



EDUCATION NGO'S  
EXCHANGE RESPECT CONNECTIVITY  
HONESTY REVIEW AFFORDABILITY DISSEMINATION  
CONSERVATION EFFECTIV COMMUNICATION ADAPTABILITY  
MOTIVATION PARTICIPATION INDEPENDENT PLURALITY  
KNOWLEDGE-SHARING HORIZONTAL EFFICIENT COMMONS  
INTERDISCIPLINARTITY AWARENESS RESEARCHES INCLUSIVNESS  
NORM-BREAKING BENEFITS TRANSPARENCY TRANSLATION  
CROSS-SCALE OWNERSHIP FUNDING RELEVANCE FEEDBACK  
INTEGRITY NORM-BREAKIN CAPABICTY-BUILDING NEW NATURE  
INNOVATION COLLABORATING EQUALITY PEOPLE HOLISTIC  
PARTNERSHIP OUTREACH NATURE PARTNERSHIP OUTPUTS  
HONESTY EMPOWERMENT MULTI-DISCIPLINARY RESILIENCE  
PRO-ACTIVE COOPERATION RECOGNITION ACCESS  
DIALOGUE DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP NETWORKING  
VISIBILITY BOTTOM-UP NOMINATION  
KNOWLEDGE OPENNESS FORUM  
PRO-ACTIVE ENRICHMENT

# Guide to IPBES plenary meetings for new observers

provided by the Open-Ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders  
IPBES-7 | December 2018

## Editorial

Published by the Open-Ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders  
December 2018

## Coordinating author

Malte Timpte, Consultant/Institute for Biodiversity –Network e.V. (ibn) (V.i.S.d.P.)

## Contributing authors

Kyle Gracey, Society for Conservation Biology – SCB

Cornelia Krug, URPP Global Change and Biodiversity, Universität Zürich

Flore Lafaye de Micheaux, International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN

Günter Mitlacher, World Wide Fund for Nature – WWF Germany

Laurence Perianin, International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN

Kristina Raab, Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ and Network-Forum  
for Biodiversity Research Germany – NeFo

Teuta Skorin, Society for Conservation Biology – SCB

## Graphics

Layout: Marijke Küsters, [www.mkuesters.com](http://www.mkuesters.com)

Header: Facilitators of the IPBES-2 Stakeholder Day, M.Timpte

IPBES Structure and Mandates: German Network-Forum for Biodiversity Research – NeFo

Photos: IISD/ENB, NeFo/GIZ ValuES, NeFo

This publication was supported by WWF Germany

Reinhardtstrasse 18, D-10117 Berlin; [guenter.mitlacher@wwf.de](mailto:guenter.mitlacher@wwf.de)

# Content

Background	4
How to participate in IPBES plenary meetings?	4
Accreditation as an observer organisation and registration to IPBES plenary meetings	4
Participation in IPBES plenary meetings as an individual	5
How to prepare for IPBES plenary meetings?	7
Plenary Agenda	7
IPBES Documents	7
Information and communication during plenary sessions	9
How to engage with other observer organisations?	11
IPBES Stakeholder Day(s)	11
Stakeholder consultations during the plenary sessions	12
Meetings of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES)	12
Meetings of early career scientists during the plenary	13
How does a IPBES plenary meeting work?	15
The plenary sessions	15
Observer interventions in plenary sessions	16
What are contact groups?	19
Observer intervention in contact group sessions	20
Contact group sessions on the budget	20
How are decisions made in IPBES plenary sessions?	21
What happens between IPBES plenary meetings?	25
What are the IPBES bodies?	26

## Background

This guide aims to provide delegates of stakeholder organisations with basic information about IPBES plenary meetings. It outlines the necessary steps to become an accredited observer organisation to the plenary, gives tips on how to prepare for negotiations, and explains how decisions are made. Volunteers from various stakeholder organisations developed this guide prior to the fourth IPBES plenary meeting based on their experience as observers during previous IPBES plenary meetings and publicly available information provided by the IPBES secretariat. This guide is a living document, it was updated before IPBES-5 and again before IPBES-7.

