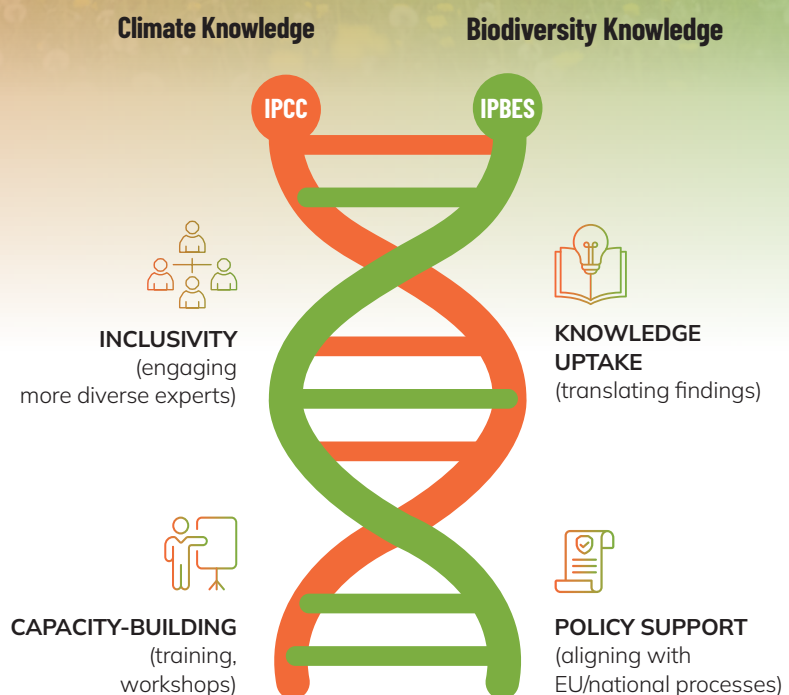# Closing the Gaps: How the RESPIN Project Unites IPBES and IPCC Experts

Overview

The RESPIN project (REinforcing Science-Policy INterfaces for integrated biodiversity and climate knowledge and policies) is a Horizon Europe-funded initiative.

This factsheet aims to provide both policymakers and experts with a clear understanding of how the RESPIN project supports and promotes the interfaces between biodiversity and climate science and policy.

The project bridges the divide between biodiversity and climate knowledge and, crucially, within biodiversity and climate policies, by **fostering knowledge exchange between IPBES and IPCC experts and engaging with policymakers**.

Climate Knowledge   **Biodiversity Knowledge**

IPCC   IPBES

INCLUSIVITY (engaging more diverse experts)

KNOWLEDGE UPTAKE (translating findings)

CAPACITY-BUILDING (training, workshops)

POLICY SUPPORT (aligning with EU/national processes)

Fig. 1: RESPIN: REinforcing Science-Policy INterfaces for integrated biodiversity and climate knowledge and policies

RESPIN goes beyond simply bringing the two communities together. It actively supports both by:

- promoting more inclusive engagement of experts,

- strengthening the uptake of knowledge into policy, and

- enhancing capacity-building and collaboration efforts.

By fostering greater collaboration between climate and biodiversity knowledge and policy domains, RESPIN enables more coherent, inclusive, and impactful environmental governance—one that addresses both crises together rather than in parallel.

Ultimately, RESPIN supports EU and national policymakers in gaining access to integrated policy support tools and provides experts working with IPBES and IPCC with new opportunities for collaboration and institutional learning.

Why biodiversity and climate science must work together

Although climate change and biodiversity loss are two of the most urgent environmental challenges of our time and are deeply interconnected, scientific and policy responses are mainly developed in siloed approaches. Strategies stay fragmented, often resulting in low effectiveness and even counterproductivity. Examples are National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) for biodiversity and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for climate (guided by distinct conventions, CBD and UNFCCC, respectively), where indicators, reporting mechanisms, monitoring systems, and evaluation procedures differ. The policy decisions of both conventions could benefit from integrated approaches that account for the complex interplay between climate systems and ecosystems. Coordinating actions across the climate and biodiversity domains would allow policymakers to identify trade-offs, avoid unintended consequences, and maximise co-benefits. The science-policy interfaces **IPBES** (**Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services**) and **IPCC** (**Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**) can give sound scientific input into developing such approaches, including on the societal challenges faced in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss jointly.

It remains crucial to bridge the gaps in science, policy and strategy development and implementation.

Key barriers: What prevents effective integration of IPBES and IPCC findings?

Through expert collaboration, the RESPIN Project has identified the following gaps:

KNOWLEDGE GAPS

a. **Fragmented knowledge systems due to uneven engagement:** Climate and biodiversity knowledge is disjointed because not all regions, knowledge systems, and stakeholder groups are equally involved in the IPBES and IPCC processes. Regions like Central Africa, Central Asia, and Latin America are underrepresented, and there's a lack of connection between national focal points (NFPs) within and between countries. As a result, the holistic understanding of climate and biodiversity issues is often incomplete and lacks diverse perspectives, which weakens the ability to create well-rounded, inclusive solutions.

b. **Barriers to expert engagement:** There are obstacles and disincentives that prevent experts and decision-makers from fully participating in and utilising the IPBES and IPCC processes.

c. **Lack of integration between different data sources and knowledge systems:** A missing translation of existing information hinders the uptake of knowledge at regional (e.g. European), national, and local levels and the connection between knowledge needs and provision. There is a need for better data integration, policy coherence, and collaboration between climate and biodiversity efforts across different levels of governance.

d. **Scientific complexity and inaccessible language:** Scientific knowledge from IPBES and IPCC is not always translated and communicated in a manner that is readily accessible and applicable for policymakers and decision makers at all levels. The use of complex language /jargon and a lack of tailored communication strategies limit the effective dissemination and uptake of this crucial knowledge.

