

IPBES-4

Fourth meeting of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 22–28 February 2016

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Summary of recommendations:

At the most recent IUCN World Conservation Congress, held in 2012, the Union adopted Resolutions supporting the operationalization of IPBES, and calling for IUCN to play a significant role in its implementation. This position paper, prepared by IUCN for the fourth session of the IPBES plenary, is offered in this light.

Regarding agenda item 4, IUCN would like to express concern over the processes used for review of documents. We see the requirements of reviewer registration and password protection as unnecessary restrictions, which risk limiting the breadth of stakeholder review and hence compromising the quality of IPBES' outputs. Instead, we urge the platform simply to place review documents and templates for comments online, with a solicitation for as broad a review as possible. In addition, we urge that responses to reviewer comments be made available after each round of review, which we see as essential to respect the huge contributions of volunteer reviewers.

Regarding agenda item 5, IUCN congratulates and thanks all involved with IPBES for their hard work over the last year. We would particularly like to emphasise our comments on seven deliverables:

- Regarding the thematic assessment on pollinators, pollination and food production, we are concerned that the text gives excessive attention to emphasising uncertainty at the expense of clearly documenting well-supported facts. We have provided specific comments on the SPM to the Secretariat on these issues (included as Annex 1 to this IUCN Position Paper).
- Regarding capacity-building, IUCN recognizes the great challenges facing the achievement of these deliverables, and urges the acceleration of linkage to strategic partners to fill the gap between aspiration and resources here.
- Regarding indigenous and local knowledge, IUCN appreciates the taskforce's efforts in piloting cost-effective mechanisms for a global call, participant selection, community dialogues, and co-production activities between assessment authors and indigenous and local knowledge holders.
- Regarding the scoping of the proposed global assessment, IUCN would like to make the IPBES plenary aware of work conducted over the last year to make key datasets mobilised against IUCN standards – The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, Protected Planet, and Key Biodiversity Areas – available according to the IPBES regions and subregions. These data are now published in the Nature Publishing Group journal "Scientific Data", and available online through the Data Dryad service. We urge that these contributions be reflected into the global assessment scoping in section IV on Data and information and section V on Strategic partnerships and initiatives.
- IUCN welcomes the scoping of the proposed thematic assessment on invasive alien species, and reiterates our offer of in-kind support, dated 19 November 2013, to provide a technical support to this assessment.
- IUCN welcomes the scoping of the proposed thematic assessment on sustainable use of biodiversity.

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- Finally, IUCN is concerned that definition of policy support tools and methodologies being used is too all-encompassing to be meaningful. We recommend that knowledge generation, assessments, and capacity-building be removed from the definition of policy support, to avoid a self-contradictory situation where the policy support function of IPBES is defined as encompassing all four of the platform's functions.

Regarding agenda item 6, IUCN is disappointed to note that the substantial contributions of stakeholders, including IUCN, in convening the stakeholder days preceding the third plenary, and also convening, organizing, and catering for a number of other IPBES stakeholder events, are not reflected as "In-kind contributions in support of the work programme".

Regarding agenda item 7, IUCN recommends that the selection of a consultancy company to undertake the independent review be undertaken under the supervision of the Bureau, through a competitive, open, transparent process. It will be important that the Bureau apply the conflict of interest policy to the selection of this institution.

IUCN's own governance is shared equally between governments and civil society (complementary to IPBES' wholly governmental nature), and so agenda item 8 on communication and stakeholder engagement is of particular importance to IUCN. Regarding agenda item 8, IUCN therefore thanks IPBES for its efforts in development of the strategic partnership to support stakeholder engagement, in the form of the contribution from IUCN to the IPBES of a half-time professional position in support of the activities of the initial implementation plan of the stakeholder engagement strategy. We look forward to the formalisation of this collaboration soon.

Initial considerations

Recognizing the need to enhance efficient and effective science policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has welcomed and officially expressed its support the establishment of the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

At the last World Conservation Congress, held in September 2012, IUCN Members agreed to engage actively in the operations of the Platform and, through this resolution, IUCN Members underlined their conviction that their Union has a lot to offer to the Platform and that the Platform should benefit from IUCN's networks, knowledge and experience in supporting decision-making at the policy level. IUCN's engagement with the Platform, and this Position Paper, are offered in this spirit.

