

IPBES-10

Tenth meeting of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany, 28 August – 2 September 2023

Key messages:

IUCN congratulates and thanks all involved with IPBES for their hard work over 2022–2023, and is grateful for the acknowledgement of our in-kind contributions. A summary of IUCN's views is presented below, focusing on the Assessment of Invasive Alien Species (IAS), and expanded with more detailed comments on this and other agenda items alongside editorial suggestions in the following pages.

Assessment of Invasive Alien Species - Summary for Policy-Makers (SPM)

- √ IUCN views the current focus on the achievability of IAS response, in contrast to the transformative change necessary to tackle some other drivers, as an overarching and crucial key message of the SPM.
- √ IUCN emphasises the importance of consistency with the existing definition of IAS.
 - IUCN and numerous other organisations (eg the Bern Convention, CBD, ICES, IMO, IPPC, OIE, UNEP-WCMC, WTO) define “invasive alien species” in ways consistent with their definition as “alien species whose introduction and/or spread threaten biological diversity”.
 - In many places the SPM and underlying assessment are appropriately consistent with this definition, notably in the Glossary, and in Para A.I.2 of the Annex to the Scoping document (IPBES/6/INF/10).
 - However, in a couple of places, the current SPM deviates from this definition, implying inclusion of alien species which threaten nature's contributions to people or people's good quality of life but not nature; this would introduce policy confusion.
 - We therefore suggest edits to ensure that the definition used here is not inconsistent with the widely-used existing definition of IAS, while making sure to be clear that many IAS, as well as threatening biodiversity, do indeed also have negative social or economic impacts on people.
- √ IUCN urges appropriate attribution and cross-reference to other organisations addressing IAS.
 - Cross-reference to the various existing frameworks, targets, and databases would support smooth uptake of the SPM's key messages into policy and avoid the impression that IPBES fails to properly attribute its antecedents and partners.
 - Examples include:
 - The IAS-relevant targets in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - The IAS-related databases (GISD, IUCN Red List, CABI Invasive Species Compendium) and the main IAS impact classification systems (EICAT and SEICAT).
 - All of the relevant material is incorporated into the main text, so simple additions of short text with traceable accounts into the SPM can address this.

For more information, please contact:

Thomas Brooks
Chief Scientist, IUCN
thomas.brooks@iucn.org

Laure Denos
Senior Science-Policy Expert,
IUCN
laure.denos@iucn.org

IUCN Headquarters
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 999 0000
Fax: +41 22 999 0002
mail@iucn.org
<http://www.iucn.org>

Initial considerations

IUCN has for 75 years served as a science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services, with its scientific excellence delivered by its independent expert Commissions, and its policy demand delivered from its Membership of States and government agencies and of national and international NGOs and indigenous peoples' organisations. The governance structure of the Union is neatly complementary with that of IPBES, as a wholly intergovernmental mechanism. Given that the functions of the two institutions are so similar, IUCN's Members adopted [Resolution 118](#) at the 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress, mandating "A significant role for IUCN in IPBES". Since 2016, IUCN and IPBES have operationalized this collaboration through a strategic partnership including substantial in-kind support to stakeholder engagement (see Table 3.2 in IPBES/10/5), including in facilitating the Open-Ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders (ONet) and providing in-kind and financial support to the organization of the Stakeholder Days preceding the IPBES plenary. In this context, IUCN welcomes recognition of this support in the IPBES10 Report of the Executive Secretary on Progress in the implementation of the rolling work programme up to 2030 (IPBES/10/4), Section E.3, paragraph 44. IUCN is also very grateful to the Government of France for their continued support to IUCN's engagement with IPBES.

Item 7(a) of the provisional agenda - Thematic Assessment of Invasive Alien Species (IPBES/10/6)

The major agenda item for IPBES 10 is the Plenary line-by-line review of the SPM for the IPBES Thematic Assessment of Invasive Alien Species (IAS). Overall, IUCN welcomes the assessment, and congratulates all authors and contributors on their work. In particular, we see current focus on the achievability of IAS response, in contrast to the transformative change necessary to tackle some other drivers, eg climate change, as an overarching and crucial key message of the SPM.

