

IPBES 12 Highlights: Saturday, 7 February 2026

Delegates spent all day advancing their consideration of the session's key deliverable: the Business and Biodiversity Assessment. It took them until the late afternoon to complete a read-through of the Background Messages. Discussions on the Summary for Policymakers (SPM)'s tables and figures ran into the night.

Working Group 1 – Business and Biodiversity Assessment

IPBES Chair David Obura opened the session by reminding delegates that this is the last day to conclude deliberations on the SPM in Working Group (WG) 1. He called for a “fast-track” approach to considering the remainder of the Background Messages of the Platform's first fast-track Assessment. WG 1 Co-Chair Eeva Primmer urged focusing comments on substance.

Delegates then resumed discussions where they left off the previous night, addressing Background Message **B3**. On fiscal reform to eliminate harmful subsidies, one Member suggested replacing “ministries of finance” with “Parties,” with delegates ultimately agreeing on “governments.”

On public funding for nature-based solutions, one Member requested adding “or ecosystem-based approaches,” which was accepted. In relation to innovative financial instruments, Members asked for including “payments for ecosystem services” and “high-integrity” biodiversity credits, with the latter being changed to “high-integrity biodiversity systems” by the authors.

Authors introduced **B4**, noting that this message emphasizes that social values and norms can be important to change business behaviors.

One delegate suggested referring only to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, rather than “all stakeholders,” including the former, in a statement on ensuring that their involvement in decision-making processes respect Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).

In a paragraph on what civil society can do, one delegate proposed to highlight verification methods to distinguish genuine biodiversity actions from greenwashing mechanisms, noting that this is important to sustain accountability and consumer trust. Authors noted that the underlying chapter supports the statement that civil society also plays a key role in developing effective monitoring strategies and verification systems. A delegation suggested specifying that all actors have a role in promoting sufficiency and shifting away from unsustainable consumption patterns, which the authors supported.

On businesses that depend on or impact biodiversity within Indigenous territories, one delegate proposed adding a reference to

local territories. The authors suggested referring to “territories of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.”

Moving to the chapeau of **B5**, one delegation proposed to also highlight technology “transfer,” in stating that the generation, use, and sharing of data and leveraging technology can create new opportunities for businesses to act, but authors pointed out there is no evidence to support this. Another proposed, and Members accepted, adding “tools and initiatives.”

On the sharing of data and leveraging of technology supporting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, one Member proposed highlighting digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources. While acknowledging that DSI is being discussed under the Convention on Biological Diversity, several delegates opposed, saying the suggestion goes beyond the Nagoya Protocol, with another noting the addition is no longer in line with the authors' intent.

Following up on a statement on raising awareness and combating misinformation, one delegate, supported by several Members, suggested adding a sentence highlighting that tools, initiatives, and experience are being used now to implement this.

On access to technology helping Indigenous Peoples and local communities conduct environmental impact assessments, one Member proposed, and the authors endorsed, adding “and monitor environmental changes.”

Delegates discussed a proposal by one delegation to add a new sentence recognizing the role of citizen science. Many Members supported this, whereas the authors clarified there was no finding in the assessment supporting that citizen science generates business opportunities. Delegations subsequently proposed a broader formulation referencing the role of civil society in generating data, knowledge, and capacity, “for example through citizen science.” One delegation opposed the term “citizen science” and urged using “monitoring” instead, saying that “science” requires a certain level of education and skills. Returning to this point in the late afternoon, Members reported productive informal consultations and one delegation proposed compromise text recognizing the role of civil society in generating data, knowledge, and capacity “through citizen-based data, in some countries recognized as citizen science.” Another delegation requested reference to “citizen-based approaches,” and a third one suggested adding “for example” through citizen-based approaches. With these modifications, Members accepted the additional sentence.

Regarding the body of **B6**, one delegate proposed splitting the opening paragraph into two, with the first one to focus on governments, to which businesses were added, and the second one to focus on civil society and academic institutions. A proposal to

add “women and girls” to a sentence on education and capacity-building programmes, was rejected by the authors, who noted there is no support for this in the Assessment.

Regarding **B7**, one delegation suggested the message that transformative change requires action by “all” businesses is incompatible with the [Transformative Change Assessment](#), which provides that action can be on a smaller scale. Authors disagreed, noting the Assessment finds that even small action can be incremental and lead to transformative change, but it still requires action by all.

One delegate suggested adding examples of incremental action taken by businesses. Authors asked delegates to reserve their proposals for including such examples to the discussions on B10 or B11.

Authors introduced **B8**, noting this message focuses on actions taken by businesses to address impacts and dependencies. One delegation proposed adding “public-private partnerships” as an example of collective action through partnership, which the authors supported.

