

IPBES 10 Highlights: Monday, 28 August 2023

The tenth session of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES 10) opened on Monday, 28 August, in Bonn, Germany. In plenary, delegates heard opening statements, reports on progress, and introductory remarks on all items on the meeting's agenda. Plenary decided to convene two Working Groups (WG), with WG 1 addressing the assessment report on invasive alien species (IAS) and WG 2 addressing all other agenda items, with the exception of the budget, taken up by a contact group. WG 1 began its deliberations in the afternoon.

Plenary

IPBES 10 opened with a youth choir's performance. Participants watched a video highlighting the contributions of IPBES to science and policymaking worldwide.

IPBES Chair Ana María Hernández Salgar opened the session. Anne Larigauderie, IPBES Executive Secretary, highlighted the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), drawing attention to new requests for IPBES assessments to support the GBF's implementation. She underscored that IPBES received the 2022 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity, together with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Kyle Whyte, US Science Envoy for Indigenous and Local Knowledge, focused on how policies and institutions, including IPBES, can empower tribal nations and Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) worldwide. He stressed that IPLCs must be in the position to "institute their knowledge systems," which goes beyond merely consulting or including Indigenous knowledge holders in environmental assessments.

Bettina Hoffmann, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection, Germany, focused on the GBF, highlighting IPBES' role in informing its development and implementation. She drew attention to the assessment of IAS to be discussed during the week as well as to proposals for future assessments.

Speaking on behalf of the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Environment

Programme (UNEP), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as IPBES' four UN partners, Hans Thulstrup (UNESCO), drew attention to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). He reaffirmed the partners' commitment to closely collaborate with IPBES and support members in implementing the GBF.

IPBES Chair Hernández delineated priorities for IPBES 10, especially approving the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the IAS report, deciding on the topics to be added to the rolling work programme up to 2030, and revising the structure and terms of reference of the IPBES task forces. She highlighted the importance of sustained financial contributions to support IPBES' work.

Regional and stakeholder statements: Spain, for the EU, stressed the importance of IPBES in supporting the GBF by making the best-available data and traditional knowledge accessible to decision makers and the public. Noting the interdependence of biodiversity and climate, she called for strengthening the cooperation between IPBES and the IPCC.

Mexico, for the GROUP OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (GRULAC), highlighted the importance of the thematic assessment of IAS in raising awareness and enhancing cooperation. She acknowledged the challenge in achieving consensus on the next assessments to be carried out by IPBES, expressing hope that this reflects the growing interest and needs of members.

The Republic of Korea, for the ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP, noted that IPBES 10 is the first plenary meeting after the adoption of the GBF, highlighting the growing importance and impact of scientific knowledge. She underscored the critical support provided by task forces.

The US, for several members of JUSSCANNZ (the US, AUSTRALIA, CANADA, ICELAND, ISRAEL, JAPAN, MONACO, NORWAY, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, SWITZERLAND, the UK, and NEW ZEALAND), noted nature is the foundation of human security and prosperity. Highlighting IPBES' critical role in providing policy relevant information, she underscored that the IAS report will help identify tools to tackle this important driver of biodiversity loss.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, for some non-EU members of EASTERN EUROPE, thanked authors for their contribution to the IAS report, noting IAS were identified as a key direct driver of biodiversity loss and are covered by a dedicated target under the GBF. He emphasized the continuous need for capacity building in his region.

Burundi, for the AFRICAN GROUP, called for joint efforts to address gaps and needs of developing countries with regard to the control and management of IAS. These efforts, he said, should include capacity building, research, access to technology, effective border control, and international cooperation to reduce the spread and establishment of IAS. He emphasized the upcoming national focal point meeting should address the low representation of African experts and data from the region in IPBES assessments.

The SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD) emphasized that IPBES' work has been at the foundation of the GBF's development and drew attention to: the importance of the IAS assessment; requests by the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) for future work, including a second global assessment on biodiversity; and the need for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

The OPEN-ENDED NETWORK OF IPBES STAKEHOLDERS (ONet) urged recognizing the critical role of stakeholders in managing IAS and going beyond the economic growth paradigm towards a biodiversity-friendly pathway that promotes overall prosperity. She highlighted the need for effective dissemination of IPBES products and key messages, noting that "knowledge transfer is the bedrock of sustainable progress," and stressing the need for effective capacity building.

