

Improving the knowledge uptake to foster synergies between climate and biodiversity policies at the EU

Deliverable D3.1

31 October 2024



Funded by
the European Union

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Prepared under contract from the European Commission

Grant agreement No. 101135490

EU Horizon Europe Research and Innovation action

Project acronym: **RESPIN**
Project full title: **Reinforcing Science-Policy Interfaces for integrated biodiversity and climate knowledge and policies**

Start of the project: 1st January 2024
Duration: 48 months
Project coordinator: Dr. Yves Zinngrebe

Deliverable title: Workshop report on Science Service and IPBES/IPCC synergies – Improving the knowledge uptake to foster synergies between climate and biodiversity policies

Deliverable n°: D3.1
Nature of the deliverable: Report
Dissemination level: Public

WP responsible: WP3
Lead beneficiary: Syke

Citation: Lipsanen, A., Korhonen-Kurki, K., Zinngrebe, Y., Yogya, Y., Korinth, H., Pitzén, S. & Jata, D. (2024). *Workshop report on Science Service and IPBES/IPCC synergies – Improving the knowledge uptake to foster synergies between climate and biodiversity policies*. Deliverable D3.1 EU Horizon Europe RESPIN Project, Grant agreement No 101135490.

Due date of deliverable: 31 October 2024

Actual submission date: 31 October 2024

Deliverable status:

Version	Status	Date	Author(s)
1.0	Final	31 October 2024	Anna Lipsanen, Finnish Environment Institute Kaisa Korhonen-Kurki, Finnish Environment Institute Yves Zinngrebe, The Helmholtz Centre For Environmental Research Yamini Yogya, The Helmholtz Centre For Environmental Research Hanna Korinth, The Helmholtz Centre For Environmental Research Samuli Pitzén, Finnish Environment Institute Divija Jata, Belgian Science Policy Office

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Executive summary

The intergovernmental interfaces for climate change (IPCC) and biodiversity/ecosystem services (IPBES) have the mandate to provide syntheses of the current scientific knowledge to inform policy and other decision-making processes. One of the EU funded RESPIN project's objectives is to explore how the use of IPCC and IPBES outputs can be improved.

This report identifies key challenges and recommendations for improving the usability of IPCC and IPBES assessments in policymaking on an EU level. The report is based on a workshop with representatives of the European Commission held in Brussels in September 2024.

The group discussions with 29 participants revealed that different formats of knowledge to target specific audiences, adjusting institutional settings for better knowledge uptake, and the timeliness and relevance of the assessments for current policy-making processes are all important to improve policy relevance for climate and biodiversity. As part of the target group-oriented format, experts emphasized the need for tailored, sector-specific information to bridge the gap between science and policy. Participants stressed the importance of translating global findings into national and sector-relevant contexts, and using concrete examples and case studies to enhance applicability. Concise outputs like visual summaries and policy briefs, delivered in a timely manner and tailored to different audiences' needs were advocated. Clear, accessible language, avoiding jargon, and translating reports into local languages were deemed crucial for reaching all societal groups, such as policy makers, other decision makers and civil society, better.

Closer collaboration between IPCC and IPBES and across scientific disciplines to address fragmentation and ensure a unified understanding of key terms is called for. Aligning and timing of the work, and incorporating missing issues, such as those related to pollution and marine, are critical steps towards making these assessments more effective tools for informing policy decisions. After presenting the results from the group discussions, this report discusses options for how the expert insights can be used to improve IPBES and IPCC outreach and how related SPI activities can be integrated in the future Science Service.

List of abbreviations

DoA	Description of Action
CBD	Convention for Biodiversity
COP	Conference of Parties
DG	Directorate-General
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NFP	National Focal Point
SPI	Science-Policy Interface
SPM	Summary for Policymakers
SSBD	Science Service for Biodiversity

1 Introduction

Climate change and biodiversity loss are one of the major challenges of our time that policy making across scales is facing. Strengthening the targeted provision of knowledge to inform policies and increasing the dialogue and shared understanding between actors in the policy arenas is key to achieving the global biodiversity goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the climate goals of the Paris Agreement. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) were created to synthesise the best available knowledge in respective policy domains and inform decision makers on implications and risks related to these environmental problems. While these institutions were created to synthesise existing information on these highly interlinked challenges, their outputs and processes remain isolated from each other, falling short in mobilising inputs from underrepresented regions, scientific disciplines and non-scientific knowledge holders. IPBES, IPCC and other related Science-Policy Interfaces (SPI) often operate in parallel, reinforcing the fragmentation between biodiversity and climate governance. The missing translation of existing information hinders the uptake of knowledge at European, national and local levels and the connection between knowledge needs and provision.

