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1. Newsletter on IPBES (April 2017)

Dear colleagues,

Just a couple of weeks ago, from 6-10 March, the fifth plenary session of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was held in Bonn, Germany. Roughly 500 participants followed the negotiations of the currently 126 IPBES members, including observing governments, UN agencies and convention secretariats, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations, indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and other stakeholder groups.

We believe that getting involved in IPBES can help to stir the international, regional and national efforts to strengthen the knowledge-policy interface in the biodiversity arena. With this newsflash we would like to get you interested in and informed about the opportunities of the IPBES process for your own work. Here, we briefly summarise the decisions taken at IPBES-5 and give you an overview about the upcoming activities of the Platform and its partners.

The ValuES project has been following the developments in IPBES since 2015 and bringing in its expertise into the IPBES work, particularly on the IPBES multiple values concept and with regards to the Platform's capacity building strategy.

If you have any questions related to IPBES or the ValuES activities around it please get in touch with us. We are very happy to share and discuss with you our experiences from the process!

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What is IPBES?

IPBES is a new independent intergovernmental body, established under the auspices of UNEP, FAO, UNESCO and UNDP in 2012. The main mandate of IPBES is to compile, systematize and disseminate the latest scientific and other knowledge on biodiversity, ecosystems and their services, to identify tools and methods to protect and conserve them, and to derive from that courses of action. IPBES recommendations should equally benefit national governments, local and regional stakeholders, as well as international biodiversity policy processes, such as the CBD. More information is available on the [IPBES website](#).

Want to know more about IPBES? – ValuES and NeFo launch IPBES Guide

Do you want to learn more about how IPBES works, what it does and how to get engaged in it? A new publication released by the ValuES project and the Network-Forum for Biodiversity Research Germany (NeFo) explains the mission and goals of IPBES. It briefly presents the four functions of IPBES, the IPBES Work Programme 2014-2018, and the organisational structure, administration and financing of IPBES, as well as the links between IPBES and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The IPBES Guide also explains the many ways to get engaged in the IPBES process. The document is available in [English](#), [French](#), [German](#) and [Spanish](#) on the [ValuES IPBES web site](#).

In brief: the 10 decisions adopted by IPBES-5

Among the ten decisions adopted by the meeting was the endorsement of a rolling plan on **capacity building**, of a prototype catalogue of **policy support tools**, as well as of an approach to the inclusion of **indigenous and local knowledge** into the Platform's work. Most importantly, the **plenary decided not to start any of the pending three thematic assessments** due to a lack of financial and personnel resources. The next plenary of IPBES (IPBES-6) will be held from 18-24 March 2018, hosted by Colombia in Medellin.

The final report by IPBES will be published soon on the [IPBES web site](#). Day-by-day reports from IPBES-5 can be obtained from the [IISD coverage of the meeting](#).

The decisions in brief:

- **Capacity building**: The Plenary welcomed the [rolling plan to address IPBES' capacity-building needs](#), developed by the Task Force on Capacity Building and reviewed by several external organisations. The rolling plan outlines three strategic approaches to capacity building and according activities, and makes suggestions how existing organisations wishing to contribute can most effectively get involved into these activities.

- **Policy support tools and methodologies**: Prior to IPBES-5, the Secretariat presented a [prototype of an online catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies](#), developed by the IPBES expert group on policy support tools. This prototype will undergo an external review, to be launched in summer 2017.

- **Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK)**: The Plenary approved the [approach for recognizing and working with ILK](#), developed by the IPBES Task Force on ILK. This approach consists of four phases: defining problems and goals; bringing together evidence and data from multiple sources; engaging IPLCs in reviewing draft assessments; and "giving back" knowledge and insights to IPLCs. The approach follows the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). The Plenary mandated the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP), supported by the Task Force, to implement this approach, in collaboration with IPLCs and experts on ILK, as well as governments and other stakeholders.

- **Pending assessments**: From the ongoing first work programme of IPBES, there are still three assessments pending which have not been initiated yet: on sustainable use of wild species, invasive alien species, and diverse conceptualisations of multiple values of nature. While the Plenary approved the scoping report for sustainable use assessment, it eventually decided not to start any new assessments in 2017 – due to a severe lack of financial resources and low capacities in the Secretariat and among the experts to coordinate related work. The Plenary, thus, postponed this decision to IPBES-6 in 2018.

- **Enhanced participation of the European Union (EU) in IPBES plenary sessions**: The EU introduced a proposal to receive status as an "enhanced observer" to IPBES which was finally adopted (on an interim basis). Next to the right to speak and reply, and to introduce proposals, this status now allows the EU to make pledges to the Platform – which might help to overcome existing financial gaps in IPBES' budget.

- **Review of the Platform**: The Plenary decided on both an internal and an external review of the effectiveness of the IPBES processes (with regard to its subsidiary bodies). The internal review will be carried out by the MEP and the Bureau, with a call for nominations to be launched in spring 2017. For the external review, a professional organisation will be hired to start with the review in 2018.

- **Knowledge and data**: The Task Force on Knowledge and Data presented its work plan for 2017 and 2018. The Plenary requested the Task Force to define clear deliverables and milestones for this plan and to report on its progress to IPBES-6 in 2018.