Should you have content proposals for this guide, please feel free to contact the group of authors: [timpte@biodiv.de](mailto:timpte@biodiv.de)

## How to participate in IPBES plenary meetings?

### Accreditation as an observer organisation and registration to IPBES plenary meetings

To participate in IPBES plenary meetings, stakeholder organisations must be accepted as an “observer” by the platform. Since the first IPBES plenary meeting (IPBES-1), about 360 non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations were accepted based on an interim procedure for the admission of observers (IPBES/1/12, Annex II). A list of all accredited observer organisations is available on the IPBES website: [www.ipbes.net/accredited-organisations](http://www.ipbes.net/accredited-organisations)

The rules for the admission of observers are still not finalized and have been subject of discussion at IPBES plenary meetings since IPBES-1. According to the interim procedure **organisations accepted as observers to previous plenary meetings (IPBES-1 to IPBES-6) do not need to reapply for observer status. However, every accredited observer organisation needs to registered their delegation and upload an official nomination letter** (Deadline for IPBES-7: 11 January 2019 / Registration: [www.ipbes.net/registration/ipbes-7](http://www.ipbes.net/registration/ipbes-7)).

Organisations should indicate their interest in becoming observers to the IPBES secretariat when they register for the upcoming plenary meeting ([www.ipbes.net/registration/ipbes-7](http://www.ipbes.net/registration/ipbes-7)) and submit the requested information (address, contact person, mandate, scope and governing structure of the organisation, competences and interest relate to IPBES matters etc.). Based on this information, the IPBES Bureau (elected representatives of IPBES member states with an administrative advisory role) will review the application and decide if an organisation should be recommended as a new observer to the plenary or not. Rejected applications are often due to organisations providing insufficient information and/or failing to show how their work is related to IPBES.

The IPBES Bureau can only recommend new observers; member states still have to accept and approve applications in plenary. Two veto options are still under discussion: new observers are accepted 1) as long as no member state of the platform objects, or 2) unless at least one third of the member states present at the meeting object (see [www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/ipbes-6-14-en.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=16541](http://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/ipbes-6-14-en.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=16541)” IPBES/6/14).

### Participation in IPBES plenary meetings as an individual

Interested individuals not affiliated to an organisation with observer status should contact accredited organisations in their region or field of expertise (see list of observers [www.ipbes.net/accredited-organisations](http://www.ipbes.net/accredited-organisations)). One of these organisations might be willing to include additional people in their delegation.



Registration of delegates at IPBES-4, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 2016. Source: IISD/ENB | Sean Wu

## How to prepare for IPBES plenary meetings?

### Plenary Agenda

One of the first documents published on the **IPBES plenary website** is the **provisional agenda**, which provides an overview of topics to be discussed and decisions to be made by the plenary (IPBES/7/1). The IPBES secretariat will also provide a report on the work programme's implementation status some weeks before the plenary meeting.

Practical information about the meeting and the meeting venue will be found in the **Information note for delegates**.

### IPBES Documents

The following set of documents will be prepared before and during the plenary:

- **Working documents:** The IPBES plenary will discuss a list of working documents during the meeting. Advanced versions of working documents are made available 4–6 weeks ahead of the plenary in English in pdf and word format on the **IPBES plenary website ([www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes-7-plenary](http://www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes-7-plenary))**. They are prepared by the IPBES secretariat and provide condensed information and background for negotiations and decision-making. Documents often refer to related information documents (see below) that include further detailed material. Final versions of working documents are translated in all six UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), and are updated on the IPBES plenary



A view of the plenary, IPBES-1, Bonn, Germany 2013. Source: IISD/ENB



IPBES Chair Abdul Hamid Zakri gaveling the approval of the Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) of the Thematic Assessment on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production. Source: IPBES-4, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 2016. Source: IISD/ENB | Diego Noguera

website within a short period of time before the plenary. They are numbered as *IPBES/PlenaryNumber/DocumentNumber*.

- **Information documents (INF):** The IPBES secretariat posts in-depth background information related to specific thematic items. Documents are made available as they come in and are only available in a single language (English in most cases). Documents are numbered as *IPBES/PlenaryNumber/INF/DocumentNumber*.
- **In-session Documents:** Working documents will be modified according to the progress on negotiations **during** plenary and made available by the IPBES secretariat on a dedicated in-session website (see [www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes-7-plenary](http://www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes-7-plenary)). To stay informed, please check this website regularly during plenary meetings.
- **Non-Papers:** Discussion papers capturing **different views and comments** from plenary statements are tabled by the IPBES secretariat or chairs of working/contact groups for consideration in the ongoing negotiation process.
- **Conference Room Paper (CRP):** Draft decision documents are prepared by the IPBES secretariat **after consultation in working groups or contact groups** for further consideration by the plenary (see more details on the groups below).
- **Legal Documents (L-Documents):** Final negotiated decision documents that contain **agreed text for adoption in plenary**. However, minor text changes can be proposed until the very last moment and need to be agreed upon in the plenary.
- **Decisions:** Once member states approve L-Documents in the plenary, they become a decision and are posted in the six UN languages on the IPBES website. Decisions are numbered *IPBES-Plenary-Number/Decision-Number*.

