

# The Climate Witness Programme – Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) Guidelines

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## 1. Introduction

These Guidelines have been developed to assist members of the Climate Witness Science Advisory Panel (SAP) to develop an understanding of the overall Programme and the specific function of the SAP.

These guidelines outline:

- The programme’s strategic rationale;
- What it means to be a SAP member;
- The process for reviewing Climate Witness testimonials and;
- The opportunities for future collaboration between WWF and research institutions to promote particular climate research.

These Guidelines and the attached proformas are designed to streamline our processes and will be adapted as the Climate Witness Programme develops. We invite you to provide feedback via the SAP coordinator.

## 2. Background to Climate Witness Programme

Climate Witness is a global initiative by WWF that puts a human face to climate change impacts occurring today, thus increasing the sense of urgency and public support for effective climate solutions.

## WWF International – Climate Witness Programme

Our initiative is to map out where communities around the world are already affected by climate change, and to communicate what this means for the lives of real people here and now.

We ask Climate Witnesses to share their observations with WWF to assist us to inspire stronger action on climate change in the community. We aim to build a movement of individuals who see climate change affecting the world's natural places and who want to be active in addressing this threat.

Climate Witness aims to achieve this by:

- Empowering people and being inclusive – involving people in the process of identifying impacts of climate change, rather than telling people what the impacts are.
- Providing an opportunity to engage – it establishes a process in which people can engage and talk, rather than just listening to information.
- Making it real – Climate Witness connects the issue of climate change to real people feeling actual things, rather than hypothetical people and model projections.
- Building a network – it provides a process to engage people who are interested in the issue and connect them with others who are similarly interested.
- Being 'here and now' – increasing the sense of urgency for everyone to take action by demonstrating that the impacts of climate change are being felt by people here and now.

The Programme also aims to build a database of climate change impacts for future reference. This allows us to monitor where certain impacts are occurring. It also provides the first step towards engaging communities in resilience building and adaptation activities associated with the new climatic conditions.

We have successfully trialled this initiative on a small scale in the last few years (see [www.panda.org/climatewitness](http://www.panda.org/climatewitness)), and we are in the process of expanding the project.

### 3. Why a Science Advisory Panel

A SAP delivers a key condition of the Climate Witness Programme by providing the ability to distinguish 'anecdotal' stories from real observations that can be linked to climate change impacts. It ensures stories are related to climate change and not just local factors.

The SAP is made up of leading climate scientists mostly but not exclusively from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) who are familiar with the latest climate change-related, peer-reviewed literature in specific regions of the world.

As at 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008, there are 104 [SAP members](#). A list of these members can be viewed on our [website](#).

## **WWF International – Climate Witness Programme**

Members of the SAP assess climate witness testimonies for levels of consistency with current scientific knowledge on climate change impacts which in turn contributes to a database of information that can be accessed online into the future.

While the primary function of the panel is to review anecdotal testimonies, there are opportunities for further involvement in a number of other Climate Witness activities outlined in this document.

### **4. What it means to be a SAP member**

The primary function of a SAP member is to verify the scientific basis of the Climate Witness stories WWF collects from around the world to ensure they are consistent with peer-reviewed literature about climate change impacts already happening today in a particular region.

This requires writing a short scientific review (one page or less) of stories that correspond to your area of expertise.

Participation in the Climate Witness programme is voluntary and in return we acknowledge your contribution on our global website as well as featuring your name above all Climate Witness stories you review. WWF is also seeking opportunities to promote new climate change research so please feel free to contact the Climate Witness Manager for more information.

There are a number of opportunities for you to become more involved in the Climate Witness Programme and Climate Change work in the WWF Global Network through attendance at conferences, forums or workshops and interaction with the media. These activities are optional and you can indicate your level interest on the SAP membership details form we will ask you to complete.

#### ***4.1 Benefits of being a SAP member***

The principal benefit of participating in Climate Witness is to be part of an innovative online community that is increasing public awareness of climate change and building the political will to prevent 'dangerous climate change'.

