Guidance on how to assess policy instruments and facilitate the use of policy support tools and methodologies through IPBES assessments

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context and purpose of the guidance

The IPBES Guide on the production of assessments (the Guide) is complemented by a series of modules, which contain further information for those involved in IPBES assessments. This guidance constitutes Module D of the Guide. It explains how to assess policy instruments and facilitate the use of policy support tools and methodologies through IPBES assessments and addresses the issues relevant in this context. It relates to one of IPBES's four functions, which is to support "*policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies, such as those arising from assessments, to enable decision makers to gain access to those tools and methodologies and, where necessary, to promote and catalyze their further development*" (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, appendix 1, paragraph 1(d)).

IPBES assessments synthesize and build on peer-reviewed scientific literature, grey literature and other available knowledge systems such as indigenous peoples and local communities as well as practitioners' knowledge. They include a review and synthesis, as well as an analysis and an expert judgement of the available knowledge base. In order to support the implementation of the policy support function, IPBES assessments should assess policy instruments and facilitate the use of policy support tools and methodologies for a specific theme, or as part of a methodological assessment.

In addition to its modules, the Guide identifies four "key IPBES resources" that have been developed to support the work of assessment authors. These resources include:

(a) **IPBES e-learning modules**: E-learning modules cover different aspects of assessments and support the development of capacity. Available at: https://www.ipbes.net/e-learning

(b) **IPBES webinar series:** Webinars cover different aspects of the assessment process, as well as the assessments themselves. Available at: https://www.ipbes.net/webinars

(c) **IPBES preliminary guide on the conceptualization of values:** This Guide contains further information on the identification and conceptualization of different values. Available at: www.ipbes.net/guidance-and-conceptual-framework

(d) **IPBES policy support gateway**: Contains information regarding a range of policy instruments and policy support tools and methodologies linked to assessments, case studies, capacity-building opportunities and resources, and communities of practice. Available at: https://www.ipbes.net/policy-support

This guidance is based on IPBES rules and procedures, its conceptual framework and experience gained during the development of completed assessments.

1.2 Key users of the guidance

This guidance is aimed at IPBES assessment authors, in particular those selected to assess policy instruments and to facilitate the use of policy support tools and methodologies through the assessment. It may also support authors in coordinating the development of key themes and narratives across chapters and the development of the summary for policymakers.

Experts undertaking IPBES-like regional, national or sub-national ecosystem assessments may also benefit from using this guidance document.

It should be noted that this guidance is a living document and will be updated based on the ongoing work of IPBES. Therefore, users should ensure they are using the latest version. Feedback by users can be provided to the relevant technical support unit and the IPBES secretariat.

1.3 Structure and contents of the guidance

Section 2 focuses on the scope and definitions to be considered. Section 3 describes the process for assessing policy instruments and facilitating the use of policy support tools and methodologies, taking into account a series of steps that should be considered for this purpose. Section 4 introduces the IPBES policy support gateway and its relevance to assessments.

