



INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES)

UPDATE PAPER FOLLOWING THE SECOND SESSION OF THE PLENARY MEETING TO ESTABLISH THE PLATFORM, HELD 16-21 APRIL 2012, PANAMA CITY

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JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

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1. Background

- 1.1 Ninety-two States, the European Union, and various observing organisations met in Panama City in April 2012 in a second session to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for a new intergovernmental platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES). A resolution¹ to establish the Platform was finally agreed on the last day of the meeting, along with an initial set of rules and agreement on priorities for short-term work. Negotiations were extremely challenging and there were, and remain, some important political issues that have influenced the Platform's rules. This paper only briefly touches on some of these issues and largely in relation to impact on UK engagement; its main focus is on the structures of the Platform, ways of working and short-term plans for work.
- 1.2 *IPBES aims to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. It will focus on government needs and respond to requests from Governments, providing a mechanism for: generating policy-relevant knowledge needs assessments and catalysing research; undertaking assessments of biodiversity, ecosystems and ecosystem services at global, sub-global and regional scales; developing and sharing policy tools and methods; and catalysing capacity building for national and regional biodiversity monitoring, research and development of policy-relevant tools.*

2. The IPBES Resolution

- i. Establishes an independent intergovernmental body
- ii. Sets out an intention to decide on the links with the United Nations system at the first formal Plenary of the Platform
- iii. Requests that UNEP facilitates the Platform until the Secretariat is established
- iv. Agrees that the seat of Secretariat to the Platform be located in Bonn, Germany
- v. This resolution and any future decisions of the Platform have a non-legally binding nature

¹ The resolution and full report of the Panama meeting is available on the IPBES website (www.ipbes.net)

3. Functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements

- i. Collaboration with existing initiatives on biodiversity and ecosystem services, including the MEAs, UN Bodies and knowledge holders, to fill gaps and avoid duplication
- ii. Scientific independence to ensure credibility, relevance and legitimacy through transparency and peer-review
- iii. Use credible processes for exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies
- iv. Recognise and respect the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge
- v. Integrate capacity-building in all its work
- vi. Ensure full and active participation of developing countries and balanced regional representation in structures and work (the idea of regional hubs will be explored at the first Plenary)
- vii. Take an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach
- viii. Seek gender equity in its structures and work
- ix. Ensure full use of national, sub-regional and regional assessments
- x. Respond to requests from Governments, including those from the MEAs, and welcome inputs from UN Bodies and other stakeholders
- xi. A core trust fund will be established to receive voluntary contributions; funding shall be committed without conditions and shall not be earmarked for specific activities
- xii. The Platform will be independently reviewed and evaluated on a periodic basis
- xiii. Platform membership open to States Members of the UN; all others, including UN Bodies, Regional Economic Integration Organisations (REIO)², and other bodies have the opportunity to be observers
- xiv. A Chair and four Vice-chairs, representing each of the five UN regions, will be selected with due consideration of scientific and technical expertise through a nomination process
- xv. A Bureau will be established to undertake administrative functions and will comprise the Chair, Vice-chairs and five other members (one from each of the five UN regions), selected through nomination
- xvi. A Multidisciplinary³ Expert Panel (MEP) will carry out scientific and technical functions; an interim arrangement for membership will be put in place (for not more than 2 years) such that the panel will comprise five participants from each UN region, selected through nomination. The chairs of the scientific subsidiary bodies of the MEAs and IPCC will be invited to observe.
- xvii. The need for working groups and their formation will be considered at a later stage
- xviii. The Secretariat will be a single central body dealing with administrative functions only

² Rules related to membership by REIOs remain under discussion

³ "Multidisciplinarity" connotes an approach that crosses many disciplinary boundaries, knowledge systems and approaches to create a holistic approach, focusing on complex problems which require expertise across two or more disciplines. Multidisciplinarity arises when scientists (including natural and social scientists, and economists), policy and technical experts, natural resource managers, other relevant knowledge holders and users, interact in an open discussion and dialogue giving consideration to each perspective.

4. The issue of membership

- 4.1 The current rules limit participation by REIOs to observers only, which impacts on the EU and hence Member States. Discussions are underway to determine membership options for individual Member States; the UK Government is keen to participate fully in IPBES from the outset, has indicated its intention to join (WPIEI 21 May 2012) and to support rapid resolution of the REIO membership issue, and has committed funding of £1.6 million over the next 3 years. UNEP is likely to formally open membership before the end of May 2012.

