* 1. Stage 3: Approval/acceptance

**The draft SPM and chapters** are presented by the secretariat to the Plenary for its consideration. Governments are given the opportunity to submit written comments to the secretariat prior to the Plenary. These comments assist the assessment experts in preparing for the Plenary but do not result in a revised draft.

2.3.1 Acceptance of reports by the Plenary

An assessment report is comprised of an SPM, which the Plenary will approve line by line, and a set of chapters (sometimes referred to as the technical report), which only the Plenary will accept. Governments are given the opportunity to submit written comments to the secretariat prior to the Plenary (8-2 weeks before). These comments assist the assessment experts in preparing for the Plenary but do not result in a revised draft. The set of chapters presented by the secretariat to the Plenary are prepared and reviewed as discussed above. While the large volume and technical detail of this material places practical limitations upon the extent to which changes to the reports can be made at the Plenary sessions, ‘acceptance’ signifies the view of the Plenary that this purpose has been achieved. The content of the chapters is the responsibility of the coordinating lead authors and is subject to Plenary ‘acceptance’. After ‘acceptance’ by the Plenary, chapters are edited by the authors to reflect the changes made by the Plenary to the SPM, and thus ensure full consistency between the SPM and the underlying chapters and their executive summaries. Reports accepted by the Plenary will then be formally and prominently described on the front, and on other introductory covers, as a report accepted by IPBES.

2.3.2 Approval of SPM by the Plenary

The SPMs are normally discussed line by line in a contact group.[[1]](#footnote-1) It is then presented to the Plenary for consideration and approval in the presence of the co-chairs and some of the experts of the assessment, who will be able to address the questions of the Plenary and discuss whether proposed changes are compatible with the science contained in the report. Sessions of the Plenary where SPMs are being discussed are open to observers but are closed to the media, including social media.

The key actors in this stage are:

* Governments, who through their representatives consider the drafts in dialogue with each other and the assessment experts and observers at the Plenary;
* Members of the Bureau who co-chair the contact groups under the Plenary where the drafts are considered;
* Assessment co-chairs and CLAs who are present on the podium to explain and defend the scientific basis for the findings and provide scientific clarification and advice on any reformulation of the findings under consideration; and
* the IPBES chair who chairs the Plenary.

The SPM will then be formally and prominently described as a report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

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| **Box 2.6** Addressing possible errors and complaints |
| The IPBES review processes should ensure that errors are eliminated well before the publication of the Platform reports and technical papers. However, if a reader of an agreed Platform report, accepted SPM or finalized technical paper finds a possible error (e.g., a miscalculation or omission of critically important information) or has a complaint relating to a report or technical paper (e.g., a claim to authorship, or an issue of possible plagiarism or the falsification of data) the issue should be brought to the attention of the secretariat, which will implement the process for error correction or complaint resolution as set out in decision IPBES-2/3.[[2]](#footnote-2) |

1. Contact groups co-chaired by Bureau members may be established by the Plenary to address issues raised and to revise the SPMs accordingly for further consideration by the Plenary (IPBES/4/19, p.7). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Decision IPBES-2/3: Procedures for the preparation of the Platform’s deliverables. https://www.ipbes.net/document-library-catalogue/decision-ipbes-23 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)