



IPBES-3 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 15 JANUARY 2015

IPBES-3 resumed their deliberations in contact groups on Thursday, 15 January 2015, in Bonn, Germany. The contact group discussing rules of procedure, and a joint session of the work programme and budget groups, met during the morning. The communication and stakeholder engagement strategies contact group met during lunch, where stakeholders presented an outline and budget for implementing the stakeholder engagement strategy. Four regional discussions on the regional assessments were held in the afternoon.

In the evening, the contact group on rules of procedure and a joint session of the work programme and budget contact groups took place.

CONTACT GROUPS

JOINT WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET

SESSION: The joint session was facilitated by work programme contact group Co-Chair Ivar Baste (Norway).

Paul Ledley, MEP Member, introduced a revised timeline of actions to be undertaken to ensure integration across the thematic, regional and global assessments. He noted that some assessments will undergo rapid scoping exercises. He also highlighted two global meetings, a coordination meeting at the beginning and a synthesis meeting towards the end of the assessment period, saying that these meetings contribute to ensuring common definitions and methodologies between the assessments. He further stated that, *inter alia*, a mechanism needs to be put in place to ensure that global aspects are properly accounted for and specific wordings on rapid scoping must be put in place.

Some participants queried the definition of rapid scoping. Others called for clarifying the involvement of experts on values and ILK to ensure conceptual coherence and consistency on these issues. One participant expressed concern that Platform reviews on three major reports are scheduled to take place at the same time.

Scoping document for a thematic assessment of land degradation and restoration: On the scope of assessments, one member suggested specifying that the full range of productive landscapes will be covered. On trends of land degradation and restoration, in terms of the loss or decline in biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, discussions focused on a reference to deforestation. Some members sought to keep the reference, others preferred instead to reference: all ecosystems; all changes in land uses; forest cover; and unplanned or unsustainable forest management practices.

A proposal for a separate chapter highlighting benefits from actions addressing land degradation received broad support. Members suggested that the chapter also highlights the benefits in terms of improved land productivity, enhanced rural livelihoods and adaptive capacity, and emphasize the costs of inaction as well as impacts of choices made at landscape level. Many members also emphasized taking a balanced approach across all chapters, with some noting the value of setting a “precedent” that would require future assessments to include both negative and positive impacts.

Delegates’ views diverged on the usefulness of specifying “participatory, regulatory and economic instruments,” among types of policy instruments used. One member emphasized the importance of providing policy guidance on managing tradeoffs between development and sustainability imperatives.

The contact group considered chapters relating to operational issues. On key information to be assessed, it was suggested to add regional assessments, as well as statistical data, as sources.

On strategic partnerships and initiatives, members highlighted the need for partnerships at regional and subregional levels, and including data holders from mining and “other driver sectors.”

On the process, timetable and budget for assessments, Co-Chair Baste noted that the table will be updated based on the outcome of the coupling and budget discussions.

On communications and outreach, members called for ensuring consistency with language in the strategy. They similarly called for including a link to the task force for the capacity building chapter.

Co-Chair Baste then invited the contact group to read through the operational paragraphs of the draft decision. There were divergent opinions on the timetable, with some members calling for bracketing of references to launching or reviewing the assessment at specific future IPBES sessions. Others expressed concern about launching a fast-track assessment, and emphasized maintaining oversight by the Plenary.

RULES OF PROCEDURE: On procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables, the contact group considered the draft annex on the use of literature in Platform reports. Co-Chair Watson explained it had been largely modeled upon the IPCC procedure, with additional references on ILK. Participants discussed ways in which the annex could reflect the new reality of open science and open data, with more types of sources now being peer-reviewed and publicly available. The group also discussed the archival, by the TSU and the Secretariat, of sources not publicly available or available in electronic format only. On a requirement that, for sources



being relied upon that are in a language other than English, an executive summary or abstract in English be prepared; the contact group agreed the TSU would facilitate the translation.

The contact group then began deliberations of the draft conflict of interest policy and procedures (IPBES/3/14). After a brief consideration of the description of the policy, the group decided to first focus on the rules for the implementation procedures. Participants discussed the possible deletion of Rule 6, which allows, in exceptional circumstances, tolerating a conflict of interest for an author making a unique contribution if it is determined that the conflict can be managed to avoid any adverse impacts on the Platform deliverable, and if the conflict is publicly disclosed. The contact group agreed to continue its deliberations in a session on Thursday evening.

REGIONAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE SCOPING DOCUMENTS FOR REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Delegates considered the draft complementary scoping report for the regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the four regions (IPBES/3/6/Add.2, Add.3, Add.4 and Add.5).

