

Global Peatlands Assessment – Process

1. Introduction

The **Global Peatlands Assessment (GPA)** will be developed in a **process** inspired by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Guide for Production of Assessments¹.

The GPA will be developed in **four stages** (Figure 1).

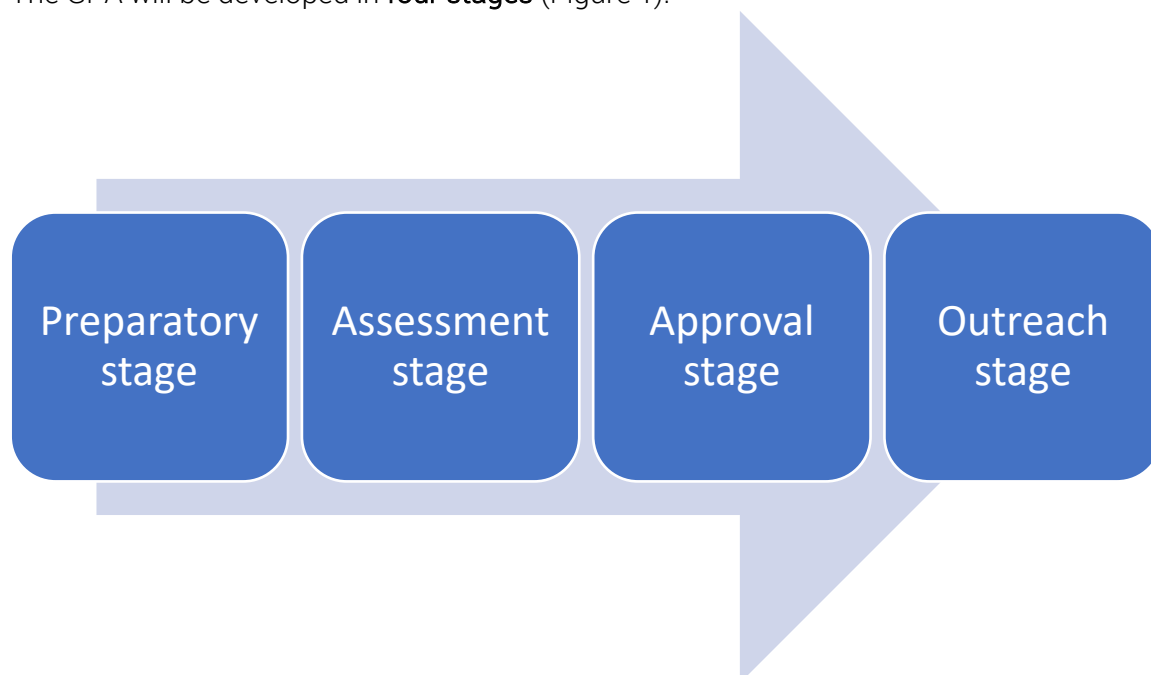


Figure 1 – Stages of the assessment

In the **Preparatory stage** the scope is defined and approved. The **Assessment stage** includes the author nomination and the development of the assessment. The approval of the final assessment report and SPM corresponds to the **Approval stage**. The fourth is the **Outreach stage** where the GPA report/SPM is disseminated.

A cross-cutting activity is the **communication of the GPA process**, which includes the continuous engagement of all partners, along with the gathering of both technical, institutional and financial support to finish the Assessment.

Different **structures** participate in the development of the assessment with different roles and responsibilities (Figure 2).

