



## **IPBES-4 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2016**

IPBES-4 delegates met in two contact groups throughout the day and into the evening. Contact group I continued line-by-line negotiations of the summary for policy makers (SPM) of the thematic assessment on pollination, pollinators and food production. Contact group II addressed the scoping reports for a global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services and sustainable use, work on policy support tools and methodologies, procedures for the review of the Platform, and capacity building.

### **CONTACT GROUP I**

**POLLINATION ASSESSMENT:** Contact group Co-Chair Bob Watson (UK) reported back on progress made during Tuesday evening’s discussions. He explained that, going forward, when discussions on a paragraph would exceed 15 minutes, the paragraph would be parked and experts, or disagreeing delegates, would be asked to work on text and report back to the contact group.

The group first resolved several outstanding issues, including clarifications and textual edits. Delegates then progressed in their line-by-line consideration of the SPM, including several revised figures.

Delegates clarified text, including on: the background to pollinators, pollination and food production; values of pollinators and pollination; and status and trends in pollinators, pollination and pollinator-dependent crops and wild plants. The contact group also agreed to insert updated figures on the dependency of micronutrient production on pollination and on the status of wild pollinator taxa.

On drivers of pollinator decline, delegates also discussed findings related to the status of western honey bee hives, the percentage of pollinators threatened by extinction, changes in the area and productivity of pollinator-dependent crops, and the role of biocultural diversity in supporting pollinator abundance.

On drivers of pollinator loss, delegates discussed availability of data and research gaps, the role of land-use change and land-use practices for pollinator decline and the impact of pesticide use on pollinators. Delegates made editorial changes and clarified several key findings and explanatory paragraphs, including eliminating policy-prescriptive language.

Divergent views emerged over text regarding the use of insecticides, and an informal group was established to further discuss these issues. Discussions on text mentioning food

sovereignty, biocultural heritage, free prior informed consent and other references to rights-based approaches in paragraphs on policy response options were also delegated to an informal group to address divergent views among delegates.

### **CONTACT GROUP II**

**GLOBAL ASSESSMENT:** Co-Chair Ivar Baste (Norway) requested that delegates provide comments for consideration by the MEP, in order to save time. Many noted the need to clarify the interrelationships between the global assessment and the first World Ocean Assessment. On the rationale of the assessment, some called for including drivers of change and consistently referencing “ecosystem services” and “ecosystem functions.” Others noted the assessment should “enhance the use of” rather than “develop” policy tools; and catalyze knowledge generation. On the utility of the assessment, members listed that it: responds to requests by governments and MEAs; addresses stakeholder engagement; informs regional policies; emphasizes ease of access to the knowledge generated; and addresses synergies with the SDGs.

On the methodological approach, delegates questioned whether parties should be able to suggest relevant data sources for the review. They underscored the importance of dialogue to ensure the output of the assessment is as relevant as possible. Discussing the chapter outlines, delegates urged clarifying that the assessment will synthesize existing evidence only, without engaging in the collection of additional data.

Other suggestions included: adding a reference to “holistic and integrated visions”; ensuring consistent references to different types of ecosystems; resource mobilization; and clarifying the link between the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook and IPBES. Delegates also debated: the need to clarify the goals of the chapters; avoiding duplication of work; and whether to include National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and trade agreements in the analysis of synergies and trade-offs associated with meeting multiple goals in the context of sustainable development.

Regarding scenarios and models, some noted the links with the methodological assessment on scenarios and models, and the need to relate with work on scenarios under the IPCC.

One participant noted that the opportunities for decision-makers presented are inadequate. Another delegate questioned a reference to the “polycentric and nested nature of governance” noting it is a complicated phrase for policy makers. On the data



and information section, one participant stated that it should take into account existing indicators in other processes to avoid using diverse sets of indicators.

Several delegates underlined that capacity-building activities should extend beyond the completion of the assessment and incorporate all areas, including ILK and policy makers. One participant called for definitions of the terms “zero-,” “first-” and “second-order” drafts. One participant said in-kind contributions should be reflected in the costs and budgets, whereas another participant called for including support from the capacity-building TSU for the assessment.

**POLICY SUPPORT:** In the afternoon, delegates discussed the catalogue of policy tools and methodologies (IPBES/4/12). One delegate said that a common understanding regarding the policy support tools and methodologies is needed across all assessments.

