Questions and Answers (Q&A) process facilitated by a Helpdesk that is managed by the WGI TSU. This would take place during the FGD review, not during the SPM drafting period. Option 1+2) then envisages an extended duration of the approval session, as described in Option 2) to take into account the longer time needed to contribute to the process remotely. The duration of the approval session is estimated be 10 working days, separated by a 2-day break. A schematic presentation of options is provided in the diagram below:

Schematic presentation of Options 1, 2, 1+2 – please refer to [Annex III](#) for a detailed description of opportunities, limitations and risks of each option.



### 2.2.3.2. Enhancing participation in the FGD review

A key enabling condition is engagement with governments to enhance the participation in the FGD review of the SPM to support the final preparation of the SPM by the drafting team and address clarification questions by delegations ahead of the approval session.

This will include pre-recorded videos with online Q&A sessions to provide guidance on the review process, to introduce the SPM and clarifications of, for example, key concepts and glossary terms.

### **2.3. Additional considerations**

The IPCC Secretariat has considered the legal aspects of holding virtual Plenary and Working Group approval sessions. These include the principle of participation and equitable representation in the expert and governmental review process, in particular given the identified barrier of a possible digital divide between developed and developing countries as leading to disadvantaged participation. The current virtual session scenario does not currently replicate the conditions as needed for the option of full participation and equitable representation, due to limitations imposed by the digital divide including technical connectivity. The application of IPCC principles and values may be understood that solutions implementing virtual meetings must provide for fair, inclusive and transparent processes so that all Members are offered the ability to meaningfully participate in review and approval, such as offered for in-person meetings.

The Secretariat will undertake consultations with national delegations including on the steps to enhance digital connectivity, if needed. At its 53<sup>rd</sup> Session the Panel agreed to allocation of resources under the IPCC Trust Fund for this purpose.

Noting the current speed of global vaccination and the efficacy the vaccines against new variants of COVID-19, the Secretariat is looking at the enabling conditions under which the in-person participation could be safely organized. This includes but not limited to the consideration of elements such as daily infections rate of the Host country, entry requirements, availability of testing facilities and kits, meeting space with proper ventilation and sitting arrangements etc.

Building on the experience from the virtual IPCC-53 Session, CWT-1 and e-LAM meetings, the Secretariat will look at other aspects that would ensure effective and inclusive participation at the virtual approval sessions such as high-quality internet access, the time allocation per session, day and item.

An assessment of the capacity constraints and needs of the Secretariat to support the implementation of a hybrid approval session is needed to inform a proposal for additional staff for consideration by the Panel. This would, for example, concern the support of zoom sessions and online document management by means of Paper Smart.

Zoom sessions with simultaneous translation for Plenary Sessions, English-only for huddle and contact group meetings, and PaperSmart are the two platforms used to implement the meeting.

### **3. Moving forwards**

Given the need to make progress in the remaining agenda items, the Secretariat, is organising the second part of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the IPCC, i.e. IPCC-53 bis, to take place in the first quarter of 2021. The provisional agenda and other details for this session will be adjusted after IPCC-53.

To ensure inclusiveness and transparency in conducting the business of future plenary sessions, the Secretariat intends to consult with IPCC Focal Points on the dates and format of these sessions.



The Secretariat in collaboration with the Operations Action Team (OAT) and ExCom have identified modalities for engaging IPCC Focal Points including in the format, timing and agenda of upcoming approval sessions, should in person meetings still be impossible. Such modalities include a newsletter, exchange forum, survey etc. The newsletter launched in early October 2020 will be used as a mechanism to enhance communication with IPCC Focal Points and engage with them under the current circumstances.

The Secretariat will work with ExCom and TSUs/OAT if necessary, to develop and refine further such elements for the ExCom to consider it with the view to develop a proposal for consideration by the Bureau and Panel.

**Annex I: Status, assessment of implications from delays, and ways forward in considering Plenary agenda items**

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Implications from delays in making progress on this item</b>	<b>Proposed way forward to advance the work on the agenda item</b>
<p>Review of the IPCC Principles Governing IPCC Work</p>	<p>IPCC-52 decided to request (i) the Secretariat to prepare a summary of the views of Member countries based on the discussions on this item (ii) the Bureau to consider the summary prepared by the Secretariat at its next sessions make recommendations regarding the review of the Principles Governing IPCC Work, as appropriate, for consideration of the Panel at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session.</p> <p>BUR-58 requested the Secretariat to prepare a background note on the summary of views and share the note with Bureau Members and Government Representatives for further views and comments.</p> <p>BUR-59 requested the Secretariat to revise the background note before forwarding to the Panel for its consideration, including the compilation of all views and comments made during the BUR-59 and Bureau portal.</p>	<p>The Principles stipulate that they shall be reviewed at least every five years and amended as appropriate.</p> <p>Member countries share different views on the necessity of the review, when, how and what elements to be reviewed.</p> <p>They share two broad views: Some of them emphasise the need to prioritize urgent and critical issues impacting completion of the AR6 cycle and transition to the 7<sup>th</sup> cycle with the rest highlighting the need to postpone review until in-person meetings are again possible.</p>	<p>Members countries may wish to continue discussions on this matter which is a prerogative of the Panel.</p> <p>The document on the review of principles presented at BUR-59 will be revised per comments received during and post-BUR-59 to be presented to the Panel for their further consideration.</p>

