

IPBES-2 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2013

On Thursday, 12 December 2013, IPBES-2 met in contact groups. Delegates addressed the rules and procedures, including the issue of MEP membership; the IPBES budget; and the initial work programme, including elements of the conceptual framework and the draft work programme for 2014-2018. Delegates agreed on the text of a draft decision on the conceptual framework.

CONTACT GROUPS

WORK PROGRAMME AND THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: Participants considered a chart containing the schedule for IPBES deliverables, based on the contact group discussion held on Wednesday. Co-Chair Ivar Baste noted that the chart included a new Plenary session in 2015. The IPBES Secretariat explained that changes introduced to the chart comprised, *inter alia*: a new deliverable on sustainable use of biodiversity, which would cost nearly US\$1 million; and establishing a task force, instead of a time-bound expert group, on procedures for working with indigenous and local knowledge systems.

In the ensuing discussion, many delegates and the MEP co-chairs supported a staggered approach to deliverables, suggesting that a limited number of initial assessments would guarantee the high quality of IPBES products and enable the MEP to gain experience. One delegate highlighted the challenge of simultaneously conducting multiple assessments and finding a sufficient number of experts. Others opposed a staggered approach, emphasizing the need for IPBES to be ambitious and make use of partnerships and the breadth of available expertise to undertake all assessments concurrently. Some of these delegates stressed that all issues in the work programme are equally pressing, urging that the assessment on sustainable use be conducted without delay. The MEP co-chairs suggested the Plenary entrust the MEP with conducting one fast track assessment, one thematic assessment and two methodological assessments for the initial period, stressing that this was the only "feasible approach." One delegate suggested conducting two assessments in 2014, and another two in 2015. Another delegate proposed conducting scoping studies on all assessments in 2014. The latter proposal received considerable support, with one delegate suggesting the use of electronic means in the initial scoping work to limit financial and environmental impacts. MEP Co-Chair Joly said that ILC involvement is a key theme in sustainable use and that early scoping of this assessment would be desirable.

On Plenary sessions, one member opposed holding the next session in 2015, preferring that funds be used for implementation. Others said a 2015 meeting was key to maintain momentum, review priorities and ensure IPBES was on track. Participants agreed to revisit the schedule of deliverables at a later stage.

Resuming their review of the draft work programme, delegates then addressed an activity to develop procedures and approaches for working with indigenous and local knowledge systems and agreed to expand the activity's scope to include "participatory processes." A developed country proposed, and delegates agreed, that a task force be formed "for the period of the work programme 2014-2018" to facilitate the establishment of a roster and a network of experts. Delegates also agreed that the task force establish a participatory mechanism for indigenous and local knowledge systems, facilitate the linkages between indigenous and local populations and scientists, and strengthen the quality of indigenous peoples' participation in the Platform's deliverables.

On regional and sub-regional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services, a developed country suggested that the scoping process be based on bio-geographical, socio-economic and political considerations and account for marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). Various delegates opposed, saying that marine ABNJ are only relevant to the global assessment and that ABNJ considerations should be part of the scoping exercise. Other delegates argued that marine ABNJ do not fall within the mandate of any state and supported considering them in regional and sub-regional assessments. The reference was deleted.

Delegates then agreed to bracket "fast track" assessments throughout the text, pending their definition in the contact group on rules and procedures.

On the assessment of land degradation and restoration, one developing country proposed including a footnote on the impact of sandstorms. This issue will be revisited at a later stage. Delegates also agreed to include a reference to Aichi Target 15 (ecosystem resilience). They then discussed whether a study on invasive alien species (IAS) should be a fast track assessment or a thematic assessment.

On the assessment on sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and strengthening capacities and tools, one country proposed, and delegates agreed, to highlight this activity's contribution to Aichi Target 18 (traditional knowledge). Some countries questioned whether the assessment should have a broad or a narrow focus, with most delegates favoring



the former. One developing country proposed ensuring that indigenous and local knowledge is included. Delegates agreed to both proposals, with minor amendments.

On policy support tools and methodologies regarding value, valuation and accounting of biodiversity and ecosystem services, one delegate supported a reference to different visions, approaches and knowledge systems, while another suggested developing new tools for “intrinsic, existence and bequeath values.” Delegates agreed to both amendments.

On the development by MEP and Bureau members of a procedure to conduct an independent review of IPBES, one participant insisted that an independent body should develop the procedure. Others said the MEP could develop it. Co-Chair Alfred Oteng-Yeboah suggested that the Bureau be also involved, since the task is both administrative and scientific. Delegates agreed that the MEP develop the procedure “in consultation with the Bureau” and that the review be conducted by an independent “body.”

