

IPBES: The world's guardian of biodiversity

16 March 2018, by Mari ette Le Roux



The first analysis released by IPBES was on the sorry state of bees and other pollinating animals

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), due to bring out a major assessment on the health of the world's species next week, is an independent body created by more than 100 countries in 2012.

— Its mission is to gather all the available science on the state of biodiversity, to project future changes, and advise governments on policies to better protect nature's bounty.

— The IPBES has 128 signed-up country members. It's secretariat is based in Bonn, Germany.

— It is not a UN body, but was modelled on the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, whose monumental reports helped alert the world to the dangers of [global warming](#) and paved the way for a 2015 global plan of action dubbed the Paris Agreement.

— The IPBES brought out its maiden analysis, on the sorry state of bees and other pollinating animals, in 2016.

— It will release its next four assessments on March 23 on the state of biodiversity in four world regions—the Americas, Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia. Another, about the health of soil, will follow on March 26.

— Each [report](#) takes three years to complete at a cost of about \$1 million (about 806,000 euros) apiece.

— The IPBES gets money from a trust fund replenished by voluntary contributions from member [states](#).

— The hundreds of scientists who work on each report are volunteers.

— The experts do not conduct their own research, but pull together data from thousands of scientific publications and condense them into a manageable summary for government policymakers—who sign off on their content.

— The body was hit with conflict of interest claims when it emerged that two of the authors of its 2016 pollinator report worked for agrochemical companies Bayer and Syngenta, producers of neonicotinoid pesticides suspected of being involved in a mysterious surge in bee deaths.

The IPBES insisted there was no conflict, and said multiple points of view are needed for a balanced analysis.

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