<p>IPCC Trust Fund Budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme and Budget: Audited IPCC Financial Statements</li> <li>• Programme and Budget: Resource Mobilization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPCC-52 approved the budget for 2020 and 2021 and noted the indicative budget for 2022 and 2023 and adopted Decision IPCC-LII-9 on the IPCC Trust Fund Programme and Budget as contained in Annex 1 of this document.</li> <li>• IPCC-52 Noted document IPCC-LII/INF.1 presented on the Audit of the 2018 IPCC Financial Statements.</li> <li>• IPCC-52 Noted document IPCC-LII/INF.13.</li> </ul>	<p>Financial matters are essential and require urgent attention by the Panel.</p>	<p>Panel's approval is sought on the revised 2020, 2021 Budget.</p> <p>IPCC Secretariat to present document on Audited 2019 Financial Statements.</p> <p>The item was considered at the IPCC-53 to be held in December 2020 which constituted the solely agenda item for IPCC-53.</p>
<p>Admission of Observer Organizations</p>	<p>BUR-58 and BUR-59 positively reviewed a total of 5 organizations.</p> <p>At BUR-58, a suggestion was made regarding clarifying questions on the request of the Holy See on admission as non-Member Observer State.</p>	<p>This item is not contentious, and no major implications identified from any delays.</p>	<p>The 5 organizations positively reviewed by the BUR-59 to be presented to the Panel.</p> <p>Holy See matter would require further review and clarification.</p>

<p>Progress reports (WGs, TFI, SYR TG Data, Communications)</p>	<p>IPCC-52, BUR-58 and BUR-59 took note of all progress reports</p>	<p>These informational reports are very straightforward and do not require a Panel and Bureau decision. Both the Panel and Bureau take note on them.</p>	<p>Provide an update on each including at the hybrid IPCC-53 with the view to inform the discussions on the budget agenda item.</p> <p>Update them and present at the subsequent Bureau and Plenary Sessions.</p>
<p>IPCC Gender Policy and implementation plan</p>	<p>IPCC-52 adopted the IPCC Gender Policy and Implementation Plan.</p>	<p>The gender action plan implementation start is subject of the availability of resources for which the approval of the Panel should be sought at the IPCC-53 bis.</p>	<p>ExCom to establish the Gender Action Team and assess the resources needs for resources to implement the plan on which the Panel approval will be sought.</p> <p>A progress report on the work of the Gender Action Team (GAT) should be presented to the upcoming Bureau meeting and Panel session.</p>
<p>Report on Secretariat staffing, roles and requirements</p>	<p>IPCC-52 requested the Secretariat to prepare a report to -BUR-58 on staffing, roles and requirements as well as options to enhance the efficiency of support for travel, procurement and continuity within and between cycles, including considerations of support from the World Meteorological Organization to the IPCC, and any relevant implications.</p> <p>BUR-59 took note of the presentation from the Secretariat on the outcome of mapping exercise.</p>	<p>Additional IPCC secretariat staff is needed in light of increased workload and implications from COVID19. New staff posts requires approval by the IPCC-53 bis.</p>	<p>The Secretariat to present the staffing needs to the Panel at IPCC-53 bis with the view to seek Panel's approval on the needed additional resources.</p>

Approval of the report of the IPCC -52 meeting	IPCC-52 report will be considered by the Panel at the next session	No implications foreseen.	The Secretariat to include the approval of the IPCC-52 report to IPCC-53 bis agenda.
AR6 Strategic Planning Schedule (SPS)	<p>The unprecedented impacts of COVID-19 have required ExCom to consider and approve urgent changes to the AR6 SPS between Panel Sessions.</p> <p>Since March 2020 the ExCom has approved changes to the SPS which consist of adjustments by 4-5 months from what was originally decided. At BUR-59 there were suggestions to seek the Panel's approval for further changes to the Working Group contributions to the AR6 beyond the first quarter of 2021.</p> <p>During consultations held on the IPCC-53 bis agenda, many member countries suggested including the AR6 SPS in the agenda of the IPCC-53 bis.</p>	There is an urgent need for the Panel to discuss further changes to the AR6 SPS schedule with the view to ensure the delivery of the AR6 with less delay and disruption and a smooth transition to the 7 <sup>th</sup> Assessment Cycle.	The secretariat to include the AR6 SPS in the agenda of the IPCC-53 bis.

