

Opportunities for communities of practice to engage with and contribute to the work of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

Introduction

Communities of practice have the potential to contribute greatly to the work and objective of IPBES by strengthening the science-policy interfaces for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.

Communities of practice support efforts to facilitate access to expertise and information under objective 2b of the IPBES work programme up to 2030.

Why communities of practice are important to the work of IPBES

Communities of practice are inclusive networks with representatives of science, policy and/or practice coming together to share knowledge and discuss issues and opportunities to increase access to expertise and information for both supporting implementation of the IPBES work programme and increasing the reach and impact of work programme deliverables.

Communities of practice can bring together a diversity of actors, including experts, policymakers and/or practitioners and provide an arena for coordination and collaboration among actors on joint activities related to a specific topic of relevance to IPBES.

Examples of topics of specific relevance to IPBES are those supporting strengthened science-policy interface, including topics of the approved and ongoing IPBES assessments and other IPBES deliverables, such as those listed in Box 2.

Communities of practice can also help to strengthen stakeholder engagement and develop capacities essential for effective participation and strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem service, on a specific topic at the local, national, regional and global levels.

BOX 1

Communities of practice in the context of IPBES

Communities of practice in the context of IPBES are groups of experts, policymakers and/or practitioners who work to increase access to expertise and information on a specific topic or focus area, both to support the implementation of the IPBES work programme and to increase the reach and impact of work programme deliverables.

These communities of practice are self-organizing groups and may have different modalities and working arrangements.

The activities carried out by the communities of practice could be considered as examples of voluntary contributions to the work of IPBES. A community of practice could also be considered for recognition as an IPBES collaborative supporters by the IPBES bureau. At regular intervals, the IPBES Bureau reviews, for endorsement, recommendations by the IPBES task forces for the recognition of contributors undertaking activities that significantly support the implementation of the IPBES work programme on the IPBES website.

How communities of practice can engage with and contribute to the work of IPBES

Communities of practice can support increased contribution to the production and use of IPBES products and the further development of and sharing of associated information and experience by individuals and institutions taking part in these networks. Communities of practice can contribute to expanding stakeholder involvement and efforts to strengthen the science-policy interface through undertaking activities such as:

- Identification, nomination and mobilisation of experts and other stakeholders to take part in the production, review and use of IPBES products;
- Organization of meetings and/or workshops to raise awareness and build capacity on IPBES and its processes and products;
- Organization of uptake events to support increased capacities to use one or several key findings of approved IPBES assessments;
- Mobilisation of efforts to address knowledge gaps on one or several specific topics identified in IPBES assessments;
- Provision of information and data for indicators used in IPBES assessments;
- Organization of capacity-building events to strengthen individual and institutional capacities on a IPBES related topic for supporting strengthened engagement with the work of IPBES; and
- Coordination and implementation of activities related to the work of IPBES and the wider biodiversity agenda, such as contributions to undertaking of national and/or (sub)regional ecosystem assessments.

An overview of the different opportunities to engage in the performance of the four functions of IPBES¹ is provided below in Box 5. Examples of contributions to the capacity-building work are presented on this link: <https://ipbes.net/building-capacity/rolling-plan>.

BOX 2

Examples of topics relevant to IPBES:

- Science-policy interface
- Pollination and pollinators
- Scenarios and models
- Land degradation and restoration
- Sustainable use of wild species
- Multiple values of nature and its benefits
- Invasive alien species
- The interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food and health (Nexus)
- Transformative change
- Business and biodiversity
- National ecosystem assessment
- Guide on the production of ecosystem assessments
- Knowledge generation
- Data management
- Policy support tools and methodologies
- Indigenous and local knowledge
- Biodiversity communication

BOX 3

Register examples of IPBES impact

Communities of practice can register and share examples of the use of IPBES outputs, such as the IPBES assessment reports, in decision-making or in science in the IPBES Impact Tracking Database (TRACK) using this submission portal:

<https://ipbes.net/impact-tracking>.

An overview of registered IPBES impacts is available on ipbes.net at this link:

<https://ipbes.net/impact-tracking-view>.

¹ As identified in its defined functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements: https://ipbes.net/documents-by-category/policies_and_procedures.

