

BELGIAN BIODIVERSITY PLATFORM

MEETING RECORD



TITLE OF THE MEETING

IPBES Assessment Review Workshop (Global Assessment)

ORGANISOR OF THE MEETING

Belgian Focal Point for IPBES/ Belgian Biodiversity Platform (BBPF)

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE MEETING

15th May 2018, Belgian Science Policy Office (Belspo), Brussels, Belgium

ATTENDEES

Angelique Berhault (BBPF), Catherine Debruyne (SPW), Hilde Eggermont (BBPF), Sander Jacobs (Inbo), Ludo Holsbeek (Leefomgeving), Marie-Lucie Susini (Cebios), Janine Van Vessem (INBO), Jorge Ventocilla (BBPF)

CHAIR AND REPORTER

Chair: Jorge Ventocilla (BBPF)

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The objective of this half day meeting was to provide info on the IPBES' Global Assessment and its review, on the status of the implementation of the 1st IPBES Work Programme, share info on calls, and collect feedback on how to improve the service offered by the IPBES Focal Point. This is the 4th meeting of this nature organized in Belgium. For reports on previous consultations, check <http://www.biodiversity.be/4123/>

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Introduction
 - Welcome
 - Objectives of the day
 - IPBES and its Work Programme in a nutshell
2. The IPBES Global Assessment and its review
 - What is an IPBES assessment, what are they for
 - How are IPBES assessments structured and produced
 - What does the review process consist of + timeline
3. Stakeholder involvement in the review
 - Why is it important to be involved in the review the assessment
 - What resources are available
4. How to review an assessment?

- Preparing for the review
- Performing the review
- Gaining access to drafts and submitting comments
- 5. Discussion on quality criteria of a 'good' assessment
- 6. Collection of first comments on the different Chapters, and SPM
- 7. Next steps

For detailed explanation on each of the agenda points, see [attached powerpoint presentation](#)

GENERAL ISSUES (not listed in the powerpoint)

- It was explained that IPBES is providing policy relevant options (not being policy prescriptive) – hence it is not steering nor legally binding. It, however, has an impact on policy making (i.e. becomes a political reality) when key messages are also endorsed in the context of e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity, as was the case for the two previous assessments (Pollination assessment; and Scenarios & Models assessment). This eventually led to national strategies; and knowledge gaps have been taken up by major funding schemes (cf. [2017-2018 BiodivERsA-Belmont forum joint call](#))

- Questions were raised about how much of the editing – especially of the Summary of Policy makers – is steered by policymakers. It was explained that, especially during the Plenary sessions, there is an extensive dialogue/exchange between policymakers (IPBES members) and the authors/experts of the assessments to guarantee that any changes made are backed up by the science. There is also a transparent and open review process guaranteeing a credible outcome. With the upcoming meeting between IPBES NFPs & experts in Bonn (4-6 June), IPBES is also exploring how to enhance co-creation.

- As regards the link between the 5th Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO5) and the Global Assessment (GA), it was explained that the GA will provide the evidence base for assessing progress towards the Aichi Targets. GBO5 will use the GA, in addition to the 6th national reports of the parties to the Convention – to assess achievement in the Aichi Targets. GBO5 and GA are thus complementary (GA will provide input to the GBO5)

- Finding the proper balance between scientific accuracy while still being comprehensible is often a difficult balance. Professional science communicators should probably be hired to assist in this job.

- It was explained that the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) is an observer to IPBES under the category 'intergovernmental organisations'; so there is a connection indeed

- It was also explained that the Global Assessment (GA) will cover land, inland waters, coastal zones and oceans. As regards the latter, it will also build on the 1st World Oceans Assessment (2015)

- Participants felt that the “scenarios” (plausible futures) & “pathways” (towards a sustainable future) are

particularly interesting for policy makers – but also to convince the general public / private sector and ensure major shift in behavior. Strong need for transformative change!

- It was explained that there is a taskforce on indigenous and local knowledge. As such, IPBES aims to promote effective engagement with indigenous and local knowledge holders in all relevant aspects of its work. The commitment is outlined in Deliverable 1(c): Procedures, approaches and participatory processes for working with indigenous and local knowledge systems. See also [here](#).

- Concerns were raised about the password protection/controlled access to the drafts, as it may limit the number of participants in the (government) review process. It would be much easier if drafts could be freely distributed within institutes and beyond – just marked 'not for citation'. It was explained that such an approach was taken by IPBES to safeguard confidentiality (also resulting from the problems faced in the context of IPCC).

- It was explained that the 2nd WP will be “rolling” work programme rather than a timebound one, to respond to needs and budget constraints in a more flexible way

- Avoid investment in lock-in scenarios; no focus on short term gain but on long term benefits

- Need for better balance and integration between the 4 functions of IPBES. Especially the policy support functions needs to be further developed and integrated into the IPBES work.

- Interesting resources:

- ✓ Catalogue on Policy support tools: <https://www.ipbes.net/policy-support>

- ✓ Catalogue on assessments: <http://catalog.ipbes.net/> (more info also [here](#))

- It was explained that the current review by Belgian experts/stakeholder would be valuable to:

- ✓ highlight any specific gaps/biases in the knowledge

- ✓ assess the usefulness and relevance of policy recommendations

- ✓ assess interlinkages between the Chapters, even if the authors of the assessments have also been involved in this process (e.g. authors of one specific chapter acting a reviewer of another chapter)

- ✓ add any missing references to scientific literature; assess confidence levels

- ✓ Improve the clarity of key messages; figures...

