What literature does the IPCC assess?

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON **climate change**
WMO
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The Assessment Reports and Special Reports produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) cover a wide range of disciplines in fulfilling the IPCC's mandate of assessing scientific, technological and socio-economic information in order to provide policymakers with a clear view of the current state of scientific knowledge relevant to climate change.

The IPCC does not conduct its own research, run models or make measurements of climate or weather phenomena. Its role is to assess the scientific, technical and socio-economic literature relevant to understanding climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation. Author teams critically assess all such information from any source that is to be included in the report[1].

Author teams use calibrated uncertainty language to express a level of confidence in findings based on the strength of the scientific and technical evidence and the level of agreement in the scientific, technical and socio-economic literature[2].

At the beginning of the assessment process, each IPCC Working Group sets cut-off dates by which time literature has to be accepted for publication by scientific journals, if it is to be included in the current assessment. Cut-off dates ensure the assessment is as up to date as is practical while ensuring that author teams have sufficient time to fully evaluate all literature included in the assessment. For the Sixth Assessment Report the cut-off dates were set so that literature has to be accepted for publication approximately one to three months before completion of the final draft.

Like other scientific publications, IPCC reports refer to cited material in the text with the full citations listed at the end of the relevant chapter so that readers can check the original sources. Copies of material that is cited in IPCC draft reports but not widely available are made available to reviewers upon request during the review period.

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[1] The procedures for dealing with scientific literature are described in Annex 2 (page 17) to **Appendix A** to the **Principles Governing IPCC Work, the Procedures for the Preparation, Review, Acceptance, Adoption, Approval and Publication of IPCC Reports:** https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/09/ipcc-principles-appendix-a-final.pdf

[2] See **Guidance Note for Lead Authors of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report on Consistent Treatment of Uncertainties:** https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/05/uncertainty-guidance-note.pdf

[3] Peer review process by which scientists with relevant expertise critically evaluate the methods and conclusions of primary research papers or the balance and thoroughness of reviews and reports.

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In the assessment process, emphasis is placed on the evaluation of all cited literature and of its sources. Contributions to IPCC reports take full advantage of peer-reviewed[3] and internationally available literature. Sources other than scientific journals also provide crucial information for a comprehensive assessment. Examples include reports from governments, industry and research institutions, international and other organizations, and conference proceedings. Information about certain experiences and practices in mitigation and adaptation activities in particular may be found in sources other than traditional scientific and technical journals. Such materials may utilize a wide range of quality-assurance mechanisms, including but not limited to formal peer review. Author teams using literature of this kind have a special responsibility to ensure its quality and validity.

The Sixth Assessment Report cited over 66 000 sources. This is an indication of the extensive body of literature on which IPCC reports and their conclusions are built.

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