



Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

Five Major New IPBES Assessment Reports: A General Primer

The world's biodiversity is being lost and nature's contributions to people are being degraded, which undermines human wellbeing.

The success of humanity's efforts to reverse the current unsustainable use of our irreplaceable natural assets and heritage requires the best-available evidence, comprehensive relevant policy options and committed, well-informed decision makers. The IPBES assessment reports serve these ends, by providing the credible peer-reviewed information needed for informed decision-making.

- 5 Forthcoming landmark science-policy assessment reports nearing completion – will be launched in March 2018
- Best-available evidence for decision makers to make informed decisions balancing the needs of people and nature
- Prepared by 550+ leading international experts from 100+ countries
- 3 Years in development, at a total cost of more than US\$6 million
- 4 Assessment reports to evaluate biodiversity & nature's contributions to people in four world regions
- 5th Assessment report focusses on regional and global land degradation and restoration
- Will evaluate progress (or lack thereof) on Aichi Targets & Paris Agreement & implications for SDGs
- Will also project likely interactions between people and nature for decades into the future

In March, 2018, representatives of 127 Governments will receive, for approval, five landmark assessment reports describing the state of knowledge about biodiversity, ecosystems and nature's contributions to people.

Prepared by **more than 550 leading international experts from more than 100 countries**, working with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the evaluations cover four world regions — the **Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and Europe and Central Asia, i.e. the whole world except Antarctica and the open oceans**. The reports are scheduled for public launch in Medellín, Colombia at the 6th annual session of the IPBES Plenary (#IPBES6) in March 2018.

A fifth IPBES assessment report, also due to be approved and launched at the same meeting, examines **land degradation and restoration**, both regionally and globally.

IPBES is the global science-policy platform tasked with providing the best-available evidence to inform better decisions affecting nature - by Governments, businesses and even individual households. IPBES is often described as 'the [IPCC](#) for biodiversity'.

The findings of the five IPBES reports will also be key inputs to a new comprehensive **IPBES global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services**, due for release in 2019, the first such evaluation since the authoritative 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

In addition, the assessment reports will evaluate lessons learned and progress (or the lack thereof) on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its [Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#), the [Paris Agreement on climate change](#), and the implications for the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), as well as other global environmental agreements. The reports will also provide vital information for setting biodiversity targets for the period after 2020.

Biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people underpin the economies, livelihoods, food security and quality of life of people everywhere. This is why public policies, business decisions and even individual lifestyle preferences can threaten or support nature’s contributions to people and the sustainable future we want. **Keeping ecosystems resilient, and safeguarding our planet’s variety of life, is fundamental to poverty eradication, human health and well-being.**

Three years in development, at a total cost of about US\$5 million, the four IPBES regional assessment reports have involved over 550 experts from more than 100 countries, who have reviewed several thousand scientific papers, Government and other information sources, including indigenous and local knowledge. The aim is to arrive at conclusions about each region’s land-based, freshwater and coastal biodiversity, as well as the state of ecosystem functioning and nature’s contributions to people.

The reports will **evaluate the status of biodiversity and nature’s contributions to good quality of life** in each region and their respective subregions, describing **current status and trends**, as well as their **links to drivers of change and threats, identifying policy-relevant issues affecting them**. The analyses will start by looking back several decades and then **project likely interactions between people and nature for decades into the future, based on different decision pathways**.

Each regional assessment report will address:

- How biodiversity, ecosystem functions and nature’s contributions to people affect economies, livelihoods, food security and good quality of life. In other words: **why is biodiversity important?**
- The status, trends and potential future dynamics of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and nature’s contributions to people, which affect their contributions to economies, livelihoods and human well-being. In other words: **are we making progress or are we still destroying biodiversity and undermining human wellbeing?**
- The pressures driving changes in biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people. In other words: **what are the threats to biodiversity?**
- The actual and potential impacts of policies and actions on the contributions of nature to sustainable economies, livelihoods, food security and good quality of life. In other words: **what policies and governance structures can lead to a more sustainable future?**
- Priority gaps in knowledge.

The IPBES assessment report on land degradation and restoration, will identify threats to land-based ecosystems, offering evidence from around the world and a range of best-available solutions to reduce the environmental, social and economic risks and impacts of land degradation. It will **help all decision makers to make more informed choices about how to halt and reverse land degradation**.

Structure of the five IPBES assessment reports

Each IPBES assessment report will begin with a concise Summary for Policymakers (SPM), highlighting the most important and policy-relevant (not prescriptive) findings and policy and governance options. The SPMs will be based on a set of six chapters (eight for the land degradation assessment report), described below, providing all the technical support for the key messages of the SPMs:

1. **Policy-relevant questions & themes** per region and subregion as well as methods and approaches of the assessment
2. **Nature's contributions to people** and good quality of life
3. **Status, trends and near future dynamics** of biodiversity and ecosystems
4. **Direct and indirect drivers of change in nature** in the context of different perspectives on quality of life
5. Analysis of possible **interactions between the natural world and society** in the long term
6. **Options for governance, institutions and decision-making** – especially on the SDGs, Aichi Targets and Paris Agreement

To ensure the **highest-possible levels of credibility and policy-relevance**, the IPBES assessment reports have been reviewed extensively by **hundreds of external experts**, including Governments, scientists and decision makers, practitioners and the holders of indigenous and local knowledge.

The assessment reports will be **presented with the widest spectrum of decision makers in mind**, including Government and business leaders, civil society groups, indigenous peoples, women's groups and even individual households, with detailed information, including easy-to-understand infographics and maps.

TIMELINE	
<i>January 2015</i>	Scoping report established the parameters of the assessments.
<i>May - June 2016</i>	External experts, including Governments, reviewed first draft of the assessment chapters, with review comments incorporated into the subsequent drafts by IPBES experts.
<i>May - June 2017</i>	External experts, including Governments, reviewed the second drafts of the assessment chapters and the first drafts of the summaries for policymakers. These comments are being reviewed and will be incorporated into the final drafts by IPBES experts.
<i>March 2018</i>	Negotiation by member States at IPBES-6 Plenary session of final text of the summaries for policymakers of the five assessment reports in Medellín, Colombia, followed by their public launches.

Launch venue: IPBES-6, Intercontinental Hotel, Medellín, Colombia; March 17-24, 2018.

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About IPBES

With 127 member Governments, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is the global body that assesses the state of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, in response to requests from decision makers.

Chaired by Sir Robert Watson, the mission of IPBES is to strengthen policy and decisions through science, for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human wellbeing and sustainable development.

The IPBES secretariat, led by Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie, is hosted by the German Government and located on the UN campus in Bonn. More than 1000 scientists worldwide contribute to the work of IPBES on a voluntary basis. They are nominated by their Governments or organisations, and selected by the IPBES Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.

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