¹ <https://www.ipbes.net/guide-production-assessments>

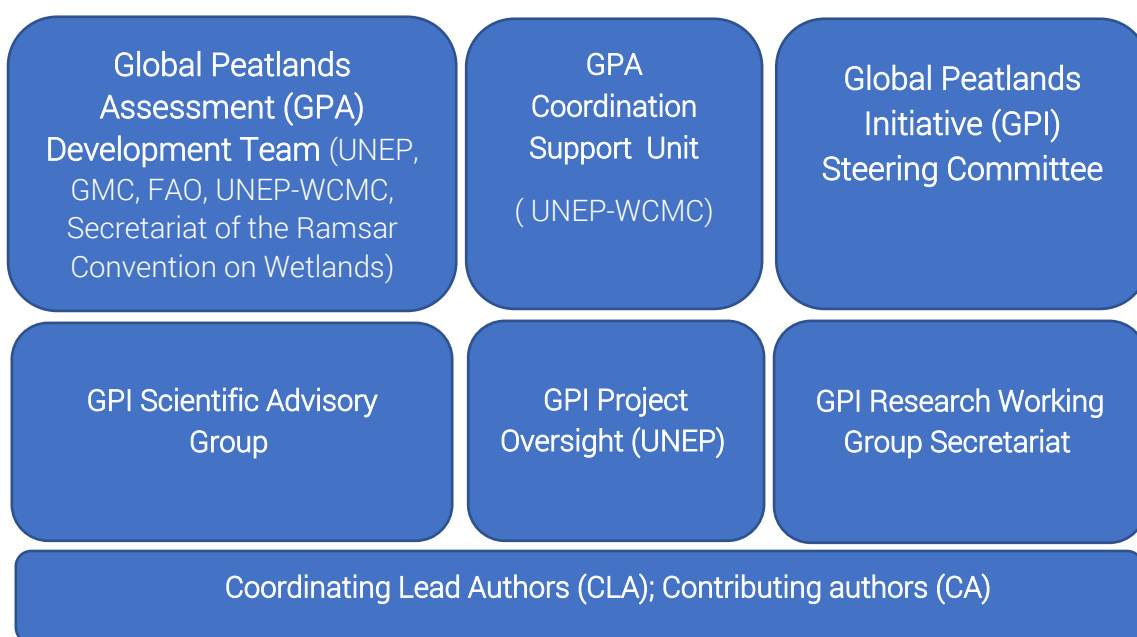


Figure 2 – Structures involved in the assessment

2. Stages of the Assessment

Preparatory stage: Scope definition and approval

The preparatory stage includes the development of a **concept note** for the global assessment, to cover:

- Context about peatlands ecosystems, their importance, threats and management challenges
- The scope and the policy relevant questions
- The potential impact of the assessment
- The target audiences of the assessment
- Structure of the assessment (global with regional messages)
- Methodological approaches
- Chapter outlines and main contents
- Key datasets and reports that will be mobilized
- Strategic partnerships and initiatives (i.e. Global Hotspot Atlas)
- The description of the process for the assessment and timetable;
- The budget;
- The communication and outreach.

To complement the concept note, a **guidance document** detailing the **process** for developing the assessment and the players involved and responsibilities is provided.

A first **database of experts** on peatlands is made available to contribute to the process of authors nomination, along with proposed **Coordinating Lead Authors for each chapter**.

Element	Description	Responsible for drafting	Responsible for review	Responsible for approval and outreach
GPA Concept Note	Document with the definition of the scope, table of contents (outline), timeline and description of the process for the assessment	GPA Development Team (UNEP, GMC, FAO, UNEP-WCMC)	GPI Steering Committee	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP)
GPA Guidance Document	Document with the general guidance for the assessment (including the review process and the definition of roles and responsibilities)	GPA Development Team (UNEP, GMC, FAO, UNEP-WCMC)	GPI Steering Committee	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP)
Researchers database	Database (Excel) of experts working on peatlands	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP) and GPA Coordination Support Unit (UNEP-WCMC)	-	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP)
Draft author list	Document (draft version) with a list of possible authors for the assessment (focusing on the coordinating lead authors)	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP) and GPA Coordination Support Unit (UNEP-WCMC)	GPA Scientific Advisory Group	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP)

Assessment stage: Development of the assessment

The GPA Coordination Support Unit (UNEP-WCMC) issues a **call for experts** with the support of the GPA Development Team. All GPI members will be invited to nominate authors, describing how their expertise is relevant to the chapters of the assessment, including independent experts not affiliated to a GPI partner.

The GPA Development Team will select the **coordinating lead authors** (CLA) considering several criteria such as:

- Gender balance
- Geographic representation
- Appropriate representation of experts from developing and developed countries including the four focal GPI countries
- The coverage of the different areas of expertise in peatlands

Additional names should be also selected by the GPI Scientific Advisory Group, in case of lack of interest/availability from the selected CLA.

If gaps in geographical, gender and expertise balances are identified, the respective CLAs, can identify potential additional experts to fill in these gaps.

A formal invitation to the nominated Coordinating Lead Authors will be done by the UNEP to confirm the interest/availability to participate in the assessment.

Authors' nomination, which involves the preparation of a short-list of authors per chapter, with attention to regional and gender balance overall, will be carried out by the Coordinating Lead Authors with the Coordination Support Unit (UNEP-WCMC) support.

After UNEP's approval, a formal invitation to the authors will be done by the Coordination Support Unit (UNEP-WCMC) to confirm their interest/availability to participate in the assessment.

