

Brussels, 11 March 2026
(OR. en)

7203/26

ENV 223
CLIMA 131

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: AOB for the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 17 March 2026
Twelfth Plenary Session Intergovernmental Science-policy Platform on
Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
(Manchester, United Kingdom, 3 - 8 February 2026)
- Information from Presidency and the Commission

The twelfth session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES12) took place from 3-8 February 2026, in Manchester, United Kingdom. Since the last plenary in December 2024, the membership of the platform grew by five countries (Cyprus, Malta and Poland from the EU, as well as Iceland and Rwanda). At the end of the plenary session, it was also announced that Slovenia has joined IPBES, entailing that all EU Member States now are members of IPBES. USA officially withdrew from IPBES on 6 February, meaning IPBES now has 152 members.

The main deliverable from IPBES12 was the ‘Business and Biodiversity Assessment’, which addresses the impact and dependencies of businesses on biodiversity. In addition, a science-based and clear Summary for Policy Makers, which emphasises the need and urgency for business, governments and other actors to act already now, was approved. This outcome was fully in line with the priorities of the EU and its Member States.

IPBES12 was carried out in a constructive atmosphere among delegates with only few controversial discussions on the assessment and other agenda items, including the rolling work programme.

DETAILED REPORT

Business and Biodiversity Assessment

The methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people (i.e. the Business and Biodiversity Assessment – BBA) was the main item on the agenda at this meeting.

The priority objectives of the EU+MS were achieved, namely (i) the full assessment was “accepted” without negotiation by the Plenary, in accordance with applicable IPBES rules; and (ii) a Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) was “approved”, maintaining its scientific integrity and improving the clarity and applicability of its messages.

Negotiations on the SPM were slow due to long deliberations, including on issues such as the role of government in creating an enabling business environment and the uptake of nature-positive policies across different geographic and political contexts. Despite difficulties, the EU+MS took a leading role in addressing and finding satisfactory solutions on issues that are often sensitive at the multilateral level (e.g. environmentally harmful subsidies, in particular evidence of sector specific impacts on biodiversity loss; the interconnection of biodiversity loss with the two other planetary crises of climate change and pollution; inclusion of human rights aspects; Indigenous Peoples and local communities; citizen science). The EU+MS were also able to significantly improve the SPM, emphasising that businesses can already be positive agents of change. Generally speaking, all delegations engaged constructively.

Additional elements of the rolling work programme up to 2030

The second agenda item which required most deliberations and engagement concerned the consideration of additional elements of the rolling work programme of the Platform up to 2030. The Plenary mandated the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to develop a proposal for the nature, topics and timing of Platform deliverables on assessing knowledge, building capacity, strengthening the knowledge foundations and supporting policy, for consideration at IPBES13 (Q3 2027).

The proposal will take into account, inter alia, the report on the prioritisation of requests, input and suggestions for additional elements of the rolling work programme of the Platform up to 2030; the report of the review panel on the midterm review; the financial situation of IPBES; potential synergies with other intergovernmental science-policy interfaces and relevant fora; the importance of strengthening the uptake, use and policy impact of IPBES assessments; and review of experiences of fast-track assessments. The intersessional process will include an in-person expert workshop in the second half of 2026 and an external review of the draft proposal by Governments and experts.

Building capacity, strengthening knowledge foundations and supporting policy

The Plenary adopted a decision on building capacity, strengthening knowledge foundation and supporting policy, welcoming the revised data and knowledge management policy and the code of practice on the use of artificial intelligence, tailored to the needs of assessments. Furthermore, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel were requested to develop a holistic indicator framework to monitor the implementation of the work programme of the Platform, including performance and impact indicators, for consideration by the Plenary at its thirteenth session.

Improving the effectiveness of the Platform

The decision on improving the effectiveness of the platform, which was adopted by the Plenary, included all EU+MS proposals aimed at strengthening the implementation of the recommendations of the midterm review. The decision also contains a call to members, observers and stakeholders on concrete proposals for such implementation.

Financial and budgetary arrangements for the Platform

The Plenary adopted the revised budget for 2026 and 2027, as well as the provisional budget for 2028, with the understanding that the indicative costs of the provisional budget for 2028 will be adjusted to reflect the activities required to implement the objectives of the Platform, while duly taking into account overall cost developments, for further consideration at the thirteenth session of the Plenary. The decision further reflected an increasing need for funding, as well as to reduce transaction costs of cash and in-kind contributions to IPBES.

Status of the membership of the Platform

The Chair reported that Cyprus, Iceland, Malta, Poland, and Rwanda have joined since the eleventh session of the Plenary, and that the Platform therefore comprised 152 members at the opening of the Plenary. At the close of the Plenary, the Chair reported that Slovenia had joined the Platform. At the same time, it was announced that the United States of America had submitted its official document withdrawing its membership.

Election of officers

The Plenary elected 25 members and 10 alternate members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to serve from the closure of the twelfth session until the closure of the fifteenth session of the Plenary. The members elected from Western European and other States come from Belgium, Canada, Germany, Greece and New Zealand (with alternates from France and the United Kingdom). From Eastern European States, the elected members come from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Romania and Türkiye (with an alternate from North Macedonia).

Organization of the Plenary; dates and venues of future sessions of the Plenary

No offers for hosting came forward during the session. Therefore, a decision was adopted on the process to be followed for the location and timing of the 13th and 14th IPBES Plenary sessions, which would be in Bonn, the host city of IPBES, in the absence of another suitable offer in the next six months.