After the plenary, the IPBES secretariat issues a **Meeting Report** that captures discussions and negotiations and the final decisions taken. The report is also provided with the preparatory documents for the next plenary.

### Information and communication during plenary sessions

**Interpretation:** Interpretation in all six UN languages is available during the plenary sessions. Interpretation will also be available for some items discussed in the contact groups at IPBES-7.

**Daily coverage of negotiations and events:** The IPBES secretariat has requested the Reporting Service of the non-profit organization International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) to cover the IPBES plenary meetings. Rapporteurs from IISD will participate in most of the public meetings and might also interview delegates and stakeholders. Daily IISD coverage of the meeting will be made available at: [www.iisd.ca](http://www.iisd.ca).

**Live stream:** The plenary sessions of the Stakeholder Day prior IPBES-7 will be broadcasted via live stream. Check the website for further information: [www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes7-stakeholder-day](http://www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes7-stakeholder-day)

**Social media:** You can receive the latest information from the IPBES secretariat by following them on Twitter <http://twitter.com/IPBES> or Facebook [www.facebook.com/IPBES/](http://www.facebook.com/IPBES/).

Use #IPBES7 or @IPBES for your own tweets.\*

\*We do not recommend tweeting details from ongoing negotiations in contact groups.

## How to engage with other observer organisations?

### IPBES Stakeholder Day(s)

Ahead of each plenary, the IPBES secretariat convenes the IPBES Stakeholder Day(s) in collaboration with stakeholders. The aim is to provide stakeholders with an update of IPBES progress, an opportunity to interact with the secretariat, members of the Bureau and experts involved in assessments, and allows for discussions on how stakeholders can become more involved and better contribute to the IPBES work programme.

The next Stakeholder Day(s) will be held **in Paris (at UNESCO) on Sunday April 28, 2019**. The agenda of the day will be available few weeks before at: [www.ipbes.net/stakeholder-events](http://www.ipbes.net/stakeholder-events)

In contrast to IPBES plenaries, participation in Stakeholder Day(s) **is not restricted** to IPBES member states and accredited observers: it is open to all interested individuals. Formal registration is however necessary to enable follow-up on participation, calibrate the venue (meals, rooms, etc.) and ensure security. **You are invited to register for IPBES-7 Stakeholder Day at: [www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes7-stakeholder-day](http://www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes7-stakeholder-day)**

### Get engaged!

**Stakeholder initiatives that support the IPBES work programme could be showcased** (depending on available time). Prior to the meeting, examples from stakeholders who will participate in the meeting or who will follow the live-stream can be collected through the TRACK database. The template is available here: [www.ipbes.net/impact-tracking](http://www.ipbes.net/impact-tracking). Further information will be displayed on the ONet webspace in this regard.

Participants of the Stakeholder Day prior IPBES-6 at the end of Saturday's proceedings, Medellín, Colombia 2018. Source: IISD/ENB | Diego Noguera



Breakout Group on Regional Assessment during the Stakeholder Days prior IPBES-4, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 2016. Source: IISD/ENB | Sean Wu



**Stakeholders can propose topics to be addressed at the Stakeholder Day.** To propose topics, participants must contact the organizers in advance (**stakeholders@ipbes.net**). Last-minute topics can also be proposed on-site. Their integration in the discussions would be made possible if the opportunity occurs.

**Stakeholders can contribute to the drafting of the Stakeholder Joint Statement.** One outcome of the Stakeholder Day will be a joint statement drafted by participants and delivered during the opening session of the IPBES-7 plenary. Every stakeholder is welcome to join the drafting group.

**Stakeholders are also welcome to join the ONet support team** for future Stakeholder Day(s).

Please note that all those participations are made on a voluntary basis (in-kind contribution) – there is no financing linked to this participation.