1.4 The IPBES conceptual framework and the relevance of policy instruments and policy support tools and methodologies

The work of IPBES is underpinned by a conceptual framework (figure 1) which consists of six interlinked elements constituting a social-ecological system that operates at various scales in time and space: i) nature; ii) nature's contributions to people; iii) anthropogenic assets; iv) institutions and governance systems and other indirect drivers of change; v) direct drivers of change; and vi) good quality of life (Díaz et al., 2015a & b). The conceptual framework guides authors in undertaking IPBES assessments. Authors assessing the use and effectiveness of policy instruments and policy support tools and methodologies will focus primarily on 'Institutions, governance and other indirect drivers', although other parts of the framework may also be essential to their work.
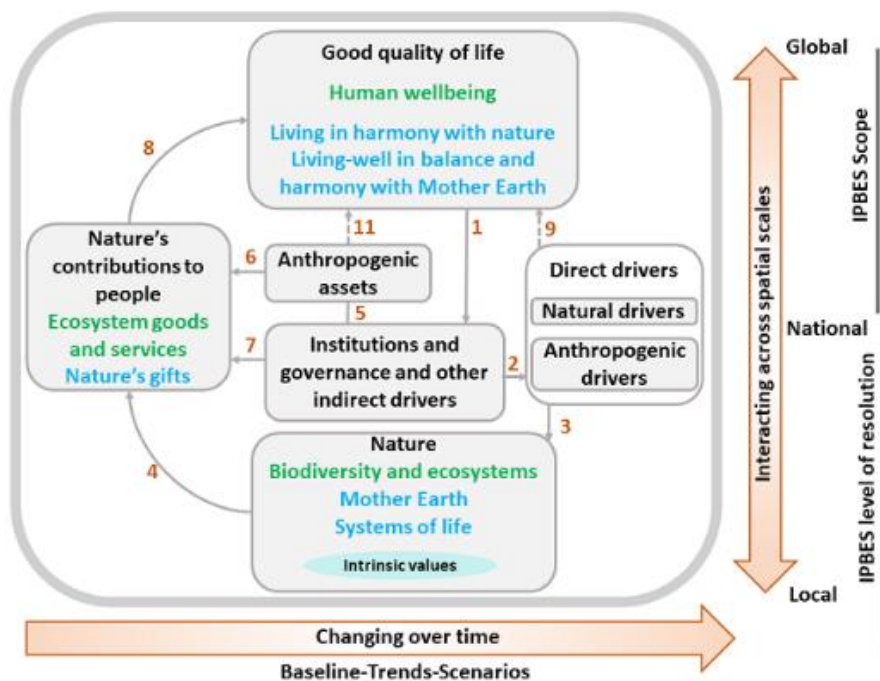
Figure 1. IPBES assessment framework. The IPBES conceptual framework builds on previous conceptual frameworks. It includes a graphic expression of the interrelationships between biodiversity and ecosystems, and human quality of life, at different temporal and spatial scales, and from the perspectives of different worldviews (including western science, and indigenous and local knowledge).

2. Definitions of key terms and concepts

A number of key terms related to policy instruments and policy support tools and methodologies are provided to ensure consistency of interpretation and understanding between and within IPBES assessments, as well as other IPBES outputs such as the IPBES policy support gateway: [1]

- **Policy**: A definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions[2];

- **Policy instrument**: A set of means or mechanisms to achieve a policy goal;

- **Policy support tools and methodologies**: Approaches and techniques based on science and other knowledge systems that can inform, assist and enhance relevant decisions, policy making and implementation at local, national, regional and global levels to protect nature, thereby promoting nature's contributions to people and a good quality of life;

- **The policy cycle:** Policies are often cyclical in that emerging problems are addressed with the formulation of policies, followed by their implementation and subsequent evaluation. These stages in the policy cycle can be formalized with assigned roles and processes and consist of many other sub-stages. For example, the policy formulation stage can include problem definition, identification of alternatives, consultations and public hearings, and finally, a decision on the chosen policy. Implementation can include allocating budgetary resources, assigning implementation roles to different actors, setting specific targets, and possibly developing guidelines. The evaluation and redefinition of the problem can be conducted with the help of formal monitoring systems as a periodic exercise, or it can be an ad-hoc process or a mere societal discussion of the impacts and consequences of existing policies;

- **Governance:** The way the rules, norms and actions in a given organization are structured, sustained, and regulated.

2.1 Policy instruments

Within the IPBES context, the following four categories of policy instruments are identified:

(a) Legal and regulatory instruments e.g. protected areas; land degradation neutrality targets;

(b) Economic and financial instruments e.g. payment for ecosystem services; ecological fiscal transfers; REDD+;

(c) Rights-based instruments and customary norms e.g. indigenous community conserved areas (ICCAs);

(d) Social and cultural instruments e.g. voluntary sustainability standards; eco-labelling certification schemes.

In some situations, overlaps between the four categories have been identified. For example, in some of the IPBES Regional Assessments of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services it was found that it was difficult to differentiate cultural instruments from customary norms.

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[1] The definitions of "policy instrument", "policy support tools and methodologies" and "governance" are taken from the IPBES glossary available at: https://www.ipbes.net/glossary. Other terms contained in the glossary may also be useful in this context.

[2] Merriam-Webster https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy.

2.2 Policy support tools and methodologies

Policy support tools play an important role in improving the governance process by ensuring that governance arrangements are integrated, based on an inclusive and adaptive evidence-base. Within the IPBES context, seven families of policy support tools and methodologies have been delineated. The families are defined by the broad challenges they address, as shown in the examples presented below. Some policy support tools and methodologies may be attributed to more than one family (e.g. the integrated valuation of ecosystem services and tradeoffs (InVEST)).

