

Rules of procedure for sessions of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

The rules of procedure for the Plenary of the Platform have been adopted by the Plenary in decisions IPBES-1/1 and IPBES-2/1.

I. Scope

Rule 1

These rules of procedure apply to any session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services convened in accordance with a decision of the Plenary and in compliance with these rules.

II. Definitions

Rule 2

For the purposes of these rules:

(a) “Platform” means the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;

(b) “Members of the Platform” means States Members of the United Nations expressing their intent to be members of the Platform;

[Issues of membership/participation of regional economic integration organizations remain under discussion with a view to resolution as soon as possible.]¹

(c) “Plenary” means the Platform’s decision-making body, comprising all members of the Platform;

(d) “Session” means any ordinary or extraordinary session of the Plenary;

(e) “Members present and voting” means members of the Platform present at a session and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting are considered as not voting;

(f) “Secretariat” means the secretariat of the Platform;

(g) “Observer” means any State not a member of the Platform and any body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, including organizations of and representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities,² which is qualified in matters covered by the Platform, and which has informed the secretariat of the

¹ Participation is open to regional economic integration organizations as observers ad interim.

² This includes indigenous and local communities.

Platform of its wish to be represented at sessions of the Plenary, subject to provisions set out in these rules of procedure;

(h) “Meeting” means a single sitting at a session of the Plenary of the Platform;

(i) “Bureau” refers to the body of elected members of the Bureau of the session of the Plenary as set forth in these rules of procedure;

(j) “Bureau member” or “member of the Bureau” refers to any person who holds one of the posts in the Bureau;

(k) “Multidisciplinarity” connotes an approach that crosses many disciplinary boundaries, knowledge systems and approaches to create a holistic approach, focusing on complex problems that require expertise across two or more disciplines. Multidisciplinarity arises when scientists (including natural and social scientists), policy and technical experts, natural resource managers, other relevant knowledge holders and users, interact in an open discussion and dialogue giving consideration to each perspective.

III. Venue, dates and notice of sessions

Rule 3

The venue and dates of each session are to be decided by the Plenary at the preceding session. If this is not possible, it should be decided by the Bureau.

Rule 4

The secretariat will invite and notify the members and observers of the Platform of the venue and dates of any session at least eight weeks before it is due to commence.

IV. Members and observers

Rule 5

1. Membership of the Platform is open to States Members of the United Nations, who may become members by expressing their intent to be members of the Platform.

2. [Issues of membership/participation of regional economic integration organizations remain under discussion with a view to resolution as soon as possible.]³

[2bis. Membership of the Platform is also open to regional economic integration organizations. A regional economic integration organization may participate in the proceedings of IPBES as any of its other members. A regional economic integration organization may have a number of votes equal to the number of its Member States that are members of IPBES [that are present and eligible at the time of the vote]. However, a regional economic integration organization shall not exercise its right to take decisions concurrently with its Member States that are members to the Platform,

³ Participation is open to regional economic integration organizations as observers ad interim.

and vice versa. A regional economic integration organization shall not be counted as an additional member when determining a quorum.]

[2bis alt The European Union, as a regional economic integration organization constituted by sovereign states of a given region to which its member states have transferred competence in respect of matters within the scope of the Platform's work, may also be a Member in the Platform within the scope of such competences and without any participation rights additional to those of European Union member states. The European Union will present a declaration of competence setting forth the extent of its competences with respect to the matters falling within the scope of the IPBES work. Notwithstanding any provision other than this paragraph in any IPBES governing instruments or decisions, the European Union may exercise only the following participation rights on behalf of its member states on matters within its competence, and only when European Union member states do not exercise such rights:

- (a) the right to speak in turn, rather than after all participant states have been acknowledged;
- (b) the right to reply;
- (c) the right to introduce proposals. [; and]
- (d) [the right to participate in decisions of the Plenary, including casting votes and joining or blocking consensus. Any exercise of the right to vote on behalf of its member states by the European Union shall comprise the number of votes of its member states that are Members and are present and eligible to vote.]

These rights are exhaustive and exclusive, and may not be exercised on a given issue by the European Union if exercised by any European Union member state, nor vice versa. For example, the European Union is not counted in the determination of a quorum, and is not eligible to seek any leadership positions in the Plenary, such as Chair or Vice-Chair, or positions on any other governing or policy body of the Platform, such as the Bureau. If the European Union speaks on behalf of its member states, it will be accorded the same amount of time as any other Member.]

