



IPBES-4 STAKEHOLDER DAYS HIGHLIGHTS: 20 FEBRUARY 2016

The Stakeholder Days preceding the Fourth Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-4 Stakeholder Days) opened on Saturday, 20 February 2016 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In the morning, participants met to hear opening statements from dignitaries. They also heard updates on IPBES and the implementation of its work programme thus far. In the afternoon, participants were informed on the work of the task forces, and experiences from the first thematic and methodological assessments as well as ongoing regional assessments. A series of breakout group sessions then convened to discuss: regional assessments; capacity building; how to best utilize the outcomes of the assessments on pollinators and on scenarios and modeling; and a draft opening statement for the IPBES-4 Plenary.

OPENING SESSION

Simoné Maynard, Australian National University, and Owen Gaffaney, Future Earth, co-facilitated the opening session. Megat Sany Megat Ahmed Supian, Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, Malaysia, welcomed participants and wished them fruitful deliberations.

Noting opportunities for stakeholder engagement in “quite a few areas of IPBES that are becoming more concrete,” IPBES Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie expressed interest in deliberations on the open-ended network of stakeholders. Laurence Perianin, IUCN, highlighted IUCN’s history, core mission, experience and expertise to support IPBES. Raj Kumar, IUCN, emphasized IUCN membership benefits, including strengthened credibility, visibility and a collective voice on conservation issues.

Anne-Hélène Prieur-Richard, Future Earth, highlighted the open-ended network of stakeholders as a formal and concrete mechanism for engagement with IPBES. Observing growing interest in IPBES Stakeholder Days, she called for addressing funding needs for participation of stakeholders from developing countries.

INTRODUCTION TO IPBES AND STAKEHOLDERS

ENGAGEMENT: Anne Larigauderie, IPBES Executive Secretary, presented progress achieved on the four objectives of IPBES. On capacity strengthening and knowledge foundations, she noted: the piloting of the draft programme on fellowships, exchange and training; the development of draft procedures

for working with indigenous and local knowledge (ILK); development of the knowledge and data strategy; and guidance on data and information management for Platform assessments.

On sub-regional, regional and global assessments, she noted that IPBES-4 would be called upon to approve the scoping report for a global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services. With regards to thematic assessments and methodological issues, she highlighted development of reports on: pollinators, pollination and food production; land degradation and restoration; invasive alien species; scenarios and models of biodiversity and ecosystem services; and a methodological assessment on the diverse conceptualization of values of biodiversity and nature’s benefits to people. On the communication and evaluation of Platform deliverables, she highlighted, *inter alia*: an online catalogue of relevant assessments; a revised catalogue on policy support tools and methodologies; and activities on the strategies for communications and outreach and stakeholder engagement.

During the question and answer session, participants, among other things, called for: clarification on the open-ended network of stakeholders; more information on stakeholder involvement in assessments; and for dissemination of IPBES products to the wider public.

PROGRESS OF THE IPBES WORKPROGRAMME

2014-2018: Task Forces: Ivar Baste, Capacity-Building Task Force Coordinator, reported that intersessional work of the capacity-building Task Force and Technical Support Unit (TSU) included: a pilot programme on fellowships; the development of a prototype matchmaking facility, matching capacity needs with resources; and, the first capacity-building forum, held in Dehradun, India in October, 2015.

Brigitte Baptiste, ILK Task Force Coordinator, reported on two meetings of the Task Force, and the piloting of ILK into four ongoing IPBES assessments. She emphasized the persistent gaps in ILK in expert teams.

Thomas Koetz, IPBES Secretariat, reported that the Knowledge and Data Task Force worked on developing, *inter alia*: guidelines on data and metadata and handling knowledge gaps and uncertainty; a core set of indicators; and a proposal for a discovery and access platform.

During the ensuing discussion, participants observed that: capacity-building needs are two-sided with learning needs “also among experts from the North” and resource needs for institutions in developing countries; equality of different knowledge sources is important; and inclusion of ILK in the assessments is a complex challenge.



Experiences from the first Assessments: Hien Ngo, Coordinator of the Thematic Assessment on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production, outlined the various processes conducted over 19 months that were supported by three Author meetings, three workshops, and external review editors. She noted that the assessment contributed to IPBES crosscutting issues, such as procedures and processes for work with ILK and a catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies. Hien said the assessment will also support ongoing IPBES dissemination, outreach and capacity building. She then presented a video on the rearing of stingless bees in the Amazon, produced by the Institute of Peabiru.

