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# SELECTING AUTHORS

## WHEN in the process should this stage be carried out?

Selected or self-nominated authors may be involved during the development of the scoping document. Once the scoping document has been formalised, most of the authors will be selected to start writing the specific chapters of the technical assessment report. Authors can provide a range of knowledge, experience and perspectives to the assessment including on scientific research, management, policy, and indigenous and local knowledge (ILK).

**TOP TIP**

*Consider the option of undertaking two calls for authors, both at the beginning of the scoping stage to support in writing the scoping report, and before the evaluation stage begins.*

## WHY is it important to include this aspect in a National Ecosystem Assessment?

Selecting appropriate authors who will contribute through different roles (see below) towards specific chapters of the ecosystem assessment is important to ensure the validity and credibility of the assessment findings. It further gains traction and legitimacy with a range of relevant stakeholders. It also helps to increase knowledge-sharing and collaboration within the biodiversity and ecosystem services of stakeholder groups, and with other sectors.

## WHO does this stage relate to?

The responsibility for selecting authors will depend on the governance structure agreed at the start of the assessment process. However, selection should be managed by the Technical Support Unit (TSU) with support from the Management/Steering Committee. It is advisable to select the co-chairs at the beginning of the assessment process. These will generally oversee the technical aspects of the assessment preparation, the process of author selection, as well as the scoping stage. The writing of an assessment requires different types of contributions, reflected in the different roles played by the selected Authors: Co-chairs, Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs), Lead Authors (LAs), Contributing Authors (CAs), Review Editors (REs) and Fellows.

**TOP TIP**

*Leadership is a useful quality to look for in the CLA's*

**Table 1: Summary of author roles and responsibilities**

Role	Summary of role	Who might this be?
Assessment Co-Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Function as editors to the assessment.</li> <li>• Oversee the technical aspects of the preparation of the assessment report and Summary for Policymakers (SPM). They are also involved in communication &amp; outreach throughout the assessment.</li> <li>• Ensure that the assessments key policy questions are addressed.</li> <li>• Ensure cross-cutting issues of significance are identified and tackled.</li> <li>• Ensure chapter coherence and alignment with the scoping report.</li> <li>• Mentor early career authors and fellows.</li> <li>• Lead the author teams by organising, facilitating and setting the agenda for author meetings.</li> <li>• Work with the TSU to ensure emerging issues are managed appropriately.</li> <li>• Contribute with inputs across the assessment process and outputs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role is usually shared between two or three experts who act as editors.</li> <li>• Experienced authors, well known in their field and capable at coordinating the work of authors.</li> </ul>
Coordinating Lead Authors (CLA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for coordinating a chapter of the assessment, including coordinating LA's, CA's and fellows.</li> <li>• Coordination and authorship of the assessment and SPM contents.</li> <li>• Ensure cross-cutting issues of significance are identified and addressed.</li> <li>• Responsible for the analysis/synthesis of policy relevant findings.</li> <li>• Attend and participate in authors meetings.</li> <li>• Mentor fellows, if included in the process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well known experience in the topic the chapter is addressing.</li> <li>• Experience in coordinating the work of authors.</li> </ul>
Lead Authors (LA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for producing designated sections or parts of chapters.</li> <li>• Synthesise material from available literature.</li> <li>• Identify contributing authors who can provide additional information.</li> <li>• Attend and participate in authors meetings where possible.</li> <li>• Mentor fellows, if included in the process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert of the content in a specific section of the chapter.</li> </ul>

Role	Summary of role	Who might this be?
Contributing Authors (CA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare information (i.e. text, graphics, data, case studies, thematic boxes), supported by references from the literature, ILK and practitioner experience.</li> <li>• They do not need to attend author meetings as they work directly with LAs or CLAs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors wishing to contribute specific knowledge but not be involved more broadly in the assessment.</li> <li>• An early career author, who wants to be involved but doesn't have the experience for a leadership role.</li> <li>• A practitioner with specific knowledge on an aspect to be covered.</li> <li>• ILK holder who provides information to be integrated into the assessment.</li> </ul>
Review Editors (RE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involved in the review phases of each draft of the assessment.</li> <li>• Provide support on editing the document</li> <li>• Advise on language for the presentation of policy relevant findings.</li> <li>• Assist the TSU in identifying reviewers for the author review process.</li> <li>• Ensure all review comments are considered appropriately.</li> <li>• Advise authors on how to handle contentious issues and ensure genuine controversial issues are reflected in the report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals with expertise in one or more discipline or subject relevant to the assessment.</li> <li>• One to two RE's per chapter</li> <li>• At least two RE's to review the entire assessment.</li> </ul>
External reviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involved in reviewing the first and second order drafts of the assessment and SPM for quality, validity and relevance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent experts (i.e. not involved in the preparation of the assessment).</li> </ul>
Fellows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early career professionals that could benefit from engaging and working alongside more experienced colleagues.</li> <li>• Develop sections or parts of chapters.</li> <li>• They should receive training in the assessment process and have a mentor for the assessment period.</li> <li>• Participate in author meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early career professionals.</li> <li>• Working in a relevant discipline.</li> </ul>

## HOW to select authors?

Authors are selected either prior to or following the finalisation of the scoping document. This will ensure that the authors engaged can contribute to answering the key policy questions, which are the focus of the assessment. Author selection could be completed through an open call for nominations or by mapping and approaching authors directly, amongst other methods. A combination of approaches might also be appropriate. This will be determined by the national context.

During this process, a decision needs to be made regarding the selection criteria for choosing a set number of contributors, or if an approach will be taken whereby anyone with interest will be included (as an author and/or reviewer). This selection will be a fundamental consideration to ensure the quality, credibility, legitimacy and relevance of the assessment, so special care must be taken regarding the author selection process. If not selected as authors, experts might be invited to take part in the process as reviewers.

The following considerations could play an important part of author selection:

- **Diversity of knowledge systems (including ILK). You may consider running a dedicated process for including ILK holders [Please see ILK practical guidance]**
- **A balanced mix of perspectives and experience, including of ethnic or cultural groups where relevant**
- **Gender balance**
- **Adequate geographic representation**
- **A range of disciplines, for example, ecologists, social scientists, economists**

Promoting a multi-stakeholder engagement approach, for example through the engagement of public, private and third sector participants as authors where relevant, contributes to supporting decision-making processes. You may need to think about how to encourage experts to take part in this process. Some experts may volunteer their services, however, in some cases, you may need to pay a stipend, for example, upon delivery of their chapter.

### TOP TIP

*Consider any existing initiatives and structures that can be drawn from or built upon. Are there any national experts who have been involved in ecosystem assessments (i.e. IPCC or GEO) or IPBES assessments previously to act as Co-Chairs or serve on the Expert Panel?*

It is important to ensure that all authors understand their role in the assessment, including as individual experts rather than as representatives of particular constituencies. A guidance note to explain the role and function of authors, and the expectations of the time required to commit for the assessment will be useful to make available with any call for authors, and/or to send to all authors alongside their invitation to participate.

## RESOURCES

1. IPBES (2018) The IPBES Guide on the Production of Assessments, Ch.2, pg.12-19, pg.23-26. <https://bit.ly/2wCfQHB>

Supported by:



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety

In partnership with:



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For further information, please contact [assessment@unep-wcmc.org](mailto:assessment@unep-wcmc.org) or visit <http://www.ecosystemassessments.net/>