IUCN expresses appreciation of the substantial work that the Platform's bodies have delivered since the third session of the Plenary.

IUCN's position on item 4 of the provisional agenda - Report of the Executive Secretary on the implementation of the work programme 2014–2018

IUCN thanks all involved with IPBES for their hard work over the last year to deliver the progress summarised in the report of the Executive Secretary.

We would like to highlight a couple of process concerns regarding the review of documents for deliverables 3 (a) and 3 (c). In the first and second rounds of review, drafts were only made available to expert reviewers through a cumbersome reviewer registration process. Moreover, in preparation for this fourth plenary, download of documents IPBES/4/3 and IPBES/4/4 was restricted through a password, disseminated only to IPBES members and observers; and opening the former was further restricted by an additional password. IUCN fears that these unnecessary restrictions of dissemination of documents for review risk compromising the quality of IPBES' outputs. Instead, we urge the platform simply to place review documents and templates for comments online, with a solicitation for as broad a review as possible. IUCN frequently utilises such open review in its own processes, and recommends them for their benefits in quality, transparency, and breadth of engagement.

In addition, we were disappointed to find that responses to reviewer comments were not made available after each round of review, which we see as essential to respect the huge contributions of volunteer reviewers.

IUCN's position on item 5 of the provisional agenda - Work programme of the Platform

1. Thematic assessment on pollination and pollinators associated with food production (deliverable 3 (a)) – IPBES/4/3 & IPBES/4/INF/1 (proposed for first contact group)

IUCN congratulates the authors on their hard work in completing the draft SPM of the thematic assessment on pollinators, pollination and food production. However, we have a general concern with the text as it stands, which in some places gives excessive attention to emphasising uncertainty at the expense of clearly documenting well-supported facts. We provided specific comments on the SPM to the Secretariat on these issues in advance of the 20 February deadline (included as Annex 1 to this IUCN Position Paper). In addition, we are concerned that several relevant issues are not discussed, including the evidence for long-term cumulative deleterious effects of neonicotinoids on pollinators, the evidence that honeybees may be a poor model system for wild pollinators, and the evidence for contamination of wildflowers with neonicotinoids, increasing pollinator exposure.

2. Scenario analysis and modelling of biodiversity and ecosystem services: methodological assessment and proposal on the further development of tools and methodologies (deliverable 3(c)) – IPBES/4/4 & IPBES/4/INF/3 (proposed for second contact group)

IUCN congratulates the authors on their hard work in completing the draft SPM of the methodological assessment of scenarios and models of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

3. Work on capacity-building (deliverables 1 (a) & 1 (b)) – IPBES/4/6 & IPBES/4/INF/5 (proposed for second contact group)

IUCN notes and appreciates the following key elements of progress towards deliverables 1 (a) and 1 (b):

- The appointment of 33 fellows to participate in the assessments process.
- Some identification of capacity-building needs during methodological assessments.
- The first call for the prototype matchmaking facility, which resulted in 82 projects being included in the beta matchmaking facility, all of which were requests for capacity (there were apparently no offers of capacity-building expertise), and many are straightforward requests for funding for research proposals.
- The first capacity-building forum, which generated sensible reflection about themes including the complexity of capacity-building, consideration of curriculum development, and the importance of engaging with institutions already involved with capacity-building.

While recognizing the great challenges facing capacity-building for biodiversity and ecosystem services, IUCN draws the following conclusions:

- Progress against IPBES' capacity-building deliverables is limited so far, both in scale and scope.
- The capacity-building forum shows that there is considerable expertise in this field.
- The lack of offers of technical capacity-building expertise to the matchmaking facility suggests that the taskforce has not yet been able to engage in any tangible way with those who can offer technical or other support.
- Beyond immediate progress towards deliverables 1 (a) and 1 (b), progress towards the aspirations set out in Decision 3/1, Annex 1 is minimal.