## Stakeholder consultations during the plenary sessions

Since IPBES-3, IPBES provides a room for accredited stakeholders (observers) to consult and coordinate during plenary sessions. The group of coordinated stakeholders will meet every morning ahead of the plenary to discuss the status of negotiations and potential statements on specific agenda items. Meeting time will be announced accordingly. Stakeholders attending as observers are invited to participate in these regular stakeholder coordination meetings. The group of coordinated stakeholders may also have a microphone assigned for joint interventions and joint statements during the plenary session.

## Meetings of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES)

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES) is supporting and coordinating the participation of delegates from indigenous and local communities at IPBES plenaries. Delegates from IIFBES are also part of the project team organising the Stakeholder Day prior IPBES-7. The IIFBES delegation will meet and consult on statements and interventions on a regular base during the IPBES-7 plenary meeting.

## Meetings of early career scientists during the plenary

A group of early career scientists formed the Biodiversity-Science-Policy-Interface Network – BSPIN during the second IPBES plenary. BSPIN is an international and interdisciplinary network of early career scientists (ECS) interested in engaging in science-policy interfaces (SPIs) related to global environmental politics. BSPIN's mission is to **link young scholars interested in SPI processes and to improve their capacities** to actively engage in them.

BSPIN has been facilitating meetings of early career scientists during previous IPBES plenary meetings. Further information will be available on **www.biodiversity.de/en/bspin-earlycareer** or on Facebook: **www.facebook.com/biodivspis**

Facilitation team of the Stakeholder Days prior IPBES-3:  
Photo by IISD/ENB | Sean Wu



## How does a IPBES plenary meeting work?

### The plenary session

Plenary meetings are the assemblies of the IPBES member states and the decision-making body of the platform facilitated by the IPBES secretariat with support from the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) (see explanation of the IPBES bodies below). **A meeting of the IPBES plenary includes plenary sessions, assemblies of all present member states and observers, and negotiations in sub-groups (so-called contact groups).** The plenary sessions are chaired by the chair of the IPBES Bureau and its co-chairs (see the [www.ipbes.net/about/organisation/bureau](http://www.ipbes.net/about/organisation/bureau) for the sitting Bureau members).

**Only representatives from stakeholder organisations that are accredited as observers are allowed to participate in the plenary session** (see also chapter on observer accreditation above). A list of participants will be available on the dedicated IPBES-7 website as soon as possible after the start of the meeting.

The agenda for the 7<sup>th</sup> plenary can be found at [www.ipbes.net/plenary/ipbes-7](http://www.ipbes.net/plenary/ipbes-7). Plenary sessions usually take place from 10h00 – 13h00 and 15h00–18h00 with the possibility of evening sessions (usually 19h30 – 23h00).

The plenary will start with an opening session and welcome addresses by the Executive Secretary, the host government and representatives from UN organisations. It is common practice that a representative of each UN region provides an opening statement, followed by international organisations and NGOs. During the past years, the chair of the plenary also invited opening statements from the participants of the Stakeholder Day(s) as well as from representatives of indigenous peoples and local community organisations (IPLCs). It is in the responsibility of the chair to allow further statements or interventions by observer organisations.

Delegates from France confer during the contact group on the budget and pending assessments at IPBES-6, Medellín, Colombia 2018. Source: IISD/ENB | Diego Noguera



The plenary session will continue with progress reports on the implementation of the first IPBES work programme before it breaks into contact groups where the IPBES member states discuss agenda items in detail. Contact groups can only make proposals for decision text. Final decisions are made in plenary.

### Observer interventions in plenary sessions

According to the rules of IPBES, ‘any observer may, **upon the invitation of the chair, participate in the plenary without the ability to cast votes or join or block consensus**’ (Rules of Procedure, Decision IPBES-1/1, Rule 7). The chair of the plenary session can also decide to give observer organisations the opportunity to provide a statement or an intervention during the opening and/or the closing of the plenary and/or on a specific agenda item. The chair might decide to give the floor only to national delegations and not allow statements from observers due to time restrictions.

**Interventions should be brief and concise** and the chair will usually allow no more than two minutes of speech. Statements should be submitted to the plenary secretariat in advance or directly after the speech and will be published as a conference document on in-session IPBES webpages.