How IPBES promotes and interacts with communities of practice

IPBES encourages and promotes the work of communities of practice through, among other things:

- Engaging with organizations and institutions that are working on topics that are relevant for ongoing and approved assessments and other IPBES deliverable, such as those examples presented in Box 2;
- Promoting and supporting efforts that aim to strengthen engagement of stakeholders, including knowledgeholders and practitioners from public and private sectors and NGOs in IPBES at local, national, regional and global levels;
- Supporting efforts to facilitate access to expertise and information relevant to IPBES and supporting strengthened science-policy interface;
- Developing an online space on the IPBES website for information on existing communities of practice.

Opportunities to engage in the performance of the four functions of IPBES

Assessing knowledge delivers global, regional, methodological and thematic assessments, and helps to catalyse assessments at the national level. Governments and stakeholders can engage with and support this work by:

- (for Governments and organizations:) Nominating, promoting and supporting the participation of experts in IPBES assessments.
- (for experts:) Being nominated as experts to participate in the production of assessments and scoping reports as authors.
- (for early-career scientists:) Being nominated as experts to participate in the production of assessments as fellows in the fellowship programme.
- (For Governments and experts) Participating in pre-scoping conferences.
- (For Governments and experts): Submitting written review comments.
- (For Governments, organizations and experts:) Promoting and using findings of IPBES assessments.

Building capacity identifies and prioritizes capacity-building needs, and builds capacities of individuals and institutions for a strengthened science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Governments and stakeholders can engage with and support this work by:

- Nominating, promoting and supporting early-career experts' participation in the fellowship programme.
- Developing complementary learning materials on IPBES products.
- Organizing and supporting capacity-building and knowledge sharing activities relevant to IPBES.
- Participating in, promoting and supporting the establishment of communities of practice on IPBES deliverables.
- Participating in, promoting, and supporting the establishment of national and regional science-policy platforms and networks and conducting national and regional ecosystem assessments.
- Taking part in IPBES dialogue meetings and webinars to enhance knowledge exchange and foster mutual learning to strengthen the science-policy interface.

Knowledge generation catalyses and generates new knowledge. It consists of three components: data access and management; filling knowledge gaps; and engaging with indigenous and local knowledge. Governments and stakeholders can engage with and support this work by:

- Providing access to, using, or reproducing the data, methods, and metadata relevant to or contained in IPBES assessments
- Contributing to knowledge generation by supporting the uptake and filling of identified knowledge gaps
- Facilitating indigenous peoples and local communities' participation in and benefit from IPBES products and activities.

Policy support promotes development and use of policy support tools and methodologies so that the assessments' results can be more effectively applied. Governments and stakeholders can engage with and support this work by:

- Using of IPBES assessments to inform policy.
- Participating in and/or convening dialogue meetings to further discuss the assessments' findings.
- Utilising the IPBES scenarios and models assessment and relevant work of the task force on scenarios and models for the development and use of scenarios of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Background – The role of the task force on capacity-building

IPBES aims to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being, and sustainable development. In doing so, it draws heavily on existing capacities of experts and institutions from all over the world to critically assess the state of knowledge on the interactions between human societies and the natural world, catalyse knowledge generation and support policy. In undertaking these endeavours, IPBES is faced with striking world-wide asymmetries in individual and institutional capacity. IPBES, with the aim of addressing these asymmetries, seeks to develop capacities of individuals and institutions for a strengthened science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

A key component of IPBES' efforts to facilitate access to expertise and information relates to the encouragement of communities of practice. Efforts towards this are undertaken in the context of IPBES' work on capacity-building and with the aim of addressing objective 2(b): facilitated access to expertise and information, of the 2030 work programme.

Communities of practice on biodiversity and nature contributions to people are self-organized networks that are driven by Governments, strategic partners, collaborative supporters, and others supporting the work on capacity-building under IPBES. The task force on capacity-building contributes to these efforts by facilitating, encouraging, and promoting activities of relevant institutions and organizations, and strengthening networks for dialogue and peer-learning.

Information about the work of the task force on capacity-building and contributions from collaborative supporters are available at <https://ipbes.net/building-capacity>.