2.2.1. Assembling data and knowledge

The policy support tools and methodologies in this family assist in gathering, processing and providing data to understand the function and dynamics of biodiversity, human wellbeing, nature's contributions to people (including ecosystem goods and services), and associated social-ecological systems. The family includes tools such as data collection efforts, databases, information facilities and monitoring, indicators, oral history, mapping of ecosystem services, among others. This family is relevant to all elements of the policy cycle.

Examples of policy support tools and methodologies of this family include databases provided by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON).

2.2.2 Assessment and evaluation

The second family of policy support tools and methodologies consists of tools that synthesize and assess knowledge, including indigenous and local knowledge. The family includes different types of assessment and evaluation tools, based on a variety of methods and diverse conceptualizations of values of nature, nature's contributions to people, and a good quality of life. This family is relevant to all elements of the policy cycle.

Examples of this family include analysis of management effectiveness and tools, trend analysis, scenarios impact assessments, indigenous peoples and local communities' monitoring systems, quantitative modelling, accounting, life-cycle assessment, deliberative valuation, cost–benefit analysis, trade-off analysis, geographic information systems and human rights assessments.

2.2.3. Public discussion, involvement and participatory process

Policy support tools and methodologies from this family assist in identifying problems and opportunities, setting goals and priorities, establishing a case for policy action, and building a shared understanding of requirements and consequences. They may also facilitate the achievement of principles such as equality, equity, non-discrimination, and effective stakeholders participation. This is achieved by supporting discussions on new and existing knowledge and data, emerging risks and opportunities, and options for societal responses, institutions, policy settings and their effectiveness. Tools of this family are relevant in particular for the policy formulation stage but can support all stages of the policy cycle.

Examples of this family include expert interviews, stakeholder mapping and analysis, field observation, focused group discussion, public hearing and auditing, participatory well-being ranking, mass media communication, and legal empowerment methodologies (e.g. community protocols).

2.2.4. Selection and design of policy instruments

This family consists of policy support tools and methodologies that support the identification, evaluation and selection of policies and institutional settings, including the evaluation of and

comparison with relevant experience and outcomes under similar and different circumstances. They can be used for both the selection and design of individual policy instruments, and the analysis of policy mixes, thereby considering the interaction among several instruments in real-world contexts (Ring and Schröter-Schlaack, 2015). This family focuses primarily on selecting and designing new policy instruments and improving existing policies to achieve certain policy objectives, considering that policy instruments are different from policy support tools and methodologies. This family is primarily aligned with the policy formulation stage of the policy cycle, but it could be relevant to the other two stages, for example to support the implementation policy.

Examples of this family include analysis of individual, or a combination of, policy instruments, identification of missing instruments and instrument impact evaluation. Other examples include legal assessment tools (e.g. for gender equitable land tenure), ex-ante evaluation of options and scenarios, designing systems of protected areas, and policy mix analysis.

2.2.5. Implementation, outreach and enforcement

Policy support tools and methodologies under this family support the practical implementation of policy instruments, and include laws, regulations and quasi-regulations, independent compliance mechanisms, economic and financial instruments, and information tools. Information tools, through monitoring, may provide information to stakeholders and support enforcement and compliance. This family focuses primarily on supporting the implementation of policies that have already been decided and enacted. It is mostly aligned with policy implementation but could be relevant to the other two stages of the policy cycle.

Examples of policy support tools and methodologies of this family include: risk-based enforcement effort, process standards (e.g. those under the International Standards Organization (ISO)), monitoring, reporting, verifying and systematic information sharing through platforms and processes, amici curiae (friends of the court) and expert witnesses.

2.2.6. Training and capacity building

Policy support tools and methodologies of this family support the identification and addressing of capacity gaps and shortfalls by enhancing the skills and capacities of relevant actors and organizations, including government officials and agencies, communities and representatives, businesses, non-governmental organizations, environmental advocacy groups, think tanks and research organisations, advisors, and support services. This family cuts cross the other six families.

Examples of policy support tools and methodologies of this family include handbooks, manuals, guides, e-learning resources, education, workshops, knowledge sharing, national science foundation agendas, and the IPBES fellows programme.

2.2.7. Social learning, innovation and adaptive governance

Policy support tools and methodologies within this family address gaps and disconnects in the policy process and between different sectors, actors and decision-making levels. These tools support social learning, strengthen links, feedback mechanisms and responsiveness to change, and improve risk management, and the overall performance of policy processes.

Examples include workshop series, peer-to-peer learning dialogues, resilience assessments, transition arenas, and technology assessment.