Admission of Observers

Rule 6

1. The Plenary will adopt at its first session the Platform's policy and procedures on admission of observers.
2. The provisions on observers set forth in the rules of procedure of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme will apply to the first session of the Plenary, unless the Plenary decides otherwise by consensus.
- [3. The Platform's policy and procedures on admission of Observers are set forth in annex I to these rules of procedure.]

Participation by Observers

Rule 7

Any Observer may, upon the invitation of the Chair, participate in the Plenary without the ability to cast votes or join or block consensus.

V. Agenda

Rule 8

1. The secretariat will, in consultation with and under the guidance of the Bureau, prepare a provisional agenda for each session in accordance with the guidance of the Plenary. Any member of the Platform may request the secretariat of the Plenary to include specific items in the provisional agenda.

2. The secretariat will, after consultation with the Bureau, distribute the provisional agenda for each session, along with other official documents to be considered at the session, to the members and those entitled to be represented as observers in the official languages of the Platform at least six weeks before the session is due to commence.

3. Between the date of distribution of the provisional agenda and the adoption of the agenda by the Plenary, members of the Platform may propose supplementary items for inclusion in the agenda, provided they are of an important and urgent nature. The secretariat will, after consultation with the Bureau, include such items on an updated provisional agenda.

Rule 9

At the beginning of each session the members of the Platform that are present will adopt the agenda for the session on the basis of the provisional agenda and any supplementary items proposed in accordance with paragraph 3 of Rule 8.

Rule 10

If the Plenary so decides it may revise its agenda by adding, deleting or amending items.

VI. Representation, credentials and accreditation

Rule 11

Each member of the Platform participating in a session will be represented by a delegation consisting of a head of delegation and such other accredited representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as it may require. An alternate representative or adviser may act as a representative upon designation by the head of delegation.

Rule 12

1. The credentials of representatives of members of the Platform and the names of alternate representatives and advisers need to be submitted to the secretariat, if possible not later than 24 hours after the opening of the session. Information regarding any later change in the composition of a delegation, along with any necessary credentials, also needs to be submitted to the secretariat.

2. The credentials of the representatives of any member of the Platform need to be issued by or on behalf of the member's Head of State or Government or minister for foreign affairs consistent with each country's policies and law. [The credentials of the representatives of a regional economic integration organization need to be issued by the competent authority of that organization.]

Rule 13

The Bureau examines the credentials and submits a report thereon to the Plenary.

Rule 14

Representatives of members of the Plenary are entitled to participate provisionally in a session pending a decision by the Plenary to accept their credentials. These representatives do not have the right to make decisions until their credentials are accepted.

VII. Members and operation of the Bureau

Rule 15

1. Candidates for the Bureau will be proposed by Government[s] [members] [members of the Platform] for nomination by regions and election by the Plenary.

2. The Bureau of the Plenary, consisting of the Chair, four Vice-Chairs, and five other officers, is elected from among the members of the Platform. Each region is represented by two officers in the Bureau, taking into account the principle of geographical representation. The Chair and four Vice-Chairs, one of whom acts as Rapporteur, will be selected with due consideration to scientific and technical expertise and will be selected from each of the five United Nations regions. The five additional members of the Bureau will carry out relevant administrative functions. The officers of the Bureau remain in office until their replacement is elected.

3. The term of office of a Bureau member is 3 years with the opportunity for re-election for one consecutive term. Such term of office starts at the end of the session at which he/she is elected and ends at the close of the session at which his or her successor is elected. The Chair will be rotated among the five United Nations regions every 3 years without the possibility of re-election as Chair.

4. Each region may designate alternates, to be approved by the Plenary, to represent the region at a Bureau meeting if the Bureau member(s) is/are unable to attend.

Rule 16

The Bureau meets as necessary, either in person or by means of telecommunication, to advise the Chair and the secretariat on the conduct of business of the Plenary and its subsidiary bodies.

Rule 17

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere in these rules, the Chair:

- (a) Represents the Platform;
- (b) Declares the opening and closure of each session;
- (c) Presides at sessions of the Plenary and meetings of the Bureau;
- (d) Ensures the observance of the present rules in accordance with the definitions, functions and operating principles of the Platform;
- (e) Accords participants the right to speak;
- (f) Applies the decision-making procedure in Rule 36;
- (g) Rules on any points of order;
- (h) Subject to these rules, exercises complete control over the proceedings and maintains order.

