

IPBES-1

First meeting of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), Bonn, Germany, 21-26 January 2013.

Summary of Recommendations:

Following resolutions pertaining to IPBES adopted by the IUCN World Conservation Congress held in Jeju, Republic of Korea, on 6-15 September 2012:

IUCN urges IPBES to actively reach out to the relevant stakeholders, by the means of dedicated staff and an ambitious engagement strategy and through utterly inclusive procedures for the admission of observers in the Plenary;

IUCN stresses the need for IPBES to collaborate with existing structures and initiatives as a cost-effective and efficient means to implement the work programme of the Platform;

IUCN calls for adequate funding for the operations of IPBES. In this regard, IUCN draws attention to the request made by the IUCN Members Assembly during the World Conservation Congress 2012 to support implementation of the capacity building component of the IPBES work programme, considering that capacity building is a critical priority for the implementation of the IPBES work programme in many developing countries;

IUCN would like to propose a partnership with IPBES through which part of the Platform's work programme could be delivered by IUCN as an in-kind contribution in the course of implementing its own programme of work 2013-2016 wherever there may be alignment and/or synergies with that of IPBES;

IUCN re-affirms its interest to play a significant role in IPBES based on its major assets, including delivering knowledge to feed into the assessment processes, engaging in the capacity-building activities and effectively supporting global, regional or sub-regional structures that might be established.

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1. Initial considerations

Recognizing the need to enhance efficient and effective science policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being and poverty eradication, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has welcomed the establishment of the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in Panama City, Panama on 21 April 2012 and other outcomes of that plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for this Platform.

IUCN would like to recall that the Platform's overarching objective is to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. This objective should inspire the decisions that might be taken during the first meeting of the supreme governing body of the Platform.

IUCN's recommendations and further commitments for this first plenary session of IPBES are inspired by resolutions adopted by the IUCN Members Assembly which deliberated at the IUCN World Conservation congress, held on 6-15 September 2012 in Jeju, Republic of Korea¹. At this occasion, it should be noted that a declaration was signed by the IUCN President, the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Korea, the Governor of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province and the Chairman of the Korean Organizing Committee committing to supporting the full implementation of IPBES².

2. IUCN's contribution to the intersessional work

IUCN acknowledged the adoption of intersessional work to prepare for the first session of the Platform's Plenary and contributed significantly to it by submitting to the interim Secretariat:

- Comments on the draft procedures for the preparation, review, acceptance, approval and publication of assessment reports and other deliverables;
- Comments and suggestions on the draft policy and procedures on admission of observers to the plenary;
- Comments on the draft critical review of assessments produced by the Secretariat;
- Proposals and suggestions for the capacity-building activities of the Platform; and
- Views on how requests to the Platform's Plenary might be received and prioritized by the Platform.

These submissions have been subject to consultations with IUCN Members and they build upon the positions addressed by IUCN for the previous meetings related to IPBES. They all aim to ensure participation of relevant knowledge holders in the activities undertaken by the Platform, hence operationalizing the desired engagement of stakeholders. These comments are available online³.

¹ Respectively resolution WCC-2012-Res-118-EN "A significant role for IUCN in the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)" and resolution WCC-2012-Res-117-EN "Operationalization of the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)"

² Jeju Declaration may be accessed at http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/jeju_declaration_15_september_final.pdf

³ <http://www.ipbes.net/comments.html>

Furthermore, IUCN supported, both financially and substantively, the process to draft the background document for the development of a Conceptual Framework for IPBES (document IPBES/1/INF/9).

Finally it should be noted that IUCN encouraged its constituency, encompassing Members, individual experts from its six commissions, and staff of its Secretariat, to engage actively in IPBES as providers of knowledge and expertise and potential beneficiaries of its outputs, through an active programme of communication⁴.

3. IUCN's position on rules and procedures for meetings of the Plenary (item 4(a) of the provisional agenda)

IUCN urges IPBES members to provide the Platform with a strong set of operational modalities. Therefore, the rules of procedure for meetings of the Plenary (IPBES/1/3) should enable the Plenary to work as efficiently and inclusively as possible.

IUCN supports the broadest possible definition for the observers to the Plenary (Rule 2 (g)). As a first stage, IPBES should take all possible chances to convene relevant stakeholders to the meetings of its Plenary. Inclusion of a body, an organization or an agency representing indigenous peoples and local communities as observers may have a great impact in raising the interests of these groups in participating in the IPBES processes. Therefore IUCN recommends the following definition: *“Observers means any State not a member of the Platform and any body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, or any body, organization or agency of indigenous peoples or local communities, which is qualified in matters covered by the Platform, and which has informed the Secretariat of the Platform of its wish to be represented at sessions of the Plenary, subject to provisions set out in these rules of procedure”.*

IUCN also supports the language which allow for the most flexible framework for decision-making (rules 39 and affiliated). Having a flexible framework implies that these rules of procedures might be revised not only by consensus. Insisting on decision-making based solely on consensus might indeed impede the timely revisions of these rules. IUCN would therefore favour a vote to be cast on this issue.

