

6th Pan-European IPBES Stakeholder Consultation (PESC-6)



MEETING REPORT

5 - 6 October 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

On the 5th and 6th of October, the ECA network organised its 6th Pan-European Stakeholder Consultation (PESC-6) to give an overall presentation of network opportunities within Europe (ONet, the ECA network, Eklipse) and to discuss collectively and collect comments on the First Order Draft (FOD) of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Invasive Alien Species (IAS) assessment.

Due to the current travel restrictions related to COVID-19, the event was organised as a virtual meeting, using the ZOOM Virtual Meeting Platform.

The meeting welcomed 70 participants in total on both days (see the Annex for more details on the participants); one of the Chairs and several Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) and Lead Authors (LAs) of the IPBES IAS assessment were present during the working sessions to answer questions from and exchange with the participants.

English/Russian interpreters were present on both days and provided simultaneous translation of the presentations, as an effort to engage more with Eastern European experts whose knowledge tends to be underrepresented at IPBES, partly due to the language issue¹.



The PESC-6 organisation team

Organisers and collaborators



With the support of



¹ The IPBES working language is English.

II. BACKGROUND

The **Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)** aims to strengthen knowledge foundations for better policy through science, and for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being, and sustainable development. Its work on capacity-building supports a better and effective use of science in decision-making at all levels (www.ipbes.net). IPBES was established as a global science-policy interface in 2012 and it has the tasks to "synthesize, review, assess and critically evaluate relevant information and knowledge generated worldwide by governments, academia, scientific organizations, non-governmental organizations and indigenous communities" (ibid.).

As of October 2020, 137 countries are members of IPBES (<https://ipbes.net/members-observers>).

The **Pan-European Stakeholder Consultation (PESC)** was established for the first time in 2013, supported by several [European platforms for biodiversity](#). The PESC meetings' objectives are to bring together a wide range of IPBES stakeholders from the region of Europe and Central Asia. It provides a forum for discussing engagement in IPBES and for collecting inputs to the current programme of work of IPBES, such as, by the time of PESC-6, the first order draft of the [assessment on invasive alien species](#). PESC builds capacity through presentations on IPBES processes, and also through learning by doing when working in groups to review IPBES documents for example.

The [ECA network](#) is the Europe & Central Asia Network of organisations engaging in IPBES whose goal is to support the national platforms, and provide a common space for sharing knowledge and lessons learned regarding IPBES. It currently consists of 10 IPBES national platforms and is expected to grow and welcome several new members in the near future. If you are interested in joining the network, please contact l.goudeseune@biodiversity.be.

III. OBJECTIVES

In the same line as previous PESC meetings, this PESC-6 meeting had two main objectives:

1. **To promote stakeholders' engagement at the science-policy interface**
 - by building capacities to provide inputs to IPBES deliverables
 - ✓ introduction for newcomers to IPBES
 - ✓ group discussions with facilitators to present the First Order Draft (FOD) of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) assessment and provide relevant comments
 - by sharing experiences on how to coordinate national or subregional biodiversity work to promote it in the context of IPBES
 - ✓ capacity-building activities by IBN in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA network)
 - ✓ presentation of the work of EKLIPSE, a European science-policy interface
2. **To contribute to the preparation of IPBES products and develop capacities on the review process of IPBES reports**
 - by promoting dialogue on the IPBES thematic assessment on invasive alien species
 - ✓ group session to discuss collectively the First Order Draft (FOD) of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) assessment, and collect comments to be submitted to IPBES as stakeholders' perspective during the open review phase
 - by informing on the development of the IAS assessment and other activities by IPBES
 - ✓ presentation of IPBES processes and next steps

IV. PROGRAMME

The meeting took place over two half days, from 10:00 to 13:00 CEST. An optional pre-session was offered to give introductory information to newcomers to IPBES.

Day 1 - 5th of October 2020

Time	Session	Presenter
9:00-9:45	<p>Pre-session of information about IPBES processes for newcomers, organised by ONet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Introduction to IPBES (15 min) → Highlights on the production of IPBES assessments (5 min) → What roles for stakeholders in IPBES? (5 min) → Introduction to ONet (5 min) <p>Q&As (15 min)</p>	<p><i>Teina Mckenzie (ONet)/ Sunandan Tiwari (ONet)/ Flore Lafaye de Micheaux (ONet/IPBES Secretariat)/ Hien Ngo (IPBES Secretariat)</i></p>

