

What is WABES?

WABES is an initiative that supports the contributions of West Africa to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) work programme, in particular its assessments. The overarching objective is to facilitate exchange amongst experts on biodiversity and ecosystem services (BES) from academia, NGOs, policy makers, amongst others, in West Africa, and build their capacities, thereby increasing their willingness to contribute to the IPBES work programme. Overall, the project is intended to be ground-breaking in strengthening a regional pool of experts to promote IPBES assessments and their visibility in the region. WABES is funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

A Master of Science (MSc) in

“Managing Science-Policy Interfaces on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Sustainable Development in West Africa – SPIBES”

SPIBES is a two-year interdisciplinary programme. The first cohort of students began in early 2018, and graduated in July 2020. The second cohort of students began in 2020 and will finish early 2022. The aim of the graduate studies programme is to convey a basic understanding of relevant scientific tools and methods, particularly in the context of IPBES, and to identify ways of producing scientific knowledge that are policy relevant. This will also be a proactive contribution to the achievement of sustainable development goals in West Africa.

The Master’s program is dedicated to scientists interested in sustainable biodiversity and ecosystem services management through science-based policy and decision-making.

The Master’s Programme does:

- provide the students with a general understanding of BES and their relevance from disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
- facilitate inter- and transdisciplinary thinking to create and enable a new generation of scientists to tackle global environmental challenges;
- generate knowledge on the functioning and set-up of (international) policy processes and decision making and
- provide tools to translate research findings into policy relevant outcomes to support decision making.

SPIBES is hosted by the African Center of Excellence on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Agriculture (CEA-CCBAD) at the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny (UFHB), Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire.

Partner Institutions:

WABES brings together the expertise of its partners on graduate programmes, biodiversity and ecosystem services and interactions between science and policy and to support capacity building for the IPBES work programme.



The Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny (UFHB) is an institution of higher learning in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. It is one of the country’s most outstanding universities, training over 50,000 students in 13 faculties and a research centre.

The aim of the **African Center of Excellence on Climate Change Biodiversity and Sustainable Agriculture (CEA-CCBAD)** of the University of Félix Houphouët-Boigny is to provide state-of-the-art teaching and research services in the field of climate change, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture.

CRNI (Doctoral school on Climate, Natural Resources and Innovations) of the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny has a main objective to train researchers and engineers to effectively tackle the complex environmental challenges in Africa. Graduates are also provided with tools and methods to increase the value of natural resources in the context of climate change.

LAASSE (Laboratoire de Sociologie Économique et d’Anthropologie des Appartenances Symboliques) also of the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny deals with the social science component of ecological challenges with special focus on the interface between science and politics.

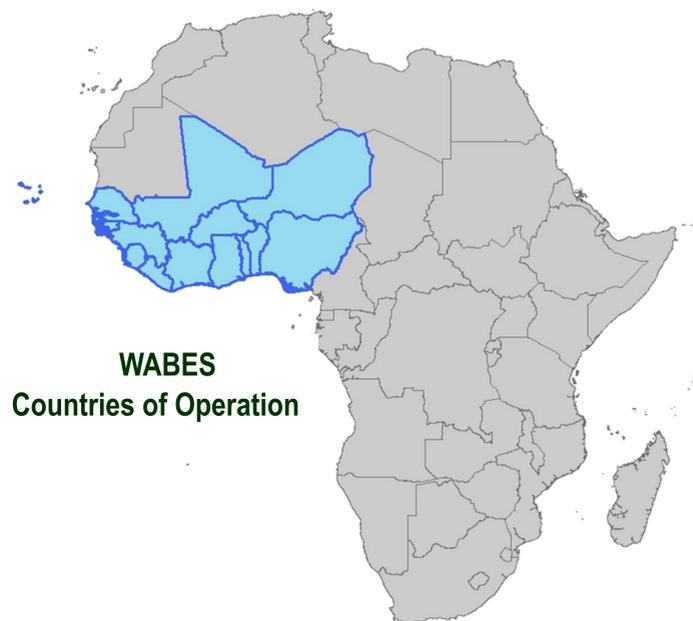
ZEF is an international and interdisciplinary research institute at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Germany. It works in the fields of research, capacity building, policy dialogue and public awareness as well as international networking.

WASCAL is a climate service centre that investigates the challenges of climate change and climate variability in West Africa. WASCAL strengthens climate change-related researches and capacities in West Africa. The programme brings together expertise from ten West African countries and Germany.

CoKnow Consulting is an international consulting agency in the field of environment, development and capacity building. CoKnow supports the exchange and cooperation between science, politics and society in inter- and transdisciplinary research approaches and focuses on creative work and moderation processes.

UFZ (Helmholtz Zentrum für Umweltforschung GmbH) is one of the world’s leading research centres in the field of environmental research. It shows ways for a sustainable handling of the natural life bases for the well-being of humans and environment. It has experience in IPBES-related capacity building at national and international level.

UNEP-WCMC (UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre) is a global leader in the field of biodiversity. It collaborates with researchers and policy-makers to establish biodiversity in environmental and development decision-making processes, thereby contributing to sustainable development.



West African Expert Platform

Building of expertise on IPBES-relevant topics through network activities and annual expert workshops

There is still a lack of effective interfaces between science and policy on issues related to IPBES in West Africa. Such interfaces are to be promoted and strengthened within the framework of WABES. By bringing together experts, an exchange between scientists and representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations has been initiated.

The aims of our regional expert platform are to promote cooperation, knowledge exchanges and provide participants with customised information on the latest developments in IPBES. To date, as part of our platform’s activities, three in-person workshops for West African experts have been organised in Abidjan/Ivory Coast in 2017; Accra/Ghana in 2018; and Ouagadougou/Burkina Faso in 2019. The workshops were attended by a total of 210 participants from 21 countries, including participants from 14 West African countries. The aim of these workshops was to raise awareness of IPBES, and support increased contributions of West African biodiversity and ecosystem services experts to IPBES and its work programmes, to facilitate an improved exchange of information, and to strengthen regional networks with regard to their participation in IPBES.

In addition to the points already mentioned, during the workshops, the significance of the latest IPBES global assessment and upcoming assessments for the region, and roadmaps by which the assessments can be assimilated into domestic policies and implemented are identified and discussed. In the medium term, the activities should also improve West Africa’s contribution to the IPBES plenary sessions and the work programme.

The workshops are complemented by a web-based discussion forum to bring experts and decision-makers closer together. Since 2020, due to the emerging global pandemic, travel bans and movement restrictions, WABES has been organising a series of virtual mini-workshops to advance the objectives of the regional experts platform.

Visit our website for more details: www.wabes.net

WABES is funded by:



In Co-operation with:



In support of the IPBES work programme