There are a number of other benefits which include:

- Promotion of individual scientists and associated research institutes;
- Opportunities for further promotion of scientific research and associated organisations;
- Access to data collected from Climate Witnesses on climate change impacts;
- The opportunity to explore research projects with WWF; and
- Attendance at public media events, workshops, conferences or forums.

If you can think of any other opportunities please let us know.

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## **4.2 Process for SAP peer review**

SAP members will be asked to peer-review one-page 'Climate Witness stories' submitted to us by members of the public.

We ask you to review no more than one Climate Witness story every two months depending on how many we receive dealing with your expertise, and subject to your availability and capacity.

We will only forward stories that are applicable to your specific field of expertise and geographic scope therefore we do not expect the reviews will take a lot of time to complete or that a lot of additional literature research will be required.

Reviews should be completed in English however Climate Witness will consider special circumstances for other languages on a case by case basis.

Your review serves to verify that the experiences which our Climate Witnesses are attributing to climate change, are in fact what you as an expert would expect in their region and consistent with current scientific knowledge.

In order to peer review stories and gather data on climate change impacts we have developed a list of categories of impacts and consequences. These were developed by WWF International climate scientists and peer reviewed by a small number of external climate scientists. Please contact the Climate Witness Manager if you require more information.

Some examples of the type of Climate Witness stories we receive can be viewed at: [www.panda.org/climatewitness](http://www.panda.org/climatewitness).

### **Five step process for SAP peer review**

#### **Step 1**

A WWF liaison person will be appointed to be your main contact and will email you a peer review form to complete. The Climate Witness story requiring review will be appended.

The story will be matched to your area of expertise based on the responses you provided in your SAP Membership Details form.

#### **Step 2**

Identify the story's level of consistency with current science by ticking one of the boxes in the table below.

<input type="checkbox"/> A.	Consistent with peer-reviewed literature about climate impacts already
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	happening today in that particular region.
<input type="checkbox"/> B.	Somewhat consistent with peer-reviewed literature about climate impacts already happening today in that particular region.
<input type="checkbox"/> C.	Not consistent with peer-reviewed literature about climate impacts already happening today in that particular region, but the observation may be a good indication of potential climate impacts projected for that particular area
<input type="checkbox"/> D.	Not consistent with known current or projected climate impacts in that particular region

### Step 3

After establishing a level of consistency, you will need to write a short review - up to 150 words - which explains if the observations can indeed be linked to climate change and why.

Tips for writing your climate witness review

Climate Witness is designed to appeal to a broad audience made up of everyday people who, in most cases, do not have any scientific knowledge. We therefore encourage you to follow the guide below when writing your review:

- Write in an anecdotal tone using the first person.
- Use everyday language, not technical language.
- Try to keep the tone of writing consistent with the testimonial you are reviewing.
- Keep the sentences simple and clear. Remember that readers may not speak English as a first language.
- Provide information links to more detailed information rather than including detail in text.

### Sample SAP peer review:

#### [Scientific Background prepared by Prof. John E Hay](#)

*The observations Linda describes for Aitutaki are consistent with the response of corals to environmental stresses. Given the relatively pristine nature of the Aitutaki lagoon, it is quite possible that the observed event was the result of high sea surface temperatures and/or excessive sunlight. The observations are thus consistent with peer-reviewed literature describing climate-related impacts already being experienced by reef ecosystems.*

*The observations for Rarotonga reflect past bleaching events and highlight the delayed recovery of such reef systems when they are suffer stresses, including high pollutant loadings and high sedimentation rates. The latter may be related to climate conditions, but indirectly.*

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*Based on the information provided, my conclusion is that the observations for Aitutaki in particular appear somewhat consistent with peer-reviewed literature about climate impacts already happening today.*

### **Step 4**

Please provide at least one reference to the most current scientific report or journal article.

You may also include further links to scientific papers, reports, journals or URL's that contain useful information about the relevant impacts.

