

IPBES 10 Highlights: Friday, 1 September 2023

On the penultimate day of the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES 10), Working Group 1 finalized its consideration of the summary for policymakers (SPM) of the thematic assessment of invasive alien species (IAS) and their control.

Working Group 1

WG 1 Co-Chair Douglas Beard (Western European and Others Group, WEOG) thanked delegates for their hard work during the previous day's evening session and invited members to start deliberations on the key messages of the SPM. Assessment Co-Chair Helen Roy presented a revised text reflecting the approved background messages.

On a paragraph about impacts of IAS to people and nature, one delegate suggested adding a sentence on the need for improved data collection in specific regions. Co-Chair Roy agreed with the sentiment, but stated this would better fit in another part of the SPM, perhaps in relation to the data gaps table.

On a sentence regarding vulnerability of areas that are protected or remote, members debated how to formulate the message, in particular whether to keep it simple or include the list of areas found in the background messages. They eventually converged on a simple formulation, more appropriate for uptake by policymakers.

On a message on biological invasions adding to marginalization and inequity, delegates agreed to add reference to Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), ethnic minorities, and poor rural and urban communities being disproportionately impacted.

On a message reflecting on policies and their implementation being insufficient in managing biological invasions, and preventing and controlling IAS, a lengthy discussion took place over the inclusion of references to Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 (IAS) and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 15.8 (prevention of IAS). Delegates agreed to retain both references to maintain the links with past and ongoing policies and targets.

On IAS trends, delegates debated a sentence regarding the historical introduction of alien species, specifically whether the emphasis should be on the lack of consideration or on knowledge of their "invasive" character or their "negative impact." Delegates eventually agreed to replace reference to "alien species" with "IAS," and not to reopen background text already agreed upon.

Delegates had a lengthy debate on a paragraph regarding the ongoing amplification of drivers of change to nature that may increase the number of IAS and their impacts. Specifically, members discussed whether it is appropriate to combine demographic drivers, economic activities, and land- and sea- use change as drivers that increase the number of IAS in a single sentence. Some delegates argued that combining these drivers may cause confusion because they interact with each other and have varying degrees of impacts in different regions. After several proposals by the Assessment Co-Chairs, members agreed to a more general text which mentions the different drivers, noting regional variation.

On prevention and preparedness, members agreed to note that these are the most cost-effective options and thus crucial for managing threats from biological invasions. A delegate suggested

references to the challenges linked to IAS introduction via biofouling. Members agreed to: note, in the background messages, that it is estimated that nearly 70% of marine IAS established worldwide have been introduced via biofouling; and address the need for relevant coordination and collaboration in a subsequent part of the key messages.

On containment and control as effective options for IAS that cannot be eradicated, delegates agreed to note that biological control has been successfully applied in many cases, but it may also have non-target effects if not well regulated.

On discussions of integrated governance, delegates debated, once again, whether it should refer to managing biological invasions or IAS. Some members reasoned that since the message also refers to pathways, management should refer to biological invasions and not just IAS. Others disagreed, stating that it is the threat of IAS that should be managed. Delegates eventually agreed to a compromise, which included both IAS and biological invasions, after confirmation by the assessment authors that it is supported by the relevant background message and evidence in the report.

Delegates deliberated how to include a reference to biofouling to a paragraph on collaboration across sectors for supporting the management of biological invasions. After discussions, they agreed to the suggestion of Assessment Co-Chair Peter Stoett to include biofouling as an example of shipping.

On IAS prevention and control, delegates agreed that existing, collaborative, and multi-sectoral approaches could provide frameworks for cross-disciplinary thinking to contribute to the management of biological invasions.

On the significance of public awareness, engagement, and capacity building for the prevention and control of biological invasions, delegates agreed that community-driven eradication campaigns can raise awareness and contribute to action.

On the need for immediate and sustained action to manage biological invasions and mitigate the negative impact of IAS, members agreed to refer to the need to increase the availability and accessibility of information and means of implementation.

Co-Chair Beard invited delegates to revisit pending issues in the background messages. Members discussed: language tweaks to address existing concerns; additional examples as requested during the first reading; and controversial issues, including reference to "international standards," and regional variation of available data and knowledge reviewed for the assessment.

Members then turned their attention to figures and tables contained in the SPM, with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) presenting amendments made following members' suggestions.

Members further agreed to add an additional appendix reflecting information for documenting and managing biological invasions of existing IAS databases, which provide information, data, and knowledge products relevant for planning and implementation of management options.

On the preamble, delegates revisited the wording to ensure consistency with the rest of the SPM. Some delegates raised the issue of whether to include a paragraph or a footnote on data gaps and language barriers that limited the information used in the assessment. Assessment Co-Chair Anibal Pauchard reassured delegates that the report is truly a comprehensive global report and that experts had reviewed data from all regions.

Co-Chair Beard thanked all delegates for their hard work, commitment, and spirit of cooperation, and closed the deliberations of WG 1.

Working Group 2

Improving the effectiveness of the Platform: WG 2 Co-Chair Bishwa Nath Oli (Asia Pacific) opened the session. MEP Co-Chair Shizuka Hashimoto introduced the relevant documents ([IPBES/10/1/Add.2](#), [IPBES/10/9](#), [IPBES/10/INF/16](#), [IPBES/10/Other/4](#)) and presented an overview of the draft terms of reference for the midterm review of the 2030 rolling work programme of IPBES, noting it will feature both an internal and external review.