On task forces of “strategic partners” to support deliverables on capacity-building and indigenous and local knowledge, delegates agreed to enable the Plenary to ask the MEP to select task forces. Another participant proposed, and delegates agreed, to include “other organizations” in addition to “strategic partners.”

On technical support, one participant suggested, and delegates agreed, that the Bureau, in addition to the MEP, select institutions that could provide support to the Platform’s deliverables. Delegates also agreed that the Secretariat issue calls for technical support “based on criteria established by the MEP and the Bureau.”

Delegates then addressed an initial scoping for the fast track assessment of pollination and food production prepared by the MEP, to which they provided general comments. One delegate said that the scope of the assessment overlaps with work undertaken by FAO, with some stressing the need to ensure that all assessments provide added value. Some delegates suggested reflecting the elements of the conceptual framework in the scoping document. Others underscored that the assessment should provide new elements and concrete tools for decision-makers. One delegate stressed the relevance of the assessment for the agricultural sector and another one emphasized the assessment’s practical use for policy-making.

One delegate suggested that the scoping study be discussed in depth and approved by the Plenary in Antalya to ensure that the assessment can be carried out by 2015. One delegate supported that all the scoping papers be discussed in detail to ensure transparency and stakeholder support. Supported by others, he called for using a more holistic approach and going beyond the assessment of the economic value of pollination for food production. One delegate suggested focusing on pollinators other than bees, including those that are utilized by indigenous communities.

Delegates agreed on the text of a draft decision on the conceptual framework, without amendments.

RULES AND PROCEDURES: The contact group resumed discussions on Bureau member participation at MEP meetings. Some developing country delegates favored allowing the MEP co-chairs to invite whichever member whose expertise they consider relevant to their discussions. One delegate said that Bureau members should be invited to all MEP meetings. Another said that it should be left to the discretion of the MEP to decide when the two bodies need to work closely on particular issues. A developing country delegate said that the chair should be invited to MEP meetings, given the chair’s role as a liaison

between science and policy. Some delegates said there are budget implications to consider when inviting members of the Bureau. Another called for inviting strategic partners to attend MEP meetings. Delegates will return to these issues at a later stage.

Participants then addressed the guidelines for the nomination and selection of MEP members, where discussions centered on whether nominations for the Panel should be proposed only by members or also by observers. One delegate suggested that observers do not submit nominations directly to the Secretariat, but rather through governments.

Delegates also debated whether to include among the selection criteria for MEP candidate members their willingness to commit at least 20% of their time to the work of the Panel for a 3 year period. Several delegates preferred that this criterion be included in terms of reference or in a draft decision. Eventually, delegates agreed not to address this issue in the rules of procedure. Delegates also agreed to a rule on a voting procedure for electing MEP members.

Afterwards, delegates considered a non-paper on possible elements for a decision on selecting MEP members. One delegate supported that only the MEP and the Plenary review the regional lists of potential MEP members, but not the Bureau. Another suggested that the Bureau only “advise” the regions, based on the selection criteria. Opposing these views, other delegates stated that the Bureau should review the regional lists. One delegate further highlighted potential conflicts of interest if the MEP is mandated to review the lists of future members of the MEP.

A non-paper will be prepared in informal consultations with representatives from the regions, including on outstanding criteria for MEP nominations.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Having weathered potentially frosty conditions in Antalya, delegates continued their hard work on the fourth day of IPBES-2. Discussions over the past two days have taken place largely in contact groups, which, with the exception of the budget group, have been open to observers. One participant was heard commenting that the “repeated calls” by an observer for provision in the budget to support stakeholder participation in IPBES meetings was perhaps to blame for the decision of Platform members to keep their finance discussions “private.” Some participants, however, expressed the view that observers have a strong case to be involved in budget discussions, noting that many of them have provided in-kind contributions to the Platform and are key to its success. Many hoped that in light of the observer’s apologies, the decision may be revisited in the future.

The budget discussions were described as “conscientious,” with close attention being paid to the prioritization of work programme activities. This mirrored the contact group discussions on the work programme, where delegates were seen debating which assessments should have priority. Developing country delegates were caught smiling in satisfaction about the inclusion of an assessment on the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, with one of them stressing that this could “create a real link between IPBES and ILCs.” Some said this study could add real value to current knowledge, since some assessment topics are already covered elsewhere, while others considered that other issues are perhaps “more urgent and need further exploration.” Ultimately, as one delegate put it, “what is essential is that IPBES does not turn into nothing but old wine in a new bottle.”