IPBES 4/6 concludes by proposing actions that are a plea for continuation of the same actions undertaken to date (e.g., in fellowships, in the matchmaking facility). In IUCN's view, this conclusion should be scrutinised carefully. Are IPBES members happy with progress given expenditure, or are there more efficient ways of increasing capacity-building? There is clearly a challenge in resourcing fellow and other exchanges and in attracting offers of technical expertise to the rather static mechanism of the matchmaking. What will another year achieve? Will there be an increase in activity? IPBES 4.6 mentions acceleration of linkage to strategic partners in capacity-building, and IUCN strongly supports such an option, and stands by to help as appropriate.

Further to this, the "[IUCN suggestions regarding the components of IPBES work programme \(2014 - 2018\)](#)", pages 4–7, also remain relevant.

4. Work on indigenous and local knowledge systems (deliverable 1 (c)) – IPBES/4/7 & IPBES/4/INF/6 (proposed for first contact group)

IUCN congratulates the IPBES taskforce on indigenous and local knowledge on its progress. In particular, IUCN appreciates the taskforce's efforts in "Recognizing the importance of direct dialogue with indigenous peoples and local communities" (IPBES/4/7 Annex, Section A, Paragraph 2), and in acknowledging the importance of "Indigenous and local knowledge-specific procedure to reinforce indigenous and local knowledge in Platform assessments" (IPBES/4/7 Annex, Section B, Paragraph 3 (b) (c)). Such mechanisms for dialogue and procedures were successfully piloted in the IPBES pollination assessment, as reported by Lyver et al. (2015) "[Indigenous and Local Knowledge about Pollination and Pollinators associated with Food Production: Outcomes from the Global Dialogue Workshop](#)", and included cost-effective mechanisms for a global call, participant selection, community dialogues, and co-production activities between assessment authors and indigenous and local knowledge holders. Application of these approaches into ongoing and upcoming assessments will be valuable.

The "[IUCN suggestions regarding the components of IPBES work programme \(2014 - 2018\)](#)", pages 8–10, also remain relevant.

5. Scoping report for a global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services (deliverable 2 (c)) – IPBES/4/8 & IPBES/4/INF/8 (proposed for second contact group)

Regarding IPBES/4/8, IUCN would like to make the IPBES plenary aware of work that we, in collaboration with others such as UNEP's World Conservation Monitoring Centre and BirdLife International, have been conducting over the last year to make key datasets mobilised against IUCN standards – The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, Protected Planet, and Key Biodiversity Areas – available according to the regions and subregions designated for the IPBES regional assessments. These data are now in publication in the Nature Publishing Group journal “Scientific Data” (<http://www.nature.com/articles/sdata20167>), and available online through the Data Dryad service (<http://datadryad.org/resource/doi:10.5061/dryad.6gb90.2>). We urge that these contributions be reflected into IPBES/4/8, specifically the sections IV on Data and information and V on Strategic partnerships and initiatives.

We are also concerned about the abbreviated timeframes and sparse information provided to authors of the global assessment scoping document, who we understand never received the final draft for comment, and were repeatedly requested to respond to information in dense pdf documents with very short deadlines. In addition, it would be greatly beneficial to authors to introduce the process in the form of videos or powerpoint presentations, rather than through pdf documents.

6. Revised scoping report for a methodological assessment on diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits (deliverable 3 (d)) – IPBES/4/9 & IPBES/4/INF/13 (proposed for first contact group)

The “[IUCN suggestions regarding the components of IPBES work programme \(2014 - 2018\)](#)”, page 37, remain relevant.

7. Scoping report for a thematic assessment on invasive alien species (deliverable 3 (b) (ii)) – IPBES/4/10 & IPBES/4/INF/12 (proposed for first contact group)

IUCN congratulates all involved in developing the scoping report for the thematic assessment on invasive alien species. We see it as a very good contribution, and strongly support IPBES' efforts to undertake this important assessment.

We have two comments on the document. First, in the rationale (section II.C, paragraph 7), the text reads “...mainly non native...”. IUCN recommends deletion of “mainly” here. Its inclusion is contradictory to the definition of invasive alien species defined in the scope (section II.A, paragraph 3). Second, in section IV on Indicators, metrics and data sets, it would be sensible to add text into paragraph 24 stating that the assessment will work using existing knowledge products and tools, and support these rather than establishing new ones, wherever possible.

