Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
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Item 8 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Communications and stakeholder engagement: stakeholder engagement strategy

Further details on the revised draft stakeholder engagement strategy (deliverable 4 (d))

Note by the secretariat

1.   The annex to the present note sets out: (a) a categorization of potential stakeholders in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; and (b) more details on the needs analysis that could be conducted by the Platform's secretariat in order to identify the needs of specific stakeholder groups. A categorization of potential stakeholders was first initiated in 2009 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which conducted a gap analysis for the purpose of facilitating the discussions on how to improve and strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services (UNEP/IPBES/2/INF/1). The original categorization has been updated and new organizations have been included following the call for comments launched by the secretariat in an effort to improve the revised draft stakeholder engagement strategy. The categorization could be developed further as the Platform grows.

2.   The needs analysis would help the Platform to identify stakeholder expectations and better understand the nature and degree of engagement envisaged by contributors and end-users as well as the optimal methods of engagement (e.g., website, direct interaction, hubs, print materials, audiovisual materials, collaborative projects or any mixture of these) for different groups of stakeholders. The results of the analysis could help the secretariat to improve its approaches to reaching out to stakeholders. The annex is presented without formal editing.

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* IPBES/3/1.

Annex

I.   Categorization of potential stakeholders

1.   The following groups of potential stakeholders were drawn from UNEP's gap analysis and revised by stakeholders following the IPBES secretariat's call to improve the revised draft stakeholder engagement strategy. They are presented below:

2.   The United Nations system and related governance processes have over the years demonstrated a steadily increasing interest in drawing on scientific information and advice in order to fulfil their responsibilities to advance human health, welfare, and development, while better managing and conserving the environment and natural resources. This need for scientific advice has been approached by different organs of the system, at different times, in different ways. Some of the most relevant examples include the following.

- The Multilateral Environmental Agreements, which have each established subsidiary bodies or other mechanisms to provide scientific and technical advice, including, for example, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Animal and Plant Committees of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Scientific Council of Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Science and Policy Interface (SPI) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

- UN Programmes such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and specialized UN agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The United Nations World Ocean Assessment could also be added in this category.

- International Commissions such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), set up under the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), or the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, administered by FAO.

- Scientific advisory groups such as the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) which supports the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environment Protection (GESAMP) which advises a range of sponsoring organizations, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

3.   Other key organisations that play important roles in interfacing science and policy are:

- Organisations such as the International Council for Science (ICSU), the International Social Science Council (ISSC), and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), which among other things often represent the scientific community.

- Scientific networks, such as the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the global network of International Long Term Ecological Research (ILTER), and information sharing networks and programmes such as the Inter American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

- Scientific programmes, such as DIVERSITAS, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), which promote and facilitate research in key areas.

- The new 10-year international research initiative, Future Earth, which will build on the success of existing global environmental change programmes.

- Scientific networks, such as the Species Survival Commission (SSC), the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP), the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

- The research centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), ranging from the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) to the WorldFish Centre, and from Bioversity International to the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).

- Specialist "boundary" organizations working in support of governance processes to improve the information available for decision making, such as the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the European Centre for Nature Conservation and the Ecosystem Services Partnership.

4.   Furthermore, there is the role played by civil society organizations and the private sector in providing support to science-policy interfaces. Some of the most relevant examples include:

- The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), a global association of some 200 companies which provides a platform for companies to explore sustainable development, and to advocate business positions on these issues in a variety of forums.

- Internationally active non-government organizations such as World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Conservation International (CI), BirdLife International and the World Resources Institute (WRI), which between them make substantive scientific input within the areas covered by their respective organizational interests and priorities.

- Drynet, a network of Civil Society Organizations that aims to provide civil society with the right knowledge to influence dryland development.

- NatureServe, a network connecting science with conservation, active throughout the western hemisphere.

5.   There is also an increasing number of intergovernmental arrangements at the regional level that play important roles in interfacing science and policy in biodiversity and ecosystem governance. For example, the following four organizations:

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), which aims to facilitate cooperation and coordination among the Member States on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the region.

- The African Union's Scientific, Technical and Research Commission (AU/STRC), established to coordinate and promote scientific and technological research and findings, and to serve as a clearing house for all scientific and technical activities of the continent.

- The European Environmental Agency (EEA) and European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) of the European Union, established to support sustainable development and to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment.