Element	Description	Responsible for drafting	Responsible for review	Responsible for approval and outreach
Call for experts	Call for experts' interest in joining the assessment and nominations from GPI partners	GPA Coordination Support Unit (UNEP-WCMC)	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP)	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP)
Authors' nomination	Short-listing authors per chapter; with attention to regional and gender balance overall	Coordinating Lead Authors with GPA Coordination Support Unit (UNEP-WCMC) support	-	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP)
Formal invitation to authors	Process to confirm the interest/availability of the nominated coordinating lead authors (CLA) and contributing authors (CA) to participate in the assessment	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP) or GPA Coordination Support Unit (UNEP-WCMC)	-	GPI Project Oversight (UNEP)

The assessment work by experts is guided by **3 author meetings** and different review periods. It involves an iterative and collective expert evaluation of the state of knowledge, which entails the preparation and review of the following successive draft chapters of the **report**, as well as of the **Summary for Policymakers (SPM)**.

Meetings	Timeline	Participants	Description	Deliverable
First Authors' Meeting	Q3 2021	Coordinating Lead Authors, GPA Development team	Development of an annotated outline of chapters and design and agreement of methodologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of data & knowledge needs. • Identification of case studies. • Understanding of roles, responsibilities and timelines. 	Annotated outline Methodologies

Meetings	Timeline	Participants	Description	Deliverable
In between meetings	Q4 2021	Coordinating Lead Authors, GPA Coordination Support Unit	<p>Development of zero-order draft chapters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desirably the zero-order draft will have around 70% completed text. • Some paragraphs will consist of bullet points to indicate content. • Graphics, tables and case studies are not all agreed but text may include indications for graphics that might be included. • Includes descriptions and bullet points of text and graphics to include in each section of the chapter • Includes review/feedback on the proposed sections of the chapters 	Zero-order draft (report)
	Q4 2021/ Q1 2022	Coordinating Lead Authors, GPA Development Team	<p>Internal peer-review within the assessment</p> <p>This review stage is internal to the assessment. It provides an opportunity to understand where the overlaps are between chapters, gaps in text and expertise.</p>	Revised zero-order draft (report)
		Coordinating Lead Authors, Authors, Contributors / GPA Coordination Support Unit	<p>Development of first-order draft chapters</p> <p>The first order draft is a complete draft of the technically and scientifically balanced assessment, including the glossary. Authors should have thought about graphics and either have identified existing graphics for inclusion or have identified where graphics will be developed.</p> <p>Assessment authors should be mindful of the language used in the preparation of the first draft and the range of scientific, technical and socio-economic evidence should be presented clearly and concisely. The CLA should identify a list of potential external expert reviewers and contact them before the external review goes live</p>	First-order draft (report)
		GPA Development Team including expert reviewers	<p>Peer-review by GPA Development Team including expert reviewers</p> <p>The first external review process is directed at expert reviewers. These reviewers will come from a variety of</p>	Revised first-order draft (report)

Meetings	Timeline	Participants	Description	Deliverable
			<p>institutions but will have a technical background in the content of the assessment. The development team works with authors to identify expert reviewers who are also invited by the GPI Project Oversight to provide review comments</p> <p>The review of the first order draft runs for 6-8 weeks</p>	
			Identification of data gaps and collaboration with networks to fill gaps	
	Q4 2021/ Q1 2022		Preparation of global and regional maps	
Second Authors' Meeting	Q1 2022	Coordinating Lead Authors, Contributing Authors, GPA Development team	<p>Plan the development of the 2nd order draft AND 1st draft Summary for Policymakers</p> <p>The main objectives of the second author meetings are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop content in each chapter, identify gaps and challenges. • Address comments received from the expert review of the first order draft • Work on the executive summary and draw out draft key messages. • Plan next steps for producing the second order draft, including the Summary for Policymakers. • Standardize the quality of scientific evidence across chapters and across assessments. 	
In between meetings	Q1-Q2 2022	Coordinating Lead Authors, Contributing Authors, GPA Coordination Support Unit	The second order draft is a complete draft of the assessment. The second order draft will take into consideration comments from the expert peer review. A full draft of the Summary for Policymakers, including key messages and graphics, is also developed during this period.	second-order draft (report) first-order draft (Summary for Policymakers)
	Q2 2022	GPI partners experts	<p>Peer review by GPI partners and other nominated external reviewers</p> <p>Once the second order draft and draft Summary for Policymakers are ready, the GPI Project Oversight (UNEP) will notify GPI partners and observers of the start of the review period</p>	Peer review comments