The chair will announce the agenda item under discussion and ask for comments and interventions. Usually the chair will give the floor to speakers in the following order:

- representatives of member states or regional groups
- representatives of collaborative partners (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, FAO, UNESCO)
- representatives of strategic partners like biodiversity related conventions (e.g. CBD etc.)
- representatives of international observer organisations (e.g. IUCN, ICSU, Future Earth, etc.)
- representatives of other observer organisations (indigenous peoples and local community organisations – IPLCs, business, group of coordinated stakeholders, other stakeholder organisations)

IPBES-6 plenary session, Medellín, Colombia 2018. Source: IISD/ENB | Diego Noguera



To ask for the floor, representatives and observers have to press the speak button on the microphone they were assigned besides their name tag. Nametags should not be moved since they are linked to a specific microphone to allow the chair to identify on his/her monitor who is asking for the floor. The chair will give the floor to representatives in the order they have requested to speak or in the order presented above.

It is also common practise at plenary meetings for representatives wishing to speak to hold the organisation's name tag upright in front of them to give a signal to the chair and the camera operator.

Observer organisations holding a strategic partnership agreement with the IPBES secretariat will have a specific nametag (e.g. IUCN). Nametags for observer groups, such as 'Education' or 'IPLC', will usually be provided as well as a nametag for the 'Stakeholder' group in a specific row of the meeting room.

The chair is more likely to accept an intervention during the plenary from stakeholders if they provide a coordinated statement and inform the chair in advance about their intention to speak.

**Stakeholder delegates who presents the intervention should identify themselves and the agenda item they wish to comment on.**



Statement by the open-ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders at IPBES-6, Medellín, Colombia 2018. Source: IISD/ENB | Diego Noguera

## What are contact groups?

At IPBES-7, certain agenda items will be discussed in contact groups, before a final decision on the item will be made in the plenary session. At previous IPBES Plenary meetings, some contact groups met in parallel, while others were held during lunch or dinner breaks. Information about which items will be addressed in which contact group will be presented in the latest version of the annotated agenda ([www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes-7-plenary](http://www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes-7-plenary)).



The dais during the Contact Group on Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment, IPBES-6, Medellín, Colombia 2018. Source: IISD/ENB | Diego Noguera

Items especially relevant for observers (based on the provisional agenda IPBES/7/1):

1. Opening of the session (opportunity for opening statements)
3. Admission of observers to the seventh session of the Plenary of the Platform
5. Report of the Executive Secretary on the implementation of the first work programme for the period 2014–2018
6. Global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services
7. Financial and budgetary arrangements for the Platform
8. Review of the Platform at the conclusion of its first work programme

9. Next work programme of the Platform. (Stakeholders can comment on the draft work programme until 2 January 2019! See IPBES Call EM/2018/26 from 29 November 2018)
10. Organization of the Plenary and dates and venues of future sessions of the Plenary
11. Institutional arrangements: United Nations collaborative partnership arrangements for the work of the Platform and its secretariat
12. Adoption of the decisions and report of the session
13. Closure of the session (opportunity for closing statements)

**Open and closed contact groups:** Contact group sessions during IPBES plenary meetings are generally open to observers. However, the chair of the contact group may decide to hold a contact group meeting **without observers**. In this case, only delegates from member states and delegates from observer organisations specifically invited to join are allowed to participate in the meeting.

### Observer intervention in contact group sessions

The rules regarding observer interventions in plenary sessions (observers can only make statements when the session chair gives them the floor) are also applicable in contact groups. Observers can only comment on an item and suggest text changes, but **they cannot request text changes**.

Only delegates of member state delegations are authorized to propose amendments to IPBES documents. Experts (MEP members, report authors or the IPBES secretariat) may be asked by member states' delegates to provide further information. All member states have to agree on final amendments. Text changes suggested by stakeholders need to be taken up and supported by member states to be included in the final text. Observers should inform the chair prior to the session that they would like to present a statement on a specific item.

**Sharing information from contact groups:** During contact groups, comments and text changes presented by delegates should not be shared publicly. **Reporting/tweeting on the ongoing negotiations is not recommended.**



Consultation by members of the Coordinated Stakeholders group, IPBES-3, Bonn, Germany 2015  
Source: IISD/ENB, Claudia Friedrich

### Contact group sessions on the budget

Results from the negotiations in the **contact group** on budget are crucial for the IPBES process. IPBES needs to raise additional funding to be able to implement the work programme agreed on at IPBES-2 or the plenary will have to decide how to reduce the workload and/or drop some of the planned assessments. The contact group on the budget will discuss where cuts could be made and present a proposal to the plenary.