Delegates then turned to **B9**. On businesses’ adoption of innovations and new technologies that improve biodiversity outcomes, one delegation proposed highlighting investment in biodiversity credits. Another delegate proposed specific examples of innovation, including “circular economy approaches focused on product durability and extension of life spans as well as the promotion of sufficiency.” The authors suggested simplified text to encapsulate the suggestions, enjoining delegates not to add too many words.

In the chapeau of **B10** on action at the value chain level, countries agreed to include a reference to improving “transparency” in addition to traceability and collaborative action. In the message’s body, one member proposed, and delegates agreed to, specifying that approaches incentivising “environmental” performance are effective at improving outcomes.

One Member questioned the need for including social impact assessments in a sentence in the body of **B11** on businesses using environmental and social impact assessments to inform decisions. The authors replied that nature’s contributions to people are often captured by social impact assessments, and that it is good practice to integrate both types of impact assessments. Another Member proposed adding “and management plans,” which was accepted.

On the need for sector-specific metrics for monitoring, one delegation proposed adding a reference to small and medium-sized enterprises, which the authors rejected for already being referenced elsewhere. A Member suggested adding a new sentence on opportunities for businesses “to go beyond impact mitigation to invest in landscape conservation, restoration, and sustainable management,” which was accepted.

Delegates then engaged in lengthy discussions on one Member’s proposal to rephrase a sentence on FPIC. Some favored underlining that businesses “must respect” or “are required to seek” FPIC, while others opposed such language as being overly prescriptive and favored “can seek.” Later in the afternoon, the authors proposed compromise language, reflecting discussions on C7, reading: “For example, when establishing or significantly changing their activities, businesses should recognize and respect FPIC of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, along with

their respective rights in accordance with national legislation.”

This proposal garnered Members’ endorsement.

Turning to **B12**, one delegation suggested specifying that financial institutions can shift finance away “at any stage” from harmful activities. Authors noted that there is no evidence to support this statement.

One Member questioned the meaning of “impact investing” and whether this includes economic impact. Authors explained that impact investing is understood in terms of environmental or social impact.

Recalling the previous discussion that financial institutions do not pay into the Cali Fund, a delegate proposed deleting the relevant statements, which the authors agreed to.

Authors introduced **B13**, highlighting this message focuses on the persistence of barriers to businesses and others undertaking action.

On systemic barriers, one delegation proposed to also mention economic systems and business models that measure progress primarily in gross domestic product (GDP). Authors agreed to include economic systems that measure GDP, but not business models.

WG 1 Co-Chair Floyd Homer invited delegates to consider **C1**. On approaches that use different data and metrics, Members agreed to add examples of such approaches, which include: metrics of condition and significance of a location for biodiversity; and metrics on potential and actual flow of nature’s contributions to people and human wellbeing. One Member pointed out that the use of baselines and counterfactuals in attribution of observed changes in biodiversity was missing from the text. Authors noted it was deleted inadvertently and reinstated it at the end of the message.

Concerning **C2**, a Member asked what is meant by “potentially disappeared fraction of species” as an example of aggregate metrics. The authors clarified this was a well-known metric among experts. Pointing out that policymakers may not be familiar with this term, delegates debated whether to delete the reference altogether or include a definition in a footnote. They eventually agreed to move the references to “species abundance” and “potentially disappeared fraction of species” to a footnote, highlighting these as examples of aggregate metrics, along with the terms’ definitions.

Moving to **C3**, one delegation suggested, and the authors agreed, to specify that business uptake “requires the combination of multiple methods and metrics.” Another Member proposed to add a sentence on the choice of biodiversity metrics being “non-neutral” and reflecting “different worldviews and values with implications for the ways in which metrics are interpreted.” The authors opposed this addition, saying that this notion is covered in **C7**.

On existing gaps in the availability and accessibility of data and information, in **C4**, some delegates called for mentioning that robust metrics, data, and tools already exist to assist operation-level decision-making. Authors accepted the proposal, but noted that, as the message refers only to data and information, metrics and tools should be excluded.

In **C5**, one delegate questioned whether “complete loss of services” refers to ecosystem services. The authors proposed using language consistently found in the SPM, on complete loss of nature’s contributions to people, including ecosystem services.

Delegates accepted message **C6** without further edits.

Moving to the body of **C7**, delegates suggested changes to the statement that there are examples of partnerships between businesses and Indigenous Peoples and local communities to develop new products and services that document and preserve Indigenous and local knowledge, respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and share benefits fairly. One delegation proposed to specify that respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities be “in accordance with national legislation.” Others argued this should also extend to benefit sharing. Members agreed to the authors’ proposal for the end of the sentence to read “preserve Indigenous and local knowledge, share benefits fairly and equitably, and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in accordance with national legislation.”

