Embedding Social Sciences and Humanities into IPBES – Supportive activities of the German IPBES Coordination Office

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The four functions of the IPBES

- **Prioritize key scientific information** needed by policy makers (no new research)

- **Perform regular and timely assessments** (global, regional and, as necessary, subregional scales and thematic issues)

- **Identify policy-relevant tools and methodologies** (not prescriptive and mindful of mandates of MEAs)

- Prioritize and help to catalyse funding and other **support for key capacity-building needs**

Possibilities to participate as scientist:

- Expert groups and Task Forces
  - Nomination by governments
  - Nomination by organisation

- Reviewer
  - Nomination by governments
  - Nomination by organisation

- Commenting on drafts of IPBES documents (government, institution or individual expert)

- Observer (accredited organisation or institution)

- Member of MEP
The German IPBES Coordination Office supports the federal ministries by:

- Integrating national experts in the IPBES Work Program:
- Continuously informing the national scientific community about IPBES work and associated relevant activities via:
  - Providing scientific advice to the federal ministries
  - Providing technical support to the IPBES Secretariat (upon request)
- Carry out work related to public relations
The German IPBES Coordination Office supports the BMUB and BMBF in disseminating the outcomes of IPBES Assessments

A brochure portraying the outcomes of the successfully finalized IPBES thematic assessment of pollinators, pollination and food production (Deliverable 3a)

Due to be available online and in print soon!
National IPBES Fora: Engagement with expert

• Discussions on national and international science and technical IPBES activities

• Exchange of experience between members of IPBES expert groups, task forces and other national experts

• Science-based analyses of IPBES documents to support the development of national positions in preparation of the next IPBES plenary


(Photos: German IPBES Coordination Office)
Analysis of the composition of the interim and 2015 MEP by Montana and Borie (2016)

National Responses to calls for nomination of experts

Discipline of experts, who wished to be nominated by Germany

Analysis based on applications submitted to the German IPBES Coordination Office as response to the international calls for nomination for scopings, assessments and task forces in 2014 and in 2015.

(Source: IPBES coordination office archives)
Initializing the process…

Identifying experts in the field of SSH:
- Consulting experts (individuals, networks, organizations etc.) for recommendations on key SSH actors, preferably also with expertise on science-policy interfaces:
  - nationally
  - UN-organizations
  - at IPBES-3 in Bonn
- Own database at DLR-PT

And inviting them to a one day Workshop.
The trigger to start discussions on this issue

One-day expert meeting on 12 November 2015 in Bonn, Germany
“Social scientists in the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Chances und Challenges for the protection and the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services – from a social sciences perspective”

With
- Experts from the fields of social sciences and humanities,
- the IPBES secretariat,
- IPCC experts and
- ministerial representatives

Outreach & further discussions

Policy Brief

Brief correspondence in Nature

4th National Forum, in Bonn, GER

IPBES- 4 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

European Ecosystem Services Conference, Antwerp, Belgium
Shortly before IPBES–4: Policy Brief & Correspondence in NATURE

- Affirmative to the IPBES-Process;
- Focuses on recommendations to improve the integration of SSH, Not an in-depth discussion of the reasons for the imbalance;
- An issue of urgency, since the first IPBES work programme is already well advanced;

(Development of the Policy Brief: Scientific coordination A. Vadrot, J. Jetzkowitz & M. Kirk. Technical and financial support: German IPBES Coordination Office (2015-2016))
Proposals by the independent group of scientists to the IPBES secretariat to enhance SSH participation:

- IPBES secretariat should explicitly refer to SSH experts in international **calls for nominations** for assessments;

- The IPBES secretariat should be encouraged to develop and implement a **strategy and communication products for ‘hard-to-reach’ stakeholders** outside the traditional scope of biodiversity research;

- The IPBES secretariat should closely collaborate with **National Focal Points (NFP) and SSH-relevant scientific associations and stakeholder networks**;

- The IPBES secretariat is encouraged to constantly map and **review the disciplinary balance** throughout different stages and processes of the IPBES and its products.
MEP and the Bureau should ensure that expert teams established to prepare and to review scoping documents include an **appropriate number of experts from SSH**;

MEP is encouraged to **interact with SSH experts** and scientific associations to identify relevant research gaps and research needs emerging from the IPBES assessments;

MEP, in consultation with the Bureau, should ensure that **SSH experts are involved** in regular reviews of the effectiveness of the Platform’s guidance, procedures, methods and approaches;
Bureau, MEP and IPBES secretariat should ensure political negotiations on **assessment titles** sufficiently reflect the inter- and transdisciplinary nature of the IPBES Conceptual Framework.