The RESPIN project¹ aims to support the integrated provision and use of IPBES and IPCC processes and outputs. RESPIN facilitates the uptake of IPBES and IPCC outputs within the EU science service mechanism and supports the development of capacities to incorporate IPBES and IPCC findings into decision making at EU level. Additionally, the project will identify gaps in knowledge provision and develop strategies to address them, improving the engagement of diverse knowledge holders, with particular support for underrepresented regions in Central Africa, Central Asia, and Latin America. RESPIN has five main functions:

- Function 1 enhances the participation of diverse knowledge holders in IPBES and IPCC by assessing engagement levels, improving capacity-building activities, and fostering long-term collaboration.
- Function 2 identifies gaps and barriers in using IPBES and IPCC findings across various levels, aiming to improve data integration, policy coherence, and collaboration between climate and biodiversity efforts.
- Function 3 integrates IPBES and IPCC findings into EU decision-making, enhances policy coherence, develops private sector engagement formats, and supports EU delegations in international negotiations.
- Function 4 raises awareness of IPBES and IPCC processes by translating findings into accessible resources, developing training courses, establishing a collaborative platform, and fostering strategic partnerships for effective outreach and dissemination.
- Function 5 ensures coordination and synergy among project activities through regular meetings, a steering committee, and an Advisory Board, providing complementary reports and recommendations to key partners and remaining adaptable to future developments.

A key goal of RESPIN is to contribute to increasing EU science support to biodiversity and climate policy at the EU level and beyond with particular focus on the interconnections between these two policy areas. The purpose of this report is to scrutinize current SPI processes to identify and foster synergies with IPBES and IPCC, and provide targeted support to EU policy makers and negotiators. The report is based on a stakeholder workshop held at the EC in September 2024. The aims of the workshop were: to explore barriers in using IPBES and IPCC outputs and to understand what prevents integrating this information in decision making; to discuss how to improve the knowledge uptake of IPBES and IPCC findings in EU policy making; and to explore options to better feed biodiversity and climate science into EU

¹ <https://respin-project.eu/>

policy making. We have also explored possibilities to build synergistic processes with the future Science Service for Biodiversity² and IPBES and IPCC processes at the EU level. Our goal has been to enhance the consideration of IPBES and IPCC findings and outputs at the EU level by engaging EU stakeholders in an assessment of potentials and barriers.

We present our methods for data collection, the workshop structure and how the results have been organised in section 2. Section 3 presents the results according to the key questions discussed at the workshop and key themes that rose from the group discussions. In section 4 we provide conclusions and the next steps for how this report is further utilised.

2 Methods

2.1 Data collection

To explore the opportunities and barriers in building synergistic processes, we held a targeted workshop with key EU level SPI actors to explore the synergies between latest reports and inputs from IPBES and IPCC, and from the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and other relevant EU policies and strategies. We invited key actors targeting several EU DGs and key knowledge holders from SPIs to a half a day event in Brussels in order to co-create new avenues for more integrated processes. Additionally, we invited two keynote speakers and assessment report authors, Dr. Hien Ngo and Dr. Carolina Adler as experts who have been involved in IPBES and IPCC. They presented case studies that were centred around the IPBES Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration (IPBES, 2018) and the IPCC Report on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability (IPCC, 2022). Their experiences gave insights on how the assessments have been and could be used in policy to stimulate subsequent groups discussions.

In total, there were 29 participants at the workshop including national focal points from Belgian Biodiversity Platform and Belgian Science Policy Office taking part in the discussions as well as seven RESPIN project members who facilitated the workshop. Organisations representing stakeholders present at the workshop are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. DGs and other organisations represented at the RESPIN workshop on 4th of September 2024

Organisation	Stakeholders
DG for Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)	1
The European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) / DG for Energy (ENER)	1
The European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) / DG for Research and Innovation (RTD)	1
DG for Climate Action (CLIMA)	1
DG for Environment (ENV)	1
DG Joint Research Centre (JRC)	1
DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE)	1
The European Research Executive Agency (REA)	4
DG for Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO)	1
DG for Research and Innovation (RTD)	5
Belgian Biodiversity Platform (INBO)	1
Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO)	1
UN FAO / IPBES	1

² BioAgora project is developing Science Service for Biodiversity at the EU level: <https://bioagora.eu/>

University of Bern / IPCC	1
RESPIN project members	7
Total	29

In helping to identify and select key stakeholders to invite from the EU Commission, we received valuable assistance from policy officers at DG RTD. The input from DG RTD in assisting to run the workshop was crucial in ensuring diverse representation of stakeholders.

2.2 Workshop execution and structure

The workshop was held on the 4th of September at the EU Commission's facilities in Brussels as a half day event starting with morning coffee and ending at 13 pm followed by an optional lunch. The programme for the workshop is described in detail in Table 2 below.

