



European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy

What kind of biodiversity research does Europe need to help stopping biodiversity loss globally? Where to set research priorities in times of scarce resources? How to make sure that biodiversity research has an impact on environmental policy and conservation?

These are some of the questions the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) deals with.

The EPBRS is a forum at which natural and social scientists, policy-makers and other stakeholders identify, structure and focus the strategically important research that is essential to conserve biodiversity, to use its components in a sustainable way, to make sure that the arising benefits are shared in an equitable way - and last but not least- to stop biodiversity loss.

The EPBRS keeps close connections with relevant international bodies, national governments, EU institutions and EU projects in the field of biodiversity research. Since its inception in 1999 it has met twice a year under successive EU Presidencies to discuss and give recommendations on strategic research priorities for biodiversity. The agendas of the meetings of the EPBRS balance science and policy and the main tangible deliverable of each EPBRS meetings is a short written agreement on issues that are of high scientific and policy importance. The scientific flavour of the meeting ensures that all participants enjoy sufficient depth of understanding to discuss the substantive issues constructively. The themes addressed in the meetings are not only important to Europe, but of particular relevance to the organising country and often to forthcoming CBD meetings, too. The group has so far dealt with many topics, including biodiversity and climate change, health, islands and archipelagos, invasive organisms, water and forest, the ecosystem approach, indicators, sustainable use, sustainable development, and sustaining livelihoods.

The strength of the EPBRS lies in its members, among whom are several delegates to SBSTTA. Membership in the EPBRS is open to all states that participate in the 7th Framework Programme and to the EU institutions. The participating states each nominate one scientist and one policymaker to attend the meetings. The scientists are mostly biologist, so additional socio-economic experts and other disciplines are invited to participate *ad personam*. Other experts and stakeholders are invited to participate as appropriate.

The EPBRS process consists of meetings, activities between meetings, and activities of national platforms. The meetings involve keynote speeches, presentation of European research, breakout groups to prepare agreements, and plenary meetings to discuss and adopt agreements.

Each meeting is prepared by an electronic pre-conference to include as much scientific excellence and opinions as possible and to give everyone a say.

The EPBRS encourages, interacts and helps to establish national platforms for biodiversity research (NBP), composed of scientists, policy makers, funding agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders. The forms and functions of these platforms depend on the needs and administrative landscape of their country. One shared purpose is to identify knowledge gaps whose reduction would help support national policy, and to bring these national concerns to the EPBRS. The national platforms use the EPBRS agreements to identify issues that are of particular national importance.

The EPBRS also makes extensive use of the active internet discussion list EUROBI – EU Research on biodiversity (<http://groups.google.com/group/EUROBI/topics>) whose membership is open to anyone interested in biodiversity science.

All further information and documentations of previous activities can be found at www.epbrs.org.