

## Report on outcomes of IPBES 1 in January 2013

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) held its first Plenary session (after the official founding in April 2012) in Bonn, from January 21<sup>st</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> 2013. For the time being 105 States including Germany are full members of IPBES. Non-member States and organisations, including scientific and non-governmental organisations were admitted as observers. Dr. Axel Paulsch as member of the Institute for Biodiversity Network (ibn) was nominated for the German Delegation and followed IPBES 1 throughout. Dr. Cornelia Paulsch followed the meeting as NGO-Participant for ibn.

Some remarks on the outcomes:

### Election of members for the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel

During the founding meeting of IPBES in Panama in April 2012 it was agreed to install two subsidiary bodies: the Bureau, which should fulfil the administrative functions of IPBES and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP), which should oversee the scientific functions. In the intersessional period between Panama and Bonn the five UN-regions nominated their candidates for both bodies. All candidates were accepted in consensus after negotiations within and between the regions to reach a balance in disciplines and gender aspects. It was agreed that the term for the Bureau members is three years and that re-election for a second consecutive term is possible, except for the chair position, which will rotate between the five regions each term. The representative of the Asian-Pacific Region (Mr. Zakri Abdul Hamid, Malaysia) was elected to be the first chair of IPBES. The Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) will be the region to nominate the next chair in three years from now. The list of all Bureau and MEP members is available on the IPBES internet presence in the meeting report.

### Rules of Procedure

As the founding meeting in April 2012 did not achieve to set up all rules of procedure necessary to run the platform, the agenda of IPBES 1 foresaw to fill the gaps. This aim was reached only partly. There was an agreement on the term for the Bureau to be 3 years and on the rotation principle. With respect to decision making it was agreed that decisions on substantive matters have to be taken in consensus, while procedural matters could be decided by a majority if a consensus cannot be reached. This obviously rises the question which matters are to be seen as substantive or just procedural, respectively. If this is unclear the chair of the plenary can rule on this question. This ruling can immediately be challenged and a vote of all members present and voting would decide by majority.

Some Rules of Procedures are still unsolved and were transferred to the next plenary:

There is still no solution for the full membership of the EU. For the time being 15 EU States, including Germany, are IPBES members, but the EU as a so called Regional Economic Integration Organisation (REIO) has only observer status. The full membership of REIOs is mainly opposed by the USA, some other states have difficulties with the idea that the EU could exert voting rights in the name of its member states.

In that context it has to be mentioned that the rules for the admission of observers are as well unsolved. Some states (namely Argentina, Brazil and China) insist on a veto right for each member to exclude specific observers. The EU and Norway held the position that a minimum of a third of the members would have to opt for the exclusion of an observer before the respective observer is denied admission. There was no compromise and the respective rules stay in brackets, meaning they are not yet agreed. In order to have an interim regulation in place for the next meeting of the plenary it was agreed that observers who had been admitted to IPBES 1 will also be admitted to IPBES 2. New observers would have to apply for admission, the Secretariat will circulate the list of applicants to all members in advance and each member could put a veto on any observer. This veto could then be overruled by a two-third majority in the plenary session as such.

With respect to the funding measure "Sustainable Land Management" of BMBF it can be noted that the Institute for Biodiversity Network (ibn) is already accredited as observer, as

well as the Gesellschaft für Ökologie (GfÖ) and the Umweltforschungszentrum (UFZ). All three organisations had sent observers to IPBES 1 who are actively participating in regional projects of the funding measure or GLUES.

#### Administration and Budget

In the question of which UN-Organisation should administer IPBES and should employ the staff for the Secretariat (located in Bonn) the members agreed to give this task to UNEP, who had held the interim secretariat since the first preparatory meeting in 2008. The budget for 2013 allows for staffing six positions in the Secretariat and for a second plenary meeting. More voluntary contributions will be needed to really run assessments in coming years and some developing countries explicitly invited developed countries to rise their contributions significantly.

#### Work Programme

As expected the meeting did not yet address the question which assessment topics would have to be taken up first, but nevertheless agreed on important steps to set up a work programme for the coming years. Especially the MEP was entrusted to :

- develop a draft work programme for 2014-2018
- prioritize the requests submitted by members or Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs, such as e.g. the CBD)
- to convene a workshop on synergies between scientific and other forms of knowledge (probably to take place in Japan)
- to further develop the conceptual framework for assessments and the scoping process.

IUCN and ICSU were invited to prepare a stakeholder engagement strategy, involving a wide range of observers.

On all these activities reports have to be prepared for the second plenary session in order to review the progress made and agree on next steps.

#### Venue of next IPBES Plenary

It was anticipated that IPBES 2 will take place in the second week of December 2013. The venue is still to be determined.

#### Personal conclusion:

As a personal conclusion we would observe that some achievements have been reached that are essential for building up IPBES. These achievements include the election of a Bureau and a MEP and designating specific tasks to these bodies. To request UNEP to staff the Secretariat was also a necessary step being taken now. Agreement on an initial budget was reached as well.

A considerable change in comparison to the proposals in the pre-session documents was made in the details for prioritizing requests for assessments. It had been proposed that requests coming from MEAs should have higher priorities than those coming from single members or stakeholders. This proposal was denied and prioritization now has to follow certain criteria like relevance, urgency or availability of knowledge, independent from the question who has made the request. This means that also scientific bodies as stakeholders to IPBES could submit requests that fulfil the mentioned criteria.

From the perspective of the funding measure "Sustainable Land Management" of BMBF it is to be seen positive that ICSU as a scientific organisation was invited to prepare a stakeholder engagement strategy. This will secure that the scientific community will be recognised as an indispensable stakeholder.

The unsolved rules for the admission of observers to plenary meetings still hold the risk that some organisations could be denied observer status. It might therefore be wise to try to get admission as early as possible for scientific bodies, not only German ones but also from partner countries, if they wish to regularly participate in coming IPBES meetings.

Members of regional projects already present in the Bonn meeting used the chance to approach delegates and stakeholders from partner countries, e.g. LEGATO scientists made their project know to stakeholders who run pilot community monitoring projects in Vietnam and the Philippines.

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29.01.2013