



IPBES-3 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2015

IPBES-3 resumed its discussions on Tuesday, 13 January 2015, in Bonn, Germany. Delegates continued their discussions on the task forces on knowledge and data, and ILK systems. They also addressed: budget issues; implementation of the work programme; rules of procedure; and the communication and stakeholder engagement strategies. Delegates also heard a briefing from Rajendra Pachauri, IPCC Chair.

Contact groups on budget, work programme, and rules of procedures met during the day.

INITIAL WORK PROGRAMME OF THE PLATFORM

TASK FORCES ON KNOWLEDGE AND DATA, AND ILK SYSTEMS: NEW ZEALAND underlined the need for: data standards to ensure comparability; and considering data collection, tools and management as separate activities.

GBIF welcomed the data management plan as “practical” and emphasized the importance of productive relations with strategic partners. GEO Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON) reported on developing a framework for biodiversity data.

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES) underscored the need for a participatory mechanism for the effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, stressing that the use of ILK requires specific considerations.

GUIDES ON ASSESSMENTS, POLICY SUPPORT TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES, AND PRELIMINARY GUIDES ON SCENARIO ANALYSIS AND MODELLING AND THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF VALUES: The Secretariat introduced documents IPBES/3/INF/4, IPBES/3/INF/7, and IPBES/3/INF/8.

Several delegations, including the AFRICAN GROUP and MEXICO, emphasized the need to ensure IPBES outputs are useful for policy makers, with GEORGIA emphasizing “practicability” for differing national and regional contexts.

Many delegations supported the draft catalog generally, but suggested improvements. MEXICO, COLOMBIA, BOLIVIA, BRAZIL, RUSSIA, FRANCE and TURKEY stressed the need to broaden the scope of methodologies as well as policy tools and instruments. BRAZIL emphasized the value of communities of practice and sharing success stories. The UK noted the definition of policy tools as “very broad” and suggested the catalog focus more on tools relevant to IPBES work.

Several delegations supported extending the mandate of the expert group. The US inquired about the next steps of the expert group and whether to narrow its focus. A contact group on this topic, co-chaired by Ivar Baste (Norway) and Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana), was established.

SCOPING DOCUMENTS FOR ASSESSMENTS:

Regional assessments: The Secretariat introduced documents IPBES/3/6, Add.1, Add.2-6 and INF/17.

Executive Secretary Larigauderie then introduced the initial scoping report for a global assessment (IPBES/3/9) suggesting the next step be to prepare a full scoping report.

INDONESIA advocated, *inter alia*, an analysis of the current state of scientific and other knowledge. He indicated land degradation and restoration as a priority for his region. The US suggested subregions as a more appropriate scale to assess policy needs.

The EU advocated for the regional assessments’ co-chairs to be included in the global assessment and for the relevant representatives from the global assessment to be involved in the regional assessments’ final stages.

SWITZERLAND said the assessment on open oceans should not be postponed. PORTUGAL advocated addressing marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions. JAPAN supported integrating elements of subregional assessments in the Asia-Pacific assessment. URUGUAY called for explicit references to drivers of biodiversity loss in the Americas report and, with ARGENTINA, decried “negative” references to economic activities, noting biodiversity and ecosystem services play a central role in poverty reduction. FRANCE said the global assessment “cannot simply be an amalgamation of regional assessments,” calling for referencing the impacts of globalization and trade on biodiversity loss.

ICIMOD highlighted its contributions to the science-policy interface in the Asia-Pacific region. The World Ocean Assessment Secretariat outlined the process of developing the first World Ocean Assessment. Island Sustainability Alliance said the open oceans assessment should have a broad scope to adequately address all drivers affecting marine ecosystems. ICSU supported undertaking an open oceans assessment, while allowing sufficient time for expert review of existing data.

Land degradation and restoration: The Secretariat introduced IPBES/3/7 and IPBES/3/INF/7. The US described the document as “generally balanced” but called for clarity on the range of ecosystems to be studied. FRANCE suggested focusing on ecosystems that are most degraded or vulnerable to land use changes. COLOMBIA, supported by BOLIVIA, called for a balanced approach that takes into account all ecosystems.

Welcoming the document, the AFRICAN GROUP, supported by TURKEY, called for removing references to “western science.” ALGERIA stressed the urgency of the assessment and proposed prioritizing the most vulnerable ecosystems.

BRAZIL called for attention to indirect drivers of land degradation as well as the economic benefits of restoring degraded land. NEPAL recommended including a compilation of success stories.

The UNCCD highlighted the Convention’s contribution to the scoping report, saying that the Convention will be “one of the key clients and users of this assessment,” and underscoring the need for effective collaboration to meet the needs of its stakeholders.



Conceptualization of values: The Secretariat introduced IPBES/3/8 and IPBES/3/INF/18.

COLOMBIA proposed adding national accounting as a technical specialty and referring to policy experts, rather than policy makers. TURKEY called for distinguishing between “measurable and non-measurable values,” to ensure scientific “rigor.”

CHILE suggested including an additional chapter on ecosystem accounting, building on a pilot being undertaken by the UN Statistical Office. The US called for a limited scope for the assessment and, with the UK, building on the methodological guide and existing conceptual frameworks. AUSTRALIA called for a stronger “value proposition” for such an assessment.