The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IIFBES) highlighted the required fundamental changes to the relationship between humans and nature, urging placing human rights, including Indigenous rights, at the center of implementation, monitoring, and reporting of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs). She called for concrete, collaborative efforts, including addressing the interlinkages between biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution, and a holistic approach to addressing IAS.

Organizational matters, admission of observers, and credentials: Chair Hernández introduced the provisional agenda (IPBES/10/1 and IPBES/10/1/Add.1) and provided an overview of the organization of work, including the establishment of two working groups, which were adopted by delegates without comments. She noted that financial and budgetary arrangements will be discussed in a contact group, consistent with prior practice.

Chair Hernández welcomed the four new IPBES members, Guinea, Namibia, Palau, and Oman, bringing the total to 143. Reminding delegates of the need to elect ten officers by the end of IPBES 10 (IPBES/10/2, IPBES/10/INF/2/REV.1, and IPBES/10/INF/22), she noted all nominations received so far were considered eligible and urged regional consultations to finalize the nominations. Members welcomed all 42 new observers, as

recommended by the Bureau (IPBES/10/3 and IPBES/10/INF/3). Stadler Trengove, IPBES Secretariat, reported on credentials.

Reports: Executive Secretary Larigauderie reported on progress in implementing the rolling work programme up to 2030 (IPBES/10/4 and IPBES/10/INF/4, 5, 6, 8-15, and 17). She provided an updated timeline on the upcoming assessments and an overview of the work on IPBES objectives: strengthening knowledge, supporting policy, and improving communication and engagement of the Platform.

Robert Spaul, IPBES Head of Communications, reported on communication and engagement, focusing on traditional and social media interactions, impact tracking, and strengthening engagement with stakeholders.

David Obura, Co-Chair of the nexus assessment, pointed to bi-monthly coordination between the Co-Chairs of the nexus assessment and the transformative change assessment. He noted the second external review, which also includes the assessment's SPM, will open in November 2023.

Karen O'Brien, Co-Chair of the transformative change assessment, said the second external review of the transformative change assessment will open in December 2023, and that the third and final Indigenous and local knowledge dialogue of the process will take place in the same month.

Matt Jones, Co-Chair of the business and biodiversity assessment, highlighted that the first author meeting for the report will take place in September 2023 and indicated that draft chapters should be ready for the first external review in June 2024.

Financial and budgetary arrangements: Executive Secretary Larigauderie presented the relevant documents (IPBES/10/5, IPBES/10/1/Add.2, and IPBES/10/INF/18). She focused on: in-kind support and cash contributions for the Trust Fund for 2022 and 2023; final expenditure for 2022; budgetary implications following the indicative timeline up to 2030 for ongoing and future IPBES assessments; proposed amendments to the budgets for 2023 and 2024; the fundraising strategy; and the overall financial situation, including a revised budget for 2023, a budget for 2024, and a provisional budget for 2025.

JAPAN announced the organization of a G7 workshop on IAS and a contribution of USD 190,814 for 2024, in addition to the in-kind contribution for the Technical Support Unit (TSU) on the assessment on IAS. The UK reiterated its contribution of 300,000 British Pounds (approx. USD 370,000) for 2024, in addition to an annual contribution of 100,000 (USD 123,000) for the TSU for the business and biodiversity assessment. The US encouraged further cost-saving measures, stressed the need to be mindful of limitations on financial and human resources, and reiterated its pledge of USD 1.3 million for 2023. The EU reiterated its pledge of EUR 1 million (approx. USD 1.08 million) annually for 2023, 2024, and 2025, and, with SWITZERLAND, urged broadening the donor basis. SWITZERLAND reiterated its contribution of 100,000 Swiss Francs (approx. USD 110,000). SOUTH AFRICA requested reflecting the hosting of the second authors' meeting for the nexus assessment.

Chair Hernández suggested, and delegates agreed, to establish a financial and budget contact group to continue discussions. The contact group will be co-chaired by Hamid Čustović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Spencer Thomas (Grenada).

Thematic assessment of IAS: Chair Hernández introduced the relevant documents (IPBES/10/6, IPBES/10/1/Add.2, IPBES/10/INF/1, IPBES/10/INF/5, and IPBES/10/Other/1). Members agreed to assign the consideration of the assessment to WG 1, to be co-chaired by Sebsebe Demissew Woodmatas (African Group) and Douglas Beard (Western Europe and Others Group, WEOG). They agreed to use the Chair's note (IPBES/10/Other/1) as basis for their deliberations.

