Consultation with Governments and Partners on an
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

This note was prepared by UNEP and France upon an invitation included in the Statement adopted
by the Steering Committee of the IMOSEB process of consultation (Montpellier, Nov. 2007); it is
based on consultations with the MA and IMOSEB networks of experts.

CONCEPT NOTE
AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM
ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Building on the global strategy for follow-up to the Millennium Ecosystem
Assessment (MA) and the consultative process towards an International Mechanism
of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB)

Executive Summary

This concept note responds to the final meeting of the multi-stakeholder international steering committee for the consultative process initiated by the Government of France on an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB). The steering group invited the Executive Director of UNEP in collaboration with the government of France, other governments and other partners to convene an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting to consider an intergovernmental mechanism for biodiversity and ecosystem services. This concept note was developed by the United Nations Environment Programme in close consultation with the Government of France and a number of experts in their individual capacities.

The aim of this concept note is to support consultations with governments and partners in the lead up to such an inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder meeting scheduled for November 2008. It is envisaged that this concept note would constitute the basis for the documentation of the meeting.

The concept note builds primarily on the MA follow-up initiative and the outcomes of the IMoSEB consultative process, but also draws on lessons learned from
IPCC, GEO and IAASTD, as well as ongoing networking and capacity building initiatives.

The current science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services is comprised of a number of national and international mechanisms and processes. However, the contribution of all these processes for policy making at all levels can be further strengthened if they are supported by credible, legitimate and salient emerging scientific findings and recommendations which are provided by an intergovernmental science-policy platform.

It is envisaged that the overarching benefit of an intergovernmental science-policy platform is increased support to multiple actors at multiple scales for mitigation and adaptation to unprecedented changes in biodiversity and ecosystem services. The main deliverable would be improved policy-relevant information from all relevant sources about the state, trends and outlooks of human-environment interactions, with focus on the impacts of ecosystem change on human well-being. In addition, the science-policy platform would provide decision-makers with support in the development of tools and methodologies to translate knowledge for policy-making.

A phased approach is recommended for delivering the benefits outlined above. A phased approach will provide an evaluation and monitoring framework to measure progress and success of the platform. The modalities for the first phase (Phase I) should be agreed at the intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting. Activities in this phase which include influencing the science research agenda, building capacity at the national level for undertaking sub-global assessments, and providing scientific findings on emerging issues, would be conducted over a four-year timeframe under the auspices of a light operational and scientific oversight structure, with a geographically, gender and disciplinarily balanced composition, and with clear terms of reference. The activities for the second phase (Phase II) over a second four-year time period could include a second global ecosystem services assessment in addition to the continuation of Phase I activities. Details of Phase II will however be finalized following an evaluation of the Phase I and based on the demand expressed by members.
Overcoming Barriers to Development: The world is witnessing unprecedented losses of biodiversity and ecosystem services, which are impacting human well-being and sustainable development. The future development of all countries will be impaired if these losses are not reversed, especially for developing countries in their fight to reduce poverty. Public and private actors therefore need to mitigate and adapt to changes in biodiversity and ecosystem services. Such efforts are, however, knowledge intensive and need to be supported by a dynamic science–policy platform which has credibility, saliency and legitimacy.

I. Background: Unprecedented losses in biodiversity and ecosystem services

1. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) showed that, over the last 50 years, humanity has caused losses in biodiversity and declines in ecosystem services which are unprecedented in history. In fact, 60% of the 24 assessed ecosystem services are in decline, and further degradation is expected if immediate action is not taken.

2. Scientific knowledge on the links among biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being, although not complete, has increased significantly since the completion of the MA. However, there is a need for a stronger international science-policy platform to allow emerging scientific knowledge to be translated into concrete policy action at all levels.

3. The current science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services is comprised of a number of national and international mechanisms and processes. The biodiversity and ecosystem-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), for example, contain a number of provisions on scientific and technical cooperation. However, the contribution of these scientifically credible processes to policy-making at all levels could be further strengthened if they are supported by credible, legitimate and salient emerging scientific findings and recommendations which are provided by an intergovernmental science-policy platform.

4. The consultation towards an International Mechanism for Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) and the global strategy on MA follow-up both demonstrate a growing demand for such an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

5. This concept paper is intended to support consultations with governments and partners on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The paper explores the rationale and modalities for such a platform. In doing so, it draws not only from the MA and IMoSEB processes, but also from lessons learned
from global processes like the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), GEO (Global Environmental Outlook), IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development), national processes for linking science and policy such as in Brazil, as well as ongoing networking and capacity building initiatives.