BRAZIL welcomed the “fresh perspective” in the report and called for linkages with The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) and Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) initiatives. Emphasizing that previous Plenary sessions have focused on economic values, BOLIVIA said including a chapter on national accounting would “upset the balance” and favored adopting the document without revisions.

IIFBES cautioned that a focus on economics could “crowd out” endogenous values, ultimately undermining the goals of IPBES’ work programme.

BRIEFING FROM THE IPCC CHAIR

Rajendra Pachauri, IPCC Chair, remarked “the IPCC might have inspired the IPBES, but the new generation is often a few steps ahead of the previous one.” He suggested that the IPCC and IPBES bureaus meet periodically to explore matters of substance in their respective assessments. Pachauri then shared his experience leading the IPCC and presented, *inter alia*: work undertaken by IPCC’s working groups; key findings from IPCC reports; observed changes and projected risks posed by climate change for biodiversity and food security; and possible adaptation and mitigation measures.

Responding to questions from the floor, Pachauri said he is “cautiously optimistic” that growing global awareness and political commitment will lead to a “snowballing of action” to address climate change. He highlighted the five-fold increase in India’s solar energy targets as an example of the growing awareness of the co-benefits of taking mitigation actions.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PLATFORM

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2014–2018:

Executive Secretary Larigauderie introduced documents IPBES/3/10 and IPBES/3/2/Add.1, providing information on: the status of cash and in-kind contributions to the trust fund; expenditures for 2013–2014; a proposed revised budget for 2015; a proposed budget for 2016–2017; and a revised indicative budget for 2018. Summarizing the overall budget situation at the beginning of 2015, she noted there is a budget shortfall of US\$19.5 million for implementing the full work programme.

The US expressed his delegation’s commitment to finding a viable roadmap to accomplish the work programme. With FRANCE and SWITZERLAND, he asked for clarification on in-kind support provided by other MEA secretariats and international programmes. The AFRICAN GROUP called for a collaborative spirit in the budget discussions and expressed hope that all outstanding pledges will be honored.

COLOMBIA said their pledges and in-kind contributions have not been included in the report. Many delegations lamented that the report lacks the detailed information necessary for approving a revised budget.

The Secretariat then introduced IPBES/3/2/Add.1/Rev.1, which seeks approval to formally apply for IPBES’ accreditation to the list of international organizations eligible for official development assistance (ODA) as determined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC). He noted the document further requests clarification from the Plenary on participants’ eligibility for financial support.

NORWAY and COLOMBIA supported the IPBES application and, with the US, CANADA and JAPAN, favored following OECD-DAC criteria on eligibility for ODA. BELARUS, supported by GEORGIA, TURKEY and RUSSIA, called for continued financial support to countries in transition to ensure effective representation from the Eastern Europe region.

Several delegations announced pledges to support IPBES activities in 2015, including: US\$100,000 from MALAYSIA; US\$176,000 from SWEDEN; and US\$300,000 from JAPAN. ETHIOPIA offered in-kind and logistical support for subregional assessments as well as limited financial support, including through hosting the African TSU. Chair Zakri established a budget contact group, co-chaired by Leonel Sierralta (Chile) and Jay Ram Adhikari (Nepal).

TSUs: The Secretariat introduced the report on institutional arrangements to operationalize technical support for implementing the work programme (IPBES/3/INF/13), noting this is for information only.

RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE PLATFORM

The Secretariat introduced documents IPBES/3/INF/11 and IPBES/3/INF15-16; IPBES/3/12; IPBES/3/13; and IPBES/3/14.

CHINA, supported by ARGENTINA, advocated admission of observers based on consensus. Opposing, the EU said refusal of admission of an observer should only be warranted if one third of members object. She also called for more “balanced and new” membership of the MEP.

The US cautioned against establishing burdensome procedures that could hinder broad participation.

SWITZERLAND, NORWAY, MEXICO, JAPAN, the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC and GHANA noted the need for clarification and textual improvements in the documents and looked forward to further work in the contact group. A contact group co-chaired by Senka Barudanovic (Bosnia-Herzegovina) Robert Watson (UK) was established.

COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Secretariat introduced this item (IPBES/3/15, 16, INF/9 and INF/10). Many delegations welcomed the stakeholder engagement strategy, with GERMANY and SWEDEN noting that stakeholders are crucial to the success of the Platform. The US favored the Secretariat managing stakeholder engagement. GABON favored management of the stakeholder engagement strategy through an inclusive, open-ended forum. Discussions will resume on Wednesday.

On the communications strategy, the US said that the communications strategy should not be finalized “until there is a deliverable.”

IN THE CORRIDORS

Sunshine greeted IPBES-3 participants on Tuesday morning, where many awaited the IPCC Chair Rajendra Pachauri’s presentation. While his suggestion that the IPCC and IPBES bureaus meet periodically was welcomed by some, others were heard discussing a comment on whether briefings from “such luminaries bring value to the proceedings.”

The afternoon’s discussion on the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy was highly anticipated. After the session ended, some stakeholders left feeling “cautiously optimistic,” that IPBES members will provide them with “the mandate” they need to bring a more diverse group of actors to the table. However, one observer commented that if this issue is not resolved at IPBES-3, some stakeholder groups might “disengage altogether” from the process. Given that time to discuss the stakeholder engagement strategy in contact groups has not been formally scheduled, many were left pondering if this scenario might become reality.