Meetings	Timeline	Participants	Description	Deliverable
		Coordinating Lead Authors / GPA Coordination Support Unit	Peer review feedback reviewed	Comments response matrix
	Q1-Q2 2022	Authors	Identification of data gaps and collaboration with networks to fill gaps	
			Preparation of global and regional maps	
Third Authors' Meeting	Q2 2022	Coordinating Lead Authors, Contributing Authors, GPA Development team	<p>Prepare the development of the 3rd order draft Report (Final Draft) AND 2nd draft Summary for Policymakers (Final Draft Summary for Policymakers)</p> <p>The third author meeting aims to address comments received from the external review of the second order draft and to plan for the finalization of the report as well as its Summary for Policymakers and presentation at the Steering Committee.</p>	
After Authors' Meeting	Q2-Q3 2022	Coordinating Lead Authors, Contributing Authors, GPA Development team	The final draft includes the full report with addressed feedback from the review process, as well as a final draft for the Summary for Policymakers.	Final draft (report and Summary for Policymakers) (in Stage 3)

Approval stage: Approval of the final assessment report and Summary for Policymakers

A final draft of the assessment report and Summary for Policymakers should be completed and submitted to the Steering Committee 8 weeks before the meeting in which the summary for policymakers is agreed at.

Members are given the opportunity to submit written comments prior to the meeting. These comments assist the assessment experts in preparing for the GPI Steering Committee Meeting but do not result in a revised draft.

The final draft should reflect comments made by governments and relevant stakeholders (GPI partners) during the second external review. If necessary, the GPI scientific advisory group, working with authors and reviewers, can try to resolve areas of major differences of opinion. The final draft of a report should credit all report coordinating lead authors, contributing authors and information providers, as appropriate, by name and affiliation at the end of the report.

The approval of the draft version of summary for policy makers and the acceptance of the draft version of the report is done by the GPI Steering Committee in a Meeting which involves CLA and GPA Development Team. The content of the chapters is the responsibility of the coordinating lead authors and is subject to GPI Steering Committee 'acceptance'. After 'acceptance', chapters are edited by the authors to reflect the changes made by the GPI Steering Committee to the summary for policy makers, and thus ensure full consistency between the summary for policy makers and the report.

Outreach stage: Dissemination of GPA

The dissemination of the assessment report, including the front matter (preface), the summary for policy makers, the chapters and the back matter (annexes), is supported by an outreach strategy.

The report will be made available online, in a modular way corresponding to the different chapters (digital-first assessment, with use of storymaps and factsheets to present the bulk of the information) whereas the SPM will be a printed document.

The strategy will include at least some of the following steps:

- Production of a storymap and preparation of possibly the GPI website to receive the contents of the GPA.
- Other communication products (video) (tbd)
- Development of an interactive map on an existing platform (several options available) (will provide access to the spatial data to the extent possible for exploration and overlay); The interactive map will be the go-to place for peatland distribution at global to subnational scales, giving the reader of the assessment the opportunity to explore places not profiled in detail in the assessment report.
- Communication ahead of the Steering Committee session where the Summary for Policymakers will be accepted.
- Preparation of press releases.
- Preparation of other media materials (including press kits, mini videos explaining the Summary for Policymakers content and PowerPoint presentations on the outcomes of the assessment).
- Mobilization of all partners and stakeholders to help promote the assessment reports and expand their overall reach and impact.
- Webinar with key journalists ahead of the GPI Steering Committee Outreach with social media.
- Media training for GPA authors
- Interviews with press, TV and radio in response to requests.
- Communication after the GPI Steering Committee.
- Engagement over the course of the months with different audiences and stakeholders following the approval of the Summary for Policymakers, including conference and events.

The translation of Summary for Policymakers/report in different languages (tbd) and the publication of printed versions of the summary for policy makers will be done and the public launching of the work will be organized.

Cross-cutting stage: communication of the GPA process

The communication of the GPA process is essential for engaging the different partners and to generate alliances and momentum for the process.

A collaborative workplace will be set using an appropriate online program (i.e. Slack) allowing for an efficient communication among the institutions and the individuals involved in the production of the assessment.

An external communication strategy will be developed by the GPA development team with the support of specific communication consultants following the approval of the concept note by the GPI Steering Committee. The aim of the outreach strategy is to ensure that the assessment results are appropriately disseminated and that they reach the target audiences.