3. Assessing policy instruments, and facilitating the use of policy support tools and methodologies within IPBES assessments

This section sets out steps that IPBES assessment authors can use to assess policy instruments and facilitate the use of policy support tools and methodologies as part of an assessment. Chapters 6 of the IPBES Regional Assessments of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services were developed using these steps. The description of each step includes a checklist for authors.

The majority of the policy analysis is expected to occur within the chapter or chapters focusing on governance and policy instruments. However, the assessment of policy instruments is also likely to be addressed in the assessment chapter on drivers. The location of the analysis will be dependent on the scope of the assessment and the chapter structure. The coordinating lead authors of relevant chapters within an assessment and across ongoing IPBES assessments are encouraged to coordinate their work closely to ensure coherence.

In IPBES assessments, policy may be analyzed at different levels from global, regional, national or sub-national to local, with analyses highlighting the interactions between scales of decision-making. Authors may focus on policy emerging at the international level, including under multilateral environmental agreements, or at the national level, including executive orders, regulations and policy statements.

Authors are encouraged to refer to the scoping document and other chapters in the assessment at any point during the assessment process, to ensure consistency around the assessment of policy instruments.

Step 1: What are the policy goals and what is the policy context and history?

Historical, social, economic, political, ecological, legal and institutional settings influence the design and implementation of policy instruments. Identifying these settings will help authors to describe the policy context, the decision-making model (rational, organisational or political) and history of policy instruments and of the use of policy support tools and methodologies. Authors are encouraged to consider administrative, social and cultural norms, as well as the scale of policy implementation, i.e. regional, sub-regional, national, sub-national and local (see also guidance on scale under step 3f below), when describing policy context.

Authors may want to first state the policy goal and its relation to the policy issue the assessment relates to as well as other relevant policy goals and targets. Policy goals related to an assessment can be very specific (e.g. secure pollination, protect and use forests sustainably), or more comprehensive (e.g., addressing transboundary issues, such as species migration or air pollution). Policy goals can be related to implementing bilateral, regional or multilateral agreements and contribute to the achievement of global targets (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals or Aichi Biodiversity Targets).

The policy context will shed light on the challenges which a policy aims to address. The description of the policy context should address relevant direct drivers (e.g. land use change, climate change), indirect drivers (e.g. demography, science and technology), as well as current gaps in achieving policy goals, including with regard to the institutional context (e.g. laws, regulations), actors'/stakeholders'/right-holders'/duty-bearers' interrelationships (e.g. government, non-governmental, private and societal organisations), and governance models (e.g. centralized, decentralized, public-private, etc.) that are utilized to address social, economic and ecological

challenges. This description will support an understanding of the biodiversity and ecosystem service governance and the role(s) of various stakeholders in the governance system.

Checklist of key actions

- ✓ **Historical, social, economic, political and institutional settings described**
- ✓ **Relevant challenges identified**
- ✓ **Policy goals described and its link to the policy issue**
- ✓ **Current gaps described**
- ✓ **Scales at which governance and decision-making takes places considered**

Step 2: What are the policy instruments relevant for the assessment?

Authors may wish to describe relevant policy instruments under the four categories used in the IPBES context and purpose (see section 2.1 above). The categories can be adjusted to correspond to the specific context of an assessment, but adjustments should be described and followed systematically.

Authors are encouraged to describe the criteria they used for selecting the instruments they address (e.g. availability of literature or case studies, etc.). Given the word count (page length) restrictions for each chapter within an assessment, authors might want to include the description of the criteria within supplementary material for the assessment.

It may also be informative to consider the evidence base upon which an instrument was selected and incorporated within a policy or strategy, where possible including information on the policy support tools and methodologies that were used to inform its selection. The scale at which a policy instrument operates should also be described.

Authors may wish to describe not only individual policy instruments, but also policy instruments forming "policy mixes", as part of which instruments appear in a certain sequence, complement or are in conflict with each other.

Authors may also consider presenting information on policy instruments along key themes. This approach can be used to specifically highlight policy mixes which utilize a suite of policy instruments and policy support tools.

Checklist of key actions

- ✓ **All relevant policy instrument categories or themes described**
- ✓ **If relevant, potentially missing instruments in the policy mix identified**

Step 3: How to assess policy instruments?

This section sets out a series of sub-questions that can guide the assessment of policy instruments.

