

Stakeholder engagement for sustainable cultural landscapes

Stefan Hotes, Tomohiro Ichinose, Marie Stenseke, Josef Settele, Flore Lafaye de Micheaux, Yesenia Hernandez, Maiko Nishi, Brice Sinsin, Damasa Macandog

On 13 May 2021, we organized a webinar¹ on the topic of Cultural Landscapes - Old and New Challenges for Sustainability. We defined cultural landscapes broadly as 'any area that has been altered from its natural state to cater to human needs'; based on this definition, more than 50% of the global terrestrial area classify as cultural landscapes. The online event brought together experts involved in research and management of cultural landscapes.

The aims were

- to raise awareness of IPBES and the assessments it produces
- to highlight the importance of stakeholder networks for implementing measures derived from assessments
- to facilitate communication concerning sustainable development of cultural landscapes
- to indicate opportunities for participation in stakeholder activities in support of cultural landscapes
- to invite contributions to a special issue on cultural landscapes²



We started with an overview of key findings from the IPBES Global Assessment, followed by an outline of the Open-ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders (ONet), including the Social Sciences and Humanities Network (SSHN). The role of local and traditional knowledge for the management of cultural landscapes was highlighted based on examples from Oaxaca, Mexico. Networking among diverse organizations engaging in revitalization and sustainable management of cultural landscapes was the topic of a presentation on the International Partnership of the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI).

A case study from Benin addressed the issue of historical land ownership on the management of protected areas, and another case study from the Ifugao region in Luzon, Philippines, showed how scientific knowledge can support the maintenance of cultural landscapes.

The webinar confirmed that large-scale and long-term driving forces including demographic change and climate change create pressures that have mostly negative effects on the sustainability of cultural landscapes. These effects are generally due to land use change including agricultural intensification and urbanization as well as land abandonment. These contrasting pressures are caused by social and economic processes which influence where people decide to live, how to earn a living and how to engage with their community and their environment.

The two-hour period available for the webinar did not provide enough time to discuss the responses that have been taken so far at international, regional and local levels for enhancing the sustainability of cultural landscapes. However, the need to search for new ways of integrating social and economic processes with environmental constraints in rural and urban areas was confirmed. The transition to bio-based economies sets the basic framework for this, because it requires us to link lifestyle choices and individual consumption patterns with the capacity of ecosystems. Promoting the use of IPBES assessments and scenarios in discussions about how to implement the Sustainable Development Goals provides opportunities for deriving best practices concerning cultural landscapes. Co-production of knowledge based on indigenous and local perspectives as well as various scientific approaches is essential.

¹ A recording of the webinar, the webinar programme and profiles of the speakers are available at the following URL: https://land-1.sciforum.net/#webinar_content

² Information concerning the special issue on Cultural Landscapes in the scientific journal 'Land' is available at: https://www.mdpi.com/journal/land/special_issues/cultural_landscapes