

Interactive comment on “Ideas: a simple proposal to improve the contribution of IPCC WG1 to the assessment and communication of climate change risks” by Rowan T. Sutton

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I thank Mat Collins for his comment on my proposal. His initial remarks reflect the statement at the beginning of my final paragraph: “Some will argue that the WGII report is needed to provide information on impacts.” But as I argue in the same paragraph, very little information about impacts is needed to recognise that - for example - high climate sensitivity would lead to greater and more costly impacts than low climate sensitivity. And this is not controversial.

We agree that the cross-WG reports (and the underlying inter-disciplinary collaborations) have an important role to play in meeting the needs of policy makers, and as

such they are an important step forward. But in AR6 we also have a new cycle of the traditional three “siloeed” Assessment Reports, so it is appropriate to ask how these reports can be improved – in particular how they can assess more effectively what policy makers need to know. I argue this requires greater attention by WGI to the explicit assessment of high impact scenarios, even when their likelihood is assessed to be low.

I agree the question of whether effort should be expended on developing models which more effectively sample high (or low) impact scenarios is an interesting one, and is largely beyond the scope of my proposal. However, the characterisation of Physically Plausible High Impact Scenarios (PPHIS) should be based on assessment of all relevant evidence and – as I state in the proposal – “not model results alone”.

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Discussion paper