## How are decisions made in IPBES plenary sessions?

The plenary is the assembly of the member states and the decision-making body of IPBES. All decisions on matters of substance have to reach a consensus. If member states cannot agree on an issue, text is often put in square brackets and tabled for discussion at a later stage (in the relevant contact group or plenary). In case of disagreement on text, i.e. when a consensus is not reached, the plenary might postpone the negotiations and send the text back for further development by the MEP and the Bureau.

The plenary will make decisions (see paragraph below), approve new deliverables and agree on negotiated text as well as on IPBES reports according to the **Rules of Procedure** (IPBES-1/1) and the **Procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables** (IPBES-3/3). Intensity and scope of negotiations vary greatly both within documents and across documents. The following procedure for the preparation and **clearance of IPBES deliverables** have been adopted by plenary in decision IPBES-3/3, Annex 1, 1.3, 2. - 4. (IPBES-3/3; [www.ipbes.net/policies-and-procedures](http://www.ipbes.net/policies-and-procedures)):

- **“Validation”** of the Platform’s reports is a process by which the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau provide their endorsement that the processes for the preparation of Platform reports have been duly followed.
- **“Acceptance”** of the Platform’s reports at a session of the Plenary signifies that the material has not been subjected to section-by-section or line-by-line discussion and agreement by the Plenary but nevertheless presents a comprehensive and balanced view of the subject matter.
- **“Adoption”** of the Platform’s reports is a process of section-by-section (and not line-by-line) endorsement, as described in section 3.9, at a session of the Plenary.
- **“Approval”** of the Platform’s summaries for policymakers signifies that the material has been subject to detailed, line-by-line discussion and agreement by consensus at a session of the Plenary.
- **“Preliminary acceptance, adoption and approval”** of regional reports will be undertaken by the relevant regional representatives at a session of the Plenary, and such reports will then be further reviewed and may be accepted, adopted and approved by the Plenary as a whole.

### Clearance processes for Platform deliverables

Platform deliverables	Validation	Acceptance	Adoption	Approval
<b>Assessments</b>				
Thematic and methodological assessment reports (based on standard or fast-track approach)	MEP/Bureau	Plenary	N/A	N/A
Thematic and methodological assessment SPMs (based on standard or fast-track approach)	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	Plenary
Regional/subregional assessments reports	MEP/Bureau	Plenary	N/A	N/A
Regional/subregional assessments SPMs	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	Plenary
Global assessments reports	MEP/Bureau	Plenary	N/A	N/A
Global assessments SPMs	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	Plenary
<b>Synthesis reports</b>				
<b>Synthesis SPMs</b>				
<b>Technical summaries</b>				
<b>Technical papers</b>				
<b>Supporting materials</b>				
	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	N/A
	MEP/Bureau	Plenary	N/A	N/A
	MEP/Bureau	Authors and MEP	N/A	N/A
	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	N/A

The plenary can also recognise and highlight certain issues on the agenda by using particular expressions that carry different weight. The weakest expression is to ‘take note’ of a report or process. The plenary can also **‘welcome’** a document or decision, if the member states agree with the content. It can also **‘invite’** members or stakeholder organisations to implement activities in the future or **‘encourage’** them, if the need for action should be highlighted. The plenary can **‘requests’** its bodies e.g. IPBES secretariat or the MEP to carry out certain activities. The strongest formulation the plenary can use in its decision text is to **‘urge’** its members to act. However, this still does not mean that this decision is binding for the member states.



Participants during contact group at IPBES-4, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 2016. Source: IISD/ENB | Sean Wu



IPBES-4 Chair Abdul Hamid Zakri and incoming IPBES Chair Robert Watson in consultations with panellists during plenary, IPBES-4, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 2016. Source: IISD/ENB | Sean Wu

**Election of experts for the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) and the Bureau:** Only IPBES member states are authorized to **propose and elect members of the MEP**, according to decision IPBES-1/1 and IPBES-2/1 and the Guidelines for the nomination and selection of MEP members. To ensure continuity in the work of the MEP, not all 25 MEP members (5 per UN region) will be replaced after one term. At IPBES-5, four members of the MEP (one alternate from the Latin American region, two from the Eastern European region, and one from the African region) will be replaced.

Member states are asked to propose candidates taking into account disciplines and gender balance. Member states can nominate as many candidates as they wish. However, it is common practice that countries of each UN region agree on joint candidates before the election takes place in the plenary session.