II. Rationale: Harvesting the benefits of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

6. The overarching benefits of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services are:

a) Increased scientific support to the MEAs and to other multilateral agreements affected by biodiversity and ecosystem services changes at all levels;

b) Provide the scientific basis to achieve better coordination and coherence among the various biodiversity and ecosystems-related MEAs;

c) Provide scientific support to national governments concerned about the local consequences of biodiversity and ecosystem changes;

d) Provide credibility, salience and legitimacy to the science supporting the multilateral agreements, intergovernmental organizations and national governments;

e) Ensure the timeliness, relevance, quality and quantity of information flows to decision-makers at appropriate levels.

7. Specific recommendations from the MA follow-up partners and the IMoSEB consultation for the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services include:

a) **Influence the Scientific Research Agenda**: inform and support, in association with requests of the global change programs, development of a scientific program of research to better understand and predict the causes and consequences of changes in the biosphere at the global scale, and possible responses;

b) **Generating the Knowledge**: undertake regular independent assessments of changes in the biosphere at multiple scales;

c) **Policy Support**: respond to requests from multilateral agreements,
intergovernmental organizations and/or national governments for information and decision support on specific issues;

d) Horizon Scanning: proactively alert such organizations to emerging issues and threats in order to allow timely responses and provide rapid assessments of these threats;

e) Capacity Building: support international action to build the capacity to undertake regular monitoring and assessment of changes in biodiversity and ecosystem services at the national level.

8. The science-policy platform should be structured such that the credibility, salience, and legitimacy are ensured by:

   a) Independence;

   b) Responsiveness to user needs;

   c) A governance structure that includes the multilateral agreements, intergovernmental organizations and national governments.

9. The science-policy platform would generate a range of outcomes, including:

   a) Promotion of dialogue among diverse knowledge systems and understandings, perspectives and values regarding biodiversity and ecosystem services, to help make policy decisions more effective, efficient and equitable;

   b) Improved communication to aid understanding and application of scientific results on biodiversity and ecosystem services by all relevant audiences;

   c) Support to the subsidiary advisory bodies of MEAs, national governments, civil society, development agencies, multilateral banks and the GEF by providing proactive scientific advice on existing and emerging threats;

   d) Identification of biodiversity and ecosystem services research priorities and gaps implied by decision-makers’ concerns at all levels, and promotion/diffusion of these to the scientific community and the science funding agencies;

   e) Provide decision-makers at all levels with appropriate tools and methodologies to turn assessment findings (knowledge) about biodiversity and ecosystem services losses into action, in an effective, efficient and equitable manner.
III. Proposal: A phased approach for implementing the activities of the intergovernmental science-policy platform.

10. It is suggested that the specific activities of the intergovernmental science-policy platform should be phased, and performance should be evaluated in each phase.

11. The first inter-governmental meeting tentatively planned to be held in the last quarter of 2008 should approve both the phasing of activities, and the objectives associated with Phase I, as well as determine the timing for when an evaluation of Phase I should be undertaken to enable a subsequent decision on Phase II.

IV. Key components of Phase I

12. **Influencing the Research Agenda.** Phase I will support the global change programs of the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP), DIVERSITAS in particular, and key research funding agencies in the identification of research needs and programmes. This will include advancing understanding of the dynamic interactions among global drivers of change, ecosystem services, biodiversity, and human well-being at multiple scales.

   - **Objective:** Continue to build and improve the knowledge base on the links among biodiversity, ecosystem functioning, ecosystem services and human well-being, and develop tools for mainstreaming ecosystem services into development and economic decision-making.

   - **Expected Accomplishments:**

     i) A group of research funding agencies and development funding agencies have identified options for resourcing global collaborative research on changes in the biosphere that affect the global public good;

     ii) A robust set of targets that build upon the 2010 biodiversity targets for 2020 to be presented at the Tenth Conference of Parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity in Nagoya in 2010.

13. **Generating the Knowledge through Sub-Global Assessments.** A key component of the global strategy for MA follow-up is the mobilization and facilitation of sub-global assessments (SGAs). Phase I will provide support for existing SGAs, as well as for the sharing of lessons learned and experiences among ongoing SGAs. It will also initiate additional SGAs according to the ecosystem services framework provided by the MA, with an emphasis on ecosystems and regions not well covered by the original and ongoing set of MA SGAs. This component will primarily respond to needs and requests...
from individual governments and biodiversity-relevant MEAs and other bodies for help in developing the policy-relevant information base and establishing baselines on the links among biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being.