The ensuing discussion focused on: the plans for disseminating and implementing the assessment; approaches used to deal with uncertainty; the value created by ILK and how ILK has been communicated and perceived by policy makers; and contributions of invasive alien species and genetically modified crops to pollinator loss.

Karachepon Ninan, Chair of the Methodological Assessment on Scenarios and Models of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, provided an overview of the process of drafting and compiling the assessment, saying that the assessment aims to provide advice on using scenarios and models in IPBES activities. He outlined the assessment's high-level messages, which will be discussed by the IPBES-4 Plenary as part of the summary for policy makers.

Regional Assessments: The Coordinators of the regional assessments reported on process and status of the regional assessments; composition and experts; and opportunities for input by stakeholders.

Sana Okayasu, Asia and Pacific regional assessment, and Michele Walters, Africa regional assessment, said these assessments are aiming for completion by the end of 2017 and approval by the spring of 2018. Mauricio Bedoya, Americas regional assessment, and Amor Torre-Marín, Europe and Central Asia regional assessment, said an important lesson from these assessments was that the number of experts involved may vary among regions and by chapters.

Responding to questions on opportunities for stakeholder participation, Felice van der Plaats, IPBES Secretariat, noted IPBES' on-going work on building strategic partnerships in all regions and identifying organizations that can provide data and knowledge. She emphasized that all assessments are inclusive of ILK, and suggested the external review of the regional assessments, scheduled for 30 May 2016, would be a good opportunity for ILK to provide input to these assessments.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS: Some participants noted divergent information from governments and academia on biodiversity status, thus potentially affecting information validation for the assessments. Participants also discussed the complexity of ILK integration noting its scattered nature, diverse languages and sources. Some highlighted the need for ILK expertise in each chapter. Panelists reported that communication between regional Coordinators is key to ensure cohesion and comparability. On expertise, some noted that government nominees in some regions lacked adequate capacity. Stakeholders said their role as IPBES observers includes recommending and lobbying for experts.

USING THE OUTCOMES OF THE POLLINATION ASSESSMENT: On communicating assessment results to a broader audience, participants suggested: mainstreaming the

assessment results in education; utilizing social media; the value of presentations at local, national and international levels; and needing targeted information for different stakeholders that is produced mindful of policy cycles. Participants also noted the importance of conflict of interest policies, stressed that assessments must be rigorous and comprehensive, and emphasized ensuring diversity of authorship.

USING THE OUTCOMES OF THE SCENARIO ASSESSMENT: This session addressed how stakeholders can contribute to disseminating outcomes; "educating" policy makers; and generating new models and scenarios by, for instance, exploiting the opportunity of the potential global assessment. Participants highlighted improving the usefulness of models and scenarios by "translating" technical terminology, potentially replicating the model of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for information dissemination, and lobbying delegates to progress scenario tools and approaches.

CAPACITY BUILDING: Discussions in this group focused on challenges and ways to move beyond the traditional approach to capacity building. On challenges, participants noted difficulties in assessing and using existing capacities, and the need for building capacities across multiple levels. They also noted the need to ensure that capacity building reaches the younger generations and builds long-term capacities as opposed to focusing only on the immediate needs of an assessment. Many participants called for a new approach to capacity building to include: the sharing of capacities; recognizing that scientists also need to build their capacity in working with diverse knowledge systems; the building of capacities for social learning; and building institutions that bridge the gap between different knowledge systems.

STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION: The breakout group on the joint opening statement invited all participants to submit topics to be included in the statement and suggested several elements under the topics of: stakeholder engagement; the open-ended network; achieving quality assessments; and communication visibility.

The co-facilitators of the breakout groups reported back to plenary and Owen Gaffney closed the session for the day.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As participants strolled into the Kuala Lumpur Convention Center to take part in the IPBES-4 Stakeholder Days, many overlooked the delays in registration, and, welcoming the facilitators' flexibility to begin promptly, gathered ready to address a "packed agenda" aimed at improving stakeholders' involvement in the process. Reflecting on the opening session, one participant noted that Stakeholder Days have become a useful tradition at IPBES and "newcomers" to the process were heard appreciating the "atmosphere of mutual support and interest between stakeholders and the IPBES Secretariat."

Throughout the day, many lauded IPBES for their "groundbreaking task" of including ILK into the many different assessments being produced; one participant even suggested that this model could be used in other similar fora. However, despite these positives, delegates also debated the challenges of ensuring that government expert nominations adequately consider stakeholders' expertise, and the dilemma of generating new data under "tight deadlines."

As discussions for the day concluded, many agreed that greater attention should be paid to dissemination, as there was a danger that completed assessments would otherwise become merely "shelved reports."