It is important to remember that the assessment should be based upon existing knowledge and literature and not involve primary research.

Step 3a: How are policy instruments implemented?

The way in which policy instruments are implemented depends on the process employed, the resources available and the specific institutional setting, governance style and structure. Authors could

start by describing for each policy instrument addressed in the assessment, based on available literature:

(a)   The roles of different actors in the implementation of a policy instrument, including their formal responsibilities, which could be reported in the literature as a narrative of an organizational structure, in legal instruments or in court decisions, and less formal roles, e.g. the role of intermediaries, knowledge brokers, practitioners, non-governmental organizations or businesses;

(b)   The financial resources allocated to implementing the policy instrument, including their source (e.g. national budget, municipality budget, donor, charity, private sector), continuity and predictability, and relative abundance as compared to other similar financial allocations;

(c)   The human resources allocated to implementing the policy instrument, including numbers, skills and mandate of experts, professionals and managers implementing the policy instrument, including the mandate and capacity of the respective authority;

(d)   The enabling and constraining conditions, and the relevant institutions and governance modes.

In their descriptions, authors should refer to confidence terms (see section 2.2.6 on using confidence terms in the IPBES Guide on the Production of Assessments), which should rate confidence in the conclusions based on both the level of scientific agreement, and the quantity and quality of the evidence available (based on the literature).

Authors may also wish to describe how governance influences the implementation of the policy instrument (see also step 3b below). This could include the ways in which implementation is enabled by governance conditions and recognize possible barriers for implementation. An analysis of the enabling context may reveal that governance structures other than those directly relating to the instrument being assessed also influence policy implementation. In particular, rigid sectoral role division or major changes in governance structures (e.g., decentralization, marketization, administrative, legal or political changes might have a notable impact on the governance of the assessed policy).

Step 3b: What is the governance system(s) in which the policy instrument is being implemented?

A clear understanding of the governance system in which a policy instrument or policy support tool is being implemented is an important part of their assessment.

Good governance is an important enabling condition for policy implementation; it enhances the implementation of policies and distributes resulting positive impacts evenly. Good governance is usually characterized as including: participation, inclusiveness, consensus orientation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equality and non-discrimination, and rule of law. Good governance reduces the risks of corruption, and engages and empowers minorities and vulnerable groups.

Biodiversity governance is well addressed in the literature and through case studies in most parts of the world, but literature on ecosystem services governance is only starting to accumulate. For example, the different modes of governance of ecosystem services may be framed as: (1) hierarchical top-down governance; (2) scientific-technical governance; (3) adaptive collaborative governance and (4)

governing strategic behavior (Primmer et al., 2015). Different governance modes usually imply different policy instruments and different parts of an ecosystem targeted by responses (See figure 2).
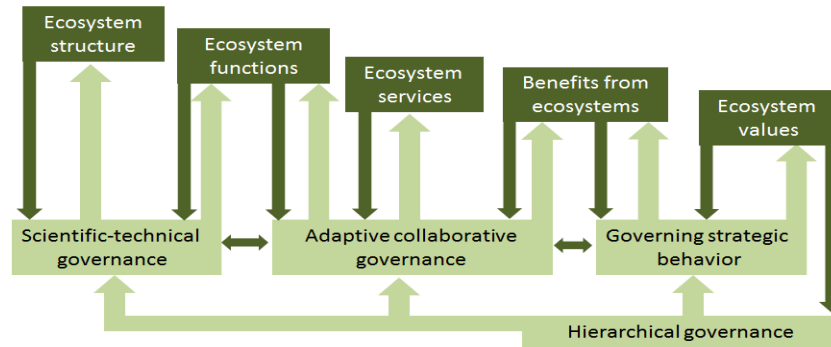
Figure 2. A framework for analyzing governance of ecosystem services (Primmer et al. 2015)

Step 3c: Who are the relevant actors and stakeholders?

While gathering the available literature related to the assessment of a policy instrument, it is important to understand the full range of actors and stakeholders associated with that policy instrument, as well as their various roles. This should include actors and stakeholders at the scale at which the policy instrument applies as well as any other scale at which the instrument may have an influence.

In the IPBES context, stakeholders are defined as "any individuals, groups or organizations who affect, or could be affected by (whether positively or negatively) a particular issue and its associated policies, decisions and action"[3]. While terms are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature to describe stakeholder groups (e.g. actors, target groups, beneficiaries), care should be taken to ensure that terms are used appropriately and consistently within the assessment.