Overarching comments on the SPM:

Consistency with the existing definition of IAS. Our most important comment is that it is essential that the definition of IAS used in the assessment is not contradictory to that widely-used by existing international bodies. Specifically, the CBD (<https://www.cbd.int/invasive/terms.shtml>), IUCN (<https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/12413>), and many other international bodies including the Bern Convention, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the International Maritime Organization, the International Plant Protection Convention, the United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and the World Trade Organization define "invasive alien species" in ways consistent with their definition as "alien species whose introduction and/or spread threaten biological diversity". In many places the SPM and underlying assessment are appropriately consistent with this definition, notably in Para A.I.2 of the Annex to the Scoping document (IPBES/6/INF/10), as reported in the first paragraph of {1.3.1} of the main assessment, and in the Glossary. However, in a couple of places, the current SPM deviates from this definition, implying inclusion of alien species which threaten nature's contributions to people or people's good quality of life but not nature. We suggest edits for the SPM to ensure that it is not inconsistent with the widely-used existing definition of IAS, and thus avoid the policy confusion which this would cause, while making sure to be clear that many IAS, as well as threatening biodiversity, do indeed also have negative social or economic impacts on people.

Appropriate attribution and cross-reference to other organisations addressing IAS. A number of other organisations address IAS; cross-reference to their various frameworks, targets, and databases would be useful, and support smooth uptake of the SPM's key messages into policy; and avoid the impression that IPBES fails to properly attribute its antecedents and partners. One example is the IAS-relevant targets in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals – cross-referencing these would strengthen policy uptake. Similarly, it would be useful and appropriate to mention the largest IAS-related databases (GISD, IUCN Red List, CABI Invasive Species Compendium) and the main IAS impact classification systems (EICAT and SEICAT). All this material is incorporated into the main text, and so simply additions of short text with traceable accounts into the SPM can rectify the problem.

Proposed modifications, corrections, and clarifications in the SPM main text:

Preamble paragraph 3. Delete the word “spread” from the first sentence, and instead add a short additional second sentence reading “Many invasive alien species spread, exacerbating their negative impacts.” This is important to be clear that spread is not necessary for negative impacts to occur.

Preamble Paragraph 3. Expand current sentence reading “Invasive alien species represent a subset of all alien species – animals, plants and other organisms – known to have a negative impact” to read “Invasive alien species represent a subset of all alien species – animals, plants and other organisms – known to have a negative impact on biodiversity; many invasive alien species also have negative impacts on nature’s contributions to people and on people’s good quality of life”. This is important to ensure consistency with the widely-used existing definition of IAS.

Figure SPM.1 is excellent. Please retain unmodified.

A. The chapeau is very good, with its second sentence appropriately consistent with the widely-used existing definition of IAS (“Some become invasive, causing negative and in some cases irreversible impacts on nature, including loss of biotic uniqueness, and contributing to the unparalleled degree of deterioration of the biosphere upon which humanity depends”).

KM-A1. Add text to the end of the third sentence to read “with the Global Invasive Species Database as the core source for this evidence for >1,000 species and the CABI Invasive Species Compendium for >2,000 species”. It’s very important to attribute the core data systems providing the underlying data here.

KM-A1. Modify final sentence to read “Invasive alien species can have multiple impacts, and more than one quarter have an impact nature’s contributions to people or good quality of life, as well as nature directly.” This is important to ensure consistency with the widely-used existing definition of IAS, while also ensuring consistency with the underlying evidence in {4.2}.

KM-A2. In the first (bold) sentence, change “ecosystems” to “biodiversity”, since IAS impacts are incurred across all levels of ecological organisation, not just on ecosystems.