Table 2. RESPIN workshop programme 4th of September 2024 at the EC

08:30 – 09:00	Morning coffee
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome, icebreaker & introductions and RESPIN project introduction
09:30 – 10:35	- Case: IPBES Land Degradation and Restoration – <i>How the assessment has been used in policy?</i> / Dr. Hien Ngo, Biodiversity and Pollination Expert at UN FAO - <u>Virtual</u> keynote with Q&A - Case: IPCC Climate Adaptation - <i>How the assessment has been used in policy?</i> / Dr. Carolina Adler, one of the lead authors of the IPCC Report on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability - Keynote with Q&A - How do EU policies correspond with IPCC/ IPBES policy recommendations - observations from the RESPIN project / Researcher Samuli Pitzén
10:35 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 12:30	Workshop activities - questions to be discussed: - What are the main barriers for knowledge uptake? - How could outputs from IPBES and IPCC help to identify synergies between climate and biodiversity? - How could SPI processes improve the use of IPBES / IPCC products in policy making?
12:30 – 13:00	Debriefing, conclusions and next steps
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch (optional)

The workshop began with an introduction to the day followed by presenting the RESPIN project. After this, the two keynote speeches by IPBES (online presentation) and IPCC (onsite presentation) experts (see 2.1) were given on how the assessment reports from IPBES and IPCC have been used in policy. Finally, some observations from the RESPIN project on how EU policies correspond with IPCC and IPBES policy recommendations were shared.

After setting the context, stakeholders including the IPBES and IPCC keynote experts were randomly divided into three breakout groups (around seven participants per group) to discuss

the three main questions (in **bold** below) complemented with supporting subquestions (in *italics* below) at three different group discussions:

- **What are the main barriers for knowledge uptake?**
 - *Practical examples beyond time and resources for barriers for knowledge uptake?*
 - *How IPBES/IPCC knowledge has guided the strategy formulation in practice?*
 - *How IPBES /IPCC have been taken into account in policies? if not taken into account, why not?*
 - *How to improve the knowledge uptake?*
- **How could the relevance of IPBES and IPCC for your daily work be improved?**
 - *How could outputs from IPBES and IPCC help to identify synergies between climate and biodiversity?*
 - *What options in your current role and organization do you have to act in improving this?*
- **How could SPI processes improve the use of IPBES / IPCC products in policy making?**
 - *What are the key information needs?*
 - *What information would you need to act on biodiversity and climate issues?*
 - *What format and means of delivery of information is most useful for you?*
 - *Which SSBD functions could facilitate IPBES / IPCC knowledge uptake?*

The workshop employed a dynamic “round robin” structure for the discussions in which all groups visited all three tables discussing all three main questions. Each table had a facilitator and a notetaker supported by audio recordings. Stakeholders were first instructed to write down their insights on sticky notes followed by discussions on these points led by the facilitator. These sessions lasted 45, 30, and 20 minutes respectively, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of ideas. When switching tables, each group was introduced to the key points discussed with the previous group. As the discussions progressed, common themes and patterns emerged, with each subsequent group either contributing new insights or building upon the ideas of previous participants.

Additionally, there was a blank flipchart set up at the room labelled as the “parking spot” where stakeholders had a chance to write down any additional viewpoints which might not have been otherwise mentioned at the discussions at the tables. Finally, the facilitators from each table presented brief summary messages for each main question, finalising with main points also from the “parking spot”. The workshop was conducted in English.

A few days after the workshop, feedback of the workshop was gathered through an online survey. In the survey the participants were asked about the relevance and execution of the workshop and whether they would participate again to a similar event. They were also given a possibility to provide any other comments they might have.

The results presented in this report are categorised and clustered according to the key questions and subquestions (described above) discussed at the workshop as well as according to key themes that rose from the discussions across the groups. These themes and patterns identified during the discussions were then used to categorise and cluster the results further. The results from the discussions have overlaps and recurring themes across the tables thus they are merged according to the themes emerging from the analysed material and clustered accordingly. As many of these issues are cross-cutting, some overlaps between these clustered sections and themes can still occur.

3 Workshop results

3.1 SPI processes supporting the use of IPBES and IPCC products in policy making – barriers and information needs

In this section, we present the results for the identified main barriers for knowledge uptake as well as barriers that prevent better usability of IPBES and IPCC evidence. We also present some of the key information needs to improve the use of IPBES and IPCC products in policy making.

3.1.1 Barriers for knowledge uptake

Scientific terminology and synthesis on a global level makes it difficult for policy makers to link them to practical and contextual implications. The participants stated that even though the assessments contain summaries for policy makers, different languages as well as different scales (e.g. global and national) used in science and policy still make it difficult to translate what are the policy implications of the assessment results. The difference between knowing and understanding was also mentioned, as reading a policy brief does not necessarily equate to a proper understanding of the subject.

The question of responsibility was raised during the discussion on how IPBES and IPCC results can really be seen in policy implementation. The main question was how to see the assessment results manifesting on the ground and who pays for the costs of implementation. Oftentimes at the EU level, IPBES and IPCC are used when drafting strategies that are not legally binding, which offers freedom and responsibility to member states for implementation.