Considering the recent experience of nominating experts for the interim Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, to be selected by the Plenary at this meeting, IUCN would like to reiterate its recommendation that observers be able to nominate experts for the MEP. Therefore, IUCN supports the language provided under Rule 30. Adopting such a rule would facilitate the selection of a Panel respecting gender, disciplinary and geographical balance.

4. IUCN's position on policy and procedures for the admission of observers (item 4(b) of the provisional agenda)

IUCN favours a solution which ensures high inclusiveness, equity of treatment and maximum transparency. The definition of observers to the Plenary should follow adequately this principle, as indicated above.

⁴ Communication tools could be accessed at www.iucn.org/ipbes

IUCN regrets that the meetings of the MEP and other subsidiary bodies to be established may be closed to observers as a consequence of the decision that Observers might only attend meetings of the Plenary⁵. While recognizing that these bodies are subordinate to the Plenary, which is the only decision-making body of the Platform, this sends an inappropriate signal about the transparency of the work of these bodies and the open participation of relevant stakeholders in the work of the Platform.

IUCN also regrets that the participation of Observers in the decision-making is not enhanced by a mechanism, as was previously proposed. Furthermore, the document IPBES/1/4 provides that “*IPBES will not provide financial assistance to the observers for participating in the platform process*”. Such a provision could prevent some relevant stakeholders, if not nominated to be part of IPBES Members’ delegations, from participating in the decision-making process of the Platform. This seems to be contradictory with the resolution establishing IPBES which recommended that the Plenary encourages and takes into account, as appropriate, inputs and suggestions made by relevant stakeholders [...]”⁶. Therefore, IUCN recommends to carefully considering this question before adopting such a restrictive rule. IUCN proposes that the question of a financial support for observers to participate in plenary sessions be elaborated further in the context of an overarching stakeholder engagement strategy.

5. IUCN’s position on next steps required for the preparation of the initial work programme (item 5(a) of the provisional agenda)

Resolutions relative to IPBES adopted by IUCN Members at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2012 urge IPBES Members to provide the platform with an ambitious and robust work programme for the first years of its implementation supported by adequate funding, and to ensure that it responds to the needs expressed, not only by governments, but also by civil society including the scientific community, conservation NGOs and the business sector.

IUCN recommends the adoption of a significant intersessionnal work plan with a view to table a comprehensive draft work programme to the second meeting of the Plenary, based on the illustrative work programme provided in document IPBES/1/INF/14. This draft should identify clearly the deliverables of the Platform, with the target dates, in a first period of time. IUCN recommends also that this draft provide guidance for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the programme, including through measurable indicators of success. IUCN also supports the suggestion to adopt a stakeholder engagement strategy within the initial work programme of the Platform. IUCN stands ready to contribute to this activity.

With the view to encourage inputs and suggestions from relevant stakeholders, IUCN recommends IPBES to adopt sensible timelines that optimally enable contribution of a wide range of experts.

⁵ Rule 5 and rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure for the Plenary of the Platform as presented as Appendix II of the document UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9

⁶ Appendix I, Para 1(a) of the document UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9

In order to streamline the possible activities proposed to be implemented by the Platform⁷ and the requests, inputs and suggestions, IUCN recommends that the Plenary officially calls for requests, inputs and suggestions, during the present session and circulates widely this call for contributions.

In its intersessional comments, IUCN expresses warm appreciation of the procedures that have been prepared by the secretariat to support the implementation of the work programme, especially the procedures for the preparation of reports and the elements for recognizing indigenous and local participation. These procedures are critically important and must be brought to the consideration of the Plenary at a later stage. IUCN emphasizes the importance of giving the ability to observer organizations to nominate authors, reviewers and editors during the preparation phase of the reports⁸.

6. IUCN's position on procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Platform (item 5(b) of the provisional agenda)

IUCN appreciates the procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests, inputs and suggestions provided by the secretariat because it provides clear timelines and adequate opportunities for relevant stakeholders to contribute in the process. IUCN agrees with the order of priority given to requests, inputs and suggestions supported by multiple entities. In order to fully accomplish the transparency of the process, IUCN would suggest adding one criterion to be considered by IPBES authorities while reviewing the requests, inputs and suggestions, as "General information on the consultation process that resulted in the requested action".