5. Strategic partnerships

- 5.1 One of the key ways of working for IPBES will be to establish strategic partnerships with other relevant initiatives. The draft work programme (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/2; paragraphs 17 & 18, and potential activity 8) considered in Panama, and previous session documents (especially the 2009 'gap analysis' UNEP/IPBES/2/INF/1), already highlight the importance of partnerships between the Platform and other bodies, including those involved in assessment processes, the scientific bodies of the MEAs, and organizations and initiatives whose work is directly relevant to implementation of priority areas of the work programme, such as:

- i. Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON)
- ii. Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)
- iii. 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership
- iv. International Long Term Ecological Research network
- v. Collaborative Partnership on Forests
- vi. DIVERSITAS

- 5.2 Although there was no progress in Panama, the inter-sessional work programme aims to begin identification of key partnership and how they might work, especially in relation to capacity-building. Some of the organisations, such as DIVERSITAS and GBIF, are already observing IPBES and were at the Panama meeting, and some have already begun to assess the role that they could fulfil in partnership with the Platform.

6. Responses from the MEAs

- 6.1 **CBD:** the 16th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) took place in Montreal from 30 April – 5 May 2012. A paper on ways and means to improve effectiveness of SBSTTA and options for collaboration with IPBES (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/L.6) was considered and the following agreed:

- i. SBSTTA welcomed the establishment of IPBES and the provision for the Chair of SBSTTA to participate in the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel of IPBES;
- ii. Invited IPBES to contribute to future assessments of the Aichi Targets and policy options to deliver the 2050 vision of the Strategic Plan, and consider how the IPBES work plan can contribute to achievement of Aichi Targets;

- iii. Decided that SBSTTA should identify further scientific and technical needs that could be considered by IPBES, and also that SBSTTA should review outputs from IPBES and take them into account in recommendations to COP;
 - iv. SBSTTA requested the Executive Secretary to seek views from governments and other stakeholders on how requests from CBD could be conveyed to IPBES and prepare proposals for agreement at COP11.
- 6.2 **CITES:** At its 15th meeting (Doha, 2010), the Conference of the Parties adopted a decision that the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees and the Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, participate in discussions concerning a possible IPBES, to provide all necessary input into the process of IPBES and to ensure that the role of CITES receives due recognition. At the 61st Standing Committee meeting (15-19 August 2011) cooperation with IPBES was discussed (SC61 Doc. 15.6 (Rev. 1) and a statement agreed that IPBES should provide particular support to the Scientific Authorities to the Parties to CITES, along with several suggestions on CITES priorities for IPBES. A position paper for engagement at the second session of IPBES in Panama was agreed by the Joint Sessions of the 26th meeting of the Animals Committee and 20th meeting of the Plants Committee, 22-24 March 2012 (AC26/PC20 DG1 Doc. 1). This paper was provided to the 5th meeting of the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of the Biodiversity-related Conventions (25th March 2012) as the basis for a statement that was presented to the second session of IPBES jointly on behalf of all the biodiversity-related MEAs. The paper focused on principles and mechanisms for cooperation between CITES and other MEAs and IPBES (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/INF/16).
- 6.3 **CMS:** A resolution on cooperation between CMS and IPBES was adopted by the COP 10 in November 2011 (UNEP/CMS/Resolution 10.8). In addition to general agreement on building cooperative working relationships with IPBES at global and national levels, the Scientific Council was requested to review needs and opportunities for improving the interface between science and policy in relation to the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species, to include the use of scientific assessments, and consider the potential role of migratory species as indicators of wider ecological change. The Scientific Council was asked to report the results to IPBES and to Standing Committee and COP11 (due 2014).
- 6.2 **Ramsar:** a draft resolution (DRXI.6) including on cooperation with IPBES is to be considered at COP 11 in July 2012. The Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP) discussed IPBES establishment at its 16th meeting in February 2011 and UNEP, in its role of secretariat to the second session of IPBES, attended and gave a presentation.
- 6.3 **OSPAR:** the Heads of Delegation meeting in May 2012 considered an update paper (HOD 12/5/5-E) on establishment of the Platform and agreed to consider ways in which OSPAR could relate to IPBES.

