

## IPBES Function „Policy Tools and Methodologies“ – options for future activities

*Workshop 16th to 17th of January, 2017, UFZ Leipzig*

### **Main goal of the workshop:**

The aim of the workshop is to reflect on the original intention of the IPBES function to **“Identify policy relevant tools/methodologies, facilitate their use, and promote and catalyse their further development”** (Policy support function) and identify potential future activities of IPBES in this function. This can include for example exploring ways how to further develop the currently ongoing work (e.g., to promote and facilitate the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies that is currently being set up, but more importantly identifying new deliverables, mechanisms or tools.

The workshop explicitly aims to **“think out of the BOX”** and not be tied too much to the approaches and deliverables developed in IPBES so far. With this, it should take an explicit user’s perspective.

These potential future activities identified at the workshop will be sent to the IPBES Bureau and MEP and made available for the forthcoming IPBES plenary (March 2018) to consider them as potential elements for the second IPBES work programme planned to start in 2020. Therefore, the workshop could also explicitly think about the potentially envisaged goals or outcomes at the end of the second work programme and identify appropriate mechanisms and measures to reach these.

### **Background**

#### **Mandate and development of the IPBES policy support function**

The Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has been created in 2012 to improve the effective use of biodiversity- and ecosystem services-related knowledge in political decision making processes. On its second meeting (IPBES-2) the plenary of IPBES decided on the Work Programme for 2014-2018 (IPBES/2/17, Decision IPBES 2/5), including four main functions: capacity building, knowledge generation catalysis, assessment and policy support. As deliverable 4 (c) of this work programme a catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies should be developed. For this purpose, an expert group was established to support the members of the IPBES MEP and Bureau in developing the catalogue and further guidance regarding policy support tools and methodologies. In the third session of the IPBES Plenary, a draft catalogue and guidance on policy support tools and methodologies was elaborated. However, in the long term, IPBES is not only concerned in developing a catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies. As already outlined in its founding resolution, IPBES “supports policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies, such as those arising from assessments, to enable

decision makers to gain access to those tools and methodologies and, where necessary, to promote and catalyse their further development” (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, annex I, appendix I, paragraph 1 (d)). Further, Decision IPBES-4/1 was requested to identify the various needs of users for, and facilitate the development of, policy support tools for all relevant deliverables of the work programme (IPBES/4/12, also IPBES/5/INF/14).

During its fifth plenary in March 2017 the IPBES secretariat reported on the progress of the development of recommendations for action and on the operational implementation of the online catalogue. As a major innovation since IPBES-4, the prototype of the catalogue has been made available online as a demo version in cooperation with the OPPLA web platform. The plenary decided to extend the mandate of the expert group and to continue the work on deliverable 4), with a focus on the following tasks:

- Provide the prototype of the online catalog for review to IPBES members and stakeholders
- Further develop the catalog in cooperation with relevant international processes and partners
- Work together with the capacity building task force to explore ways to make future use of policy support tools and methods more effective at different levels of policy-making
- Review the use and effectiveness of the online catalog as part of the IPBES review up to IPBES-6.

Despite these on-going activities, it is important to identify new deliverables, mechanisms or tools for the second work programme but also to promote and facilitate the use of policy tools by addressing users’ needs. While the policy tools expert group is well-established and the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies is well underway (see also the outputs in sections II and II in IPBES/4/12) thus far, few ideas on activities how to identify new mechanisms or tools and on how to facilitate the use of existing tools for policy makers have been contrived. Guidance on how to develop these ideas would therefore be extremely helpful for the design of the second IPBES work programme.

### **NeFo’s activities on the IPBES policy support function**

The Network-Forum for Biodiversity Research Germany (NeFo) actively supports European and international activities related to IPBES in close collaboration with European and other partners.

In the scope of these activities, in 2011 NeFo and the UFZ Science-Policy Expert Group organised a workshop on policy support through relevant tools and methodologies in IPBES. The report on this workshop endorses the policy relevance as a major focus of ongoing efforts of IPBES. The work area on policy support is of pivotal importance for achieving policy relevance. It would therefore be vital to initiate an assessment on policy-relevant tools and methodologies. As already other work areas of IPBES use and develop policy tools and methodologies, an assessment should draw on the studies in these work areas<sup>1</sup>. Further, in the workshop several open questions were identified:

- First, to achieve its policy support function, clear and standardised procedures on how to include all knowledge holders including non-scientific stakeholders are needed.
- To address different stakeholders, a clear and strong communication strategy towards media and education is needed to disseminate policy support tools and methodologies.

