

## IPBES-9 Highlights: Friday, 8 July 2022

The penultimate day of the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-9) was another negotiating marathon. Working Group 1 (WG1) met throughout the finalizing consideration of the summary for policymakers (SPM) of the methodological assessment regarding the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits, including biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services (values assessment). WG2 addressed: the scoping report on the business and biodiversity assessment; additional elements on IPBES' rolling work programme to 2030; the nature futures framework (NFF); ways to improve the effectiveness of the Platform; and engagement with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

### Working Group 1

WG1 started its work focusing on a section of the values assessment on leveraging the diverse values of nature for transformative change towards sustainability. On recognizing and respecting Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK), delegates debated whether to refer to decolonizing “perspectives” or “methods,” reaching convergence on the former. They further discussed whether to refer to “Western” or “dominant” worldviews, opting for “dominant epistemologies and worldviews.”

On the relationship between pathways towards sustainability and justice, and the inclusion of a diverse range of nature's values, delegates agreed that relevant scenarios can be grouped according to their potential to achieve “just and sustainable futures,” rather than sustainable development or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Members heavily debated on: stating that the four suggested sustainability pathways all accept the need to respect “biophysical boundaries” or “safe ecological limits”; the degrowth pathway; and references to cosmo-, bio-, eco-, and pluri-centric values. On boundaries or limits, they disagreed strongly on which term to use or whether to retain the statement at all. On degrowth, they debated whether this pathway emphasizes reducing material and energy needs: in the Global North/industrialized countries and redistributing wealth with the Global South; within and between countries; or simply stating “whilst meeting the needs of all.” On values, they agreed there are many other worldviews and knowledge systems, including those based on fulfilling collective good quality of life, “mostly based on non-anthropocentric worldviews.” Late in the day, members agreed to elaborate on the “degrowth” pathway. They also agreed to note that the four pathways presented in the section have different interpretation of the impacts of ecological limits on the potential for economic growth. After a friends of the chair (FoC) group meeting, the sentence on safe ecological limits was deleted, as members could not agree on language.

On ways to mobilize sustainability-aligned values, particularly on overcoming value-action barriers, delegates decided to delete reference to specific commodities, such as palm oil, cocoa, and coffee. They discussed at length whether to refer to “fair global value chains” or to fair value chains “at all levels.” They agreed to refer to the need to mobilize international cooperation and

“design or transform, as appropriate” institutions associated with biodiversity conservation that allow Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) to develop their own conservation models.

Delegates discussed at length whether to retain reference to “deforestation-free certification.” A suggestion to refer to possible trade-distorting practices that may have undesired consequences affecting livelihoods also generated disagreements.

Members then addressed a section on embedding the values of nature for transformative decision making for sustainability. On a sub-section on environmental policy instruments, delegates disagreed on statements referring to rights-based approaches, specifically on the rights of nature, the rights of Mother Earth, and specific entities' rights. They also strongly debated listing examples like lakes, rivers, and mountains as entities with rights. A FoC group offered alternative text. Members decided to delete reference to “human rights” and revise a statement on sovereignty of natural resources.

Delegates reached consensus on potentially drawing inspiration for environmental governance from the values held by IPLCs, agreeing to refer to the notion of “Vivir Bien or Buen Vivir.”

On a paragraph on the link between balancing perspectives on nature's values across policies and coherence among sustainability-related policy instruments, delegates mainly disagreed on a suggestion to include the notion of nature-based solutions (NbS). Some delegations underscored that NbS are a controversial concept, and it is premature to include it or single it out among policy options. Many others pointed to the recently adopted relevant resolution by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) and insisted on including the notion. Later in the day, delegates debated whether to: refer to the NbS definition agreed at UNEA-5, and a statement in the assessment that NbS vary considerably in how much they support biodiversity, and their placement in the document.

On a textbox describing the One Health approach, members engaged around whether and how to include the One Health High-Level Expert Panel's definition of “One Health.” After protracted discussions, they agreed to add a footnote referencing the Panel's definition. Suggestions to specify that animal health includes both domestic and wild species, and that the health sector's interest relates also to prevention, not just control, of zoonoses, were accepted. Delegates agreed to add language noting actions to implement the One Health approach at the national level should be context-specific and recognize different social and economic conditions.

Members returned to the key messages' contentious issues. On IPBES' and the assessment's understanding of nature, delegates agreed to note that the assessment is expected to contribute to achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the future post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) towards just and sustainable futures.

Members also agreed to refer to “persistent inequalities between and within countries,” rather than inequities, and to the “intertwined economic, social, and environmental dimensions” of sustainability.

On background messages, on a sub-section on predominant economic and political decisions prioritizing certain values of nature like market-based instrumental values, members discussed language on designing institutions that integrate policies to foster

sustainability-aligned values, or values inherent in sustainability and justice. They also deliberated on using economic “expansion” or “development” and whether to refer to the needs of developing countries to raise living standards.

On standardization procedures in valuation for the uptake of ecosystem accounting in national policies, delegates agreed to include reference to ongoing challenges for implementation in decision making.

On valuation studies, members agreed to note that the majority of countries have not made progress at a rate that would have allowed achievement of Aichi Target 2 (integration of biodiversity values into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies) by 2020.

On language on certification schemes, delegates agreed to include precautionary language on the negative consequences that such standards and certification schemes may have if not designed in line with relevant international rules and not implemented with local input.

On a list of examples of international initiatives that have promoted the integration of the values of nature into national-level policies, members decided to remove reference to the Global Biodiversity Outlook and to refer to the UN General Assembly resolution on Harmony with Nature.

Markus Fischer, Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) member, presented the work of the FoC group on figures and tables. The experts explained changes made in response to comments received and addressed additional comments.