On 19 November 2013, IUCN made a formal offer of in-kind support to “Staff support to assessments or work of the task forces”, specifying that “This will represent assignment of IUCN staff of 0.5 Full Time Equivalent per year. This contribution will last for the whole period 2014-18. In 2014 and 2015, IUCN will assign half the time of a professional staff for supporting the assessment on invasive alien species.” This offer was welcomed by IPBES Decision 2/5 X (see IPBES/2/12 page 50) and documented in Annex VII to this Decision (IPBES/2/12 page 76). IUCN intends to reiterate and update this offer, assuming that the fourth plenary approves plan for IPBES to proceed in development of the full thematic assessment on invasive alien species.

8. Scoping report for a thematic assessment on sustainable use of biodiversity (deliverable 3 (b) (iii)) – IPBES/4/11 & IPBES/4/INF/12 (proposed for second contact group)

IUCN congratulates all involved in developing the scoping report for the thematic assessment on sustainable use of biodiversity. We see it as a very good contribution, and strongly support IPBES' efforts to undertake this important assessment. In particular, IUCN is supportive of the narrowed scope of the present document, and considers the chapter outline to be sensible and achievable.

9. Work on policy support tools and methodologies (deliverable 4 (c)) – IPBES/4/12 & IPBES/4/14 (proposed for second contact group)

Regarding IPBES/4/12, IUCN has two comments regarding the Annex to this document. First, the blue arrows linking “Categories of policy instruments” with “Policy goals” in Figure I (paragraph 1, page 7) are severely incomplete. In fact, there should be blue arrows linking all four “Categories of policy instruments” with all three “Policy goals”.

Second, policy support tools and methodologies are defined here (in paragraph 2, page 7) in a way that is too all-encompassing to be meaningful. Specifically, it is proposed that they should encompass not only policy support (i.e., Public discussion, involvement and participatory process; Selection and design of policy instruments; Implementation, outreach and enforcement; and Social learning, innovation and adaptive governance) but also the other three functions of IPBES (Assembling data and knowledge (including monitoring); Assessment and evaluation; Training and capacity-building). This generates a self-contradictory situation where the policy support function of the platform is defined as encompassing all four of the platform's functions. We recommend deleting points b, c, and f from this list accordingly.

The “[IUCN suggestions regarding the components of IPBES work programme \(2014 - 2018\)](#)”, pages 38–40, also remain relevant.

IUCN's position on item 6 of the provisional agenda - Financial and budgetary arrangements for the Platform: budget and expenditure for 2014–2018, including report on the funding of experts and meeting participants

Regarding the Financial and budgetary arrangements for the Platform (IPBES/4/13 & IPBES/4/13/Add.1, proposed for third contact group), IUCN is disappointed to note that the substantial contributions of stakeholders, including IUCN, in convening the stakeholder days preceding the third plenary, on 10–11 January 2015 in Bonn, and also convening, organizing, and catering for a number of other IPBES stakeholder events (e.g., a stakeholder day following the International Conference on Conservation Biology in Montpellier, 7 August 2015), are not reflected as “In-kind contributions in support of the work programme” (page 4) in Table 2 In-kind contributions received in 2015.

IUCN's position on item 7 of the provisional agenda - Rules and procedures for the operation of the Platform

Four items are being considered under agenda item 7: Nomination and selection of members of the Bureau (IPBES/4/14 & IPBES/4/INF/17); Procedures for the preparation of the Platform's deliverables (IPBES/4/7, annex & IPBES/4/15, proposed for discussion in second contact group); Procedure for the review of the Platform (IPBES/4/16 & IPBES/4/INF/13, proposed for discussion in second contact group); and Policy and procedures for the admission of observers (IPBES/4/17).

IUCN has comments on just one of these items, the Procedure for the review of the Platform. Regarding IPBES/4/16, paragraphs 12 and 13, IUCN recommends that the selection of a consultancy company to undertake the independent review be undertaken under the supervision of the Bureau, through a competitive, open, transparent process. Moreover, we think that it will be important that the Bureau apply the conflict of interest policy to the selection of this institution.