Different behavioural barriers were also discussed as a reason why the use of the reports is not always easy. Such barriers were, for example, cognitive biases such as confirmation bias and status quo bias (resistance to change). It was also pointed out that it can be seen that communication between scientists from different disciplines is not always well handled thus making it difficult to integrate policy relevant knowledge between different fields of science.

Another barrier is the lack of perceived relevance – meaning that if the topic of the assessment is not close to one's own work, it is not perceived as urgent. Information overload (reports too long to go through), institutional inertia (e.g., cross-DG meetings are strictly ordered and rely on negotiation rather than collaboration) and short-termism (e.g. short-term economic benefits are emphasized over long-term environmental benefit) were also mentioned as behavioural barriers complicating the science-policy interaction.

Participants highlighted the need for transformative change, stressing that much of the necessary knowledge is already available but the policy making processes are too slow. A shift in values and a commitment to acting on existing knowledge were seen as essential moving forward. However, in many DGs, transformative change is considered as utopia as the political world that DGs need to serve does not really want to change.

3.1.2 Barriers in utilizing IPBES and IPCC evidence

The participants discussed how science and evidence from IPBES and IPCC is used in policy and how other interests often override science. The political interests are driven by powerful interest groups and large companies that influence policymaking via heavy lobbying machines at the EU level. Participants presented examples where opinions, or even lies, were treated as being the same level as science. Also, the way media is presenting, for example, environmental NGOs, affects the public opinion on biodiversity conservation. In this arena, the scientific world is oftentimes too quiet.

There was discussion related to the political neutrality of the reports. One participant suggested that “IPBES reports are ideologically biased towards wokeness” and that the

reports “serve a very specific audience and not the whole spectrum from left to right”. Some IPCC and IPBES assessments may be seen as too “woke” on the right side of the political spectrum, but at the same time they may still be too conservative or “watered down” for the left side. It was also pointed out that IPCC and IPBES could try more to reach increasingly right-wing political decision-makers. As the “political nature” of the reports was highlighted by several participants, it was mentioned several times that there is a need particularly for IPBES assessments to be based on “pure” science. It was also apparent that political disagreements extend to the use of concepts. For example, the term “nature-based solutions” was not accepted in some of the countries negotiating amongst IPCC and IPBES. Restricting the work of IPBES and IPCC authors based on political agenda threatens the credibility of the assessments and complicates negotiations.

Workshop participants also wished for more collaboration between IPCC and IPBES. It was generally assumed that IPBES has a stronger interest to cooperate with IPCC than vice versa. It was stated that IPCC has been more established and stable in comparison to the younger IPBES. However, participants clearly voiced that IPBES and IPCC could have joined communication which would be “the voice of science regarding the planet”.

3.1.3 Key information needs

The discussion under this theme highlighted several key informational needs of policymakers, with a particular emphasis on a lack of assessment-related economic data. Participants emphasised the need for clearer overview over the cost of implementation and an assessment of possible impacts, especially at different levels, including national, regional and local. They also called for better evaluations of the costs of inaction and trade-offs, and scalable policy options. IPBES and IPCC were notably mentioned as lacking sufficient economic research expertise. Improving economics and quantification on terms and language that is useful for policy makers in cost benefit analysis or impact assessments was found important. As one participant remarked: “in general economic analyses really work for policy makers”.

Beyond economic research, participants pointed to a broader lack of social science research, particularly in areas such as behavioural science. Understanding the social acceptance of policies, citizens priorities, and emotional responses towards proposed solutions is important. In line with this, the importance of understanding the linkages between economic, social and financial dimensions was emphasised. Also, interlinkages between technical assessments and social impacts/acceptance could be included into recommendations or analysis.

Several additional individual issues were raised, including the need for a better understanding of when policies have a positive impact, more regionally focused research and a stronger inclusion of marine issues (e.g. through World Ocean Assessment). It was pointed out, however, that it is not such a straightforward exercise for IPBES to put more emphasis on regionally-specific key messages as previous experience from IPBES regional assessments has led to careful consideration of how impactful these regional assessments would be.

Multiple actions were suggested specifically that should be taken by IPBES and IPCC. A key recommendation was for the bodies to align their work and collaborate more closely, to address the current fragmentation and institutional silos, and to better incorporate currently missing issues (e.g. pollution, marine). A possible starting point for harmonization could be the adoption of common definitions from both bodies (e.g. for “nature positive”) to ensure a unified understanding of key terms to enable smoother working with these. One participant recommended that policy makers should agree to use the glossaries from IPBES and IPCC. A key question, particularly to IPCC, was to highlight knowledge gaps more clearly in the assessments, as these are critical for determining EU horizon funding priorities and aligning EU efforts with global goals and targets. However, one participant cautioned, that IPCC and IPBES are highly political bodies making this a difficult step to implement, and that closer collaboration risks biodiversity issues becoming overshadowed by climate concerns.