On improving engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, several delegates supported introducing the phrase “along with their respective rights in accordance with national legislation” to be consistent with previous discussions.

On the chapeau of **C8**, delegates agreed to refer to gaps in “knowledge and its application” rather than “knowledge and practice” to be consistent with previous approved messages. In the message’s body, they similarly agreed to refer to “business-relevant data” instead of “inadequate data” to be consistent with the Key Messages.

Having completed a first consideration of all key and background messages, Co-Chair Homer invited delegates to turn to outstanding disagreement on specifying sector-specific subsidies and investments in **A3**. Members reiterated their opposing views on whether or not to include sector-specific data.

In the evening, IPBES Chair Obura reminded delegates that the Business and Biodiversity Assessment’s scoping document does mention sectors. The authors presented a compromise: retaining the mention of specific sectors, without the respective quantitative information. In the context of this compromise, one delegate called for including a footnote to the UN Environmental Programme’s [State of Finance for Nature](#) report, as the source of the data. Another Member reiterated their strong objection to any mention of specific sectors. They instead proposed that the authors include the reference to sectors and data on public and private finance flows in Chapter 5 of the Assessment and add a footnote in the Background Message that directs them to this part of the report. Co-Chair Homer convoked a huddle to resolve this issue.

Delegates then turned to **figures and tables**. Multidisciplinary Expert Panel Co-Chair Shizuka Hashimoto recalled that an informal group, open to all interested Members, convened throughout IPBES 12 to address these. He emphasized that the revised versions of the tables and figures now presented to WG 1 address all comments considered during these discussions and are agreed outputs of the informal group.

On a **figure providing an overview of the Business and Biodiversity Assessment**, the authors explained that they changed the arrows to simplify the figure, and include text to show that both impacts and dependencies create risks and opportunities. One delegate inquired why the reference to an enabling environment was removed from the caption. Authors explained that this was moved to Figure SPM.2, but agreed that it could still be included here.

On a **figure on enabling environments**, the authors highlighted the addition of icons to represent actors at the top of the figure,

noting the icons are consistently used in IPBES materials and placed to reflect the shift towards an enabling environment from current conditions. A few delegates suggested some cosmetic changes to the figure, which the authors will try to incorporate. Delegates agreed to add a reference to “nature’s contributions to people” after “biodiversity” in the figure’s caption.

On a **figure on the relationship between business and biodiversity**, the authors emphasized it was created in response to discussions in the informal group, where members called for a dedicated figure to clearly highlight impacts and dependencies. Delegates made suggestions related to the terms used in the figure’s section on drivers and examples of impacts and dependencies. The authors presented an alternative figure which reflected most of the proposed edits, underscoring that the terms now used for drivers are consistent with the language found in IPBES’ Transformative Change Assessment.

On a **figure on the intersections between impacts, dependencies, risks and opportunities**, delegates agreed to change “risk, opportunity, impact, and dependency” in the figure to plural form to align with the caption.

On a **figure showing business actions to address their impacts and dependencies and contribute to creating an enabling environment**, delegates agreed to minor editorial changes in the caption.

On a **figure on appropriate measurement approaches at different levels of decision-making**, one Member requested, and authors agreed, to change the color of “participatory mapping and monitoring” to increase its visibility. Another requested exchanging a line stating that sector-based approaches should not be used to make individual investments with a positive example. The authors agreed with this suggestion, but rejected a proposal to add a reference to environmental and social management plans, saying these are not measurement approaches.

Discussions on the tables continued into the night.

In The Corridors

The penultimate day of IPBES 12 began with plenty of coffee, as discussions in Working Group 1 the night before had continued until past 11:00 pm. Flickering lights and microphone glitches left delegates wondering whether the lack of sleep was beginning to make itself felt – or whether a ghost was haunting Manchester Central Hall.

As deliberations finally turned to section C of the background messages, one observer worried that “a C-section would be needed to make this Summary for Policymakers see the light of day,” seeing the slow pace of progress. Fortunately, negotiations picked up momentum in the afternoon, not least because of the skillful midwifing of the Co-Chairs, who decided to abandon the practice of reading out every sentence in full to invite comments on paragraphs as a whole.

Though yet another round of evening talks proved inevitable, delegates went on their well-deserved dinner break optimistic that these last contractions would allow them to celebrate the successful birth of the Business and Biodiversity Assessment on Sunday.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of IPBES 12 will be available on Wednesday, 11 February 2026 at enb.iisd.org/intergovernmental-science-policy-platform-biodiversity-ecosystem-services-ipbes12

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