KM-A2. Add text to the second sentence to read “Biological invasions have caused both the decline and the extinction of native species and have been a significant driver in more than 300 (60 per cent) of documented global animal and plant extinctions, as assessed on the IUCN Red List.” The supporting evidence is in {4.3.1, Box 4.4}.

KM-A5. Begin the second sentence “As documented by SDG indicator 15.8.1,...”. It is very important to recognise that data mobilisation on IAS responses is mandated under the official UN SDG indicator.

KM-B1. The second sentence gives the impression that such IAS have benefits only. Edit to read eg “Historically, many invasive alien species were intentionally introduced for their anticipated benefits to people without consideration of their negative consequences,...”.

KM-C1. Expand the current sentence on the precautionary approach to read eg “A precautionary approach can guide management actions, including the use of novel and emerging, technologies, considering both potential benefits and potential risks.” This is consistent with the approach taken in GBF Target 17.

KM-C2. Add “to date” into the third sentence, to read “...where most attempts at eradicating or containing invasive alien species to date have been ineffective”, to reflect the fact that additional successful options may be developed over coming years.

KM-C4. Add “currently” into the first (bold) sentence, to read “...that cannot currently be eradicated in terrestrial and closed water systems”, to reflect the fact that additional successful options may be developed over coming years.

KM-C4. IUCN is supportive of the explicit discussion of physical, chemical, and biological control in this key message, further to IUCN Resolution WCC-2020-Res-096, which appeals to increase the scale,

scope and pace of IAS control and eradications on islands by investing in innovative techniques, methods, technologies and strategies.

KM-D3. It would strengthen policy relevance to link this paragraph more directly to GBF Targets. Thus, suggest adding “to deliver GBF Target 6” at the end of the second sentence.

KM-D3. Similarly, expand the next sentence to read “Coordinated efforts to strengthen national regulatory instruments, including those for online trading, aligned with GBF Target 5, and for creating of a policy environment conducive to the use of responsible technologies, aligned with GBF Target 17, are priorities.”

KM-D3. Similarly, add “aligned with GBF Target 18” at the end of the next sentence, on market-based instruments.

KM-D4. It would also strengthen policy relevance to highlight alignment with SDG Target 15.8 specifically. So, in the second sentence, add “including but not restricted to Target 15.8.1” after “SDG15”.

A1. Third sentence, change “known to have an adverse impact on people and nature” to read “known to have an adverse impact on nature; they frequently also have negative impacts on people”. This is important to ensure consistency with the widely-used existing definition of IAS.

A1. Add “with the Global Invasive Species Database as the core source for this evidence for >1,000 species and the CABI Invasive Species Compendium for >2,000 species” at the end of the fourth sentence.

A1. Fifth sentence. Delete “on nature, nature’s contributions to people and good quality of life”. This is important to ensure consistency with the widely-used existing definition of IAS.

A1. Sixth sentence. Modify to read “More than 25 per cent of invasive alien species have a negative impact on nature’s contributions to people or good quality of life, as well as on nature directly.” This is important to ensure consistency with the widely-used existing definition of IAS, while also ensuring consistency with the underlying evidence in {4.2}.

A2. Add a new second sentence reading “The Environmental Impact Classification of Alien Taxa (EICAT) framework provides a robust mechanism for assessing such impacts {4.1.2, Box 4.2}.” It is important to ensure that users of the SPM are aware that this framework exists. The supporting evidence is in {4.1.2}, especially in Box 4.2.

A2. Immediately after this, expand what is currently the second sentence to read “Invasive alien species are identified on the IUCN Red List as a significant factor, alongside other drivers of biodiversity change, in more than 300 (60 per cent) of recorded global animal and plant extinctions to date (established but incomplete), and in threatening nearly 10,000 species {box 4.4} and at least 218 invasive alien species have caused 1,215 documented local extinctions of native species across all taxa (figure SPM.3) (established but incomplete) {4.3.1}.” It is very important to highlight global extinction risk, as well as extinctions per se, as an impact of IAS.