It was also mentioned that IPBES reports should be sent to CBD and negotiators for COP should read the whole IPBES report – as at the moment the links between CBD and IPBES are not clear.

The need to reach civil society and citizens in general were mentioned as very important in democracies. In the EU, the role of the European Parliament is key in policy making and members of Parliament are acting under influence of citizens. The importance of public opinion was also acknowledged, with some participants noting that citizen support or opposition can significantly impact policy outcomes. Social media and science communication were seen as key tools for fostering public engagement.

The discussions also revealed a strong demand for clear and direct recommendations from scientists. Whilst IPBES and IPCC may not be the best suited interfaces for this role, the policymakers emphasized strongly that researchers need to provide more explicit policy guidance based on their scientific findings. For example, at the moment SPMs are too abstract in this regard - more useful info can be found from the assessments.

Finally, participants found it difficult to know how to use relevant parts of both IPCC and IPBES reports, and considered a common knowledge basis important to increase the knowledge uptake from assessment reports.

3.2 Outputs from IPBES and IPCC in helping to identify synergies between climate and biodiversity

In this section, we present the results for how can outputs from IPBES and IPCC help to identify synergies between climate and biodiversity. This section is in particular based on the discussions dealing with the relevance of the IPCC and IPBES outputs for daily work as well as how can the information from the assessments be made more accessible to policymakers. The results are categorised and clustered according to the key themes that rose from the discussions dealing with these topics.

3.2.1 Targeted sector and topic orientation

A recurring theme throughout the workshop was the critical need for tailored, sector-specific information to enhance the relevance of IPCC and IPBES findings. Participants emphasized the importance of translating scientific outputs from global to national and sector-specific contexts. There was a strong consensus that IPBES and IPCC reports should be customized to address the unique needs of various sectors, including agriculture, trade, marine policy, and biodiversity.

To bridge the gap between policymakers and academia, attendees suggested providing concrete examples and sector-relevant case studies. This approach, they argued, would make the reports more applicable and useful in day-to-day policymaking. One participant proposed a "double translation" approach, stating, "We need to translate from the global level to country-specific case studies, and then further translate to the sector being addressed. This, coupled with providing relevant case study examples, would significantly improve the utility of the reports."

Another valuable suggestion was the synthesis of past IPCC and IPBES reports, aligning them with future policies. This approach would enable the creation of focused, special reports that provide clear roadmaps for policymakers to follow. Participants also advocated for more concise outputs, such as visual summaries, to help distil key findings and enhance user-friendliness.

Building on earlier points about accessibility, participants also emphasized addressing the decreased readability of IPCC reports over time by creating more flexible products for diverse audiences.

3.2.2 Appropriate formats and trainings initiatives

The workshop highlighted the importance of appropriate formats and ongoing training reaching all relevant levels of staff within the Commission to facilitate the uptake of scientific inputs from IPCC and IPBES recommendations. Participants introduced the concept of “after-sales service”, suggesting that the release of reports should be accompanied by follow-up workshops and training sessions. These additional resources would help policymakers and other stakeholders better understand the findings and apply them effectively in their work.

Attendees stressed that trainings should be tailored to different levels of expertise and offered on an ongoing basis. This approach would ensure that users remain engaged with the content over time and can apply it effectively in their respective fields. The timing of these trainings was repeatedly emphasized as a crucial factor in the successful uptake of biodiversity and climate-relevant knowledge.

One participant noted, “People are busy and struggle to find relevant information. We need to use newsletters, social media, and digital technology to make engagement with these reports far easier than dealing with lengthy documents.”

Building on the earlier recommendations for appropriate formats and trainings, participants also suggested a) implementing climate system training based on IPCC methods to help reconstruct the climate system and understand impacts; b) creating an EU policy hub to serve as a forum for training and information sessions on future policies, enabling discussions between different Directorates-General (DGs); c) organizing sessions focused on transformative change and its practical implementation, and d) conducting cluster analysis of findings to present to DGs, encouraging learning from colleagues across departments.

3.2.3 Applying new technology and databases

The potential of AI and digital tools to improve the accessibility of IPCC and IPBES findings was a topic of discussion. Participants proposed the creation of searchable databases and interactive tools that would allow policymakers to quickly find relevant information. These technological solutions could effectively bridge the gap between the wealth of scientific data and the time-pressed needs of policymakers.

Innovative ideas included developing an atlas for climate solutions and establishing a platform to gather examples and success stories from various countries. These resources would not only make information more accessible but also provide practical, real-world applications of scientific findings.