2. The Chair may also propose:

- (a) The closure of the list of speakers;
- (b) A limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times a member or observer may speak on an issue;
- (c) The adjournment or closure of debate on an issue;
- (d) The suspension or adjournment of a meeting.

3. The Chair and the Bureau, in the exercise of their functions, remain at all times under the authority of the Plenary.

Rule 18

The Chair participates in sessions in that capacity and may not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a member of the Platform.

Rule 19

1. The Chair, if absent from a session or any part thereof, should designate one of the Vice-Chairs to act as Chair.

2. A Vice-Chair acting as Chair has the same powers and duties as the Chair and may not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a member of the Platform.

Rule 20

1. If the Chair resigns or is otherwise unable to complete his or her assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, a new Chair is to be elected at the next session to serve the remainder of the term of office of the departing Chair. Until a new Chair is elected, one of the Vice-Chairs, as agreed by the Bureau, serves as the Acting Chair.

2. If a member of the Bureau, other than the Chair, resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, that member is replaced by the alternate from the same region.

Election of members of the Bureau

Rule 21

1. The members of the Bureau will be elected by the Plenary by consensus unless the Plenary decides otherwise.
2. If the Plenary decides to elect members of the Bureau by vote:
 - (a) This is held at ordinary sessions of the Plenary;
 - (b) Each member of the Plenary has one vote in the elections;
 - (c) All elections are decided by a majority of the members present and voting. All elections are held by secret ballot, unless otherwise decided by the Plenary;
 - (d) After completion of the elections, the number of votes for each candidate and the number of abstentions is recorded.

Nominations

Rule 22

1. All nominees for election as the Chair and Vice-Chairs need to have relevant expertise from the agreed guidelines. Curricula vitae of all nominees are to be submitted to the secretariat and made available to members of the Platform before the elections.
2. The secretariat of the Platform will invite members of the Platform to submit to the secretariat no less than four months before the scheduled election written nominations, in accordance with rule 15 and accompanying curricula vitae of nominees to the Bureau. The Plenary can accept late nominations at its discretion. The secretariat will post the names of persons nominated and their curricula vitae, as well as the identity of the region making the nomination, on the website of the Platform in a time frame that will facilitate consideration of such persons by members of the Platform.

VIII. Subsidiary bodies

Rule 23

1. The Plenary may:
 - (a) Establish subsidiary bodies to carry out such objectives as may be agreed upon at a session of the Plenary;
 - (b) Determine the matters to be considered by any subsidiary body;
 - (c) Establish the terms of reference of any subsidiary body.
2. The Plenary will keep under review the composition, effectiveness and need for its subsidiary bodies, including the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, as part of the periodic review of the operation of the Platform.

Rule 24

The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel reports to the Plenary and will carry out the scientific and technical functions agreed by the Plenary, as articulated in the document (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, Annex I, Appendix I) on functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform, and will organize itself as it considers appropriate to implement the Work Programme.

Rule 25

1. The interim membership of the Panel will be based on equal representation of five participants nominated by each of the five United Nations regions. Such a membership will be in place for not more than a two-year period in order to allow the final regional structure and expert composition to be agreed at a session of the Plenary. The members of the Bureau will also be observers of the Panel during this period.
2. The membership of the Panel will be based on equal representation of five participants nominated by each of the five United Nations regions.
3. The co-chairs of the Panel may invite the Bureau to participate as observers of the Panel. The chairs of the scientific subsidiary bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will be observers. The Panel may also invite experts from the United Nations organizations that are partners of the collaborative partnership arrangement to participate as observers, as appropriate.
4. The members of the Panel are elected for their personal expertise and are not intended to represent any particular region.

Guidelines for the nomination and selection of members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel

Rule 26

Candidates for the Panel are to be proposed by members of the Platform for nomination by the regions and election by the Plenary. In the event that a region cannot agree on its nomination, the Plenary will decide. Taking into account disciplinary and gender balance, each region will nominate five candidates for membership of the Panel. The following criteria could be taken into account in nominating and selecting members of the Panel:

- (a) Scientific expertise in biodiversity and ecosystem services with regard to both natural and social sciences and traditional and local knowledge among the members of the Panel;
- (b) Scientific, technical or policy expertise and knowledge of the main elements of the Platform's programme of work;
- (c) Experience in communicating, promoting and incorporating science into policy development processes;
- (d) Ability to work in international scientific and policy processes.