Another delegate stated that lessons learnt from assessments could assist in developing the catalogue. Some participants expressed concern regarding the budget, noting that as the budget has not yet been approved, no final decisions can be taken on this item. On a schematic representation of the interrelationship between policy formulation, policy instruments, and policy-support tools and methodologies, delegates proposed: aligning wording with that of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; and recognizing the diverse conceptualizations of values.

**PROCEDURES FOR THE REVIEW OF THE PLATFORM:** The Secretariat, introduced the relevant document (IPBES/4/16), and Co-Chair Asghar Fazel (Iran) called for general comments. Some delegates noted that the policy component in the review is weak. Many said the proposed timing for the final review would overload the IPBES-6 agenda, noting that IPBES-6 already has to address the regional assessments and the land degradation assessment. They suggested more emphasis on the midterm review, which is scheduled for consideration at IPBES-5, adding that the focus should be on the administrative work of the Platform. Some also suggested that the midterm review be carried out internally, rather than by an independent reviewer.

Participants also considered the annex on terms of reference for the reviews. Regarding the appointment of the reviewers, some noted that external reviewers should be nominated rather than appointed and should come from the social sciences, rather than the natural sciences. Others said that since the midterm review would dwell on the administrative aspects of the Platform, the reviewers' expertise would not need to be as broad as suggested. One participant said reviewers should provide their expertise *pro bono*, in a similar manner as experts who are engaged in the IPBES' assessments.

**CAPACITY BUILDING:** The contact group then took up the agenda item on capacity building (IPBES/4/6). Ivar Baste, as Co-Chair of the Capacity-Building Task Force, provided an overview of the work undertaken thus far. Regarding the continuation of the pilot for the draft programme on fellowship, exchange and training, some noted the need to prioritize partnerships with organizations, in particular those that attended the first Capacity-building Forum, held in October 2015 in India. Others suggested: a special emphasis on experts from Central

and Eastern Europe; the sustainability of the draft programme; tailoring the matchmaking facility to key priorities identified by the Plenary; and capacity building for IPLCs. The contact group then considered and agreed on the associated draft decision on capacity building, with textual amendments referencing the role of BES-Net and the need to prioritize capacity building needs.

**SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY:** Marie Stenseke (Sweden) and Sebsebe Demissew (Ethiopia), Co-Chairs of the assessment on sustainable use, summarized comments on the scoping report received in plenary. Co-Chair Fazel invited participants to comment on the report. Several participants noted that the scope was too broad. One participant suggested using the CBD's definition of sustainable use, which includes wild species and ecosystem services. Others called for linkages with CITES' work on sustainable use. Participants also called for inclusion of good practice and success stories, and policy-relevant messages. Some participants favored postponing this report to allow for input from the regional and global assessments. Others opposed, saying sustainable use of biodiversity is paramount for them. Some said the scoping report would have been best discussed in a face-to-face meeting, rather than through an e-conference.

Fazel called on the Co-Chairs of the assessment to provide further guidance for refining the scoping report before further consideration in the contact group.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

Almost half-way through the meeting, IPBES-4 delegates have become firmly ensconced in contact group discussions. Some managed to keep their calm even as they scrambled from one room to the other trying to follow the line-by-line negotiations on the summary for policy makers of the pollination assessment in Contact Group I, while trying to stay abreast with the many issues addressed in Contact Group II. The latter hit a wall in the late afternoon when discussing the scoping report for an assessment on sustainable use. While it became clear that many felt more work is needed on the scoping document itself, budget issues emerged as another stumbling block. Some were heard saying that despite the cost savings of an e-conference, face-to-face meetings would have perhaps been better in the long run. Others feared, however, that this consideration would put the assessment's timeline in jeopardy, recalling that some donor countries had already suggested they'd accept “kicking some assessments down the road” in order to prioritize the global assessment. One observer noted it would be a true bridging of “policy” and science to get the scoping document to a point where all are happy to move forward.

Over in Contact Group I, several delegates expressed relief that well-known issues of contention over “certain types of agrochemicals” and “certain rights-based approaches to ecological agriculture” were moved promptly to informal consultations. One seasoned delegate expressed his surprise when the issues were resolved hours ahead of Wednesday night's deadline, noting that these “have been around since day one.” Others lauded the spirit of compromise and professionalism that characterized the summary for policy makers negotiations noting that there is now a “high level of confidence that the assessment will be released on Friday as scheduled.”