WG1 concluded consideration of the values assessment.

## Working Group 2

### Scoping report for the business and biodiversity assessment:

In the morning, WG2 returned to the assessment’s scope and rationale section. Delegates continued discussing how to refer to value chains in a paragraph on improved understanding and awareness of the different dependencies and impacts of businesses in the context of risk and monitoring. Suggestions included “upstream-downstream” dependencies, “throughout global value chains in line with SDG12 (responsible consumption),” and “the entire supply chain.” Finally, members agreed to refer to “dependencies and impacts of businesses, throughout value chains” with a footnote specifying “taking into account, where relevant, international obligations.” Members agreed to remove references to value chains in the remaining paragraphs in the chapter outlines.

On the timeline, members noted the assessment, subject to resource availability, will be reviewed at IPBES-12. Delegates approved the draft decision on the business and biodiversity assessment without reference to specific starting or inception dates.

### Additional elements of the rolling work programme:

The Secretariat introduced document IPBES/9/12 on requests, inputs, and suggestions for additional elements of the rolling work programme up to 2030. She stressed the busy schedule, highlighting the MEP and Bureau have advised it is not possible to take up additional scoping or assessment work between IPBES-9 and 10. She presented the timeline of IPBES work up to 2030, concluding there are two timeslots available for methodological or fast-track thematic assessments up to 2027, and one up to 2030, in addition to the second global assessment (GA2).

She presented the draft decision text proposing deferring consideration and decision on the GA2 and a thematic assessment of ecological connectivity (ECA) to IPBES-10.

There was universal support for undertaking GA2, including regional information as appropriate, with diverging views on the timing of decision and work. Many also supported the Secretariat’s view to defer decision to IPBES-10.

Many members underscored the importance, timeliness, and urgency of the ECA and requested a decision at IPBES-9 to start a fast-track process, with scoping to be prepared and considered at IPBES-10. Others noted it would be best informed by the outcome of the GBF negotiations and should thus be deferred to IPBES-10, and yet others underscored the need for urgent progress on connected areas, underpinned by sound science, urging a fast-track assessment to be started posthaste. One member suggested to broaden the scope of the invitation to the scientific community and other knowledge holders in the decision.

In the evening, members decided to consider, at IPBES-10, inputs for GA2 and the ECA, based on an initial scoping report. They also invited the scientific community to build a knowledge base to work on filling gaps identified in the GA.

**Nature Futures Framework:** In the afternoon, delegates resumed deliberations on the NFF, discussing proposed text from an FoC group. Delegates addressed the draft decision, including language stating:

- the NFF’s further development should include but not be limited to alignment with IPBES’ conceptual framework;
- the NFF is reaffirmed as an important tool for future assessments; and
- the scientific community, IPLCs and other relevant actors should discuss the opportunities and limits, as well as test, where appropriate, the NFF.

**Improving the effectiveness of the Platform:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (IPBES/9/11), reported on activities undertaken, and explained related decisions.

She presented draft terms of reference (ToR) for the midterm periodic review of the 2030 IPBES work programme, stating the Bureau and the MEP will conduct the internal review and prepare a report for IPBES-11 and an external review will be undertaken by a review panel and presented at IPBES-12. One member inquired why the ToR had not been presented to plenary for full consideration, and noted preference for an independent entity coordinating the external review.

On behalf of the MEP, Shizuka Hashimoto (Japan) presented results of a study to understand the current level of use and impact of IPBES’ conceptual framework (IPBES/9/INF/20), highlighting positive responses, like the uptake in regional and national biodiversity assessments and widespread use in scientific literature.

Members welcomed the notes on the use and impact of the conceptual framework, selection of experts and review of online meetings and practices, and streamlining future scoping processes, including the notion to limit the length of SPMs and chapters; supported a second review for the SPM of the invasive alien species assessment; and encouraged taking account of the review panel’s recommendations and report on progress at IPBES-10.

Two amendments to the decision were accepted, one on recognizing the importance of ensuring full and effective participation in online meetings and activities, including due consideration of time differences, and enhancing inclusivity; and another that welcomes the recommendation for streamlining future scoping processes. All related decisions were approved.

**Engagement with the IPCC:** Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie presented IPBES/9/9 and IPBES/9/INF/26, including a compilation of the thematic or methodological issues related to biodiversity and climate change. Delegates engaged and agreed on decision text discussing further collaboration between the two bodies.

## In the Corridors

“Brackets, brackets, brackets... Arggghh!” WG1 Co-Chair Beard voiced what was on many delegates’ minds, as they toiled away on Friday, or should we say Groundhog Day? Words like safe ecological limits, rights of nature, Mother Earth, and living well kept flying around WG1’s room, in discussions on the values assessment’s SPM.

It was a rollercoaster of moods in the halls. Luggage of various sizes were parked across the venue, and volunteers hurried around packing up the decor. Meanwhile delegates were still knee-deep in parallel WGs, contact groups, FoC consultations and informal discussions, wordsmithing decision and SPM text, and last but not least, figuring out IPBES’ budget.

At one point, a technical glitch caused the WG1 audio to play inside WG2’s room, leading to remarks of disbelief: “You’re still talking about NbS?” Surprisingly, WG1 won the race, flooding the hall with cheerful delegates clinking glasses and bottles after the SPM was approved just in time for another German-hosted Happy Hour, while WG2 was still left with open agenda items and brackets, brackets, brackets.

The ENB summary and analysis of IPBES-9 will be available on Tuesday, 12 July 2022, at: [enb.iisd.org/intergovernmental-science-policy-platform-biodiversity-ecosystem-services-ipbes9](https://enb.iisd.org/intergovernmental-science-policy-platform-biodiversity-ecosystem-services-ipbes9)