IUCN would also like to strongly support the decision taken at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD⁹ requesting that IPBES contribute to assessments in support of the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. IUCN recognized that Aichi targets form the major framework to inspire the necessary transformations to reach its vision of a "just world that values and conserves nature". The Aichi targets are duly referenced in the IUCN Programme 2013-2016¹⁰ as the objectives whose implementation must be supported by the work delivered by IUCN.

Furthermore, IUCN would like to recommend that requests, inputs and suggestions, take into account the IUCN Programme 2013-2016, particularly the provision of knowledge products and processes which is planned and the capacity development activities which are envisaged. IUCN encourages the Plenary to recognize the adequate synergies to build between the two programmes.

7. IUCN's position on potential role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in overseeing further preparation of the initial work programme (item 5(c) of the provisional agenda)

IUCN commends that the MEP may have a prominent role in preparing the work programme. IUCN would like to insist on the great advantages for the Plenary to ask for an overarching conceptual framework to be submitted to its adoption. Such a document will be a valuable tool to streamline the work of the platform and to optimize the future buy-in of its products.

⁷ Building on the elements provided in previous meetings such as UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/2 and UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/INF/3

⁸ As mentioned in the document IPBES/1/INF/3 section 3.3

⁹ Decision XI/13 section C

¹⁰ Accessible at https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_programme_2013_2016.pdf

8. IUCN's position on possible institutional arrangements for implementing the initial work programme (item 5(d) of the provisional agenda)

IUCN recalls the importance of the principle providing that IPBES should collaborate with existing initiatives. The possible arrangements for implementing the work programme should include a section on strategic partnerships and establishing networks of organizations. This is particularly important given the sustained timeframes, investment, and capacity-building necessary to establish networks of biodiversity focused institutions. Hence, IUCN recommends that IPBES conduct a review of possible collaboration with existing organizations in view of the activities that might be implemented. This review should be completed for consideration by the second plenary meeting of the Platform, drawing on overviews of existing activities¹¹ and exploring the potential modalities that have already been documented¹².

9. IUCN's position on nomination and selection of the members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (item 6 of the provisional agenda)

While regretting that the process to nominate experts excluded nominations from relevant stakeholders, IUCN acknowledges that many experts who are nominated have a solid background on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and on ecosystem services, which is at the heart of the platform's mandate.

However, IUCN recommends that the selection of experts to sit in the MEP take adequately into account experience and skills in working with business actors and experience and skills related to indigenous and local knowledge. These two components of the general expertise to be strengthened by IPBES are indeed critical.

IUCN would also like to point out that in considering the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel regions, the Plenary should retain the possibility of adding a few additional seats to the ones to be filled by regional nominees, in order to ensure geographical and disciplinary balance.

10. IUCN's position on initial budget of the Platform (item 8(b) of the provisional agenda)

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2012 called on IUCN Members and governments, to provide resources to support the implementation of the capacity building component of the IPBES work programme, considering that capacity building is a critical priority for the implementation of the IPBES work programme in many developing countries.

IUCN reiterates this call and considers that the indicative budget requirements for the administration and operations of the platform are a minimal basis to start with. IUCN urges IPBES Members to not only provide funds to cover for this minimum but to go further in order to enable an ambitious intersessional work.

Having recognized IPBES as a major priority in its programme 2013-2016, IUCN will dedicate all possible efforts to communicate and continue to raise awareness on IPBES and its important role. Furthermore, IUCN represents an existing structure which could deliver work on behalf of IPBES in a cost-effective way. In delivering its programme 2013-2016, the Union could simultaneously

¹¹ UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/3/Add.1, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/4/Add.1, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/5/Add.1 and UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/6/Add.1

¹² UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/INF/11 and UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/INF/15

provide elements of and building blocks for implementation of the IPBES work programme. These elements would be considered as an in-kind contribution from IUCN to IPBES work programme. However, it would be IUCN's expectation that the incremental costs that might be required to align the IUCN programme deliverables with IPBES expected outcomes would be covered by the Platform's trust fund.

While recognizing the cost-saving rationale behind the proposed structure of the secretariat, IUCN is nevertheless concerned about the absence of staff dedicated to stakeholder engagement as was proposed in previous documents¹³. IUCN considers that IPBES should actively reach out to relevant stakeholders to disseminate the calls for contributions which will be critical to ensure a broad buy-in of its products.

Furthermore, while communication is an operational imperative for the Platform, no specific staff appears to be dedicated to communication. IPBES Members may wish to endow the initial secretariat with these critical capacities for the early success of the platform.

¹³ UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/6