Rule 27

1. The secretariat of the Platform will invite members of the Platform to submit to the secretariat written nominations and accompanying curricula vitae of nominees for the Panel no less than four months before the scheduled election. Curricula vitae of

all nominees are to be submitted to the secretariat and made available to members of the Platform, together with the names of persons nominated, as well as the identity of the region or observer making the nomination, on the website of the Platform.

2. The Plenary can accept late nominations at its discretion.

Election of members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel

Rule 28

1. The members of the Panel will be elected by the Plenary by consensus, unless the Plenary decides otherwise.

2. If the Plenary decides to elect members of the Panel by vote:

(a) The elections will be held during ordinary sessions of the Plenary;

(b) Each member of the Plenary has one vote in the elections;

(c) All elections will be decided by a majority of the members present and voting;

(d) All elections will be held by secret ballot, unless otherwise decided by the Plenary;

(e) After completion of the elections, the number of votes for each candidate and the number of abstentions will be recorded.

Rule 29

1. The term of office of all the Panel members is 3 years with a possibility of re-election for one consecutive term. The term of the office of each Panel member should start at the end of the session at which he or she is elected and end at the close of the session at which his or her successor is elected.

2. The Chair or Co-Chairs of the Panel will be elected by the members of the Panel and the Panel should rotate the position of the Chair(s) among the range of its members at regular intervals.

Rule 30

1. A Chair, if absent from a session or any part thereof, should designate another member of the Panel to act as Chair.

2. A member of the Panel acting as Chair has the same powers and duties as the Chair.

Rule 31

1. If a Chair resigns or is otherwise unable to complete his or her assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, a new Chair is to be elected by the members of the Panel at the session where it is known that the Chair will be unable to complete his or her assigned term of office to serve the remainder of the term of office of the departing Chair.

2. If a member of the Panel resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, that member will be replaced by an alternate nominated by the same region and selected by the Plenary.

Meetings of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel

Rule 32

The Panel will meet as necessary, either in person or by electronic means, and conduct its business in a transparent way. Efforts shall be made to hold meetings of the Bureau and meetings of the Panel concurrently or in association, where appropriate, to allow for a maximum complementarity and coordination of work, and cost savings.

Rule 33

In addition to the procedures of the Panel, the Chair(s) of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel:

- (a) Declares the opening and closure of each meeting of the Panel;
- (b) Presides at meetings of the Panel;
- (c) Ensures the observance of the applicable Platform rules in accordance with the functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform;
- (d) Accords participants in the meetings of the Panel the right to speak.

IX. Conduct of business

Quorum

Rule 34

The Chair may not declare a meeting of any session open and permit discussion to proceed unless at least one third of those members of the Platform participating in the session are present.

Quorum for decision-making

Rule 35

The presence of a majority of the members of the Platform participating in the session is needed for any decision to be taken.

X. Decision-making

Rule 36

1. The members of the Platform take decisions on matters of substance by consensus, unless otherwise provided in its rules.
2. On matters of procedure, the members of the Platform are to make every effort to achieve consensus. If all efforts by the members of the Platform to achieve consensus on a matter of procedure have been exhausted, and no consensus has been reached, the decision will, as a last resort, unless otherwise provided by these rules of procedure, be taken by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Platform present and voting.
3. If the question arises whether a matter is one of procedural or substantive nature, the Chair shall rule on the question. An appeal against this ruling shall be put to the vote immediately and the Chair's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting.
4. When considering reports, differing views are to be explained and, upon request, recorded. Differing views on matters of a scientific, technical, or socioeconomic nature are, as appropriate in the context, to be represented in the scientific, technical, or socioeconomic document concerned. Differences of views on matters of policy or procedure are, as appropriate in the context, to be recorded in the Report of the Session.

XI. Languages

Rule 37

1. The official languages of the Platform are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
2. Interpretation into all the official languages of the Platform will be provided for all the sessions of the Plenary. A member may speak in a language other than an official language if the participant provides for interpretation into one of the official languages.

Rule 38

Official documents of the Plenary are to be drawn up in one of the official languages and translated into the other official languages.

XII. Modifications to the rules of procedure

Rule 39

1. Modifications to these rules of procedure are adopted by consensus.
2. Unless the Plenary decides otherwise, any modifications proposed to these rules of procedure, submitted by members of the Platform or by the Bureau, should be communicated to all members of the Platform at least eight weeks before they are submitted to the session where the proposals are expected to be discussed.