On the objectives of the midterm review, members agreed to add that it will evaluate the effectiveness of the communications and outreach work, and, to the extent possible, the policy-impact of IPBES' work. Without finding agreement, they debated at length:

- where and how to refer to the special circumstances of developing countries;
- whether to separate references to members from those to observers and other stakeholders; and
- whether and where to insert references to the fulfillment of the IPBES operating principles or specific references to regional, gender, and linguistic balance as well as multidisciplinary perspectives and diverse knowledge systems.

On the internal review, delegates agreed it will seek the views of members of relevant IPBES bodies, and former members of the Bureau and the MEP.

On the external review, delegates discussed the desired composition of the external review panel and agreed to insert references to regional and gender balance, multidisciplinary expertise, IPLCs, and youth.

Members diverged on whether the external review panel should be supported by an independent qualified consultant or coordinated by an external professional organization. Co-Chair Nath Oli invited informal consultations.

Regarding the methodology, delegates agreed that the draft survey questions will be made available for review, before use in the internal and external reviews. They further agreed the external review panel would hold an in-person meeting to commence its work.

Discussions continued in an evening session.

Additional elements of the IPBES rolling work programme up to 2030: WG 2 Co-Chair Julia Marton-Lefèvre (WEOG) invited delegates to discuss the initial scoping report for the fast-track methodological assessment of integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and ecological connectivity, which they agreed to prepare. She stressed that, if the group does not reach an agreement on a text to present to plenary, the assessment will have to be postponed.

On the scope and rationale, delegates debated at length whether to refer to the "use and change in use" or "use and direct change in use" of land, inland waters, and sea, and whether to also refer to areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). They agreed on the insertion of ABNJ, but not to that of "direct" change.

After some members proposed references to additional Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) targets, delegates agreed to remove all references to individual targets to which the assessment will be relevant.

They agreed the assessment will also cover lessons learned and best practices in "identifying," restoring, and enhancing ecological connectivity.

Regarding the methodological approach, delegates inserted agreed language from the initial scoping report of the monitoring assessment, agreed to the previous day.

Turning to the chapter outline, starting with chapter 1 (setting the scene), delegates added references to: the importance of ecological connectivity, spatial planning, and their interconnection; assessing the role of private actors; and GBF target 4 (species' conservation), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 14 (life below water), and 15 (life on land). They also agreed that the assessment will support people in vulnerable situations, in particular Indigenous peoples, and include a definition of the concept of ecological connectivity.

On chapter 2 (implementing GBF target 1 on biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning), delegates agreed the chapter will highlight the importance of including biodiversity in all spatial planning (including urban planning) for conserving "and

enhancing" nature and nature's contributions to people. They agreed to add a reference to respecting the rights of IPLCs and achieving the SDGs in relation to bringing the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance close to zero by 2030.

Delegates converged on taking a land- and sea-scape approach to explore the various demands and interests as well as the interactions between different land and sea uses. They then debated at length: whether to include a list of examples of land and sea uses the chapter may explore; which examples to include; and whether the list should be moved to a footnote. Two members opposed references to hydropower development and agricultural production, with several others urging retention of agriculture. One member noted the list's value in helping governments identify the relevant experts to nominate for the assessment. The MEP supported removing the list, noting the aim for experts to look at all land and sea uses to deliver a comprehensive assessment. They also noted that the call for experts that will be issued for the report will provide more details as to relevant expertise. Delegates agreed to remove the list.

On chapter 3 (implementing GBF target 2 on ecological restoration and 3 on protected areas and sustainable use), members agreed that the chapter will take into account the effectiveness of types of protection and other effective area-based conservation measures when looking at how land and sea use can be effective in protecting biodiversity. In reflecting on the translation of global targets at the national and local levels, delegates agreed the chapter will identify key priorities and challenges "also in relation to the sustainable development and challenges of each country." They further agreed to insertions on: the role and contributions of Indigenous territories and traditional lands; and assessing nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, and Mother Earth-centric actions, as tools and strategies to promote sustainable livelihoods and income-generating opportunities for restoration. Members also discussed measures and procedures to avoid the duplication efforts with other IPBES assessments and work under the CBD.

On chapter 4 (maintaining, restoring, and enhancing ecological connectivity), delegates agreed the chapter will not only assess the role and importance of ecological connectivity as a key component of spatial planning for the survival of wild animals and plant species, but also to the functioning of ecosystems and genetic diversity, to cover all three levels of biodiversity.

On chapter 6 (enabling environment), different members questioned the reference to well-conceived policies, good governance, community buy-in, and long-term commitment to meeting goals. Delegates agreed the chapter will assess science-informed policies and governance at all levels, including transboundary governance where appropriate, removing the other references. In relation to adaptive management, they added a reference to restoration.

Discussions continued in the evening.

In the Corridors

"That was a bit too much suspense for my taste," shared a seasoned delegate as she exited the venue on the penultimate day of the meeting. In both Working Groups, delegates held their breath for a good part of the day, anxious to see whether agreement would be reached on outstanding issues.

In the final tense moments of the deliberations in Working Group 1, Co-Chair Beard resorted to pleading with delegates to trust the tremendous effort that went into delivering a comprehensive assessment of invasive alien species (IAS) and their control. This managed to infuse a new sense of resolve and delegates eventually erupted in a prolonged standing ovation, as they completed their task. In an emotional finale, Co-Chair Beard thanked everyone for their hard work, commitment, and spirit of cooperation.

As the IAS assessment report authors left for a celebratory dinner, delegates in Working Group 2 were still hard at work. "I did not expect these discussions to be so contentious," shared a puzzled observer. "It seems like it was easier to reach agreement on the IAS assessment than on the terms of the midterm review," he added.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of IPBES 10 will be available on Tuesday, 5 September 2023 at enb.iisd.org/intergovernmental-science-policy-platform-biodiversity-ecosystem-services-ipbes10