AFRICA: The contact group, co-chaired by Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) and Fundisile Mketeni (South Africa), completed two readings of the report. Explaining the drafting process, the Secretariat noted that a longer background document was prepared at a regional scoping meeting held in August 2014 in Paris, France (the Paris Workshop) and will be made available to the assessment experts.

Discussing the scope of the assessment, members agreed to include “climate-related risks such as desertification and silting.” Following a debate on geographic boundaries the group agreed to include territories recognized by the African Union, with an explanatory footnote.

On the rationale, members added a reference to governance and adapted language on the impacts of socioeconomic drivers, calling for the assessment “to consider the relationship between trade agreements and foreign investments on biodiversity and ecosystem services.” On assumptions, some members emphasized that a successful assessment will require building the capacity of African experts.

On the operational structure, members highlighted the need to link regional and subregional TSUs and agreed to request the MEP to undertake a mapping of institutions that can host the TSUs. On communication and outreach the group listed some “traditional” communication tools to be used in disseminating the findings and removed a reference to partnerships with specific institutions, such as SciDev.Net.

AMERICAS: The regional group on the Americas was co-chaired by MEP members Ann Bartuska and Carlos Alfredo Joly and Bureau Vice-Chair Leonel Sierralta (Chile). The group completed a first reading of the report for the Americas, presenting suggestions for clarifications and substantive revisions on the operational paragraphs. On scope, several participants called for highlighting positive issues and the role of indigenous peoples in conservation. On the geographic boundary of the assessment, participants discussed the breakdown of regions, and Co-Chair Joly noted this had also been extensively discussed at the Paris Workshop. A few participants suggested deleting the paragraph on utility. On key datasets, strategic partnerships and initiatives, and communications and outreach, participants suggested additions to the institutions listed. The MEP and the Secretariat will review the proposals made by the group in conjunction with the longer outcome of the Paris Workshop and present a new version of the text to members of the Americas region on Friday.

ASIA-PACIFIC: The regional group on the Asia-Pacific region was co-chaired by Jay Ram Adhikari (Nepal) and Abdul Hamid Zakri (Malaysia). Mark Lonsdale, MEP member, facilitated the discussion. On assumptions, delegates discussed inclusion of data gaps and a transparent review process. Delegates agreed to suggestions from the floor, including: on key data, ILK inclusion, data aggregation and data sets; on the scope, referencing poverty, addressing poor waste management and specifying consequences of climate change; on rationale, to address diversity of ILK and include issues common and specific to small island nations; and, mentioning some strategic partnership and initiatives as well as that the capacity-building task force will highlight priority issues at the subregional level.

On rationale, one party opposed reference to “biodiversity outside of protected areas.” Another emphasized that in several countries, biodiversity and ecosystems to be assessed lie in “productive” rather than “protected” areas.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA: The European and Central Asian regional group was co-chaired by Senka Barudanovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Robert Watson (UK) and Ivar Baste (Norway). Under rationale, some countries urged listing specific ecosystems as examples of vulnerable ecosystems. One noted that having too many in the list could nullify the impact of listing the ecosystems. Others suggested ensuring referencing of coastal and marine systems, with delegates agreeing to include this under the geographic boundaries section. Under utility, delegates agreed to remove references to specific regional agreements and include them in an annex. On chapter outlines some emphasized the need to ensure that elements of generic scoping are not potentially ignored or “downgraded.”

Under key datasets, some called for deletion of references stating that there is data variability between the subregions as well as a lack of availability and reliability in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. One delegate questioned the veracity of the statement. Others countered saying that there is an issue with data variability between the regions. Delegates agreed to reference that there is a lack of data availability and reliability in some Eastern Europe or Central Asia countries.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Thursday confirmed that the nascent IPBES, at times, requires cautious, novel and exploratory maneuvering by members. Describing the afternoon regional breakout group sessions as an “experiment,” one delegate said “some of us are confused on what exactly we are supposed to do and what to leave to experts later in the process.” The resurgence of long-standing geopolitical debates was another unintended, albeit not wholly surprising, consequence.

For example, an appeal to members of one contact group to “dare to think in terms of ecosystem boundaries,” was met with the counter-argument that “this is a UN process,” in which national boundaries are sacrosanct. As delegates left the room, one person commented “this is a very good example of the challenges facing a science-policy platform.”

Nevertheless there were also moments when creative thinking was broadly welcomed, with one delegate citing one such idea as a proposal for the land degradation and restoration assessment include a separate “benefits” chapter. ”