Engagement with the IPCC: Chair Hernández introduced the relevant documents (IPBES/10/7, IPBES/10/1/Add.2, IPBES/10/INF/20, and IPBES/10/Other/2). Members agreed to assign the consideration of the matter to WG 2, to be co-chaired by Floyd Homer (GRULAC), Julia Marton-Lefèvre (WEOG), and Bishwa Nath Oli (Asia-Pacific Group). They agreed to use the relevant Chair's note (IPBES/10/Other/2) as basis for their deliberations.

Building capacity and supporting policy: Chair Hernández presented the relevant documents (IPBES/10/8, IPBES/10/INF/9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, IPBES/10/1/Add.2 and IPBES/10/Other/3) and assigned substantive consideration to WG 2. Members agreed to use the relevant Chair's note (IPBES/10/Other/3) as basis for their deliberations.

Improving the effectiveness of the Platform: Chair Hernández presented the relevant documents (IPBES/10/9, IPBES/10/INF/16, IPBES/10/1/Add.2, and IPBES/10/Other/4) and assigned substantive consideration to WG 2. Members agreed to use the relevant Chair's note (IPBES/10/Other/4) as basis for their deliberations.

Additional elements of the IPBES rolling work programme up to 2030: Chair Hernández presented relevant documents (IPBES/10/10, IPBES/10/INF/7, and IPBES/10/Other/5) and assigned substantive consideration to WG 2. Members agreed to use the relevant Chair's note (IPBES/10/Other/5) as basis for their deliberations.

Dates and venues of future sessions: Chair Hernández presented the relevant documents (IPBES/10/11 and IPBES/10/1/Add.2), noting that IPBES 11 will take place from 10-16 December 2024 and IPBES 12 will be held in late 2025. She invited offers to host the sessions. Spain, for the EU, stressed the need to align the schedule of deliverables with the CBD process, especially with regard to the GBF.

Institutional arrangements: Chair Hernández presented the progress report on the UN collaborative partnership arrangement for supporting the work of the Platform and its Secretariat (IPBES/10/INF/19). Hans Thulstrup, UNESCO, also on behalf of UNDP, FAO, and UNEP, presented the organizations' activities under the agreement. Among others, he highlighted the direct support provided for the IPBES Secretariat and underscored joint initiatives, including on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Working Group 1

WG 1 Co-Chair Demissew opened the WG's first session, outlining the group's working method and presenting the report's various contributors.

IAS assessment Co-Chairs Helen Roy (UK), Aníbal Pauchard (Switzerland/Chile), and Peter Stoett (Canada) shared insights into the report's preparation, including engagement with IPLCs. They delineated the SPM's structure, noting it features a preamble and four distinct parts, which focus on the threats biological invasions pose and related trends as well as suggested key strategic actions for integrated governance. They further addressed the review of the SPM by governments, providing an overview of main comments received and how they were addressed in the assessment.

Members' comments related to, among others:

- strengthening the message that precautionary actions are the most effective ones;
- fostering cooperation and collaboration between governments and various stakeholders;
- options to prevent IAS from crossing borders;
- further developing internationally binding legislation related to IAS;
- the gaps that undermine countries' capabilities to deal with IAS;
- including data from different regions;
- consistency in defining terms; and
- the interlinkages between IAS and climate change.

In the Corridors

Delegates arrived at the World Conference Center in Bonn in a good mood, energized by the momentum brought about by the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and ready to build on the Platform's track record in providing evidence-based and policy-relevant information for decision making. The venue was dressed for the occasion, with drawings of critters such as lionfish, zebra mussels, and red foxes greeting delegates as they began to engage in the deliberations on the thematic assessment of invasive alien species and their control.

Noting that discussions on the subject often offer opportunities for fruitful multilateral collaboration, limiting archetypal dichotomies between developed and developing countries, most participants expressed their optimism for the final outcome. They emphasized that agreeing on a robust set of recommendations can go a long way in addressing the process of biological invasions, including species' transport, introduction, establishment, and spread, thus tackling one of the major drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide.

Others admonished not to lose sight of the other important agenda items. "Without a proper monitoring framework, the GBF stands on shaky grounds," noted a seasoned delegate, pointing to the agenda item on assessment reports to be prepared up to 2030. Another veteran delegate recalled past challenges regarding addressing the interlinkages between climate change and biodiversity loss.



IISD 
 Earth Negotiations Bulletin

Still Only One Earth



The ENB team looks back on 50 years of sustainable development policy to find the lessons learned

View the 40 policy brief series at bit.ly/still-only-one-earth