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<sup>1</sup> For the background paper and the chair’s summary of the 2011 workshop, see: <http://biodiversity.de/schnittstellen/produkte/workshops/experten-ws-ipbes>

- Further, a strong link to the capacity building function needs to be established. This link can be strengthened in by tailoring policy tools in a way that decision makers can apply them for their policy issue or by enhancing, the policy makers' ability to use policy tools (e.g., by training).
- Last, there is need for a continuous, independent and transparent evaluation of the effectiveness of policy tools.

Some of these questions have surely been addressed, at least partly in the IPBES work programme so far, other may need an additional look taking the lessons learned so far into account.

NeFo also supports the German government and its national IPBES coordination office in achieving the integration of German expertise into international IPBES processes, as well as providing information and capacity building for the German biodiversity community (including scientists, decision makers and other stakeholders) on the latest international developments. On the occasion of the fifth national forum on IPBES in February 2017, NeFo gave an overview on the latest developments regarding the design and implementation of the IPBES catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies and announced a workshop to further explore how the policy support function could be implemented. Thus, also a number of German experts will be invited to the workshop.

### **Purpose/ expected outputs**

In light of the persistence of a number of questions raised during the 2011 workshop on the one hand and the work and progress of IPBES with regard to its policy support function on the other hand, the planned workshop aims to take a step back and look beyond the current horizon. The purpose of the workshop is to reflect the policy support goal of IPBES and to discuss what IPBES should ideally be delivering to meet the needs of policy makers and practitioners. The workshop thus aims to tackle four major questions:

1. What are the needs of policy makers and practitioners?
2. How IPBES may be best able to meet these needs?
3. Where do we stand at the moment?
4. What needs to be done to align the IPBES work with the needs identified?
  - a) How could we strengthen/improve or further develop what we have so far?
  - b) What would we need in addition?
  - c) Where should it seek explicit partnerships?

The expected output of this workshop is a documentation of the workshop that includes the identification of needs of policy makers, practitioners and other decision makers (including e.g. focus areas, processes, tools, timelines, governance and actors ...) and recommendations for improvement of the existing IPBES work as well as suggestions for new mechanisms or measures. This documentation will be sent to the IPBES Bureau and MEP for their consideration in preparation of the second IPBES work programme planned to start in 2020. It is envisaged that the results are made available as an INF document for the forthcoming IPBES plenary (March 2018).

## Outline of the workshop (tentative, status 20<sup>th</sup> of September, 2017)

The workshop is planned for the duration of two full days, to be held in the premises of the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research in Leipzig, Germany.

The first day is aimed at a more open perspective, reflecting the needs of decision makers and IPBES' potential role (i.e. questions 1 and 2 above). The second day starts with a stocktaking of where IPBES currently stands in responding to these needs (question 3 above). Based on these, recommendations for improvement and/or further developments will be developed (question 4).

A detailed programme will be provided beginning of September.

## Participants

The number of participants is limited, to ensure an open, fluid, and profound discussion. The workshop of approximately 20-30 participants has a specific focus on practitioners's needs and aims to take a broader view beyond experts that are already involved in policy support activities. Therefore we envisage a heterogeneous mix of participants including some experts from IPBES (Secretariat, TSU and Expert Working Group), Administration/Policy, International Organizations, private sector, and scientists, aiming for equal balance of participants from the international, European and German context as well as gender balance. The workshop will be facilitated by the NeFo/UFZ Team.

**Registration till 30<sup>th</sup> October** via the following link:

[http://societas.biodiv.naturkundemuseum-berlin.de/NeFo\\_policy-tools-workshop](http://societas.biodiv.naturkundemuseum-berlin.de/NeFo_policy-tools-workshop)

**Contact:** Marianne Darbi, NeFo-Team, Email: [Marianne.darbi@ufz.de](mailto:Marianne.darbi@ufz.de)

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