- **Objective:** Additional support catalyzed for existing sub-global assessments and initiating new sub-global assessments based on the MA framework, with an emphasis on ecosystems and regions not well-covered by the existing set of sub-global assessments.

- **Expected Accomplishments:**
  i) Policy-driven sub-global assessments undertaken in selected countries, in close cooperation with national governments and regional bodies, including economic valuations and scenarios development focused on supporting policy-making processes;
  ii) A clearing house mechanism to facilitate information exchange among sub-global assessments is established.

14. **Policy Support.** Phase I will harness networks of scientific experts across natural and social science disciplines to provide decision-makers with timely responses to queries on biodiversity and ecosystem change, and provide policy and decision support where requested. This will include methodologies for the economic analysis of trade-offs among ecosystem services based on monetary and non-monetary valuation of ecosystem services, as well as tools for integrating assessment findings into development and economic planning and budgetary processes, programs and policies at the national level.

- **Objective:** Build understanding and promote learning for the application of the ecosystem service framework by governments and civil society.

- **Expected Accomplishments:**
  i) Capacities of national governments are strengthened to track changes in ecological assets, identify budgetary appropriations for investment in ecological infrastructure, incorporate incentive mechanisms into national and sub-national development planning and implementation, and develop appropriate governance mechanisms;
  ii) Governance mechanisms for the resources of the biosphere that are affected by the interdependency of local, regional and global processes are identified and evaluated;
iii) Incentives for sustaining ecosystem services are identified and evaluated, including the promotion of taxation mechanisms, schemes for payments for ecosystem services and other market mechanisms, elimination of distorting subsidies, with support for national testing of such mechanisms in pilot projects.

15. Horizon-scanning and Awareness. Phase I will monitor, evaluate and communicate information on emerging issues in the science of biodiversity and ecosystem service change. These would include general alerts disseminated to the MEAs, UN bodies, national governments and others, and targeted policy briefs to the agencies specifically affected by particular issues.

- **Objective:** Identify and report on emerging issues that have the potential of causing significant impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being.

- **Expected Accomplishments:**
  i) A networked panel of experts to identify, evaluate and communicate emerging issues with potentially significant implications for biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being is established;
  ii) Evaluations of current emerging issues including food security and bio-fuels are produced.

16. Capacity Building. There are on-going efforts to build capacity all levels on understanding the links among biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being. Phase I will contribute to these efforts by building capacity for undertaking SGAs, integrating the monetary and non-monetary values of biodiversity and ecosystem services into national accounts, disseminating decision-support tools and methods, and including younger national scientists in particular from developing countries within the activities of the intergovernmental science-policy platform.

- **Objective:** Build the capacity of scientists at the national level to support decision making with credible, salient and legitimate scientific support.

- **Expected Accomplishments:**
  i) National level processes for linking science and policy are strengthened in selected countries, drawing on lessons learned from countries such as Brazil;
  ii) A programme awarding fellowships to young scientists from developing countries is established, to provide increased opportunities for participation
in the activities of the science-policy platform;

iii) Targeted support to specific national and international agencies for capacity building in the science and assessment of changes in the biosphere, and in the development of appropriate policy is provided.

V. Modalities for implementing Phase I

17. The proposed structure and dynamics of Phase I are illustrated in Figure 1 and outlined below.

18. **Kickoff meeting, fourth quarter 2008.** An initial intergovernmental meeting scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2008 can agree on the modalities, objectives, scope, principles and procedures of Phase I. It is proposed that the meeting be co-chaired by a prominent scientist and a prominent policy-maker, chosen in a manner which takes into account the need for geographical and gender balance. Deliberations will be based on this concept paper and a draft statement.

19. **Key operating principles for Phase I.** It is proposed that Phase I should be:

a) Flexible, intergovernmental but also include non-governmental stakeholders, and build upon existing networks of scientists and knowledge-holders;

b) Scientifically independent, credible, inclusive, and subject to critical expert peer review as appropriate;

c) Responsive to policy needs as identified by decision-making organs at multiple scales, including biodiversity-related MEAs, by being legitimate and policy-relevant without being policy prescriptive;

d) Linked to relevant assessment processes such as IPCC and GEO;

e) Monitored from the outset with procedures for measuring its effectiveness.

