

SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE IPCC
Sofia, Bulgaria, 27 July – 2 August 2024

IPCC-LXI/Doc. 10
(16.VII.2024)
Agenda Item: 5
ENGLISH ONLY

STRATEGIC PLANNING SCHEDULE FOR THE SEVENTH ASSESSMENT CYCLE

(Prepared by the IPCC Bureau)

(Submitted by the Secretary of the IPCC)

STRATEGIC PLANNING SCHEDULE FOR THE SEVENTH ASSESSMENT CYCLE

1. DEVELOPMENT OF A PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLANNING SCHEDULE

At the 60th session of the IPCC Panel, the Panel “request[ed] the Bureau to prepare a document outlining the month and year of delivery on the basis of an AR7 strategic plan” (IPCC-LX-9). An initial plan was drafted by the Working Group (WG) and Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI) Co-Chairs, drawing on inputs from Bureau Members.

At the 67th session of the Bureau, this initial plan was discussed in detail. The IPCC Bureau requested the WG/TFI Co-Chairs revise the BUR-LXVII/Doc. 4 to reduce the overlap in government review periods, ensuring that there were no more than two consecutive weeks of overlap in government reviews.

This change was implemented and a revised version of the Strategic Planning Schedule was shared with the IPCC Bureau. Nearly all Bureau members agreed with the revised version or made only editorial suggestions. Section 2 of this document contains the revised Strategic Planning Schedule incorporating the change requested along with the subsequent editorial suggestions.

The proposed Strategic Planning Schedule contained in Section 2 of this document is for consideration and decision by the Panel in line with Decision IPCC-LX-9 paragraph 9.

2. PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLANNING SCHEDULE

This paper outlines the IPCC Co-chairs’ proposed schedule for the Seventh Assessment Cycle (AR7) work program, taking into consideration comments raised during P-60, as requested in decision IPCC-LX-9.

This plan was initially drafted by the Working Group (WG) and Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI) Co-Chairs, discussed during the 67th Session of the IPCC Bureau (B-67), and revised after B-67.

It contains a schedule, including an outline of the month and year of delivery of IPCC reports as requested in Paragraph 9 of IPCC-LX-9. It also includes additional elements ensuring AR7 is inclusive, policy relevant and comprehensive, while fostering integration across Working Groups and with the TFI.

The schedule has been developed to meet the science needs of our reports, in particular the need for scientific rigor and comprehensiveness while striving for reports across all WGs that are policy-relevant, neutral, robust, comprehensive and accurate. The schedule highlights specific actions that will be taken to ensure inclusivity and diversity in the AR7 cycle. The schedule incorporates the following principles:

- Scheduling of meetings and review periods in line with past practice, allowing for a sufficient duration at each stage of production of the reports;¹ and
- Inclusivity of experts and authors and a feasible workload (see also IPCC-LXI/INF.15).

The schedule was also developed with the following conditions:

- The intention to hold a joint AR scoping meeting across all WGs in December 2024 (as for AR6);

¹ The duration of each step of report preparation (e.g., development of the drafts, expert and Government review periods) falls within the range of durations used in AR5 and pre-CoVID AR6 (see Table 3).

- Delivery of the WG reports in the order WGI, WGII and WGIII per Paragraph 9 of IPCC-LX-9; and
- Ensuring a feasible workload for Governments, IPCC Bureau members, Authors, TSU staff, and experts by avoiding potential overlaps in activities as much as possible, including minimizing overlaps with common holiday periods and ensuring no more than a two consecutive week overlap period in government reviews.

Using these principles and conditions, the WG and TFI co-chairs developed the schedule by identifying what was necessary to achieve an inclusive, quality report while maintaining momentum from a rapid start. The result is a single schedule for the programme of work in AR7 (Table 1; Figure 1). In this schedule, the proposed delivery dates for AR7 will be:

- Special Report on Climate Change and Cities (SR-Cities): **March 2027**
- Methodology Report on Short-Lived Climate Forcers (MR SLCF): **July 2027**
- Methodology Report on Carbon Dioxide Removal Technologies, Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (MR CDR/CCUS): **July 2027**
- WGI Assessment Report: **May 2028**
- WGII Assessment Report and updated IPCC Technical Guidelines on Impacts and Adaptation: **June 2028**
- WGIII Assessment Report: **July-August 2028**
- Synthesis Report (SYR): **May 2029**

The dates listed above are indicative, intended to be used for planning purposes, and will be updated if needed. Some buffers are built into the schedule to accommodate small adjustments (e.g., the extension to the call for scoping meeting nominations adopted recently), but additional flexibility may be required to accommodate additional changes that arise, evolving needs, or external constraints (e.g., venue availability). In addition, any unforeseen surprises (such as experienced with CoVID) would require adjustments to the schedule.