7. IPBES Next steps

- 7.1 Agreement on the timing of the first formal Plenary of the Platform will be made inter-sessionally; possibilities include Dec 2012 or Jan/Feb 2013. It's also possible that a second Plenary could follow just nine months after the first to ensure that the Platform gathers pace on work programme related

activities; this recognises that the first plenary still has significant work to do on rules of procedure, structures and budget, and could mean a possible second Plenary in autumn 2013.

- 7.2 An intersession work programme was agreed in Panama to aid preparation for the first formal Plenary (See Annex I). Some of the work is dependent on voluntary funding contributions.

8. JNCC involvement

- 8.1 In autumn 2011, Defra requested that JNCC lead on developing UK positions on the IPBES work programme and we have also been part of an EU drafting group, under both Polish and Danish presidencies, assisting in developing EU positions on the work programme. JNCC staff were members of the UK delegations to the both the first session to establish IPBES (Nairobi Oct 2011) and the second session in Panama. We have also made contributions to a number of international and EU workshops on different elements of the work programme.
- 8.2 JNCC has also developed a multidisciplinary UK Stakeholder Group and has co-hosted a workshop with Defra for the group and undertaken two consultations with it on the scope of the draft work programme. We will continue to develop and work with this group in relation to the IPBES work programme.
- 8.3 The inter-sessional work programme (Annex I) also has scope for JNCC working with the UK Stakeholder Group to develop *inter alia* UK ideas on a process for how requests could be made to IPBES (paragraph 5 of Annex I) and the scoping process for dealing with these requests (para 6). In addition, views on capacity-building needs could also be something that we develop with the Stakeholder Group (para 10). The scope for JNCC contributions to the review of assessments (para 8) and development of the conceptual framework (para 9) require further discussion with Defra, but depending on how this work is undertaken there might be a role for JNCC in co-hosting an expert workshop and gaining contributions from the Stakeholder Group. With a possible first Plenary due at the end of 2012 or early 2013 much of the work will need to be completed well in advance and possibly Aug/Sep, but as yet UNEP has not issued a communication on plans for delivering the inter-sessional work programme.
- 8.4 JNCC can also play a role in supporting development of effective relationships between the MEAs and IPBES on scientific and technical issues, in developing initiatives like GBIF to respond to IPBES, and in supporting the UKOTs to interface with the Platform and contribute to any regional activities.

*Helen Baker, JNCC
23 May 2012*

ANNEX I

Possible inter-sessional work to prepare for the first session of the Platform's plenary

The following inter-sessional work could be considered and taken forward to advance various elements of the functions and operations of the Platform before the first formal Plenary. No decisions will be taken during these processes and results will be made available six weeks before the first Plenary. Some elements will be possible only with voluntary funding.

Procedures

1. Various rules of procedure remain to be agreed; the interim secretariat was requested to develop suggestions and make them available for the first Plenary.
2. The four UN organisations were requested to provide a joint proposal for administrative hosting of the Secretariat.
3. UNEP, working in collaboration with the other relevant UN organisations and the Government of Germany, was requested to provide an interim secretariat.
4. The interim secretariat was requested to develop options for the structure of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, especially taking into consideration a regional approach that will be more ecologically relevant; workshop(s) and online consultations will take place to involve the wider expert community in this process.
5. Governments, MEAs and other stakeholders were asked to submit views on the process by which requests might be submitted to and prioritised by the Plenary; the secretariat was asked to draft a procedure for consideration by the first Plenary.
6. Governments and other stakeholders were invited to submit proposals on the scoping process for assessments and other activities, and views on what the outputs from this process should be; the secretariat was asked to undertake online consultation on this and draft a scoping process for consideration by the first Plenary.

Work Programme

7. The secretariat was requested to produce a catalogue of assessments.
8. Based on the assessments in this catalogue, the secretariat was asked to compile a review highlighting: implementation of capacity-building activities; use of conceptual frameworks; scope of assessments; methods of integrating different knowledge systems; use of scenarios and policy-relevant tools; lessons learned in assessing impact; and gaps in knowledge.
9. The secretariat was asked to produce a draft conceptual framework for IPBES; online consultation and an expert workshop would be part of this process.
10. Governments and stakeholders will be invited to make submissions on capacity-building needs and ways of addressing those needs, especially partnerships