IPBES secretariat and the MEP - in close collaboration with the NFPs and scientific associations- should encourage SSH experts to register on *The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network* (BES-Net) and invite young scientists to join and engage with the newly established *Biodiversity Science-Policy Interfaces Network for Early Career Scientists* (BSPIN)
Vadrot et al., 11 February 2016; Nature 530:

- more encouragement and more engagement to promote a balanced disciplinary composition of IPBES expert groups, task forces and other bodies
- “Social sciences and humanities remain markedly under-represented. They make up less than 10% of the membership of IPBES expert groups, instead of the recommended 30%”.

(http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v530/n7589/full/530160b.html)
Increasing discussions on the need to include SSHs in IPBES

At IPBES-4 in Kuala Lumpur (Feb. 2016):

Najib Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia, formally opened IPBES-4, welcoming delegates and underscoring the importance of collaboration between governments and natural and social scientists to achieve the right balance between protecting the environment and ensuring social and economic progress and poverty eradication.

Anne Larigauderie, IPBES Executive Secretary: 4 regional assessments and the land degradation and restoration assessment to seek additional nominations from Governments and stakeholders in order to ensure geographic, disciplinary and gender balance among experts, particularly with regard to the selection of experts from the Eastern European region and for the selection of experts from social sciences, indigenous and local knowledge holders and policy practitioners (IPBES/4/2).

Scientists circulated and discussed the Policy Brief at IPBES-4.
Disciplinary balance - How to engage social scientists in IPBES (Reuter et al., 10. March 2016; Nature 531):

- “disciplinary imbalance within IPBES could best be remedied by improving the organization's communication with researchers from the social sciences and humanities”
- “IPBES calls need to be circulated more widely and avoid language and expressions that are tailored specifically for natural scientists. The calls should recognize differences in the social-science and humanities communities and target these more specifically”

(http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v531/n7593/full/531173c.html)
Continued discussions on the need to include SSHs in IPBES after IPBES-4:

IPBES reaches out to social scientists: **call for more social scientists** in the global assessment (Anne Larigauderie, Marie Stenseke & Robert T. Watson, 21 April 2016; Nature 532):

- “A strong collective effort is necessary to reach scholars outside the natural sciences, because they might not consider themselves to be biodiversity researchers. (…)
- IPBES is reaching out to learned social-science societies (…), to networks of scientists and to prominent interdisciplinary international programmes such as Future Earth (…)
- Success ultimately depends on governments and organizations stepping up to nominate more social scientists.”

**Major biodiversity panel desperately seeks social scientists** (Olive Heffernan, 21.04.2016; Nature news)
Experts, who expressed interest to be nominated by Germany (IPBES call for nominations dated 11 March 2016)

Analysis based on applications submitted to the German IPBES coordination office for all calls for nominations for the rescoping „thematic assessment of sustainable use of biodiversity“ and the assessment „Global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services“.

(Source: IPBES coordination office archives)
Ongoing efforts to enhance visibility and activities of SSHs in IPBES

European Ecosystem Services Conference,  
*Helping nature to help us*, University of Antwerp, Belgium, 19-23 September 2016

**Goals and objectives of the session:**
Expand discussions on the role of SSHs in IPBES at the international level, which were started at the workshop in November 2015.

**Intended outcomes of the session:**
- Improving knowledge on the role and functions of SSHs at science-policy interfaces.
- Concrete measure that would support the MEP to further strengthen SSH in IPBES.
- Support of the issue of SSH in the IPBES regional assessment “Europe & Central Asia”/ECA
- SSH’s contribution to better capture the various values of biodiversity.
Summary

• How to achieve the recommended 30% membership of SSHs in IPBES experts groups as suggested by Vadrot et al. 2016?

• Calls should target SSH communities more (Reuter et al. 2016 and Larigauderie et al. 2016) → How? What are the best ways here?

• Case example Germany: In order to achieve the aspired 30% involvement of SSH in IPBES activities, IPBES secretariat, MEP/Bureau have to be supported by member states through national activities.
Thank you!

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