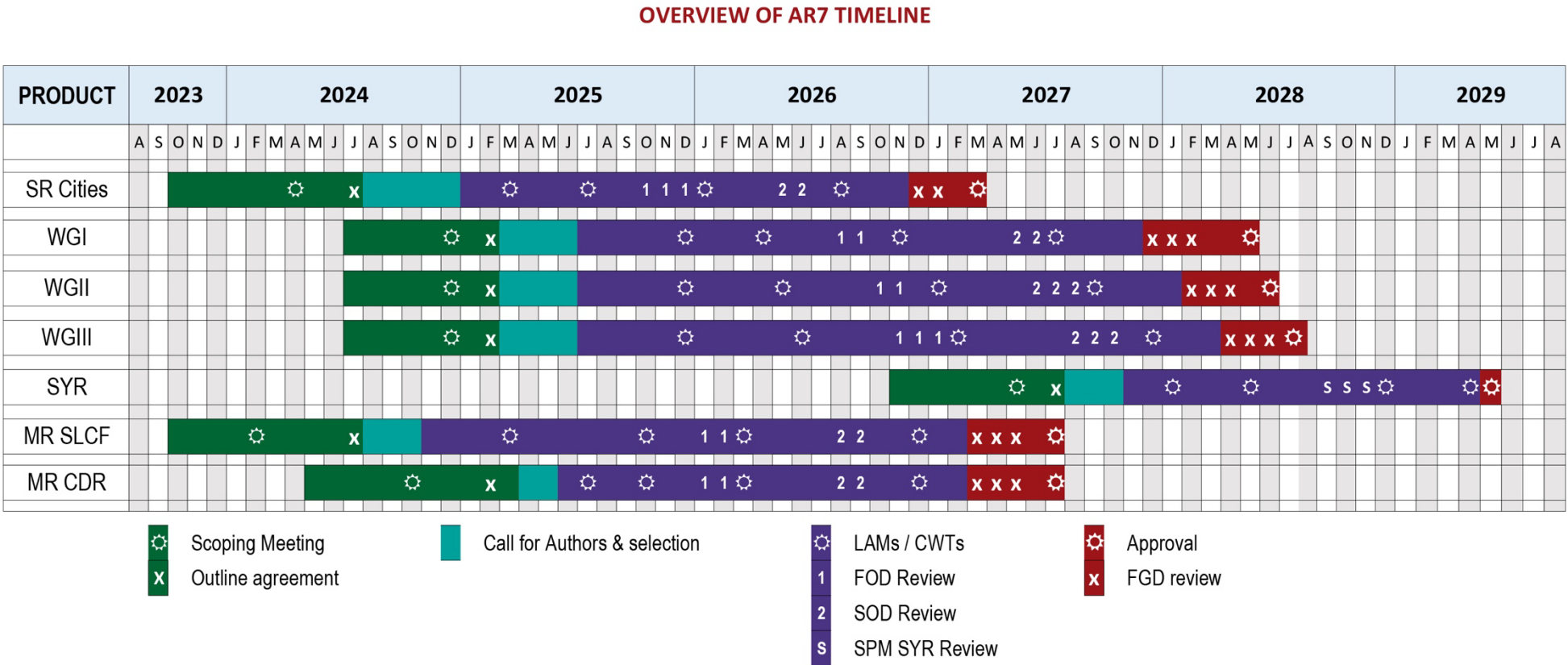
Proposed schedule

Table 1: Proposed AR7 schedule with delivery dates in month/year format. Dates are indicative, with more certainty on the earlier part of the schedule.