The GPI Platform will also be used to share updates about the GPA process and international relevant events (UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, UNFCCC CoP, etc) will be used as well to promote the process.

2. Roles and responsibilities in the GPA process

In the following table the roles and responsibilities of the different structures and institutions involved in the assessment are characterized.

Role	Responsibilities
GPI Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews the concept note and the guidance on process for the assessment • Reviews the SPM and the assessment chapters <p><i>[Correspondence in IPBES with the Plenary]</i></p>
GPI scientific advisory group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees the scientific and technical aspects of the assessment process, and peer reviews the final draft report • Reviews Coordinating Lead Authors <p><i>[Correspondence in IPBES with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel – MEP]</i></p>
GPA Development Team (UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, FAO, GMC, Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and suggests names of experts (CLAs, CAs and Reviewers), to fill gaps in expertise, for discussion with CLAs and CAs • Oversees the policy and administrative aspects of the scoping process and the assessment process • Assists the GPI scientific advisory group and the Secretariat in overseeing assessment processes, including in the filling of expertise gaps and in author communications • Ensures the approaches and findings of the assessment chapters are internally consistent • Assists in the preparation of Summary for Policymakers and presentations for the Steering Committee

Role	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer reviews the final draft assessment • Hold regular meetings by teleconference at least once every two months • Develop the outreach strategy <p><i>[Correspondence in IPBES with: Bureau, Management Committee]</i></p>
GPI project oversight (UNEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the GPI scientific advisory group and development committee in overseeing the production of the assessment report • Supports the GPI Steering Committee, provides access to relevant documents • Interacts with governments ensuring that they receive all relevant documents • Approves the GPA Concept Note, the GPA Guidance Document, the Researchers' Database, the draft author list and the authors' nomination <p><i>[Correspondence in IPBES with the IPBES secretariat]</i></p>
GPA Coordination Support Unit (UNEP-WCMC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides guidance to the expert group to ensure that activities are delivered in accordance with the guidance of the GPI scientific advisory group and GPI decisions • Ensures the provision of logistical, technical and thematic support (through documents, communications, contacts, online collaborative space, etc.) to experts in order to facilitate their participation in the assessment. • Supports the formatting and editing of the assessment report and the identification of plagiarism risks • Supports the organization and online storage of reference materials and data used in the assessment report, making assessment-related materials that are not publicly available accessible to reviewers, and submitting materials to the GPI project oversight (UNEP) for archiving • Prepares specific content (through author / contributor roles) • Supports the expert group in convening teleconferences, as well as putting in place the necessary teleconference services to facilitate calls • Collaborates with GPI project oversight (UNEP) and provides regular feedback to the secretariat on the progress of the assessment report • Provide regular updates to the assessment teams about the assessment developments <p><i>[Correspondence in IPBES with the Technical Support Unit]</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Coordinating Lead Authors (CLA) (for each chapter of the assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the chapters of a report are completed to a high standard, are collated in a timely manner, and conform to the structure and style defined for the document • coordinate the work of the authors and contributors involved in their chapter through regular communication

Role	Responsibilities
(lead authors with additional responsibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that any cross-cutting scientific, technical or socio-economic issues, of significance to more than one section of the report, are addressed in a complete and coherent manner and reflect the latest information available • identify gaps in the chapter author team and searching for potential Contributing Authors to fill those gaps • contribute to the writing of the Summary for Policymakers • participate in the author meetings • coordinate the work of their chapter at the meeting
Contributing Authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare technical information in the form of text, graphs or data for inclusion by lead authors in the relevant sections or part of a chapter (supported, as far as possible, with references from peer-reviewed and internationally available literature) • contribute to specific parts of a chapter (and do not work to the chapter as a whole) coordinating with the authors of the chapter to see whether the contribution is best fitted • they are not privy to all communication in the chapter team but work directly with the CLA • keep the confidentiality of the report • Note: are not formally nominated
Information providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with CLAs and authors in developing sections or parts of chapters • Receive training to gain an in-depth understanding of the assessment process • Participate in the author meetings
External reviewers (independent experts not involved in the preparation of the chapters)(*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out the external review of the first and second order drafts of the assessment report and the SPM through an evaluation of its quality, validity and relevance • Provide authors with feedback in a constructive tone, suggesting ways to shorten text, to display content using figures and tables, and providing suggestions for text revisions (use full citations) • Comments should be in English and comments on spelling, text style and grammar are not needed

(*) experts who are nominated by governments but are not selected are encouraged to contribute to the report as external reviewers