Fig SPM.2. Modify title to read “Examples of invasive alien species with a negative impact on nature’s contributions to people, and/or good quality of life, as well as nature.” This is important to ensure consistency with the widely-used existing definition of IAS.

Fig SPM.2. Delete “: 16 per cent of invasive alien species have a negative impact on both nature and nature’s contributions to people; 7 per cent on both nature and good quality of life; 20 per cent on both nature’s contributions to people and good quality of life; and 5 per cent on nature, nature’s contributions to people and good quality of life” from the legend. This is unnecessary detail, and risks introducing inconsistency with the widely-used existing definition of IAS. Deletion would ensure consistency, while also ensuring consistency with the underlying evidence in {4.2}.

A4. Add a new second sentence reading “The Socio-Economic Impact Classification of Alien Taxa provides a core framework for assessing such impacts {4.1.2, Box 4.2}.” It is important to ensure that users of the SPM are aware that this framework exists. The supporting evidence is in {4.1.2}, especially in Box 4.2.

A4. The next sentence (ie the current second sentence) gives the impression that such IAS have benefits only. Modify to read “Although some invasive alien species have been intentionally introduced for their anticipated benefits to people without consideration of their negative impacts,...”.

A7. Current sentence on invasive pigs does not sufficiently balance negative impacts with benefits. Change “but are considered key species in driving and maintaining the spread of invasive alien plants that are having a negative impact on the Hawaiian rainforest” to read “despite the fact that they cause a severe negative impact by driving and maintaining the spread of invasive alien plants in Hawaiian rainforest”.

A8. Begin the second sentence “As documented by SDG indicator 15.8.1,...”. It is very important to recognise that data mobilisation on IAS responses is mandated under the official UN SDG indicator.

B9. The third sentence gives the impression that such IAS have benefits only. Modify to read “Historically, many invasive alien species have been intentionally introduced around the world for their anticipated benefits to people without consideration of their negative impacts”.

C20. IUCN is supportive of the explicit discussion of physical, chemical, and classic biological control in this key message, further to IUCN Resolution WCC-2020-Res-096, which appeals to increase the scale, scope and pace of IAS control and eradications on islands by investing in innovative techniques, methods, technologies and strategies.

Box SPM.3. IUCN is supportive of the inclusion of this box, further to IUCN Resolution GA 07 RES 11 on “Chemical and Biological Control”, and in alignment with CBD Tech Series No 91.

C22. It would be wise to add the word “potential” twice into the fifth sentence, to read “potential benefits and potential risks”, given that this concerns novel technologies and so the actual benefits and risks are not yet known.

D27. It would strengthen policy relevance to link this paragraph more directly to GBF Targets. Thus add “in particular its Target 6” after “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework” in the second sentence.

D27. Similarly, add “aligned with Global Biodiversity Framework Target 5” at the end of the third sentence.

D27. Similarly, add “aligned with Global Biodiversity Framework Target 17” at the end of the fifth (ie final) sentence.

D28. Similarly, add “aligned with Global Biodiversity Framework Target 18” at the end of the third sentence.

D32. Add “comprehensively apply EICAT and SEICAT to assess the impacts of invasive alien species” into the list of key gap-filling priorities in the third sentence.

Appendix 2, Table SPM.A1. Add text to fourth gap under “Gaps on biomes, units of analysis and species groups” to read “Lack of understanding and synthesis of impacts of invasive alien microbes {4.7.2}, including through application of EICAT {4.1.2}”.

Appendix 2, Table SPM.A1. Add text to fourth gap under “Regional gaps in data and knowledge” to read “Incomplete data on impacts of invasive alien species across Africa and Central Asia {4.7.2}, including through application of EICAT {4.1.2}”.

Appendix 2, Table SPM.A1. Add text to fourth gap under “Gaps on how invasive alien species affect nature’s contributions to people” to read “Incomplete data on impacts on nature’s contributions to people and good quality of life {4.7.2}, including through application of SEICAT {4.1.2}”.