IUCN's position on item 8 of the provisional agenda – Communications, stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships

With regard to item 8 on Communications, stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships (IPBES/4/18, IPBES/4/INF/15 & IPBES/4/INF/16, proposed for discussion in the first contact group), IUCN's comments focus on stakeholder engagement.

On 19 November 2013, IUCN made a formal offer of in-kind support to "Staff support to stakeholder engagement", specifying that "This will represent assignment of IUCN staff of 0.5 Full Time Equivalent per year. This contribution is expected for the period 2013-16 but might be extended in time, depending on available resources. In 2014, IUCN will assign half the time of a professional staff to implement the communication, outreach and stakeholder engagement activities planned in deliverable 4c." This offer was welcomed by IPBES Decision 2/5 X (see IPBES/2/12 page 50) and documented in Annex VII to this Decision (IPBES/2/12 page 76).

IUCN thanks IPBES for its efforts, documented in IPBES/4/18 Annex II, in development of the strategic partnership to support stakeholder engagement (deliverable 4 (d)) in the form of this contribution from IUCN to the IPBES of a half-time professional position in support of the activities of the initial implementation plan of the stakeholder engagement strategy. We warmly look forward to the formalisation of this collaboration soon.

We would also like to take the opportunity to highlight some additional incentives and disincentives perceived by stakeholders regarding engagement with IPBES. From 27 November 2015 until 8 January 2016, IUCN ran an open, anonymous survey of those of its constituents who have been engaged in IPBES, receiving 60 responses.

Asked about the positive aspects of their engagement with IPBES, respondents listed the platform's internationality, the learning opportunities that IPBES engagement presents, its interdisciplinarity, the sense of excitement of participating, and the inclusion of indigenous and local knowledge, as well as the previously documented incentives (IPBES/3/18, Decision IPBES-3/4, Annex II, Section VII, page 107) of the opportunity to influence the Platform's work, networking opportunities and the potential to develop partnerships, the perception of making a difference, working on something that they consider important, and the opportunity to contribute to useful outcomes. Interestingly, no IUCN constituents mentioned the other incentives that have previously been considered important: prestige and opportunities to engage in a project of scientific excellence; relevance to their research interests and the alignment of their priorities with those of the Platform; being part of an influential organization; recognition for grants, scholarships and fellowships and the opportunity to gain recognition; or the potential to be compensated for their time.

Similarly, asked about negative aspects of their engagement with IPBES, respondents listed unrealistic ambition, lack of funding, disorganization, lack of innovation, leadership challenges, internal politics, poor geographic balance, weak external collaboration, poor linguistic balance, excessively academic focus, and weak internal collaboration, along with the previously mentioned disincentives of heavy time commitments and lack of clarity on how to participate. Previously mentioned disincentives of engaging in a process in which they have not been involved in developing the questions, uncertainty as to how funding incentives are to be established, and lack of recognition by institutions for the contributions made by their scientists were not mentioned.

Template sheet

Summary for Policy Makers of the pollinators, pollination and food production a

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Please submit comments by **20 February 2016** by email to hien.ngo@ipbes.net

NB: Please use the English version document which has line numbers, and refer to page number and line