20. **Operational structure.** It is proposed that the structure for Phase I be comprised of an Operational Steering Group, a Scientific Steering Group, and a Secretariat. The structure should be light with a geographically, gender and disciplinarily balanced composition, with clear terms of reference (see below).

21. **Timeframe.** Phase I is suggested to span four years from 2008 to 2012. An evaluation of Phase I will allow for possible adjustments after the first four years.

22. **Procedures.** It is suggested that the procedures guiding activities in Phase I draw lessons from existing processes such as the IPCC, MA, IAASTD and be approved by
the initial intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting (see Annex I).

23. **Operational Steering Group.** It is proposed that the Operational Steering Group be co-chaired by a prominent scientist and a prominent policy-maker chosen in a manner which takes into account the need for geographic and gender balance. The Operational Steering Group will comprise government-nominated representatives, representatives from civil society including scientific organizations and the private sector, and ex-officio members from UN bodies and MEAs, and be composed in a geographically and gender balanced manner. The terms of reference of the group would include:

a) Oversee the implementation of Phase I according to the principles and procedures agreed at the intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting;

b) Consider and approve, based on inputs from Scientific Steering Group as appropriate:
   - Additional procedures as needed;
   - Expert nominations, identification of co-sponsors and donors, and partnership arrangements for the implementation of Phase I;
   - Budget and work programme for Phase I, and financial reports prepared by the Secretariat;

c) Consider findings arising out of sub-global assessments, rapid assessments of emerging issues and observations and information networking, which may require action by governments, international organizations and civil society;

d) Consider the possible scope, process and parameters for conducting a comprehensive global assessment in Phase II, based on the recommendations of the Scientific Steering Group.

24. **Scientific Steering Group.** It is proposed that the Scientific Steering Group be limited in size and be composed of prominent scientific experts chosen in a regionally, gender and disciplinary balanced manner which reflect the need to also take into account traditional knowledge. The terms of reference of the group would include:

a) Ensure scientific and technical credibility of all activities under Phase I, including the nomination and selection of scientific experts for programme activities;
b) Guide the development of tools, guidelines and methodologies for sub-global and global assessments, networking, capacity building, outreach and policy support;

c) Promote the use of existing scientific, assessment and information networks and support the further development of such networks;

d) Oversee the nomination of experts for conducting such assessments in accordance with the procedures agreed for Phase I;

e) Identify emerging problems, information gaps and research needs and issue alerts relating to biodiversity and ecosystems as needed;

f) Develop recommendations for the scope, process and parameters for conducting a comprehensive global assessment in Phase II for the consideration of the Operational Steering Group;

g) Provide scientific advice and input to the Operational Steering Group as and when needed.

25. **Secretariat.** It is envisaged that Phase I will be supported by a partnership of co-sponsoring agencies in accordance with guidelines set out by the Operational Steering Group. Activities under Phase I will be supported through joint programming by partners and a separate trust fund. A multi-year work programme approved by the Operational Steering Group will be coordinated by the Secretariat, based on the key components and outcomes of Phase I described above.

**VI. Consideration of Phase II**

26. The Operational Steering Group may request the Secretariat to convene intermediate intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultations within the timeframe of Phase I to:

i) Review the accomplishments of Phase I and consider if adjustments to the modalities or governance structure are needed;

ii) Consider the need for continuation or modification of Phase I activities beyond the first four-year timeframe; and

iii) Consider the scope and modalities of a comprehensive global assessment, in preparation for Phase II. Findings of any such assessment should also be subject to the consideration (approval/endorsement/acceptance) of an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation at a later stage.
27. It is envisaged that a final intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting of Phase I will be convened with the aim to consider the effectiveness of Phase I, and the need and modalities for a Phase II. The evaluation should be initiated and completed in time for consideration by governments and partners prior to this final meeting.
Fig 1. Modalities of Phase I

Year: 2008

- Initial Intergovernmental & Multi-stakeholder meeting
- Operational Steering Group
- Networking, capacity building, programme support, cosponsoring partnership, fund and secretarial arrangement

Meets regularly

Year: 2012

- Tentative intermediate Intergovernmental & Multi-stakeholder meeting
- Final Phase 1 Intergovernmental & Multi-stakeholder meeting
- Scientific Steering Group (w/ sub- groups)

Meets regularly
Principles and Procedures Governing the
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform
on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

Introduction

1. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is a scientific and social process to strengthen relations between knowledge holders on biodiversity and ecosystem services (scientists, local communities, private sector) and actors involved in decision/policy-making processes. IPBES is designed to foster exchanges between these communities and to deliver policy-relevant information in order to support decision-making at appropriate scales.