Expanding on the application of new technology, participants also proposed: a) utilizing AI to distil key findings, keywords, and synonyms from reports, making them more easily searchable and accessible; b) creating a comprehensive database for accessing information about funded projects, including summaries of scientific findings categorized by sector, and c) developing more interactive and searchable formats for presenting findings, particularly within the EU and for Science-Policy Interface (SPI) purposes. However, concerns were raised about the proliferation of platforms and potential environmental implications due to increased cloud storage demands.

3.2.4 Adjusting EU structures and processes

Participants identified several structural improvements that could enhance the impact of IPCC and IPBES reports. They noted that timing is crucial for the uptake of scientific reports and suggested that policy briefs could be pre-announced to generate anticipation and preparedness among stakeholders. Moreover, they emphasized that IPCC and IPBES outputs should be delivered in alignment with the policy cycle to ensure they are available when critical decisions are being made.

It was pointed out that at least for IPBES, the EU is one of the strongest delegations in negotiations and they are always interested in the knowledge gaps that the assessments generate in order to guide their funding priorities. However, the fragmentation across EU processes and structures was identified as a key challenge. Attendees called for greater cross-sector collaboration and more informal working sessions between DGs to break down existing silos. They also discussed the potential creation of "boundary individuals" who could effectively communicate with both scientists and policymakers, bridging the gap between these two crucial groups.

It was pointed out that assessing the difference between the assessments that IPBES does (based on requests from countries and the EU) and the science produced by Horizon Europe projects would be important. Both are requested by the EU essentially – but are they informing EU policies correctly? At least for IPBES, it would be beneficial to better understand EU and national policy development/cycles and what are the actual entry points and what information is needed at those entry points to increase impact from assessments. However, this varies from country to country, and then at EU level it is different how policy is developed (and informed). The information for the EU policy processes is often required fast and needs to be available in the moment whereas an assessment cycle is anywhere from 3 - 5 years and this may have a misalignment with timing and responsiveness.

One participant shared that: "Previous attempts at co-creation failed due to hierarchical job descriptions. When people exceeded their mandates, good results weren't adopted due to hierarchical decision-making structures. This led to disengagement. Co-creation works, but politically it comes down to negotiation."

Further recommendations for adjusting EU structures and processes included: a) addressing the issue of fragmentation in EU processes and structures to promote mainstreaming and policy integration; b) creating incentives for policy entrepreneurship and networks to break down silos between different sectors; c) encouraging a multi-disciplinary approach to develop combined targets at the policy level, striving for connected policies in climate, trade, biodiversity, and pollution; and d) fostering partnerships between policymakers and scientists, with a focus on creating the earlier mentioned "boundary individuals" who can effectively communicate with both groups.

3.2.5 Timing and relevance

Participants stressed the critical nature of timing in the uptake of scientific information, which was a cross cutting theme across other clusters. Addressing the challenge of serendipitous report adoption by cultivating better alignment between policy and scientific processes was also highlighted. It was pointed out that aligning the release of reports and policy briefs with ongoing policy discussions and decision-making processes is important. It would be also important to encourage member states to utilize knowledge before and during assessments, rather than after, to maximize impact. However, the challenge here is that in the current IPBES and IPCC processes, the findings of the assessments are not available before the assessments are officially released.

3.2.6 Stakeholder engagement

Participants highlighted the importance of broader stakeholder engagement in these processes. This would mean to include practitioners in discussions during the review phase of reports to enhance relevance and applicability. Moreover, it is important to develop strategies to attract more knowledge holders and practitioners to contribute to the reporting process. Improving outreach to various actors beyond policy officers to disseminate IPCC/IPBES findings more widely was raised. Finally, targeting and convincing citizens in democracies (in both private and public sector) who have decision making power over climate and biodiversity matters would be relevant.

3.3 Format, language and means of delivery of information

This section is based on discussions dealing in particular on the formation of the assessments, the language used in them and the way information is delivered. These themes were recurring topics across all group discussions at the workshop.

3.3.1 Composition of the assessments

Both assessments rely on interdisciplinary expertise, however, the integration of social science and natural science is not yet straightforward due to different concepts and methods used - a “language barrier” between sciences was mentioned. A stronger emphasis on social science is recognized by IPBES and IPCC; both are driven by physical sciences. It was proposed by one of the participants that including political scientists in the process of assessment writing might help the authors to keep in mind political realities and better formulate the scientific message for political groups.

However, it was stated that IPBES is doing more in integrating different types of knowledge held by such groups as indigenous communities and practitioners. According to the participants, both assessments could benefit from strengthened economic knowledge for policy making. Comparing both IPBES and IPCC, it was concluded that IPCC uses more robust economic information that resonates stronger with policymakers across the world. Better integration of economic information to the assessments was also highlighted in the discussions presented at section 3.1.

The way assessments are done affects the outcome which then affects how they can be used in policy. In both IPBES and IPCC’s processes lead authors are given a mandate by the working group to work on the content of the chapter. Topics go through a scoping process and an intense review process; potentially, a lot of science is lost before the final assessment is accepted, as certain topics can be ruled out due to political reasons.