It was also mentioned that in case of limited time, it would probably be best to restrict to the Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) and executive summaries of the Chapters, but refrain from digging into the technical details (full text of the technical chapters). Both the SPMs and Executive Summaries should give a good idea about the coverage and quality of knowledge – and if required, more details can always been traced back using the references. Following the IPBES procedures, ALL comments will need to be looked at, dealt with and/or commented on by the authors.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS/MAJOR POINTS OF CONCERN regarding the Global Assessment

This meeting only considered the Technical Chapters, as the Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) was not yet available. Participants looked into the Executive Summaries of the Technical Chapters only – but did not read through the full text of the Chapters. More detailed comments raised during the meeting will be integrated in the review template. Below, we just list a few general issues:

Glossary:

- Participants had some discussion on the use of the term 'Nature's Contribution to people' encompassing the different views on nature (Mother Earth perspectives > Ecosystem Services/monetary views > Human-well being/Nature-based solutions) that co-exist today. This new term seems rather easy to understand (self-explaining) and avoids possible 'bad' side-effects of monetary terms like ES. It seems a good compromise that also eases communication between communities (even regions) having a different type of relationship with nature. However, in the assessments – it should be used in a smart way without neglecting the evolution and acceptance of "ecosystem services".

Chapter 3 – Evidence for assessing progress towards Aichi Targets

- Sometimes, sections in the Technical chapters are more clear than the key messages in the executive chapters
- Some parts are hard to digest

Chapter 4 – Plausible Futures

- Interesting Chapter, also pointing to knowledge gaps at several places. As regards the latter – would be interesting to summarize these in a box (to improve uptake by funding programmes/agencies and IPBES itself). This comment might be applicable to other chapters as well, and to the SPM.
- Good coverage of different habitat types; drivers (incl. marine plastics); focus on consumption patterns; 2030-2050 timeframes.
- Sometimes language rather complex, and flow in the sections of the Executive Summary not good (making it hard to understand)

Chapter 5 – Pathways towards sustainable future

- Very interesting and well written chapter – clear structure. Pointing to nexus (trade-offs) between biodiversity-agri; biodiversity-land use; biodiversity-freshwater; biodiversity-food production oceans; biodiversity-cities; biodiversity-bioenergy (climate goals). Also recognizing need for social science, change in consumption patterns, social/political, economic & institutional changes, creating incentives, human rights-equity, tele-coupling with public & private sector, importance of education, ILK, environmental law (international & domestic)...

Chapter 6 – Opportunities and Challenges

- Executive summary still very long, and sometimes tough reading
- Formulation of key messages sometimes quite prescriptive
- Overlap with Chapter 5 should be looked into
- Would be interesting to know more about efficiency of "old practices" under current settings

Follow-up on this WS – Preparing the BE position

When providing comments, participants are requested to respect the following **Belgian deadlines**:

June 20th: For the individual chapters

June 30th: For the Summary for Policy Makers (SPM)

Early submission of comments is encouraged, so that we can also consider these for two related workshops in the first week of June 2018.

Criteria for comments:

- ✓ Provide comments in **English**
- ✓ Comment on **substantial aspects** of the draft assessment and SPM (i.e. no editorial comments), as well as on the **overall balance**
- ✓ Each reviewer/government should ideally submit **one template per assessment** (compiling comments across several or all chapters + comments on the SPM)
- ✓ Be **constructive** – ideally explaining a way forward. Where relevant, comments should be underpinned by reference to **scientific publications**
- ✓ Formatting among chapters and across assessments will also be corrected and harmonized in the final version
- ✓ Graphics editors will be used for the final tables and figures
- ✓ Text should not be policy prescriptive
- ✓ Drafts (Chapters & Summary for Policy Makers) are confidential, do not share, cite or circulate. To get access to the drafts – please follow these steps:

1. Register as user of the IPBES website (www.ipbes.net/user/register?destination=registration_global_sod) if you have not already done so.
2. Apply to become an IPBES external reviewer for individual chapters of the global assessment or for the summary for policymakers at <https://www.ipbes.net/registration-second-external-review-global-assessment> (this will only work when logged in first as IPBES website user).
3. Once registered, you will immediately receive an email providing confidential access to the draft chapters or SPM and will be requested to submit your comments in English using a comments template that is available on the same webpage.

Submit your comments in English to j.ventocilla@biodiversity.be - preferably using the appropriate template (attached to this message). J. Ventocilla will subsequently compile all comments and use it to draft the official (Belgian) government response. The draft Government response will be validated by the Steering Group Nature, Steering Group Biodiversity, extended with BBPf Steering Committee. Thereafter, government response will be submitted by the IPBES deadlines (29 June for the Chapters; 9 July for the Summary for Policy makers)

Experts can also submit their review template individually to hien.ngo@ipbes.net by 29 June (individual chapters) or 9 July (SPM)

END OF REPORT