- The ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, which is the world's leading network of over 1,000 cities, towns and metropolises committed to building a sustainable future.

6.   There are also regional, intergovernmental scientific organizations that have direct connections with national governments and hence established national and regional policy relevance. Such networks are the Inter-American Institute for global change research (IAI) and the Asia-Pacific Network (APN) for global change research.

7.   In addition, there are global networks of specialists, such as the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) of sustainable land management specialists and the DesertNet International (DNI), which is a global network of scientists focusing on sustainable development of dry lands.

8.   There are also platforms for practitioners (individuals and organizations) involved in ecosystem assessment at regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels, such as the Sub-Global Assessment (SGA) Network and the Ecosystem Services Partnership (ES-Partnership).

9.   Also, several countries have established their own networks and coordination units to support their scientists in providing input to the IPBES. These networks are mostly based in Europe but it is hoped that other regions will also develop their own networks. Some examples include:

- The UK has set up a stakeholder hub to relay the calls for comments on IPBES documents and to provide regular information on IPBES.

- In France, the Foundation for Research on Biodiversity (FRB), with a mandate by the Ministries of Environment and Research, has been organizing the contribution of stakeholders to the preparation of IPBES meetings since April 2011.

- Germany has established its own IPBES coordination unit, while the German Network Forum for Biodiversity Research (NeFo) also supports activities related to the IPBES.

- The Swiss Biodiversity Forum has been mobilizing scientific experts and knowledge holders to get ready for the Pan-European IPBES assessment.

10.   In addition, there are other networks interested in supporting the work of the IPBES task forces on indigenous and local knowledge, capacity building and knowledge and data management. Such networks are the Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs), which are supported by the United Nations University and UNESCO. There is currently a proposal for them to participate in a pilot programme for capacity building activities on policy tools.

11.   Networks have also been set up among students in the environmental, economic and social sciences to raise awareness about the work of IPBES. One such network is the International Network of Next-Generation Ecologists.

12.   Indigenous people have set up their own forums and platforms. Among them is the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) and their working group on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the World Network of Indigenous and Local Community Land and Sea Managers. In addition, there are specific, self-organized caucuses of indigenous people in the CBD (IIFB) and in the UNFCCC (IIPFCC) processes. A similar caucus has been set up for IPBES (IIPBES).

13.   Other broad groups of stakeholders are business and industry, universities, academic institutions, local authorities, organizations focusing on agriculture and aquaculture, youth and women NGOs and national government counterpart entities (including National Focal Points for the Rio Conventions).

14.   Although not exhaustive, this list can help build a broader network of stakeholders and identify other important groups of stakeholders such as those who have the most influence on the drivers of change (e.g. business, development Ministries) and those who are mostly affected by biodiversity loss.

II.   Needs analysis

15.   Apart from the identification and categorization of stakeholders, the IPBES secretariat would also need to conduct a needs analysis of stakeholder groups to identify their willingness to participate, incentives and disincentives for participating, capacity levels, preferred methods of engagement and any issues of concern. This analysis would be conducted by using a quantitative survey. This type of survey provides comparable and quantifiable results and can reach a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Moreover, questionnaires can be translated in different languages. Results of the survey will rely on there being sufficient returns from all groups.

16.   The needs analysis will help the Platform better understand what nature and degree of engagement are envisaged by contributors and end-users as well as what engagement methods (e.g. website, direct interaction, hubs, print materials, audiovisual materials, collaborative projects or any mixture of these) suit different groups of stakeholders.

17.   Such a survey could include the subject areas and questions below. It would be further developed prior to launching the survey.

Subject	Question(s)
Areas of stakeholder engagement	• Which IPBES deliverable(s) align more closely to your knowledge and area of expertise? How could your contribution benefit the work of IPBES? • Which area(s) of stakeholder engagement are you mostly interested in? • Which are the areas you would like to be informed about?
What are the incentives for engagement?	• To help ensure sustainable development • Research overlap • Recognition • Passion for environmental issues and for sustainable use of natural resources • To build network(s)
What are the disincentives for engagement?	• High work commitments • Not enough money to participate • Not enough recognition • No research overlap • Unclear how IPBES works • Language barriers • Risks of distortion of knowledge or information
Useful products	• What types of tools would be useful to your work? • What type of information would be most useful to your work?
Preferred methods of communication	• Website • Social media • National/regional networks, hubs, face-to-face communication • Emails, webinars, conference calls