The plenary also elects the **members of the IPBES Bureau** including the chair of the platform. Members of the Bureau, two per UN region, are elected for a three-year term. New bureau members and a new chair will be elected by the member states at IPBES-7. According to the Rules of Procedures, the Chair will be rotated among the five UN regions every 3 years without the possibility of re-election as Chair. IPBES was chaired by Chair Professor Zakri Abdul Hamid (Asia-Pacific States) from IPBES-1 to IPBES-4 and by Chair Sir Robert Watson (Western European and other States) from IPBES-4 to IPBES-7.

## What happens between IPBES plenary meetings?

The IPBES secretariat organises the implementation of the plenary decisions in between IPBES plenary meetings, the **so-called inter-sessional process**, which is overseen by the IPBES Bureau. The IPBES secretariat is supported by the Technical Support Units (TSUs) for the different deliverables and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.

In case that the plenary approves a scoping for or the undertaking of a new thematic or methodological assessment, the IPBES secretariat will publish a call for nomination of experts for the respective assessment.

Ongoing work on already approved assessments will continue and expert groups will consult and meet during the year to develop draft reports. The development process of (most) assessment reports includes public online reviews where experts are invited to provide comments and recommendations on the drafts.

As soon as the plenary adopts a final synthesis report or approves a Summary for Policy Makers (SPM), it is published online. It can take a few months before the edited version of a report is released and outreach and dissemination activities are organized.

To receive the latest information e.g. on review processes or calls for experts, stakeholders should register and create a user account on [ipbes.net](http://ipbes.net). The box “Mailing list subscription” must be ticked to receive information provided by the IPBES Secretariat.



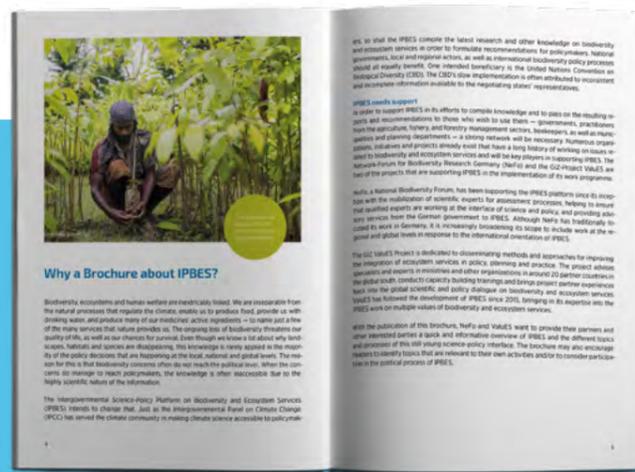
IPBES Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie, IPBES-5, Bonn, Germany 2017. Source: IISD/ENB | Sean Wu

## What are the IPBES bodies?

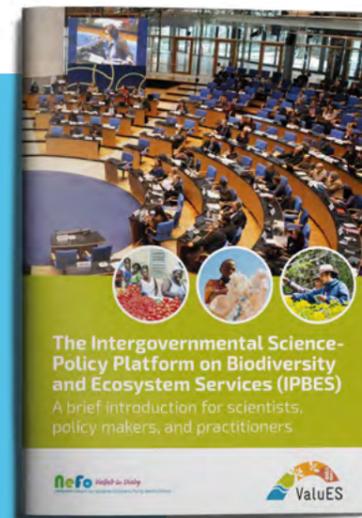
The following image provides an overview of the IPBES bodies and its most important functions. A detailed description of the IPBES process, its bodies, and their functions can be found in the ‘Conceptual framework’ (Decision IPBES-2/4), in the document ‘Functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services’ and on the IPBES website.

This concludes the brief overview of information for observers attending the IPBES plenary. We hope this guide has provided you with all the information you need to find your way around IPBES-7 and helps facilitate your future IPBES activities.

