

**IPBES-9 Highlights:  
Thursday, 7 July 2022**

The fifth day of the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-9) was, despite the hard work, a celebratory one. A plenary session, meeting in the afternoon, approved the summary for policymakers (SPM) and accepted the individual chapters of the thematic assessment of the sustainable use of wild species. The official launch of the assessment will take place on Friday, 8 July.

Working Group 1 (WG1) met throughout the day and into the evening, trying to finalize consideration of the SPM of the methodological assessment regarding the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits, including biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services (values assessment). WG2 focused for another day on the scoping report on the methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people (business and biodiversity assessment).

**Plenary**

IPBES Chair Ana María Hernández Salgar opened Thursday afternoon's plenary session. Stadler Trengove, IPBES Secretariat, reported on credentials. On the dates and venue for IPBES-11, Chair Hernández noted no offers had been received and tasked the Bureau with identifying a suitable venue and announcing the decision at IPBES-10.

The budget group reported on its deliberations, noting constructive progress. WG2 Co-Chair Julia Marton-Lefèvre presented on progress, noting several items yet to be addressed.

WG1 Co-Chair Douglas Beard summarized the status of work in WG1, noting advancement during the ongoing deliberations on the values assessment, and the substantial progress needed to conclude before the deadline. He confirmed conclusion of work on the sustainable use assessment, thanking all delegates and experts for their hard work and dedication.

Chair Hernández presented the SPM (IPBES/9/L.12), and thanked the WG1 Co-Chairs and all experts involved for their hard work. She invited delegates to formally approve the SPM of the thematic assessment of the sustainable use of wild species, and accept the chapters of the assessment.

Many lauded the comprehensive and ambitious assessment and pointed to editorial changes. Several members requested to enrich the key messages by including the agreed subtitles in addition to section and sub-section headings. A few members voiced concerns, saying such a change would require reviewing at least some of the accepted subtitles.

Chair Hernández pleaded with delegates not to reopen the text. Delegates adopted the SPM and approved the individual chapters.

The assessment's co-chairs delivered emotional addresses.

John Donaldson said "We used to work in silos; this time we worked together to get the big picture and ended up with a picture much bigger than we ever thought."

Jean-Marc Fromentin stressed the importance of bringing social and natural scientists together to properly address the sustainable

use of wild species. "We have all arrived at the same conclusion that humans are fully part of nature," he underscored and added, quoting Aldo Leopold, "citizens of the Earth community."

Co-Chair Marla Emery emphasized that the robust knowledge base of the assessment is an outcome of IPBES commitment to bring together multiple knowledge systems and sources, integrating social and natural sciences. She lauded the "experts who worked on Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) to bring that fountain of knowledge into the assessment."

Luthando Dziba, Co-Chair of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP), congratulated and thanked all for a successful result.

Jake Rice, Chief scientist-Emeritus, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and one of the assessment's authors, acknowledged the leadership role of WG1 Co-Chair Beard and noted that the diversity of knowledge is "what IPBES and the assessment are about," underscoring that "the richness of humanity is its diversity, which can live in harmony with the world's biodiversity."

IPBES Chair Hernández thanked and congratulated all involved for a comprehensive, high-quality assessment; reminded delegates that work is ongoing and a busy day is still ahead; and renewed the plenary's appointment for Saturday.

**Working Group 1**

WG1 resumed consideration of the key messages in the values assessment.

Delegates decided to consistently refer to a "typology" of nature's values and to "people" as opposed to "humans." They further discussed references to: ecosystem services, including nature's contributions to people; and "rights-based approaches related to strengthening the values of Mother Earth," deciding to include them in the preambular part of the assessment.

Following a clarification by the assessment authors, they agreed on a typology of four general categories of values, grouping together "worldviews" and "beliefs." On language emphasizing that people conceive of, or relate to, nature in multiple and often complementary ways, members agreed to note that the assessment typology may not capture the full range of values linked to various knowledge systems.

On scaling up values to a societal level, members sought clarification on the difference between aggregating individual values to form social values, and using deliberative processes to form shared values. Experts explained that aggregation simply sums up individual values, while deliberation is more involved, with one example being "listening circles." Several delegates found the message unclear and asked experts to revise the text. A delegate also requested inclusion of a statement on how future generations are accounted for in these valuations. The entire key message remained in brackets.

Members reached agreement on a key message on the required trade-offs between different valuation methods and approaches, and corresponding criteria. On grouping these valuation methods in "method families," some members suggested highlighting that additional considerations are needed to fully appreciate knowledge systems of IPLCs.

On the relationship between the availability of valuation methods and their uptake by policymakers, WG1 reached consensus on a short and concise key message. They further decided to move relevant reporting obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity to background text rather than in the key message.

On the role of institutions, many members raised the concern that the term “institution” could be misinterpreted as referring only to governments whereas the assessment uses the term in a broader context. Others noted this broader definition is explained in the document. Several did not want reference to institutional “transformation,” preferring “change” instead. After extensive discussions, members agreed on language on the key role institutions play in achieving sustainable and just futures.

On the role of values in achieving transformational change, delegates agreed on references to “sustainability-aligned” values and to those overemphasizing short-term, individual, and/or corporate material gains.