Both SPIs have a process of consensus resulting in concluding statements that are quite conservative while only the high confidence statements are communicated to policymakers. Participants also mentioned that some of the issues dealt with by IPCC and IPBES might have on-going scientific research, but a consensus is yet to emerge. While these issues tend to be also highly policy-relevant, they are not actively used for convincing policymakers. It was also mentioned that for example the IPBES “values report”³ was so abstract that it has not been used and many participants have “no idea how to use it in their work”.

When asked about preferred formats and means of delivery of information, participants stressed the importance of timing and customization. Their informational needs ranged from short emails and social media posts to one-page fact sheets, figures and graphs, and comprehensive reports like the IPBES/IPCC summaries for policy makers. Hence, depending on the individual, a different need was mentioned. Given the time constraints of policy makers, having the right information, in the right format, at the right time, was also deemed critical. “Boundary individuals” (see 3.2.4) - those who work across both scientific and policy sectors - were highlighted as potential ambassadors, vital in facilitating clear communication between both groups and helping to engage hard-to-reach groups, such as businesses.

3.3.2 Language and readability of the assessments

The language used in these reports should be clear and accessible, with formats such as newsletters and concise policy briefs being particularly effective in communicating key information. In response to this, it was pointed out that in IPBES, the Policy Support Task force and Technical Support Unit will start to do 2 pager policy briefs that will be easier to read for

³ IPBES 2022. Methodological assessment of the diverse values and valuation of nature. <https://www.ipbes.net/the-values-assessment>

high level policy makers. However, the problem with IPBES making policy briefs for different audiences is that a Summary for Policymakers is negotiated word by word, so re-writing it after the approval is challenging in order not to overcome what has been approved by the Parties. As the official IPBES fact sheets or policy briefs must be based on the agreed text, it can greatly limit their scope. It was also proposed that IPBES and IPCC could produce briefs based on their assessments in which they would use language to evoke feelings in policymakers.

Participants raised the need for jargon-free language in reports to reach a broader audience and avoid alienating potential collaborators from different sectors. Translating reports into national and local languages to increase engagement from a wider range of countries was also mentioned.

The readability of the assessments was a recurring theme in the discussions. For example, it was raised that the readability for IPCC SPMs could be improved by giving the media a role in disseminating the key messages in a jargon-less and more accessible way as opposed to, e.g., the IPCC secretariat (see Barkemeyer et al., 2016). It was also pointed out how IPCC provides scenarios to support decision-making but that they have been translated indirectly to political guidelines making it difficult to know which scenarios to use and apply from a policy perspective.

3.4 Role of future Science Service and the RESPIN project in knowledge support

The role of the Science Service for Biodiversity (SSBD) as being prepared by the BioAgora project, and how it could help facilitate the IPBES and IPCC knowledge uptake, was discussed at the workshop. The potential contributions of the RESPIN project were also acknowledged.

The recommendations for the SSBD included organizing information sessions with negotiators, providing specific facts to prepare for negotiations, and assisting with scientifically based impact and environmental assessments, which are now required for all EU policy evaluations. It was recommended that the SSBD evidence base should be able to extract information from IPBES and IPCC assessments directly. It was also highlighted that SSBD should pay more attention to anticipation of knowledge needs, rather than responding to the direct knowledge needs from the Commission. SSBD could also integrate a function that would translate IPBES and IPCC summaries for policymakers in particular for the EU context and formulate more clear policy recommendations from them.

The potential role of AI in delivering fast, accurate scientific input was also raised. Ensuring high visibility of the SSBD and actively informing policymakers about this tool were seen as crucial steps to bridge gaps and provide the “science ammunition” negotiators need, ensuring a long-term, well-functioning service. In general, participants saw a great role for the future SSBD for being a more institutionalised structure in the EU science policy interface.

Participants also identified several areas where the RESPIN project could contribute to addressing these concerns:

1. **Improved information access:** RESPIN could help streamline the validation process by making scientific outputs more accessible and relevant to end-users, particularly through collaboration with knowledge centers such as the Knowledge Centres for Biodiversity.
2. **Collaboration with IPCC and IPBES:** More dialogue is needed with IPCC, and stronger ties with IPBES should be fostered. RESPIN could play a role in ensuring that outputs are aligned with the needs of policy practitioners.
3. **Targeted engagement:** RESPIN could assist in reaching out to national focal points (NFPs) and ensuring that scientific outputs are accessible to communities and networks, thereby improving the uptake of IPCC/IPBES findings.

3.5 Workshop feedback

Responses by seven participants to the feedback survey revealed that the workshop had been important and topic relevant. The overview of the workshop relevance and execution as indicated by the responses to the survey can be seen in Fig. 1. The general feedback and sentiment from the participants present at the workshop was positive and the effort to bring relevant EC stakeholders together was appreciated.

