

Outside science academies to review warming panel

March 9 2010, By SETH BORENSTEIN , AP Science Writer

(AP) -- The beleaguered global warming panel has found an outside group to review how it writes its reports.

An international group, the InterAcademy Council, will be given complete control to review the rules, procedures and reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said a scientist close to the situation. Recently, several unsettling errors have been found in the climate panel reports issued in 2007.

Though the mistakes don't undercut the broad [consensus](#) on global warning, they have shaken the credibility of climate scientists and given skeptics of global warming ammunition.

The InterAcademy Council is a Netherlands-based organization of the science academies of 15 nations. "They will run the review themselves," said a scientist close to the situation, who asked not to be named because the researcher was not authorized to talk publicly. "It will be independent... They are choosing the reviewers."

The idea is to have the review finished before the annual meeting of the IPCC in October, the source said. The climate panel was formed by the [United Nations](#) and the [World Meteorological Organization](#).

It will be up to the InterAcademy Council to decide if it's acceptable for its reviewers to have taken part in past IPCC reports. A large number of top climate scientists have participated in the IPCC. The council will

also look at whether the reports should include non-peer-reviewed "gray literature" often written by governments or advocacy groups, the source said.

The reviewers will also look at whether to put in procedures that could catch and correct errors better, the source said.

Details of the review will be announced Wednesday at the United Nations, after the IPCC chairman meets with United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. The IPCC had been looking for an outside group to do the review.

The UN secretary general himself is requesting the review as well as the IPCC, another source close to the situation said.

"It's to be welcomed," said IPCC co-author and Princeton University professor Michael Oppenheimer. "It's a step in the direction of re-establishing the IPCC's credibility with the general public. I, as an IPCC scientist, welcome this kind of check on things."

The IPCC, which is mostly a collection of scientists volunteering their work, produced reports that had errors that ranged from mistaking how much of the Netherlands is below sea level to botching how fast glaciers in the Himalayans are expected to melt.

Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., last month called problems with the IPCC "the makings of a major scientific scandal."

Stanford scientist Stephen Schneider, another IPCC co-author, called independent review a great idea.

"Everybody knows there's a tiny error rate," Schneider said. "Any error rate that can be fixed should be fixed."

The IPCC shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 with former Vice President Al Gore.

More information:

The IPCC: <http://www.ipcc.ch>

The InterAcademy Council: <http://www.interacademycouncil.net/>

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