10:00-10:10	Welcome & introduction (incl. presentation of the ECA network)	<i>Hilde Eggermont (BE)</i>
10:10-10:40	Capacity building needs and initiatives in the European and Central Asia region. Ideas and suggestions from stakeholders to develop additional activities/bring in new countries + Q&A	<i>Axel Paulsch/ Mikhail Shakhnazarov (IBN)</i>
10:40-11:25	<p>Introduction to the Invasive Alien Species assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Presentation of the IPBES IAS assessment, and its First Order Draft (35 min) → Practical aspects (registration, download documents, etc.) (5 min) → Guidance for the review and examples of relevant comments (5 min) 	<p><i>Helen E. Roy, co-chair of the IAS Assessment</i></p> <p><i>Agnes Hallosserie (FR)</i></p>
11:25-12:55	Instructions and group review of the First Order Draft of the Invasive Alien Species assessment (breakout groups)	<i>Facilitated by ECA-team</i>
12:55-13:00	Wrap-up	<i>Mariam Akhtar-Schuster (DE)</i>

Day 2 - 6th of October 2020

Time	Session	Presenter
10:00-10:10	Welcome & introduction to Day 2	<i>Cecilia Lindblad (SE)</i>
10:10-12:00	Group review of the First Order Draft (FOD) of the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) assessment (breakout groups)	<i>Facilitated by ECA-team</i>
12:00-12:20	EKLIPSE, example of a European science-policy interface	<i>Jorge Ventocilla (EKLIPSE Secretariat)</i>
12:20-12:50	What's next? Information session on the upcoming activities within IPBES	<i>Hien Ngo (IPBES Secretariat)</i>
12:50-13:00	Wrap up, and next steps	<i>Eva Spehn (CH)</i>

V. CONTENT & OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING

On the first day, Teina Mackenzie, Sunandan Tiwari, Flore Lafaye de Micheaux, and Hien Ngo introduced **IPBES**, its work programme, the key steps of the production of IPBES assessments. They highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement for the platform, including for contributing to the assessments with their knowledge (IPBES assessing different knowledge systems, including academic publications, traditional, local and practitioners' knowledge) and for the uptake of the assessments' findings. They also presented the **Open-ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders (ONet)**, which aims to foster the effective engagement of stakeholders and multiple knowledge holders in the IPBES process, and how to engage with it.

Hilde Eggermont welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a short introduction to the [ECA Network](#). The goal of the **Europe & Central Asia Network of organisations engaging in IPBES** is to support the national platforms, merge their long-term experience in IPBES and related processes, and provide a common space for sharing knowledge, resources, opinions and lessons learned regarding IPBES.

Axel Paulsch & Mikhail Shakhnazarov from IBN gave a presentation on the **capacity building needs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia**. They presented their activities such as workshops organised in ECA countries and IPBES introduction brochures in [English](#) & [Russian](#). They also showed the results of a survey to people in the ECA region regarding IPBES. The respondents identified the needs to develop knowledge and awareness about IPBES, a better use of IPBES assessments in policy-making, and to develop national biodiversity platforms and establish networks of IPBES focal points. IBN will organise an online workshop on preconditions and possibilities of establishing a regional biodiversity platform in Central Asia, probably in March 2021.

Helen E. Roy, as co-chair, gave an overall **presentation of the IAS assessment**. She presented the objectives, content, and structure of the assessment, as well as the policy context. She also gave an overview of each chapters and explained what type of feedback the authors expected or would find useful from the reviewers.

Agnès Hallosserie briefly explained the **reviewing process** to the participants, from how to register on the IPBES website, to indications on the best way to contribute as a reviewer, such as preparing good, documented comments for increased capacity for the authors to address them.

On the second day, Jorge Ventocilla gave an introduction to the **European science-policy interface EKLIPSE**, describing how the mechanism works to respond to demands from policy-makers and other societal actors. This was followed by a list of examples of previous calls for requests that were addressed by EKLIPSE. He also presented the future of the mechanism, which will be taken over by ALTER-Net.

On both days, the participants worked in groups and **reviewed the different chapters of the IAS assessment**. They provided general as well as specific comments. The authors of the chapters were present to answer their questions and provide clarifications on the content of the chapters. However, for transparency purposes, any change to the draft assessment would come from written comments submitted to IPBES. Oral exchanges during the sessions were therefore prepared as written comments, they were then collected and assembled into a single template that was submitted to the IPBES Secretariat as the official PESC review.

The virtual format of the discussions proved to be challenging for some participants. Part of them decided to leave the meeting during the group sessions, a situation that is much less common in real meetings, like it was the case for previous PESC editions. Yet, the remaining participants contributed actively to the discussions and provided important comments to the draft assessment.

