



IPBES-4 HIGHLIGHTS: FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2016

IPBES-4 delegates met in two contact groups in the morning, afternoon and evening, and in plenary in the morning and afternoon.

Contact Group I continued deliberations on indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) systems throughout the day. Contact Group II finalized outstanding matters on the scoping report for a global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the morning, and continued negotiating the Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) of the Methodological Assessment on Scenarios and Modelling of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in the afternoon.

A brief plenary was held in the late morning to endorse the report of the credentials committee and approve the SPM and the technical report of the Thematic Assessment on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production. Plenary reconvened in the afternoon to elect new bureau members, and to consider the scoping report for the global assessment.

Discussions in the contact groups continued into the evening.

CONTACT GROUP I

WORK ON ILK SYSTEMS: Co-Chair Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) invited delegates to consider chapeau text providing context to the procedures for bringing ILK into the Platform’s assessments.

Delegates agreed to state that nothing should be construed as diminishing the existing rights of IPLCs; however, the US opposed a reference to the “approach of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.” AUSTRALIA and EU IPBES MEMBERS agreed that the reference was not necessary. COLOMBIA, NORWAY and BOLIVIA called for keeping a modified, broader reference. Delegates agreed to a US proposal to reference “international obligations and national legislation.” IIFBES emphasized that “few states have national legislation to protect and respect the rights of IPLCs” and stressed, supported by NORWAY, the need for a framework that addresses how IPBES takes into account prior informed consent (PIC).

Delegates then addressed text reflecting proposals elaborated by the contact group during the previous night’s session. They agreed to the EU IPBES MEMBERS’ proposal to refer to “ILK holders and ILK experts” throughout the text to ensure that both holders and experts are included. Delegates also agreed that

the identification of ILK should include all relevant sources of ILK, not only published sources, and to add language ensuring that ILK holders and ILK experts are included in the author teams drafting SPMs and synthesis reports. The contact group forwarded the text to plenary, with the recommendation to add the procedures for bringing ILK to the Platform’s assessments, to the procedures for the preparation of the Platform’s deliverables.

On suggested actions, SWEDEN proposed addressing the validation of ILK and the value of diverse knowledge systems for the Platform’s work. Delegates also agreed to request the ILK Task Force and the MEP to continue developing the approaches to incorporate ILK into the Platform for consideration at IPBES-5. IIFBES said this work should follow a participatory approach and involve IPLCs. COLOMBIA cautioned that piloting of the approaches in regional assessments should precede global piloting.

In the afternoon, the contact group considered a draft decision on knowledge foundations. Delegates recognized the value of a roster of ILK holders and ILK experts to assist governments and stakeholders in their search for nominees.

SWEDEN cautioned that using criteria for the selection of a roster could send a wrong signal and risk losing expertise that is not selected. Delegates revised text to take note of the progress to date on the development of a roster and to “urge the MEP, in conjunction with the ILK taskforce, to further develop this roster.”

On piloting ILK procedures, delegates agreed to text that requests the continuation of the piloting clarifying this would refer to the piloting of ILK Dialogue Workshops.

Delegates also considered a proposal, made by Colombia in the morning, requesting the MEP to define specific procedures to follow up on the process and contributions of ILK holders and experts, including a PIC policy or tool, and to present a proposal at IPBES-5. The US proposed alternative language, requesting the MEP to develop a process to “address PIC.” IIFBES stressed the need for a “free” PIC process to ensure that PIC is respected when new knowledge comes in through the IPBES process.

CONTACT GROUP II

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT: Paul Leadley, Assessment Co-Chair, said the MEP had suggested reducing the number of authors from 160 to 130 due to budget constraints. The Secretariat clarified this would save approximately US\$200,000.



One participant suggested that external reviews be replaced by internal reviews conducted by MEP members, similar to IPCC assessments. Others said the reduction of authors should not compromise the quality.

On communication and outreach, delegates agreed to delete text regarding user feedback on policy-relevant scenarios and response options.

Delegates discussed whether to delete reference to “biocultural hotspots,” agreeing eventually that the assessment will examine “biological and cultural diversity and the links between them, globally important biodiversity hotspots, and migratory species.”

Contact Group II agreed to forward the scoping report on the global assessment to plenary for approval.