Purpose

2. The Platform shall concentrate its activities in the gathering of what is currently known on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and include reflection of what is needed in terms of knowledge, research priorities and organization.

3. Based on a collective intelligence approach, the role of the Platform will be to put at decision-makers disposal, the knowledge, tools, and techniques available in appropriate and relevant ways, and present policy alternatives for decision-making.

4. The Platform will also promote and oversee independent scientific, technical and socio-economic assessments, the scope, scale and range of which will be based on the priorities and demand expressed by decision-making bodies.

5. Review of the knowledge base is an essential component of the Platform and will be undertaken by experts from scientific bodies, academia, governments and civil society, with expertise in the relevant topic areas.

Organization

6. The IPBES governance structures shall comprise the following:
   - The Plenary Assembly;
   - The Operational Steering Group (OSG);
   - The Scientific Steering Group (SSG);
   - The Secretariat.

7. The Plenary Assembly shall be composed of experts representing governments, NGOs, academic and scientific organizations, the private sector and other major groups. Experts representing NGOs, academic and scientific organizations, the private sector and other major groups, shall constitute half of the members of the Plenary Assembly, and shall be co-opted by a meeting of the government experts. Experts representing academic and scientific organizations shall comprise no less than one-quarter of the Assembly membership. IGOs will be given the status of ex-officio members. The Plenary Assembly shall be co-chaired by a prominent scientist and a prominent policy-maker, taking into account the needed for geographic and gender balance.

8. The Plenary Assembly shall be responsible for:
   - Designating members of the OSG and SSG;
   - Adopting a programme of work including a list of topics to be addressed by the Platform;
• Reviewing and accepting/adopting/approving major reports or executive summaries as transmitted by the OSG;
• Amending existing procedures, or adopting additional rules of procedure, as may be necessary.

9. The OSG shall be responsible for:
• Overseeing the implementation of Phase I activities according to the principles and procedures established by the Plenary Assembly;
• Identifying co-sponsors and donors, and partnership arrangements for the implementation of Phase I;
• Considering and approving the budget and detailed work programme for Phase I, and financial reports prepared by the Secretariat;
• Approving specific procedures related to the conduct of assessments and other studies, including the selection of experts, upon the recommendation of the SSG;
• Considering and endorsing findings arising out of sub-global assessments, assessments of emerging issues and other publications, for transmission to the Plenary Assembly;
• Considering the possible scope, process and parameters for conducting a comprehensive global assessment in Phase II, based on the recommendations of the SSG.

10. Members of the OSG shall be appointed by the Plenary Assembly. The OSG shall include government-nominated experts, representatives from civil society, scientific and academic organizations, NGOs and the private sector, and ex-officio members from UN bodies and MEAs, and be composed in a geographically and gender balanced manner. The co-chairs of the Plenary Assembly shall also act as the co-chairs of the OSG.

11. The SSG will oversee the scientific credibility of the Platform; it will be limited in size and be composed of prominent scientific experts chosen in a regionally, gender and disciplinarily balanced manner which reflects the need to also take into account traditional and other forms of knowledge. SSG members will be appointed by the Plenary Assembly upon the recommendation of the OSG. The SSG shall be co-chaired by two prominent scientists, taking into account the needed for geographic and gender balance.

12. The SSG shall be responsible for:
• Recommending to the OSG the establishment of, and selecting the appropriate scientific experts for, the working groups and task forces to undertake activities under the Phase I work programme;
• Overseeing the peer review process to ensure the highest levels of scientific quality and credibility for all products delivered by the Platform;
• Certifying reports and findings for onward transmission to the OSG;
• Providing scientific advice and input to the OSG as and when needed, including recommendations for the scope and parameters for Phase II.

13. The Secretariat, operating in accordance with UN rules, shall be supported by a partnership between the United Nations Environment Programme and co-sponsoring partners in accordance with guidelines set out by the OSG; it will be responsible for carrying out the day-to-day operations of IPBES and coordinating the implementation of Phase I.

14. The Secretariat will set up monitoring procedures for measuring effectiveness of Phase I actions, used from the outset for programme evaluation, development and continuation.

**Participation**

15. Invitations to participate in the sessions of the Platform and in its working groups, task forces, and activities shall be extended to governments and other bodies by the co-chairs of the Plenary Assembly.
16. IPBES shall encourage governments and other organizations to nominate experts to participate in
the Platform’s working groups, task forces, and activities.