Hereunder a selection of some of the general comments provided by the participants:

- Need for more structuring and generalisation to make it more understandable for non-experts & find a better way to organise internal references (to point to content of other chapters).
- Authors should keep some “academic freedom” to choose what to include or highlight in the assessment, based on their expertise.
- Find the right narrative and introduce important facts already in the Executive Summary. Clarify the issue of scale and the fact that there is no ‘silver bullet’ solution.
- The definition of IAS and the choice of wording for the definition could be better explained.
- Comment on the differences in quality of the datasets and its impact on conclusions.
- Give more attention to Central Asian region and species, better representation of case studies in Central Asia, and use more Russian literature.
- Highlight the needs for a better knowledge and scientific basis to decision-making, better systems to detect and manage IAS, and public education on IAS.
- Better include practitioners’ knowledge in the assessment, through grey literature.
- Provide practical guidance on how to use the results of the assessment 'on the ground'.
- Provide recommendations for better alignment of policies, between IAS policies and other sectoral policies.
- Exploit overlaps between the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the SDGs, the EU 2030 agenda.
- Create a final list of all key messages grouped by big topics at the end of the document.

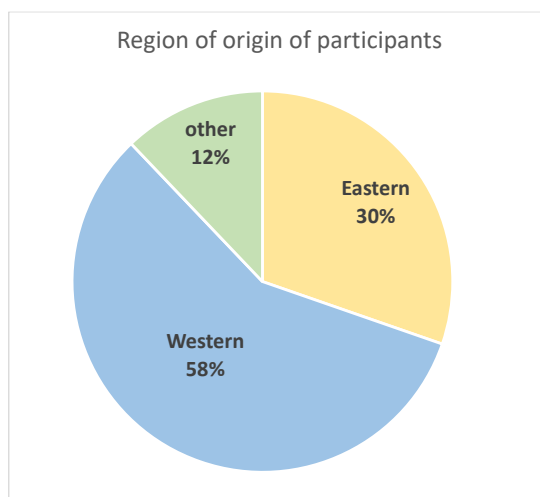
You can access all the presentations [here](#) (provided they are not confidential).

VI. ANNEX: THE PARTICIPANTS

1. Profile and expertise of the participants

The participants for whom we had profile information (n=33) originated from a total of 19 different countries, a third of them were from Eastern & Central European countries.

Countries of origin
Belgium
Bulgaria
Estonia
France
Germany
Hungary
Iceland
India
Japan
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
South Africa
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkmenistan
United Kingdom
Uzbekistan



Most of them were scientists/researchers, followed by professionals from administrations, while practitioners and policy-makers were the least represented (see Figure 1).

Almost half of them had a lot of experience with IPBES, more than a third considered themselves as newcomers, and less than a fifth were total newbies (see Figure 2).

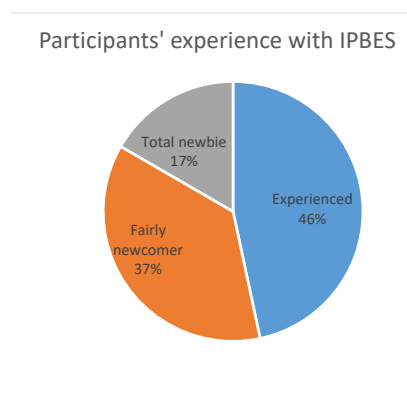
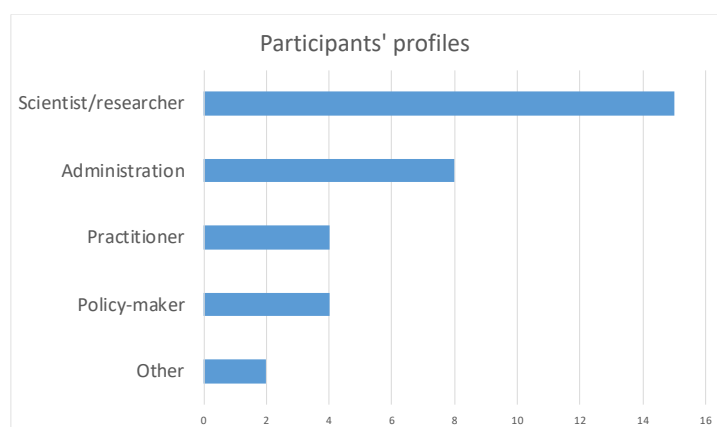


Figure 1 (left) Profiles of participants (multiple answers possible) & Figure 2 (right) Participants declared experience with IPBES.

2. Feedback from participants

A feedback form was sent to the participants in the days following up the meeting.

8 evaluations were received which were all very positive. The average rating of all respondents to the questions is as follows:

What is your overall appreciation of the PESC-6 meeting?



How would you evaluate the presentations in plenary?



How would you evaluate the work in the group sessions?