In the context of each policy instrument that is presented and assessed, the extent to which stakeholder information can be included will be based on the available literature. Some policy instruments, for which there is an appreciable amount of information, may mention very specific stakeholders; others may be broader in their description of the stakeholder groups. The assessment should try to include and highlight:

(a)   Whether stakeholders (beneficiaries and target groups) have been either positively or negatively affected by the use of the policy instrument under question - this could help to identify the "winners" and "losers"; and discourage discriminatory practices;

(b)   Whether the stakeholders (individual(s) or group(s)) responsible for implementing the policy instrument have fulfilled their duties and roles. This could help in assessing implementation effectiveness and efficiency, transparency and accountability;

(c)   The relationships between and amongst stakeholder groups. This could help in understanding the governance arrangements associated with any policy instrument.

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[3] IPBES glossary: https://www.ipbes.net/glossary/stakeholders

Keeping in mind that stakeholders are affected differently over time and space by policies and policy instruments, it is important to include dimensions of scale (see step 3f below) when identifying stakeholders and the ways in which they are affected.

Other knowledge systems, including indigenous and local knowledge, (see IPBES' work on indigenous and local knowledge) as well as practitioners' knowledge should, to the extent possible, be considered when assessing a policy instrument. Indigenous and local knowledge should be considered in accordance with the approach to recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge adopted by the Plenary (see decision IPBES-5/1, Annex II).

Step 3d: What impacts do the policy instruments have?

Policy impacts are the direct, indirect, intended and unintended impacts that a policy instrument generates. Intended impacts are related to the policy goals to which the specific IPBES assessment refers, as defined in its scoping document. When assessing impacts, authors may consider linking to other relevant areas of the assessment report, which could include chapters or sections on status and trends, drivers (including the unintended impacts of previously implemented policy instruments), scenarios, and human wellbeing.

All impacts, including ecological, economic, cultural and social impacts, should be considered for each selected policy instrument, to the degree that this is feasible. Links between impacts and tradeoffs and the different ways in which different stakeholders experience the impacts could also be considered to assess the distributional and equity impacts.

The temporal and spatial scales at which the impacts occur could also be relevant, as some impacts may occur with long delays, at a very local scale or well beyond the scale at which they are implemented, including outside the targeted policy area (e.g. through telecoupling[4]).

Step 3e: Are the policy instruments achieving the desired outcome?

Effectiveness can be assessed in a variety of different ways depending on the literature and information related to monitoring and evaluation that is available and can include various measures of efficiency, such as goal achievement, effectiveness, cost effectiveness and legitimacy (including equity and inclusion). Criteria selected for the evaluation of the effectiveness of a policy instrument in an assessment should be explained.

Effectiveness of a policy instrument or mix of instruments generally relates to the desired impacts that can be directly attributed to that instrument or mix. Causal links may, however, be difficult to establish, often requiring judgement about whether the anticipated targets have been achieved, and whether the impacts generated can be attributed to the policy. Cost-effectiveness commonly compares the effects of instruments, i.e. achieving a policy goal, with the costs of implementing them, which could also take into account the costs of inaction. A more cost-effective measure will achieve greater results for lower investment.

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[4] IPBES glossary: https://www.ipbes.net/glossary/telecoupling

Figure 3. Relationship between policy objectives, policy instruments and policy support tools

Where possible, policy evaluation literature (e.g. peer reviewed literature, grey literature and ILK) should be used to inform the evaluation of the effectiveness of policy instruments selected individually and/or in combination. If relevant, and considering various policy instruments in real-world policy mixes, it can be important to take issues of sequencing into account. If literature and information are not readily available, knowledge gaps should be clearly stated. Confidence terms should be used to refer to a limited focus in available literature or contradictory findings.

Some policy instruments may support or complement others; while others may be in conflict with each other. Presentation of these tradeoffs where possible is useful and should consider relevant spatial and temporal scales. Examples of the effectiveness of different instruments can demonstrate "what works, where and when", synthesizing the information gained in each of the steps above. Infographics can aid in communicating this information.

Step 3f: What is the scale at which the policy instrument is operating?

Scale is an important consideration in assessing the effectiveness of any policy instrument and its associated policy support tools and methodologies. It refers to the dimensions used to measure and study any phenomenon[5]. Two important types of scale that should be considered in IPBES assessments are the spatial (geographical) and temporal scales. Authors may like to develop criteria to assess effectiveness, drawing on the available literature.

