



The mission of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) is to ensure that research contributes to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy

The Lisbon European Council endorsed the “open method of co-ordination” (OMC) as a new technique of governance to help Europe “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth”. The European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) contributes to the European Research Area by implementing important aspects of the OMC.

The EPBRS “is a forum for scientists and policy-makers to ensure that research contributes to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.” Its participants, from across Europe, meet to identify and promote strategically important biodiversity research that will contribute to policies and management to reduce biodiversity loss, and help to conserve, protect, restore and make the use of the components of biodiversity sustainable.

The EPBRS keeps close connections with relevant international bodies, national governments, and the EU institutions. Since its inception in 1999 it has met twice a year under successive EU Presidencies. The agendas of the meetings of the EPBRS balance science and policy. 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 are often to forthcoming CBD meetings. 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, the new Member States, sustainable use, sustainable development, and sustaining livelihoods.

The main tangible deliverable of each EPBRS meetings is the short written agreement of the group on issues that are of high scientific and policy importance.

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 6th 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 biologists, so the Commission invites some socio-economic experts to participate *ad personam*. Other stakeholders are invited to participate as appropriate.

The EPBRS process consists of meetings, activities between meetings, and activities of national platforms. Preparatory activities involve *ad hoc* working groups that design and help to prepare the meetings, run electronic conferences, prepare and discuss draft agreements, and respond to the decisions of the plenary or of the steering committee. The meetings involve keynote speeches, presentation of European research, breakout groups to prepare agreements, and plenary meetings to discuss and adopt agreements.

The EPBRS encourages and helps to establish national platforms for biodiversity research, 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 an active internet discussion list – ‘EU Biodiversity Science’ – whose membership is open to anyone interested in biodiversity science.