On a key message on transformative change and ways to support it, delegates discussed whether the message is repetitive, especially focusing on reference to the promotion of institutional change and its relationship with social norms.

On capacity development and societal collaboration, discussion included: “capacity development” being more appropriate than “capacity building”; referring to gaps in technical and financial resources in addition to capacity gaps; and “maintaining” or “preserving” life on Earth, or “living in harmony with nature.”

In the afternoon, discussions resumed with the experts explaining that rights-based approaches are embedded in the term “policy reform.” Following some suggested revisions, consideration of the key messages was concluded and WG1 then focused on background messages.

On a message on understanding the diverse values of nature and a sub-section on the use of typologies of the values of nature, experts proposed revised text that incorporated comments relating to policy relevance, which was accepted.

Members discussed a textbox containing definitions of key concepts relating to diverse values of nature. On the term “knowledge systems,” members discussed: whether to use “scientific” or “academic” knowledge systems, with experts proposing the latter to account for social sciences, humanities, and other fields; and that ILK includes traditional knowledge. Experts provided an updated definition of “life frames,” which was accepted.

On a message on broad values and multiple ways people conceive a good quality of life, members discussed what “broad values” mean and agreed on including relevant examples in the sub-section heading.

In the evening, WG1 continued discussing the background messages of the values assessment. Delegates exchanged textual proposals on various titles and paragraphs, keeping contested portions in brackets for later consideration in order to move swiftly through remaining text.

On a sub-section on complementary objectives of justice and sustainability, they discussed, *inter alia*: making references to safe ecological limits, poverty eradication, and equity; impacts of access restrictions and livelihood impairment on the effectiveness and perceived fairness of policies on protected areas; and economic and social power asymmetries.

On important considerations for incorporating diverse values in decisions, members agreed on revisions to the sub-section heading. They continued consideration of the SPM until midnight, focusing on measuring and making visible the values of nature. Discussions will continue.

### Working Group 2

In the morning, WG2 resumed discussions on the scoping report for the business and biodiversity assessment. Experts proposed streamlined text for the outline of a chapter on how to create an enabling environment for business. Some voiced concerns on elements being prescriptive and asked for deletion of,

among others, references to “how governments and the financial sector” could apply the measures described. Others opposed.

Delegates also opposed language narrowing the chapter’s scope. They accepted language on the socio-economic conditions and different challenges faced by governments, including developing countries. After protracted debates on a reference to consistency with existing international obligations, and measures distorting trade, delegates agreed to add “considering, where relevant, existing international obligations” to a paragraph on options for action by governments.

On the chapter on businesses as key actors of change, the authors presented redrafted paragraphs on the potential options for the ways businesses may use measures of dependence and impacts when implementing actions. Delegates debated at length whether to have a list of measures to include. The text remained bracketed.

Informal consultations on outstanding issues for the scoping report and a contact group on the nature futures framework (NFF) were held over the lunch break.

Delegates turned to the section of the scoping report outlining the methodological approach for the assessment. Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie summarized relevant points and new developments. Delegates agreed to: including a reference to fact sheets under communications and outreach; detailing how to facilitate coordination with other ongoing assessments; applying new approaches to engage practitioners; referring to “all relevant business sectors” without further specification; and striking examples from a reference to the IPBES conceptual framework.

In the afternoon, delegates resumed consideration of the methodological approach of the business and biodiversity assessment’s scoping report, and the remaining paragraphs were approved with minor editorial amendment.

On the chapter outlines, delegates agreed to address “value chains” and “direct and indirect impacts” in the scope and rationale section. On the chapter addressing options for action by business, delegates agreed to language discussing options for ways businesses should, in their operations and strategic planning, improve their social, economic, and environmental performance.

Delegates turned to the scope and rationale to finalize unresolved issues. They worked on language related to risk, and direct and indirect dependencies and impacts, in a paragraph on improving understanding and awareness.

Members agreed to a reference to IPLCs in a paragraph related to categorization, and worked on language related to risk, and direct and indirect dependencies and impacts, in a paragraph on improving understanding and awareness. With general agreement to refer to impacts as “direct, and as appropriate, indirect,” text was referred back to the experts for streamlining.

In the evening, WG2 continued discussions on the scoping report. On “scope and rationale,” delegates accepted revised text suggested by experts related to improved understanding and systematic reporting. They further focused on text around value chains, followed by resumed discussions on the NFF.

### In the Corridors

The two WGs are under pressure—they have a large amount of work to complete before Saturday. As such, delegates have been working until midnight wordsmithing, including around political sensitivities. There have been quotes from the two working groups such as “it means very little, but that’s okay—if that’s what parties are happy with, we are flexible,” or “not an area where we can offer any proposals as experts,” expressing the frustrations that many were feeling.

However, an emotional moment happened in plenary: when the SPM of the sustainable use assessment was finally approved, all the tension built during three intense days of negotiation, and the fatigue from years of hard work, mostly under pandemic conditions, gave way to a wave of joy and mutual appreciation among experts and participants present and beyond. Many reflected that the comments by the scientists created a real sense of community and achievement, and reminded everyone why it is we are here.