## ***Annex II: Alternative options discussed by Executive Committee***

### **Option 1: Hybrid approval session with multiple rounds of review.**

The session will be held in two steps, namely pre-approval and approval session with the earlier being an informal session. It includes multiple rounds of review ahead of the approval session. It will also include engaging with governments ahead of the meeting including through a video or other virtual means to explain and encourage governments to submit comments.

The session will be held in hybrid format, which is a blending of written, virtual and if possible physical activities. It will consist on the following elements:

- **A pre-Plenary session** held in written format and preceding the Plenary one, which will consist of:
  - o A dynamic discussion of the comments in a written format through multiple rounds (e.g. 2 – 3) of written comments on the draft SPM during a period of approximately 2 weeks, with the view to involve as many as possible Focal Points and to address as many comments as possible by the end of the third round; (if more time is needed, the tentative proposed dates, 26-30 July for the IPCC-54 might need to change).
  - o Organized by region, chapter, UN HQ location as necessary;
  - o Led/facilitated by WG Co-Chairs, with support from Secretariat, authors and TSUs until all efforts are exhausted to reduce the number of comments before a “note from the Co-Chairs” on the comments is finalized;
  - o The Note from the WG Co-Chair is drafted and shared with the FPs summarizing the remaining comments following the dynamic discussions of comments.
  - o The Note from the WG Co-Chairs will provide but limited to details such as the governments who made the comments and the concerns raised and the assessment of the authors.
  - o While all comments will be given a chance to be addressed before the Plenary some comments might be difficult to be addressed at the pre-Plenary. A color code will be assigned to the comments with the view to address green and yellow ones at the pre-Plenary and forward the red ones to the Plenary.
- **Approval Plenary session** held in the course of approximately one week in virtual format with the possibility of physical participation of representatives from UN missions sitting in the same location if the situation with COVID-19 will permit, it will consist on the following elements:
  - o Focused on the red comments with the view to seek consensus on them;
  - o Organized in a “contact group”- like model held in virtual format. The physical presence of UN mission representatives in UN Headquarters locations (Geneva, New York, Nairobi) will be explored. They will be sitting in one or two locations and

connected virtually to the session, should governments decide to do so. Interventions could be made by the Heads of delegations or alternates only.

### **Option 2: Hybrid extended approval session**

- **Approval session** of approximately 10 working days, with two rest days midway, can be envisaged. To facilitate remote participation and work (considering fatigue and time-zone considerations), the Plenary Session schedule needs to be spread over more days<sup>4</sup> than during normal conditions. Time also needs to be allocated for activities to take place asynchronously, for example to read documents, assemble and consider contributions made in writing (interventions by delegations and responses and clarifications by the SPM drafting team).
- More details on the approval session:
  - o The SPM version for approval would be provided in clean and track change mode 48 hours prior to approval.
  - o Co-Chairs present the headline statements and supporting bullets, figures and tables for approval by delegations during 3-hour plenary sessions. Comments are taken orally and in written form. The full list of remarks can be compiled and made available to all participants for full transparency, via Paper Smart soon after the end of the session for a set period of time, for example 1 hour. Co-Chairs and drafting team work on revisions offline, for example for 2 hours. On completion, these are uploaded to Paper Smart (clean and tracked change versions) for review so that participants can check the revisions before the start of the next session.
  - o Huddles or contact groups are initiated for discussions on particular aspects of the SPM that require further clarification. The same iterative process used for plenary discussions would be used (i.e. presentation of the discussion matter, collecting both oral and written comments, providing revisions for consideration etc.). The outcomes of the huddles and contact groups would be provided on Paper Smart for a set period of time, for example 1 hour, and then presented in the plenary session by Co-Chairs.
  - o Co-Chairs provide clarifications on revisions made by the drafting team following discussions with delegations during the resumed plenary session and seek approval content being considered.
  - o Written comments would be collected at the start of the approval session on the SPM figures. A contact group on visual elements can start at the very beginning of the session.

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<sup>4</sup> This considers a maximum of two 3-hr long plenary sessions per day and includes health/rest breaks.

### **Option 1+2: Enhanced review and extended hybrid approval**

- ***Interactive FGD Review Q&A process:***
  - This process is facilitated by a Helpdesk that is managed by the WGI TSU. Clarification questions, for example on key concepts, can be posted via Paper Smart by delegations.
  - The TSU would facilitate a response including input from the SPM drafting team and Bureau members.
  - This exchange would be visible to all delegations for transparency and as a useful resource.
  