Appendix 2, Table SPM.A1. Add text to fourth gap under “Knowledge gaps on invasive alien species of particular relevance to Indigenous peoples and local communities” to read “Lack of information on Indigenous and local knowledge, values, and culture, regarding invasive alien species' drivers and

impacts on land and water managed by indigenous peoples and local communities {1.6.7.1, box 3.14, 4.7.1}, including through application of SEICAT {4.1.2}”.

Item 8 of the provisional agenda - Building capacity, strengthening knowledge foundations and supporting policy (IPBES/10/8)

Rather extensive changes are proposed to the structure of taskforces supporting the capacity building, knowledge generation, and policy support functions of IPBES, including a) to merge the functions of the policy support taskforce in an interim fashion into that on capacity building, and b) to split the functions of the support to knowledge generation such that while data and knowledge management, and Indigenous and Local Knowledge, would continue to be supported by dedicated taskforces, the intent would be to support to knowledge generation through the MEP and Bureau. Finally, the taskforce on scenarios and modelling would continue.

While refraining from commenting on the specific institutional arrangements here, IUCN takes this opportunity to underscore the importance of balance across the four functions of IPBES (see Brooks *et al.* 2014 *Trends Ecol Evol* 29: 543–545. DOI: 10.1016/j.tree.2014.08.004). It is unclear how the new arrangements would strengthen the knowledge generation and policy support functions of IPBES.

Item 9 of the provisional agenda - Improving the effectiveness of the Platform (IPBES/10/9)

IUCN refrains from commenting on specific institutional arrangements, but urges that the proposed internal and external reviews include evaluation of the impacts of IPBES on policy and practice, not just on the effectiveness of its procedures. We also note that the previous external review of the platform was conducted by an external organization, recruited through an open call, to ensure the independence of the review process.

Item 10 of the provisional agenda - Requests, input and suggestions for additional elements of the rolling work programme of the Platform up to 2030 (IPBES/10/10)

Five broad topics are proposed for consideration as IPBES assessments over upcoming years. Among these:

IUCN is supportive of Topic (a), a proposed second global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, given the importance of this in supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

IUCN is supportive of Topic (b), a proposed fast-track methodological assessment on monitoring biodiversity and ecosystem services, as long as it be clear that the assessment build from and strengthen existing institutions dedicated to the topic, notably the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (<https://www.bipindicators.net>), and the IUCN Species Survival Commission Species Monitoring Specialist Group (<https://www.speciesmonitoring.org>). We agree that a methodological focus is appropriate here, but are not convinced that fast-track is warranted – we would prefer to see this as a full assessment to ensure that this important topic is properly and comprehensively covered.

IUCN is supportive of Topic (c), a proposed assessment of ecological connectivity, as long as it be clear that the assessment build from and strengthen existing institutions dedicated to the topic, notably the Convention on Migratory Species, the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group (<https://conservationcorridor.org/ccsg>), and the New Work Item Proposal on Ecological Networks to ISO Technical Committee 331, and that the important topic of ecological connectivity is properly and comprehensively covered. Furthermore, while we agree that the methodological topics of measuring connectivity are important, we see assessment of the ecological connectivity in itself, around the world, as the most important and policy relevant issue here.

IUCN questions Topic (d), a proposed fast-track assessment of biodiversity and climate change given it is unclear how this would relate to the ongoing process of engagement with the IPCC (Item 7b of the provisional agenda), especially in the light of the existing scientific outcome and workshop report on the same topic.

IUCN is provisionally supportive of Topic (e), a proposed fast-track assessment of biodiversity and pollution, a theme which has received rather little attention to date, although it needs further contextualisation. Its relationship with current discussions on development of a dedicated science-policy interface on pollution, to the existing agreements dedicated to the topic – notably the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Minamata Conventions – as well as to the ongoing negotiations on a new legally-binding plastic pollution treaty, would need to be clear.