#### **Sample peer review URL link:**

*A paper by Ainsworth et al. which provides additional background information can be downloaded from the website of the new Australian Research Council Centre for Excellence for Coral Reef Studies <http://www.coralcoe.org.au/> Over 200 pdfs of their latest publications are available*

### **Step 5**

Email your peer review form back to us for inclusion on the website.

To view how a peer reviewed story appears on the Climate Witness website visit the website at: [www.panda.org/climatewitness](http://www.panda.org/climatewitness)

### **4.3 Other organisational issues**

Your personal information and contact details will remain confidential at all times unless authorised by you and your appointed CW SAP Liaison person.

We ask that you seek prior consent from your CW SAP Liaison person if you wish to use the WWF or Climate Witness Programme logo or names, or make a reference to your participation in the Climate Witness programme.

### **4.4 Feedback and monitoring of membership**

We invite any feedback or suggestions as to how we can improve this programme and the Science Advisory Panel.

Please do not hesitate to contact the CW SAP Coordinator for any issues that need to be resolved or if you have any questions at any time.

For more serious concerns or if you are unable to contact the CW SAP Coordinator or your Liaison person, you can also contact the Climate Witness Manager.

# WWF International – Climate Witness Programme

## 5. WWF Contacts

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# WWF International – Climate Witness Programme

## Appendix 1

### Climate Witness Programme Background

Climate Witness (CW) was launched in late 2004 featuring individual climate witness stories from WWF projects around the world. Since then WWF offices have developed initiatives with scientists and communities, generating significant exposure for WWF's Climate Campaigns in a number of countries. Climate Witness initiatives are run in Australia, Belize, Brazil, China, Fiji, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Tanzania, Tuvalu, the United Kingdom and the United States.

National and international experience with CW across the WWF network shows that CW offers an innovative formula to highlight national and global climate change impacts on people's lives while making the connection with climate change solutions.

The CW Programme is assisting WWF in bringing the human face to climate change impacts occurring here and now. It is also increasing the sense of urgency and public support for WWF's climate solutions.

In WWF's view, An Inconvenient Truth, the Stern Review and the IPCC reports have undoubtedly created new momentum around climate solutions, but there is still a need to create a stronger sense of urgency to act to avoid dangerous climate change. Hence our initiative to map out where communities around the world are already affected by climate change and to communicate what this means for the lives of real people today.

The overall goal of the CW initiative is to inspire stronger action on climate change in the community by building a movement of individuals who see climate change affecting our environment and way of life and who want to be active in addressing this threat.

#### ***Climate Witness Programme from awareness to action***

CW aims to close the gap between the increased level of awareness and the lack of action on climate change. CW is about increasing the sense of urgency and public support for effective solutions by:

- Empowering people and being inclusive – involving people in the process of identifying impacts of climate change, rather than telling people what the impacts are.
- Providing an opportunity to engage – it establishes a process in which people can engage and talk, rather than just listening to information.
- Making it real – Climate Witness connects the issue of climate change to real people feeling actual things, rather than hypothetical people and model projections.

## **WWF International – Climate Witness Programme**

- Building a network – it provides a process to engage people who are interested in the issue and connect them with others who are similarly interested.
- Being ‘here and now’ – increasing the sense of urgency for everyone to take action by demonstrating that the impacts of climate change are being felt by people here and now.

### ***Climate Witness Targets***

The Climate Witness Programme plans to grow and extend its reach in the coming years. Below is a list of targets we want to achieve. By 2009 we plan to:

1. Have 5,000 people from G11 and the top 10 most vulnerable countries register on the CW web site or any of its partner sites by uploading their climate observations and/or committing to climate solutions.
2. Proactively recruit 1,000 core Climate Witnesses covering all of the G11 and the top 10 most vulnerable countries to all major climate change impacts and priority ecoregions.
3. Successfully apply the community based CW approach to 3 ecoregions and field projects.
4. Establish a CW Science Advisory Panel (SAP) that includes members of the climate change scientific community covering most areas of expertise in impacts and consequences in as many countries as possible.
5. Peer review all core CW stories by a member of the CW SAP.

Links for additional information

[www.panda.org/climatewitness](http://www.panda.org/climatewitness)