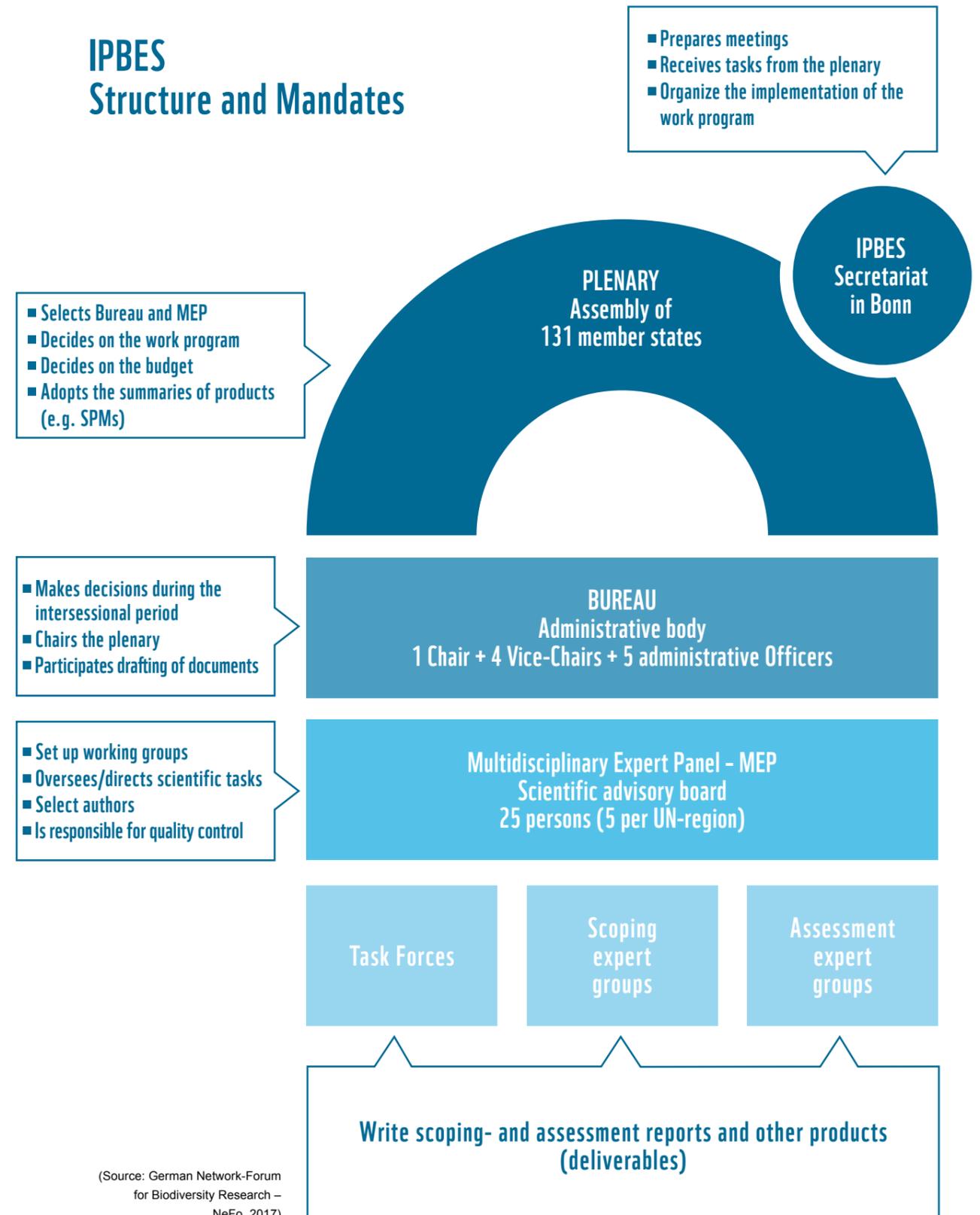
For further general information on IPBES, please have a look at the IPBES website ([ipbes.net](http://ipbes.net)) or material provided by stakeholders for example the guide by giz (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH) and NeFo (German Network-Forum for Biodiversity Research): The Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) – A brief introduction for scientists, policy makers, and practitioners. The guide is available in English, German, French, Spanish and Russian.



IPBES – A brief introduction for scientists, policy makers, and practitioners, NeFo / GIZ ValuES 2017  
Source: NeFo / GIZ ValuES



## IPBES Structure and Mandates



100%  
RECYCLED



“We should preserve every scrap of biodiversity as priceless while we learn to sustainably use it and come to understand what it means to humanity.”

— EDWARD O. WILSON

**Support the WWF**

Donation account

IBAN: DE06 5502 0500 0222 2222 22

Bank für Sozialwirtschaft Mainz

BIC: BFSWDE33MNZ

**WWF Germany**

Reinhardtstraße 18  
10117 Berlin | Germany

Phone: +49(0)30 311 777 700

Fax: +49(0)30 311 777 888



**Why we are here**

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

[wwf.de](http://wwf.de) | [info@wwf.de](mailto:info@wwf.de)