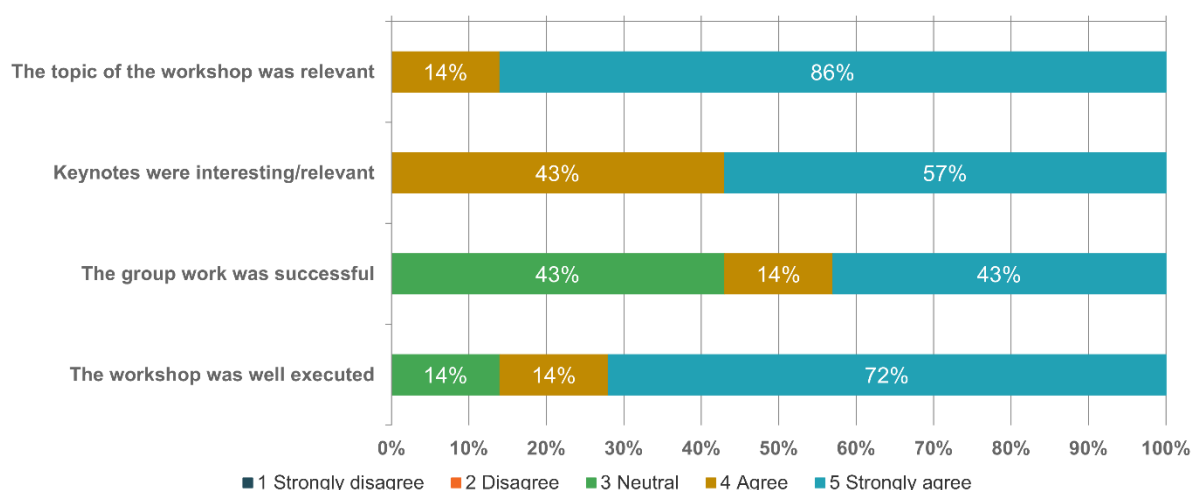


Figure 1. Workshop relevance and execution feedback (N=7)

According to the survey, majority of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the topic as well as the keynotes presented were relevant. All the respondents were also willing to participate in a similar event should it be organised in the future.

4 Conclusions and next steps

The RESPIN EU level workshop provided a valuable platform for stakeholders to explore ways for enhancing the relevance and accessibility of IPCC and IPBES reports. The discussions highlighted the critical need for tailored, sector-specific information, ongoing training and support, innovative technological solutions, and structural adjustments within EU processes. Different formats of knowledge to target specific audiences, adjusting institutional settings for better knowledge uptake, and the timeliness and relevance of the assessments for current policy-making processes are all important to improve policy relevance for climate and biodiversity.

Effective communication between scientists and policymakers requires patience and iterative refinement based on feedback from both groups (not just one-way information transfer). Targeted interventions tailored towards specific audiences while maintaining scientific integrity above all else is required. All these transdisciplinary processes require more funding than currently available.

The workshop discussions highlighted the importance of continued collaboration between scientists, policymakers, and other stakeholders to ensure that crucial climate and biodiversity information is effectively translated into meaningful action. This also extends to the importance of reaching civil society and citizens in general.

Key messages

- **Targeted, clear and timely SPI activities** on IPBES and IPCC products are needed.
- IPCC and IPBES assessments need **further translation to EU, local and sectoral** contexts.

- A key recommendation was for **IPCC and IPBES to align their work and collaborate more closely**, to address the current fragmentation and institutional silos, and to better incorporate currently missing issues. **A possible starting point for harmonization could be the adoption of common terminology from both bodies** to ensure a unified understanding of key terms to enable smoother working with the these.
- **Alignment of processes as well as timing** of launching/preparing the assessment reports coinciding with relevant policymaking processes is very important as well as the timing of the training initiatives related to them.

Next steps for RESPIN

- Workshop results will be further analysed to provide input for national level RESPIN workshops, and for other functions.
- The perceptions from the EU level will be compared with findings from other political levels, as well as contrasted with the perceptions of other involved stakeholder groups, such as scientists and non-governmental actors.
- RESPIN project will work on translating IPBES /IPCC key results into EU and selected national contexts (e.g. through fact sheets / policy briefs).
- Collaboration with the Commission and other EU SPI projects such as BioAgora will continue to ensure the continuation of knowledge support regarding to IPBES and IPCC at the EU level.
- The results across project activities will be further accumulated and contrasted in order to provide some action oriented insights for how to improve the relevance of IPBES and IPCC outputs.
- An active engagement with different stakeholder groups around IPBES and IPCC processes will aim at inspiring action agendas and facilitate the uptake by decision makers and multipliers.

5 Acknowledgements

We thank all the colleagues from different EC services who participated in the workshop, and the colleagues in DG RTD B.3 who provided valuable assistance in organising the workshop.

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