	SR CITIES	WGI	WGII	WGIII	SYR	MR SLCF	MR CDR
Scoping Meeting	Apr 2024	Dec 2024	Dec 2024	Dec 2024	May 2027	Feb 2024	Oct 2024
Outline Agreement	July 2024	Feb 2025	Feb 2025	Feb 2025	July 2027	Jul 2024	Feb 2025
LAM1 (CWT1 for SYR)	March 2025	Dec 2025	Dec 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2028	March 2025	July 2025
LAM2 (CWT2 for SYR)	July 2025	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	May 2028	Oct 2025	Oct 2025
FOD Review	Oct-Dec 2025	Aug-Sept 2026	Oct-Nov 2026	Nov 2026 - Jan 2027	N/A	Jan-Feb 2026	Jan-Feb 2026
SPM SYR Review	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Sept-Nov 2028	N/A	N/A
LAM3 (CWT3 for SYR)	Jan 2026	Nov 2026	Jan 2027	Feb 2027	Dec 2028	March 2026	March 2026
SOD Review	May-June 2026	May-June 2027	June-Aug 2027	Aug-Oct 2027	N/A	Aug-Sept 2026	Aug-Sept 2026
LAM4	Aug 2026	July 2027	Sept 2027	Dec 2027	N/A	Dec 2026	Dec 2026
FGD Review	Dec 2026-Jan 2027	Dec 2027-Feb 2028	Feb-April 2028	Apr-June 2028	N/A	March -April-May 2027	March -April-May 2027
Approval	March 2027	May 2028	June 2028	July-August 2028	May 2029	July 2027	July 2027

Note: This table shows the tentative AR7 schedule by month and not by week; as a result, some activities may seem to overlap or be closer together than reality. The only possible overlaps would be as follows: WGI FOD-TFI SODs review (7 week overlap), WGII-WGIII FOD reviews (3 week overlap), SR Cities FGD-WGIII FOD reviews (5 week overlap), WGI SOD-TFI FGD reviews (2 week overlap), WGII SOD review-TFI approvals (1 week overlap). Details on overlaps are displayed in Table 2. Duration of each step is shown in Table 3.

Figure 1: Proposed AR7 schedule (Gantt Chart) with timing of key events indicated. Activities to increase inclusivity are planned throughout the cycle (see IPCC-LXI/INF.15), including: an Expert Meeting, inclusivity training for authors prior to LAM1, outreach via regional webinars to promote the potential roles in IPCC, improvements to the process to engage Contributing Authors and Chapter Scientists). In addition, networking activities are envisioned throughout the cycle to broaden the input into the process and help orient focal points and government reviewers to the review process. In particular, the 12 months between the Scoping Meeting and LAM1 will be used to strengthen these inclusivity activities. Note that events are indicated if they occur at any point in the month shown but may only impact a portion of the month; as a result, seeing two activities in the same month may not indicate an overlap. Overlaps are shown in Table 2.



This plan includes several innovations to facilitate enhanced integration across Working Group themes, relative to past cycles:

- First, we propose a **joint first lead author meeting (LAM1)** across all WGs, tentatively held in December 2025. We considered this option to better facilitate cross-WG discussion and integration across WG Bureaus, such as cross-WG author activities that will facilitate cross-WG boxes or chapters.
- Second, we propose a **joint internal review** of the Zero Order Draft (ZOD) in early 2026, which is an internal phase (not involving governments). This review period is designed to allow cross-WG reviews by experts, and also to reinforce the integration between WGs done by the author teams. The review period has been extended to 6 weeks (instead of the 4 weeks in AR6) to accommodate the overlap.
- Finally, the plan includes an intentional **overlap in the First Order Draft (FOD) review period** to allow for cross-WG reviews. These review periods have been extended in such cases.

The strategic schedule was developed to ensure all IPCC procedures were followed with respect to expert and governmental reviews, that overlapping review periods were minimized and constrained to no more than two consecutive weeks when governments are involved. As a result, all such reviews are at least 8 weeks as per past practice. In the proposed schedule, there are **only 3 weeks of overlapping reviews that impact governments**, a substantial reduction from the 14 weeks of overlap impacting governments in the AR6 pre-CoVID plan (Table 2). Additionally, several review periods have been extended when overlaps occur to ensure adequate time for both experts and governments.

Table 2: List of overlaps of activities in AR7 and AR6. Overlapping periods involving governments are indicated in the last column. Note that some review periods have been extended to address overlaps.

AR7 OVERLAPS

ACTIVITIES	OVERLAP	DATES	IMPACT ON GVTS
WGI FOD - TFI SODs reviews	7 week overlap	Aug-Sept 2026	No
WGII - WGIII FODs reviews	3 week overlap	Nov 2026	No
SR Cities FGD-WGIII FOD reviews	5 week overlap	Dec 2026-Jan 2027	No
WGI SOD-TFI FGDs reviews	2 week overlap	May 2027	Yes
WGII SOD review-TFI Approval	1 week overlap	July 2027	Yes