- **Budget**: Due to insufficient pledges to the Platform, none of the pending three assessments (see above) were initiated. The current budget will only allow for covering the expenses for the ongoing activities in 2017 (approx. 8.7 million US$) and 2018 (5 million US$).

- **Development of a second work programme**: The Plenary requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (in charge of the scientific-technical orchestration of IPBES) and the Bureau (responsible for procedural issues) to develop a framework for a rolling work programme to be considered at IPBES-6. The time frame for such a second work programme could be considered 10 years, so to allow its deliverables to inform other global processes, such as the SDGs, UNFCCC, UNCCD, and CBD, among others. Furthermore, it shall not only reflect the four functions of IPBES but also the results of the review of the Platform. Importantly, a new work programme must not be started before the ongoing one is completed.

Platform work programme 2014 – 2018: Objectives and associated deliverables

Objective 1

Strengthen the capacity and knowledge foundations of the science-policy interface to implement key functions of the Platform:

a) Priority capacity-building needs to implement the Platform's work programme matched with resources through catalysing financial and in-kind support

b) Capacities needed to implement the Platform work programme developed

c) Procedures, approaches for participatory processes for working with indigenous and local knowledge systems developed

d) Priority knowledge and data needs for policymaking addressed through catalysing efforts to generate new knowledge and networking

Objective 2

Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services at and across subregional, regional and global levels:

a) Guide on production and integration of assessments from and across all scales

b) Regional/subregional assessments on biodiversity, ecosystem services

c) Global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services

Objective 3

Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services with regard to thematic and methodological issues:

a) One fast-track thematic assessment of pollinators, pollination and food production

b) Three thematic assessments: land degradation and restoration; invasive alien species; and sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and strengthening capacities/tools

c) Policy support tools and methodologies for scenario analysis and modelling of biodiversity and ecosystem services based on a fast-track assessment and a guide

d) Policy support tools and methodologies regarding the diverse conceptualization of values of biodiversity and nature's benefits to people including ecosystem services based on an assessment and a guide

Objective 4

Communicate and evaluate Platform activities, deliverables and findings:

a) Catalogue of relevant assessments

b) Development of an information and data management plan

c) Catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies

d) Set of communication, outreach and engagement strategies, products and processes

e) Reviews of the effectiveness of guidance, procedures, methods and approaches to inform future development of the Platform

Fig. 1 Objectives and deliverables of the first IPBES work programme for 2014-2018. Modified after IPBES/2/17.

ValuES launches web site on IPBES' multiple values concept

ValuES closely collaborates with the Technical Support Unit on Values (TSUV), based at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), who is in charge of disseminating the guide on multiple values into other IPBES deliverables, as well as preparing for a thematic assessment on diverse values. We support workshops and regional dialogues of the TSUV to strengthen the mutual exchange of the IPBES and ValuES communities of practice. In parallel, we support dissemination and practical application of the guide beyond the IPBES process by systematically applying the methods proposed by the guide at the ValuES Methods Navigator and in ValuES Trainings.

Fact sheets on IPBES: Which are your IPBES topics?

To provide you with an easy access to the main results and key recommendations of IPBES assessments and guides, we have started to develop fact sheets on specific topics. However, to ensure that we cover the topics which *you are really interested in*, we would like to invite you to identify them in our brief survey. We very much appreciate your support! Thank you!

How to get involved – upcoming peer reviews of draft IPBES assessment reports

According to the rules and procedures of IPBES, each of its assessment reports will be open to an 8-week peer-review by experts and governments, to ensure their quality, credibility and policy relevance. If you are interested in reviewing IPBES drafts, please see the upcoming rounds of reviews for the following assessments below (for each the second-order draft of the assessment report and the first-order draft of its Summary for Policymakers).

To participate, you will first need to register on the IPBES website and then apply to become an IPBES external reviewer for individual chapters per assessment. Once accepted you will receive confidential access to the draft chapters and summaries for policymakers and will be requested to submit your comments in English via the template provided by IPBES.

Reviews starting May 1 and ending June 26, 2017
- Assessment on land degradation and restoration
- Regional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa
- Regional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Asia-Pacific
- Regional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Europe and Central Asia

Review starting May 29 and ending July 24, 2017
- Regional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for the Americas

Review starting May 15 and ending August 15, 2017
- Global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services

Invitation to the 4th Pan-European IPBES Stakeholder Consultation (PESC-4), 12-14 June, 2017 in Vácrátót, Hungary

Initiated in 2013 by the European Biodiversity Platforms, the Pan-European IPBES Stakeholder Consultation (PESC) brings together a range of experts and other stakeholders that may contribute to the IPBES process or may use its outputs. In particular, these events

seek to mobilize a diverse and active IPBES stakeholder community across Europe and Central Asia. Following-up PESC meetings in Germany and Switzerland, the 4th meeting of this annual series (PESC-4) will take place in Vácrátót, Hungary.

The main objectives of PESC-4 are:
- To promote stakeholders' engagement in IPBES work by providing inputs to the IPBES deliverables (e.g. the draft of the regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Europe and Central Asia)
- To strengthen collaboration on biodiversity research at the pan-European level, including Central Asia
- To contribute to the preparation of IPBES deliverables

ValuES will be present at the meeting and report back (registration already closed).

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