POLICY GAPS

e. **Policy and structural barriers:** Institutional silos and fragmented policy cycles hinder the integration of IPBES and IPCC outputs into national, regional (e.g. EU), and global frameworks. Legal frameworks often fail to align with scientific findings, limiting policy effectiveness.

f. **Weak Science-Policy Interfaces (SPIs):** Mechanisms for interaction and knowledge transfer between scientific community (IPBES and IPCC) and policymakers are not always effective. There are differences in capacities and experiences among countries in supporting and engaging in these SPIs.

g. **Insufficient integration of IPBES and IPCC knowledge in EU policies:** Existing EU policies and mechanisms could better leverage the integrated scientific knowledge from IPBES and IPCC for more effective action.

h. **Timing misalignment between assessments and policy cycles:** The uncoordinated planning of scientific assessments and policy processes makes it difficult to use IPBES and IPCC reports effectively in decision-making or act in a timely manner. Policy cycles, such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF 2030) or the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP 2027), are long-term but tend to engage scientific output at the last moment.

RESPIN's contribution: How is RESPIN bridging the gaps?

The RESPIN Project is closing the gaps and uniting IPBES and IPCC experts by:

- **Empowering knowledge holders**: To address uneven engagement of knowledge holders and barriers to expert engagement, RESPIN assessed engagement levels and barriers of diverse knowledge holders in IPBES and IPCC in a landscape analysis (Deliverable D.1.1, mid 2025) and the capacity building needs of NFPs (D1.2, mid 2025). Tailored capacity-building activities such as workshops and webinars try to meet these needs, e.g. the webinar on institutional support for assessment authors (June 2025). Mutual understanding and long-term collaboration of knowledge holders on climate change and biodiversity is fostered by networking meetings (e.g. PESC-RESPIN joint meeting in Brussels, March 2025).

- **Empowering knowledge users at national and sub-national level**: To tackle the gap in knowledge uptake, RESPIN identified 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. For example, the project organised subnational workshops to co-develop ideas on addressing the identified gaps and barriers in Colombia, Spain and Germany (D2.2, mid 2025).

- **Developing future perspectives for SPI engagement at the EU level**: To support the closing of policy gaps, RESPIN integrates IPBES and IPCC findings into EU decision-making, e.g. through workshops with EU decision makers (see the workshop report for D3.1, September 2024). To enhance policy coherence, the project performed a coherence analysis of EU strategies versus IPBES and IPCC findings (D 3.2, mid 2025). EU delegations were supported in international negotiations (e.g. in IPBES 11 on the nexus assessments and the transformative change assessment). Furthermore, the project works with BioAgora on the Science Service for Biodiversity (SSBD) to help facilitate the IPBES and IPCC knowledge uptake by providing an open platform to explore knowledge-policy interaction and support decision-making.

- **Upscaling and communication**: RESPIN raises awareness of IPBES and IPCC processes and outputs by translating findings into accessible resources such as factsheets, developing online training courses (the first one is planned for the end of 2025), establishing a collaborative platform, and fostering strategic partnerships for effective outreach and dissemination.

Recommendations for closing the gaps

To bridge these gaps, we propose:

FOR EXPERTS

- **Strengthen interdisciplinary research and data-sharing** between biodiversity and climate science communities.

- **Focus research efforts** on the specific knowledge gaps highlighted in IPBES and IPCC assessments.

- **Work collaboratively** with policymakers and other stakeholders to translate research findings into accessible and policy-relevant formats, e.g. policy briefs, factsheets or online courses.

- **Actively participate** in IPBES and IPCC assessments and related activities to contribute knowledge and perspectives.

FOR DECISION/POLICYMAKERS

- **Support and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration** between climate and biodiversity experts, including providing institutional support for experts to engage in both the IPBES and IPCC processes.

- **Use research findings** from IPBES and IPCC to inform policies that address both climate and biodiversity goals.

- **Create and/ or strengthen mechanisms for regular dialogue** between scientists, policymakers, and other stakeholders to ensure mutual understanding and actionable outcomes.

Concrete Action for follow-up

The RESPIN project will go on in its efforts to bridge gaps and overcome siloed approaches. To get involved, you can:

- **Stay informed:** Visit respin-project.eu for the latest news and updates.

- **Participate in workshops:** Join stakeholder co-design workshops. Open calls will be announced in late 2025.

- **Explore our self-learning online courses**, available from the end of 2025.

- **Read RESPIN outputs**, such as factsheet on "IPBES and IPCC explained- why and how to engage as an expert.

- **Take part in networking activities**, national and regional workshops

- **Follow us on social media** – Connect with RESPIN on LinkedIn for updates on outputs and training opportunities.

- **Contact us** at info@respin-project.eu for any inquiries.

**Funded by
the European Union**

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