



IPBES-2 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2013

On Wednesday morning, 11 December 2013, IPBES-2 met to address communications and stakeholder engagement, including: the communications and outreach strategy; the stakeholder engagement strategy; and guidance on strategic partnerships. Delegates also discussed institutional arrangements, including the UN collaborative partnership arrangements for the Platform's work. Contact groups on rules and procedures, budget and the initial work programme met throughout the day.

COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH STRATEGY: FRANCE supported adopting the communications and outreach strategy. THAILAND supported monitoring the use of IPBES' information by the media. PAKISTAN called for recognizing the role of the scientific community in the communications strategy. COLOMBIA, with BOLIVIA, suggested adding specific references to different knowledge systems. Malaysia, for ASIA-PACIFIC, urged building on existing initiatives to avoid duplication of work. ETHIOPIA proposed establishing a clearinghouse mechanism that is easily accessible, in order to make available relevant materials. The UK noted the need to clarify the communications strategy's implementation modalities. The NETHERLANDS stressed the need to focus on delivering products that will have an impact on society. URUGUAY highlighted the need to reach out to financial fora and trade organizations.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: ASIA-PACIFIC said that the Plenary must clearly define the coordination and development of a mechanism to engage with stakeholders before taking any final decision on the strategy. SWITZERLAND, with the UK and FINLAND, supported establishing a forum to engage with stakeholders. The NETHERLANDS suggested establishing an inclusive process for stakeholder engagement. GHANA reiterated the importance of engaging with stakeholders. SWEDEN supported the possible nomination of experts by stakeholders. UGANDA noted the importance of stakeholder engagement for the transparency, accountability and functionality of IPBES. IUCN, on behalf of ICSU and IUCN, recalled that the strategy was developed with the goal of implementing IPBES' programme of work and provides for an inclusive definition of stakeholders. On behalf of participants at the Stakeholders' Days, she said stakeholders hoped that the Plenary would adopt a strategy that defines them as "partners" rather than "stakeholders" and involve them in all relevant work of the Platform.

GUIDANCE ON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: ASIA-PACIFIC said that partnerships should go beyond engaging with the UN system and MEAs. SWITZERLAND suggested that MEA Secretariats be assigned specific speaking slots in the Plenary. He said that the active involvement of the four sponsoring partners, UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO and FAO, could enable the participation of a broad range of stakeholders. ARGENTINA indicated that partnerships could be decided on a case by case basis. THAILAND suggested establishing a strategic partnership with the CBD. HONDURAS emphasized the importance of strategic alliances.

The SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY suggested that IPBES make use of existing expertise and organizations and supported stakeholder participation in the nomination of experts. The CBD called for avoiding inconsistencies in the procedures established for involving MEAs and their subsidiary bodies when prioritizing requests that are submitted to IPBES. He welcomed the strategy and highlighted ongoing work to explore the best means to collaborate with IPBES, including in the Biodiversity Liaison Group. CITES said MEAs should be full partners of IPBES. The UNCCD wondered how inputs from scientific subsidiary bodies will be integrated into IPBES' work. The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IIFBES) said indigenous peoples and local communities are essential Platform partners. She recommended: that the strategy recognize the diversity of groups collaborating with the Platform and the uniqueness of their knowledge; and establishing an IPBES voluntary fund for ILC participation. The EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH STRATEGY and the CENTRE FOR ECOLOGY AND HYDROLOGY supported the strategy as a basis for efficient collaboration with scientists and other knowledge holders.

The Plenary then endorsed the IPBES logo.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

UN COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS: The FAO introduced a draft collaborative partnership arrangement to establish an institutional link between IPBES and FAO, UNESCO, UNEP and UNDP (IPBES/2/15) and an information note on the anticipated contributions of these four UN entities to IPBES (IPBES/2/INF/3). He said that while cross-sectoral collaboration could be challenging, it is essential for the credibility and effectiveness of IPBES.

While expressing support for strong collaboration between IPBES and UN agencies, Lithuania, on behalf of the 18 EU members of IPBES, the US and BRAZIL urged revising several sections of the proposed arrangement. The UK supported a more informal partnership and, with the US, stated that only UN agencies could sign the arrangement because IPBES has no



international legal personality. The UK, the US and BRAZIL opposed giving the four UN agencies the right to participate in the meetings of the Plenary, the MEP and other IPBES subsidiary bodies, suggesting that they could attend specific meetings by invitation. MEXICO supported the proposed consultation process between IPBES and UN agencies to address any potential budgetary shortfalls in implementing IPBES activities.