AR6 OVERLAPS

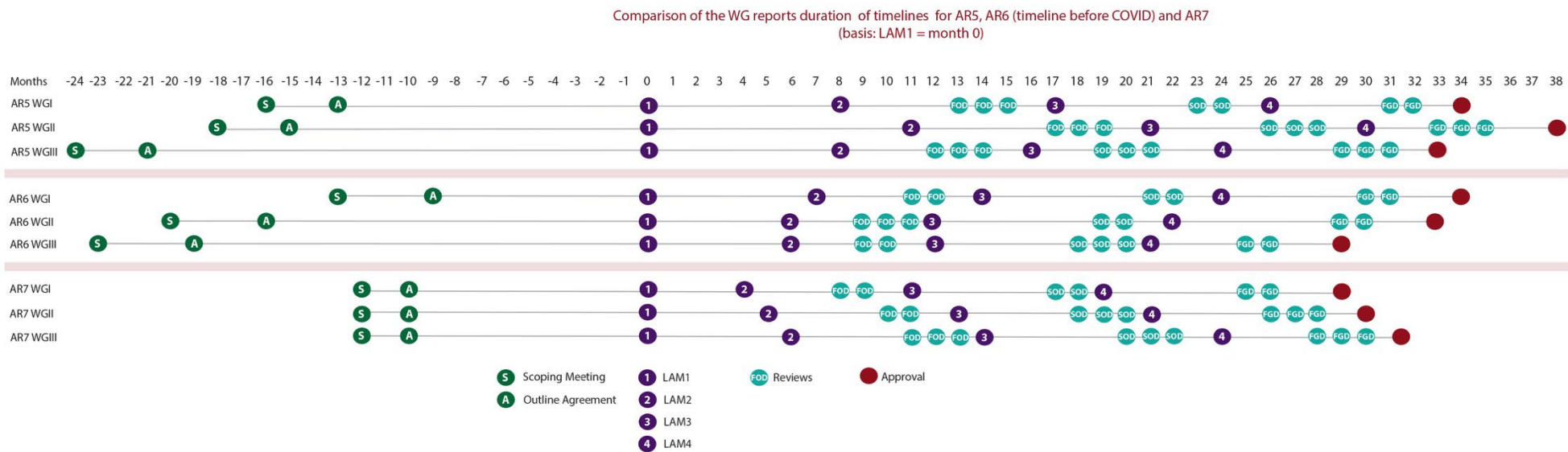
ACTIVITIES	OVERLAP	DATES	IMPACT ON GVTS
SR 1.5 FGD- SROCC FOD reviews	3 week overlap	June 2018	No
SR 1.5 FGD- SRCCL FOD reviews	7 week overlap	June-July 2018	No
SROCC FOD-SRCCL FOD reviews	2 week overlap	June 2018	No
SROCC SOD-SRCCL SOD reviews	8 week overlap	Nov-Dec 2019-Jan 2019	Yes
SROCC FGD-SRCCL FGD reviews	1 week overlap	June 2019	Yes
WGI FOD-SROCC FGD reviews	2 week overlap	June 2019	No
WGI FOD-SRCCL FGD reviews	8 week overlap	Apr-May-June 2019	No
WGI FGD-WGIII SOD reviews	1 week overlap	Dec 2020	Yes
WGII FGD-WGIII FGD reviews	4 week overlap	June 2021	Yes

Figure 2 illustrates the proposed schedule of work in relation to AR5 and AR6 (pre-CoVID) schedules; the schedules are divided into “pre-LAM1” preparation stage and “post-LAM1” production stage for all ARs (i.e. LAM1 = Month zero).

The proposed schedule from LAM1 to approval for WGI in AR7 (29 months, see Figure 2) is consistent with the amount of time allocated in AR6 pre-CoVID (29 to 34 months, depending on WG), resulting in the WGI approval occurring in May 2028. For WGII and WGIII, a few more months are scheduled to allow for the sequential delivery per Paragraph 9 of IPCC-LX-9. Table 3 shows the duration of the main steps in producing the AR7 WG reports, as well as a comparison to AR5 and AR6.

Figure 2 also allows a comparison of the preparation stages leading up to LAM1. In AR6, this period was long (24 months) due to the heavy workload with three parallel Special Reports. In AR7, this period is reduced to 12 months, while still ensuring that key stages do not conflict with SR Cities activities.