17. Experts from international organizations, IGOs or NGOs may be invited in their own right to
contribute to the work of the IPBES working groups and task forces. Governments shall be
informed in advance of invitations extended to experts from their countries, and may nominate
additional experts.

Procedures

18. In taking decisions, including approving, adopting or accepting reports, all constituent bodies of
the Platform shall endeavor to reach consensus. If consensus is judged by the relevant body to be
impossible: (a) for decisions on procedural issues, these shall be decided according to established
procedures of the UNEP Governing Council; (b) for approval, adoption and acceptance of reports,
differing views shall be explained and, upon request, recorded. Differing views on matters of a
scientific, technical or socio-economic nature shall, as appropriate to the context, be represented in
the document concerned. Differing views on matters of policy or procedure shall, as appropriate to
the context, be recorded in the report of the session concerned.

19. Conclusions drawn by IPBES Working Groups and Task Forces are not official IPBES views until
they have been certified by the SSG, endorsed by the OSG, and accepted by the Plenary Assembly.

20. Invitations to participate in the sessions of the Platform and its Working Groups, Task Forces and
activities should be extended at least six weeks in advance of the relevant session.

21. Major reports, including assessment reports, special reports, methodology Reports, technical
documents, basic documentation and other materials for consideration at the sessions of the
Platform and its workingg Groups shall normally be made available by the Secretariat at least four
weeks in advance of the session and, to the extent possible, in all official UN languages.

22. Interpretation into all official UN languages shall be provided if required for all sessions of the
Plenary Assembly.

23. The scheduling of all sessions of the Platform and shall be coordinated, to the extent possible, with
other related international meetings.

Procedures for the preparation, review, acceptance, approval, adoption and publication of
IPBES reports

24. Definitions
• “Acceptance” signifies that the material has not been subjected to line-by-line discussion and
agreement, but represents a comprehensive, objective and balanced view of the subject matter.
• “Adoption” is a process of endorsement section by section (i.e., not line-by-line).
• “Approval” signifies that the material has been subjected to line-by-line discussion and
agreement.

25. Overall process for IPBES reports

To ensure proper preparation and review, the following steps should be taken:
• Compilation of governmental and non-governmental focal points and nominees for
  Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors, Contributing Authors, Expert Reviewers, and
  Review Editors;
• Selection of Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors, and Review Editors;
• Preparation of a first-order draft report;
• Government/expert (peer) review of the first-order draft report;
• Preparation of a second-order draft report;
• Government/expert review of the second-order draft report;
• Preparation of the final report; and
• Review and acceptance/adoPTION/approval of the final report at a session of the Plenary Assembly.

26. Compilation of nominees for authors, reviewers and review editors

The Secretariat shall request that all governments and participating organizations identify appropriate experts to act as Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors, Contributing Authors, Expert Reviewers or Review Editors. To facilitate the identification of experts and peer review by governments and non-governmental stakeholders, governments and non-governmental stakeholders should designate focal points for this purpose. The SSG should ensure, where necessary, balanced representation of experts and reviewers from industrialized countries, developing countries, and countries with economies in transition. These recommendations shall be maintained by the Secretariat and be available to all members of the Platform.

27. Selection of authors, reviewers and review editors

The SSG shall make recommendations to the OSG on the selection of Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors, and Review Editors from those experts nominated by governments and participating organizations. The composition of all categories shall reflect the need to aim for a range of views, expertise, gender and geographical representation, taking into account different forms of knowledge. The Coordinating Lead Authors and Lead Authors may enlist other experts as Contributing Authors to assist in their work.

28. Review

The purpose of the review process is to ensure that IPBES reports present a comprehensive, objective and balanced view of the current state of knowledge.

Three general principles should govern the review process of the Report, which should include the latest scientific, technical and social findings as comprehensively as possible:
• Circulation should aim to involve as many experts as possible, with particular attention to independent experts (not involved in the preparation of the document) from all countries;
• The review should be objective, open and transparent; and
• Appropriate experts should review material related to traditional, local, institutional, and other forms of knowledge.

At least six weeks should be allowed for review by experts and governments. All written expert and government review comments will be made available to reviewers on request during the review process and will be retained in an open archive in a location determined by the IPBES Secretariat.

29. Approval and publication

While reports shall be accepted/adopted/approved by the Plenary Assembly, the content of the authored chapters is the primary responsibility of the authors. After acceptance/adoPTION/approval, only grammatical and/or minor editorial changes may be made prior to publication.