Spatial (geographical) scale: Spatial scale is comprised of two properties: (i) spatial extent, that is the size of the total area of interest for a particular study (e.g. a watershed, a country, global scale); and (ii) spatial grain or resolution, that is the size of the spatial units within this total area for which data are observed or predicted, e.g. fine-grained or coarse-grained grid cells[6]. Within the context of each IPBES assessment, the spatial scale of the policy instrument(s) being assessed is outlined in or framed by the scoping document for that assessment. Including a spatial dimension in the assessment of effectiveness can help to improve accuracy as it highlights whether a policy instrument had the

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[5] IPBES glossary: https://www.ipbes.net/glossary/scale

[6] IPBES glossary: https://www.ipbes.net/glossary/scale

intended impact(s) at its relevant scale; and whether benefits or unintended consequences of the policy instrument occurred at other scales. It is often not possible to assess the effectiveness of a policy instrument or policy support tool and methodology at one scale or for one specific geographical context, by drawing on the experience of the implementation of the same type of policy instrument at another scale or for another geographical context. Policy instruments are often very specific to the social, legal, political, economic, cultural and ecological context in which they are designed and implemented.

Temporal scale: Temporal scale is comprised of the: (i) temporal extent, that is the total length of the time period of interest for a particular study (e.g. 10 years, 50 years, or 100 years); and (ii) temporal grain or resolution, that is the temporal frequency with which data are observed or projected within this total period (e.g. at 1-year, 5-year or 10-year intervals)[7]. Policy instruments are often designed with specific timeframes in mind. Taking these timeframes into account when assessing effectiveness is thus very important, especially when considering who is benefitting and who is "losing out", as impacts may have time lags. The timeframes for achieving specific policy goals through the use of policy instruments may also not match timeframes for the achievement of other goals and targets coming from different levels. Care should therefore be taken when assessing the effectiveness of policy instruments in the contexts of goals and targets that are not specifically linked to that instrument.

Checklist of actions

- ✓ **Institutional setting described, including enabling and constraining factors, and resources available, both human and financial.**
- ✓ **Governance system being implemented considered.**
- ✓ **Impacts, direct or indirect, intended or unintended, at a variety of geographical scales considered.**
- ✓ **Actors and stakeholders involved considered.**
- ✓ **Effectiveness based on relevant criteria considered.**
- ✓ **Spatial and temporal scales at which the instrument operates considered, including how telecoupling or time lag effects might affect impacts.**

Step 4: Linking policy support tools and methodologies to policy instruments

As outlined above, policy support tools and methodologies support different stages of the policy cycle (policy design, implementation, monitoring and assessment) and their assessment should draw on literature, including empirical analyses of the relevant policy goals, context, implementation, governance, stakeholders, impacts, efficiency and effectiveness. Where this is not possible, for example because an assessment addresses an emerging issue that is not subject to systematic policy steering, it can be helpful to draw on policy support tools and methodologies instead of policy instruments.

Prior to an assessment, authors may use policy support tools and methodologies to support the exploration of the issue at hand. After an assessment is completed, policy support tools and methodologies can support the integration of assessment findings into policy and decision-making.

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[7] IPBES glossary: https://www.ipbes.net/glossary/scale

Checklist of actions

✓ **If limited literature is available related to particular policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies to support the analysis considered.**

4. Incorporating information into the IPBES policy support gateway

The IPBES policy support gateway (hereafter "the gateway") is an innovative, dynamic, evolving online platform with two main goals:

(a)   To enable decision makers to gain easy access to tailored information on policy support tools and methodologies to better inform and assist the different scales and phases of policy-making and implementation;

(b)   To allow a range of users to provide input to the gateway and assess the usability of policy support tools and methodologies in their specific contexts, including resources required and types of outputs that can be obtained, and thus help to identify gaps in tools and methodologies (IPBES/3/INF/8).

4.1 Introduction to the gateway and its purpose

There is a wide range of policy support tools and methodologies to support different stages of the policy cycle. However, it is often difficult for decision makers and practitioners to access such tools and methodologies and to identify how relevant they might be for addressing a particular situation. In its decision IPBES-2/5, the Plenary requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau to develop an online catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies to facilitate access by decision makers to policy support tools and methodologies, and to provide guidance on how to promote and catalyse their further development.[8]

The IPBES policy support gateway is available at https://www.ipbes.net/policy-support. The gateway has been developed by IPBES with the support of a wide range of experts and resource people across the globe, and together with Oppla, a European research project.