Figure 2: Comparison of the WG Report duration for AR5, AR6 (before COVID) and AR7. All times have been aligned at the time of LAM1 (Month=0). This presentation allows to compare durations for both preparation stages before LAM1 and production stages after LAM1 when all authors are involved and reviews are taking place. Since times are aligned to LAM1, the actual month represented differs across reports within the same column (e.g., AR6 had a joint scoping meeting for all three working groups, but it shows in months -13, -20, and -23 for WGI, WGII, and WGIII, respectively, because LAM1 occurred at different points after the scoping meeting). Note that Special Reports and Methodology Reports are not shown. In AR6, the time prior to the WG LAM1 was required to accommodate three Special Reports. AR7 only includes one Special Report and thus less time is required prior to LAM1.



This graphic is meant to compare the total duration of each timeline. All the steps are represented counting from LAM1 being month 0.
 Ex. 1: considering LAM1 took place during month 0, AR5 WGI report was approved during month 34, AR6 WGIII report during month 29 and AR7 WGIII is planned to be approved during month 31.
 Ex. 2: In AR6, considering all LAM1s took place during month 0 and that the joint Outline Agreement took place in September 2017, it corresponds to month -9 for WGI, month -16 for WGII and month -19 for WGIII.

In the AR7 cycle, the Bureau is committed to increasing inclusivity among authors and experts, including both ensuring diversity in participation, but also to ensuring the voices of all participants are heard (see also IPCC-LXI/INF.15). The schedule includes 10 months between panel agreement on the AR7 outline and LAM1 to ensure adequate time to engage authors and ensure a large, diverse pool of authors. The time block before LAM1 is also key for integrated cross-WG coordination and for activities ensuring an efficient LAM1. Ensuring a diverse pool of authors are actively engaged, along with cross-WG coordination, will also support comprehensiveness of the assessments. Several important activities include:

- Networking activities that enhance equity and inclusivity, including through broadening the author pool;
- Considering outcomes from the Gender, Diversity and Inclusivity Expert Meeting.
- Starting coordination for preparing the ZOD ahead of LAM1 to ease the burden on authors later;
- Organizing dedicated Expert Meetings (EMs) in which outcomes will inform AR Author teams;
- Dedicated author training sessions before LAM1 on important topics (e.g., webinars on IPCC process, inclusivity, document management tools, data management, use of AI etc.). Comprehension and integration of all new information from these training sessions - especially for those new to the IPCC process – will be given more time than would be available during face-to-face LAMs, which was past practice;
- Allowing better engagement with CLAs across WGs to, for instance, discuss cross-working group integration and alignment of report narratives and focus prior to LAMs; and
- Monitoring and evaluation of inclusivity practices through surveys and frequent discussions in Bureau meetings throughout the cycle.

Table 3: Comparison of duration of main steps of report production. Ranges across WGs are provided for AR5 and pre-CoVID AR6. Specific values for each WG are provided for AR7. Duration for SRs and MRs not shown.

	AR5 Range	AR6 Range	AR7		
			WGI	WGII	WGIII
Call for scoping nominations	1 month	1 month, extended to 1.5	1.25 months, extended to ~1.5	1.25 months, extended to ~1.5	1.25 months, extended to ~1.5
Call for authors	2 months	1.5 months	1 month	1 month	1 month
Author selection	3 months	3 months	3.5 months	3.5 months	3.5 months
Preparation of internal draft	4 to 6 months*	2 to 4 months	2.5 months	2.5 months	2.5 months
Internal draft review	2 months*	1 to 1.5 months	1.5 months	1.5 months	1.5 months
Preparation of FOD	4 to 6 months	3 to 3.5 months	3.5 months	4.5 months	5 months
FOD review	2 months	2 months	2 months	2 months	2.5 months
Preparation of SOD	3.5 to 5.5 months	6 months	6 months	5.5 months	6 months
SOD review	2 months	2 months	2 months	2 months	2 months
Preparation of FGD	3.5 to 5 months	4 to 6 months	5 months	5 months	5 months
FGD review	2 months	2 months	2.5 months	2 months	2 months

* Information for WGIII AR5 missing

** Note: Sum of months does not equal the total duration of cycle. Times between end of review and LAMs are not included.

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan

Note that the strategic planning schedule described in this document is an initial plan that will be continuously evaluated as the cycle progresses and updated if needed per the two aforementioned principles of schedule duration and inclusivity. In particular, some elements of the timeline may depend on the scope and (expected) length of the reports, and the plan's schedule may require refining once outlines are developed. Plans for inclusivity will be monitored and evaluated and updated following the Expert Meeting on Gender, Diversity and Inclusivity, and implementation of recommendations resulting from that Expert Meeting, and from routine surveys and Bureau discussions throughout the cycle.