CONTACT GROUPS

RULES AND PROCEDURES: Participants continued addressing the MEP membership rules, focusing on possible amendments to the draft rules of procedure for subsidiary bodies (IPBES/1/12, Annex I). Discussions centered on: the possible participation of Bureau members at MEP meetings as observers; and the possible nomination of MEP members by observers. One participant expressed concern that Bureau attendance in MEP meetings could have significant budgetary implications and may distract MEP members from their core tasks. Other participants, however, supported giving flexibility to the MEP co-chairs to decide who should be invited to MEP meetings.

One delegate supported that observers nominate MEP members. Many opposed, with some delegates stressing that IPBES member states and regions could nevertheless consult with stakeholders in their nomination processes.

In the evening, delegates reviewed the draft procedures for the preparation of the Platform's deliverables.

WORK PROGRAMME AND THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: On the fast track thematic assessment of pollination and food production, to be delivered by March 2015, a new reference to "pollinators" was included in the scope of the assessment. Some delegates questioned whether the focus on pollination, particularly in relation to food production, was too narrow, while others noted that keeping the focus limited is appropriate in order to ensure the delivery of results within a year. Some developing country members stressed that IPBES should demonstrate its uniqueness and that the focus on food production could duplicate work being carried out by FAO. Others highlighted the need for IPBES to engage in areas that have not yet been taken on board by other institutions. However, various developed country members preferred a narrow focus on pollination and food production.

A delegate proposed, and others opposed, considering the contribution of pollinators "to gene flows and restoration of ecosystems." Another delegate supported this proposal by saying that the focus should be on how this assessment can help practitioners to restore pollinators' populations and add value *vis-à-vis* existing work in this area. Eventually, the proposal was retained.

On whether to conduct a thematic assessment on either land degradation and restoration or invasive alien species and their control, there was broad support for undertaking both studies. Some delegates suggested that both studies be fast track assessments, while others queried if this was feasible. MEP Co-Chair Paul Leadley noted that the feasibility of carrying this out depends on how fast track assessments are defined. He added that if it means carrying out studies immediately, this may imply too much work for the scientific community.

On policy support tools and methodologies for scenario analysis and modeling, one delegate said the purpose of developing a guide is to make these tools relevant for policy-making. Delegates agreed that the guide to be developed be continually updated.

Some developing country delegates proposed, and delegates agreed, to include language that links the development of scenarios and modeling with the necessary tools, such as databases and geo-spatial data. They also agreed to text on promoting methods for using different types of knowledge systems.

Delegates then turned to discussing policy support tools and methodologies regarding value, valuation and accounting of biodiversity and ecosystem services. A developed country proposed adding a reference to "economic and non-economic valuation" as opposed to "market and non-market economic valuation." One delegate suggested language on different knowledge systems and holistic valuation. Delegates agreed to revisit the paragraph at a later stage.

One developing country proposed, and others supported, prioritizing a thematic assessment of "sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, and strengthening capacities and tools."

On communication and evaluation of the Platform activities, one delegate supported developing an information and data management plan to be developed by the Secretariat with the Bureau to support future assessments. He said the creation of a catalogue should be one component of an information management system. One delegate cautioned against potential overlap with other activities included in the draft work programme. The proposal remains in brackets.

Delegates discussed developing a catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies. One participant suggested including a reference to a range of methodologies "according to different visions, approaches and knowledge systems," which was eventually retained. Another delegate drew attention to the work being done in the CBD Clearing-House Mechanism and delegates agreed that it is implicit that the links with this mechanism will need to be clarified.

Delegates addressed a proposed activity to perform reviews of the Platform's effectiveness to inform the future development of the Platform. Delegates discussed whether the Bureau, the MEP and/or an independent body would be best placed to develop a procedure for this activity. Delegates agreed to continue consideration of this issue at a later stage.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The third day of IPBES-2 saw delegates conclude their initial consideration of all agenda items and engage in contact group discussions to finalize key outcomes. The high level of participation in the work programme contact group showed that most participants see this item and, particularly, the definition of assessments, as a priority. Nevertheless, some skeptical participants commented "while the IPBES could provide us with better information, it will be critical for it to lead to action-oriented decision-making to address the economic drivers of biodiversity loss."

The discussion on procedures was also well attended, with animated exchanges on the role that the Bureau should play regarding the MEP. "We need to make sure that the MEP delivers in an efficient, credible and transparent manner, so it is key to guarantee its independence from the outset," commented a delegate. Another mused that some members are worried about "too close a relationship" between the Bureau and the MEP, fearing that "scientific debates could turn into political exchanges." However, for some, this fear is unfounded and flexibility is needed to achieve a balanced MEP and to ensure that all relevant stakeholders participate in its work. Looking ahead to Thursday's discussions, in the words of Daniel Defoe, "We had no remedy but to wait and see."