- ***Approval session:***
  - Approval session is extended in duration to approximately 10 working days, with two rest days midway.
  - To facilitate remote participation and work (considering fatigue and time-zone considerations), the Plenary Session schedule needs to be spread over more days<sup>5</sup> than during normal conditions.
  - Time also needs to be allocated for activities to take place asynchronously, for example to read documents, assemble and consider contributions made in writing (interventions by delegations and responses and clarifications by the SPM drafting team). More details are described in Option 2).

### **Option 3: Delayed physical approval session**

This option would allow for a physical meeting once it is again possible.

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<sup>5</sup> This considers a maximum of two 3-hr long plenary sessions per day and includes health/rest breaks.



**Annex III: Analysis of opportunities, limitations and risks of the proposed options**

Option 1) and 2) are not mutually exclusive and there are common design elements. There are trade-offs between the different approaches as summarized in the table below. A hybrid Option, Option 1+2 could be developed with elements of 1 and 2, as necessary.

Options	Opportunities	Limitations	Risks
<p>Option 1: Hybrid approval session that includes an informal 'pre-approval' period</p>	<p>With multiple rounds of review, it has the potential to be inclusive as it is aiming to involve as many as possible Focal Points and to address as many comments as possible before the start of the formal approval session.</p> <p>The informal 'pre-Plenary' Q&amp;A activity would result in clarifications related to the SPM content that would make the approval more efficient. Thus, then approval session would not require an extension of duration.</p> <p>The virtual environment provides new opportunities to innovate the approval session.</p>	<p>The “informal pre plenary consultations” would put an additional burden on authors who would therefore have only 2 weeks available to focus on considering and addressing the FGD review comments if we retain the proposed dates for the WGI session. Such timeline is not realistic as the drafting author team would still need the full time expected to work on the SPM, so two additional weeks than expected in this option.</p> <p>A weeklong approval session, similar to the physical session is challenging, given the virtual format of the session.</p> <p>Technology may place some participants at a disadvantage, most likely in developing countries.</p>	<p>There is a possibility that the completion of the SPM approval will be challenging in a virtual environment. This would have implications, e.g. delays, to the AR6 cycle and externally to the IPCC.</p> <p>There are health risks associated with physical participation.</p>

<p>Option 2: Hybrid extended approval session</p>	<p>The extended approval process would provide the WGI and Governments with an additional flexibility to extending the consultation process to take into account time zones and a mixed written and oral process.</p> <p>The virtual environment provides new opportunities to innovate the approval session.</p>	<p>This option would require an extension of the duration of the approval session.</p> <p>Technology may place some participants at a disadvantage, most likely in developing countries.</p>	<p>There is a possibility that the completion of the SPM approval will be challenging in a virtual environment. This would have implications, e.g. delays, to the AR6 cycle and externally to the IPCC.</p> <p>There are health risks associated with physical participation.</p>
<p>Option 1+2: Hybrid extended approval session</p>	<p>The FGD Q&amp;A activity would result in clarifications related to the SPM and would enhance inclusivity and participation in the FGD review.</p> <p>The extended approval process would provide the WGI and governments with an additional flexibility to extending the consultation process to take into account time zones and a mixed written and oral process.</p>	<p>The FGD Q&amp;A activity would put an additional burden on authors, Bureau members and the TSU.</p> <p>This option would require an extension of the duration of the approval session.</p> <p>Technology may place some participants at a disadvantage, most likely in developing countries.</p>	<p>There is a possibility that the completion of the SPM approval will be challenging in a virtual environment. This would have implications, e.g. delays, to the AR6 cycle and externally to the IPCC.</p> <p>There are health risks associated with physical participation.</p>

	The virtual environment provides new opportunities to innovate the approval session.		
Option 3: Delayed physical approval session	<p>No deviation from the IPCC principles and current practices.</p> <p>No technology challenges faced.</p>	<p>Could involve a substantial delay to the AR6 schedule and an outdated SPM relative to the new literature. Any delay will have an impact to the morale of authors who have / are working around the clock to maintain the least delayed schedule. Finally, it will affect the relevance of the AR6.</p>	<p>There exists uncertainty on when normal conditions will return, so detrimentally withholding IPCC findings for input to climate negotiations and other policy spheres for an unknown period of time.</p> <p>The reports become out - dated quickly because of the emergence of new literature during the process after the cutoff date (end of January) for literature and datasets assessed.</p> <p>Report authors, Bureau members and TSU members including communications, graphics, and operations may no longer be available by reducing the support for the approval session.</p>