With purpose of achieving its two main goals, the policy support gateway was developed around the following functions:

Goal A: To enable decision makers to gain easy access to tailored information relating to policy support tools and methodologies

(a)   *Allow users to browse, search, identify and retrieve relevant policy instruments and policy support tools and methodologies and information relating to them*;

(b)   *Provide online functionality for its target groups*;

(c)   *Develop a community of practice to strengthen user networking*s.

Goal B: To allow a range of users to provide input to the gateway and their experiences and lessons on the usability of policy support tools and methodologies in their specific contexts :[9]

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8 Decision IPBES-2/5, section VIII.

9 IPBES/3/5.

(a)   *Submit information on policy support tools and methodologies*;

(b)   *Share lessons learned*;

(c)   *Evaluate the gateway;*

(d)   *Provide information to the Plenary of the Platform*.

4.1.1 Structure of the policy support gateway

The IPBES policy support gateway comprises two key components:

(a)   A catalogue of policy instruments and policy support tools linked to assessments, case studies, capacity-building opportunities or resources, and a network of experts/practitioners (communities of practice);

(b)   Methodological guidance: (i) scenarios and models by providing an overview of what they are and how they can link to agenda setting and decision support; and (ii) on multiple conceptualizations of diverse values by providing a conceptual justification, explaining through a six-step approach how to address them and providing an immersion to the topic for the IPBES community.[10]

The gateway can serve as a source of information for experts undertaking IPBES assessments on specific policy instruments, support tools and methodologies and related resources or get in touch with other experts working on related issues around the world.

Authors are also encouraged to include, based on their work in IPBES assessments, policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies, case studies and capacity-building resources and opportunities into the IPBES policy support gateway, and upload or update existing content.

4.1.2 Types of additional resources in the policy support gateway

The gateway gathers a range of individual policy instruments and policy support tools and methodologies as well as a number of additional types of resources linked to them, namely:

(a)   *Case studies* related to the implementation of specific policy instruments or application of policy support tools, including those from IPBES assessments. Since case studies provide examples relating to the practical application of policy support tools or instruments, it is strongly encouraged to have a variety of case studies for each of those. A template for case studies is available through the policy support gateway;

(b)   *Capacity-building opportunities and resources* are means to help build the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and apply relevant tools and instruments, e.g. in-person and online training, documents, etc.;

(c)   *Individual experts and practitioners* with expertise in relation to specific policy instruments or policy support tools;

(d)   Further, given the decision to integrate the content of the existing catalogue of assessments into the gateway, assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services other than those of IPBES are also included, ranging from global (e.g. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment) to national (e.g. UK NEA) scales.

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[10] IPBES/6/INF/16.

For each individual item of content, a broad range of relevant information is available. Further, the gateway displays a list of gateway items related to the one being browsed. These interlinkages are an important functionality of the gateway as they link different resources allowing users to understand the use of different resources in combination with others.

4.2 Information to be captured for each policy instrument and policy support tool and methodology

The information required for the upload of different product categories is set out in the forms available at https://www.ipbes.net/policy-support.

Whereas some of the fields are compulsory, others are optional. Compulsory fields are presented at the beginning of the forms (identified with a red asterisk). Identifying interlinkages with other resource types in the gateway is generally encouraged and compulsory in some of the forms. This is the case, for example, for case studies or capacity-building opportunities and resources, which need to be linked to existing policy instruments or policy support tools.

Further, those uploading content are encouraged to select a set of relevant tags for their resource, as these are being used as filters to refine the search results when desired. Currently, these are the following:

- The categories of policy tools and families of policy instruments
- Related category of nature's contributions to people
- Related Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals
- Related realms (i.e. terrestrial, marine and coastal, and freshwater) (and units of analysis)
- Sub-region covered

Moreover, some are shared among all product types, but others are specific to a product type. Some of the fields that are present for all types of content include:

- Summary of the resource and purpose of its use
- Languages in which the resource is available
- Copy of the resource or link to where the resource can be found (e.g. a report or other kind of document, website of the organization or project, etc.)
- Contact details of the relevant individual/s or organization/s
- Information on whether the resource is open access

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IPBES/3/INF/8 Information on work related to policy support tools and methodologies (deliverable 4 (c)). Available at: https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/IPBES_3_INF_8.pdf

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