ASSESSMENT OF SCENARIOS AND MODELING: Reporting on the outcomes of the previous night’s discussions, Assessment Co-Chair Simon Ferrier reported that a box with high-level messages had been moved to the front of the report, and the definitions of scenarios and models had been included in the introductory section. Changes in the text and figures in the section on key messages under the first high-level message were elucidated by the Assessment Co-Chairs and accepted by the contact group.

In the afternoon, participants resumed discussions on the key findings under the second high-level message on the relevant methods and tools available. Ferrier, responding to a query, agreed that the SPM would benefit from including references back to the technical report, but requested that this be an “editorial task after the report is approved due to time constraints.”

Participants discussed findings including whether currently available scenarios meet the needs of IPBES assessments, and whether ILK can contribute to scenarios and models.

Participants then addressed the findings under the high-level message on the challenges remaining in developing and applying scenarios and models. These included: the existence of important gaps in spite of a wide range of models available; the need for better links between scenarios and models; and the fact that uncertainty is often poorly evaluated and may lead to serious misconceptions during employment of results for decision-making activities.

PLENARY

CREDENTIALS: Delegates endorsed the Credentials Committee’s report stating that 78 out of 90 members attending had submitted credentials in line with the Rules of Procedure.

POLLINATION ASSESSMENT: Contact Group I Co-Chair Watson submitted the revised SPM to plenary for approval, highlighting its outstanding quality and commending the collegial and constructive atmosphere during contact group negotiations. IPBES-4 Chair Zakri invited delegates to approve the SPM and accept the chapters of the thematic report without further amendments, with the understanding that the report would be revised to reflect changes made to the SPM. ETHIOPIA requested, and delegates agreed, to reflect in the decision that IPBES took note of data gaps and proposed further research in developing countries, particularly in Africa. FRANCE requested re-inserting a paragraph that had been agreed to during the contact group describing the assessment’s

scope and objectives. Delegates agreed to France’s proposal with minor amendments and approved the SPM and the thematic report.

NOMINATION OF BUREAU MEMBERS: The AFRICAN REGION nominated Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) as Vice-Chair, Fundisile Mketeni (South Africa) as Member, and Larbi Sbaï (Morocco) as alternate member. EASTERN EUROPE nominated Rashad Allahverdiev (Azerbaijan) as Vice-Chair, Senka Barudanović (Bosnia-Herzegovina) as member, and Adem Bilgin (Turkey) as alternate member. GRULAC and ASIA PACIFIC requested additional time for consultation.

REPORTS: The Co-Chairs of the contact groups and the budget group reported on progress. Budget Committee Co-Chair Spencer Thomas (Grenada) reported that the budget group is considering ways of narrowing the 2016-2017 budget gap. The US and CANADA favored prioritizing the global assessments. The AFRICAN GROUP said selection of priority assessments should be based on agreed criteria.

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT: Delegates considered the draft scoping report for a global assessment (IPBES/4/L.3). BRAZIL, MEXICO and the US proposed, and delegates agreed, to postpone adoption due to possible changes from ongoing contact group discussions.

IN THE CORRIDORS

There was a clear sense of relief around the room as delegates patted themselves on the back, seeming to clink virtual champagne glasses, after IPBES approved its first-ever assessment – the Thematic Assessment on Pollination and Pollinators Associated with Food Production. This led some IPBES veterans to make enthusiastic statements, calling the Summary for Policy Makers “better than anything that the IPCC has ever produced” and stating that “I am now dreaming that one day IPBES will also receive the Nobel Peace Prize.”

More seriously though, delegates expressed their awareness that “at IPBES, we are all facing something new.” This new challenge was addressed during negotiations on a process for the participation of ILK holders and ILK experts. Responding to a suggestion to “view this engagement process as organic in nature” and still in “a developmental state,” one participant opined “if that is the case, early involvement of IPLCs is all the more important.”

This “novelty challenge” of IPBES was also recognized in discussions on the proposed IPBES review. “In spite of a limited budget, we need to find quality evaluators equipped with a wide range of expertise,” one observer suggested while another said “we need to safeguard the founding principles of IPBES and ensure that ILK holders are part of the process.”

This sense continued in discussions, around coffee tables, on the looming decision on prioritization in the IPBES work programme. One delegate said “we can’t lose the opportunity to make headway on ILK integration in regional assessments just because some give preference to the global assessment.”

Aware that these important issues still need to be settled during the two remaining work days of IPBES-4, delegates missed out on the “Thank goodness it’s Friday!” feeling.