The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has been mandated to assess transformative change in order to identify pathways for achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. Yet, the topic of transformative change raises significant new challenges for biodiversity assessments because it combines scientifically plausible projections about drivers and trends of biodiversity loss with normative and collective visions of a sustainable world for nature and people. In this commentary, we argue that the assessment of transformative change needs to consider – first, how different values and visions influence which voices and perspectives are considered relevant for generating knowledge about transformative change – and second, ‘whose values and visions count?’ In particular, we argue there is a need to rethink modes of participation and co-production in assessments of transformative change: from consulting different groups as potential ‘users’ of assessments, to seeing how visions of a sustainable world are represented through the selection of evidence and actors. Different actors and evidence are represented in assessments in order to justify and amplify different visions and values. Looking for these visions and values, and not just at the inclusion of actors, can reveal more about how normative values shape the assessment of transformative change.