For General comments please enter "0" for page and line numbers

Page	From	To	Comment
0	0	0	IUCN congratulates the authors on their hard work in completing the draft SPM of the thematic assessment on pollinators, pollination and food production. However, we have a general concern with the text as it stands, which in some places gives excessive attention to emphasising uncertainty at the expense of clearly documenting well-supported facts.
0	0	0	We are concerned that several relevant issues are not discussed, including the evidence for long-term cumulative deleterious effects of neonicotinoids on pollinators, the evidence that honeybees may be a poor model system for wild pollinators, and the evidence for contamination of wildflowers with neonicotinoids, increasing pollinator exposure.
4	1	2	Paragraph 9. Regarding the statement that “The number of managed western honey bee hives has increased globally over the last five decades, but declined in some European countries and North America over the same period”, the important issue is the number of bees that are pollinating crops and making honey. Because beekeepers often divide colonies, increases in the number of hives are often unrelated to increases in the number of bees (for example, dividing a colony in two doubles the number of hives without changing the number of bees). We therefore propose revising this sentence to read “The number of managed western honey bees and hives declined in some European countries and North America over the last five decades.”
4	5	12	Paragraph 10. This paragraph is very important; in providing information of the prevalence of extinction risk facing pollinator species.
4	35	47	Paragraph 14. While the headline and concluding sentences here correctly recommend both more sustainable agriculture and reversing the simplification of agricultural landscapes, the three specific approaches (a, b, and c) suggested focus wholly on reversing landscape simplification. The additional complementary approach of increasing agricultural sustainability by reducing fertilizer and pesticide use, and adoption of techniques such as natural fertilizers, IPM, organic farming, should be added.
5	3	5	Paragraph 16. The list of parameters potentially affecting risk is very long, and so we recommend deleting the text reading “which varies geographically with compounds used, and the scale of land management and habitat in the landscape” to focus on the main point of this paragraph.

5	7	10	Paragraph 16. The statement that “although most of these studies used pesticide exposure above field realistic levels” is incorrect should be deleted. Levels of exposure through nectar, pollen and water contamination in the field are of the same order of magnitude (Bonmatin et al. 2015 Env. Sci. Pollut. Res.) as in most recent controlled studies (Henry et al. 2012 Science; Henry et al. 2015 Proc. R. Soc. B) and as in recent studies conducted in real field conditions (Alburaki et al. 2015 PLoS ONE; William et al. 2015 Nature). The Swedish study described (Rundlöf et al. 2015 Nature) is a good example, but not exceptional.
5	10	10	Paragraph 16. The statement “but no effects on honey bee colony strength were detected” should be deleted because the authors a) were explicit that colony strength was the only parameter they studied for honeybees (among a dozen or so parameters suitable to characterise honeybee health), and b) stated that “the lack of short-term effects does not preclude the existence of long-term effects of neonicotinoids”.
5	10	12	Paragraph 16. The statement that “There is limited evidence on how adverse sublethal effects of pesticide exposure recorded for individual insects affects colonies and population of managed bees and wild pollinators, especially over the longer term” is ambiguous. The intended meaning is “evidence from a small number of studies”, but text can be misinterpreted to read “weak evidence”. It should be rephrased to read “Although evidences came from a small number of studies, adverse effects of pesticide exposure recorded for individuals insects affect colonies and populations of managed bees and wild pollinators.”
5	13	14	Paragraph 16. The statement that “the risks from these mixtures and interactions with other environmental stresses have not been fully evaluated” gives excessive focus to uncertainties at the expense of documented evidence. Recommend revising to read “effects of these mixtures and interactions with other environmental stresses have been partially documented (Goulson et al. 2015 Science) especially for synergies between insecticide-insecticide (Johnson et al. 2009 J. Econ. Entomol.), insecticide-fungicide (Schmuck et al. 2003 Pest Manag. Sci.), insecticide-pathogen (Doublet et al. 2014 Env. Microbiol.), and insecticide-parasite (Alburaki et al. 2015 PLoS ONE)”.
5	15	24	Paragraph 17. This paragraph is incomplete in focusing only on actions to reduce the risk of pesticide use (e.g., labelling) and omitting actions to reduce their usage, and only on voluntary actions, not regulations. Recommend adding sentences reading “For decreasing pesticide usage, pesticides should be only used when needed. Furthermore, regulators should be informed by all literature available when considering possible changes in regulations.”
5	25	25	Paragraph 18. Delete “broad” – the range of bee parasites is not very broad.
5	26	26	Paragraph 18. Most of these pathogens have been present in hives historically but without impact (Chauzat et al. 2010 J. Api. Res.). Revise the sentence to read “Emerging or re-emerging diseases historically present without impact, have become a significant threat...”.
12			This text (page 12), including Figure SPM.6, is very important; in providing information of the prevalence of extinction risk facing pollinator species.
14	38	38	The final sentence is unclear: add text to read “whilst balancing the need to ensure effective control of pests for non pollinator dependant crops”.

