



GUIDANCE

Using the IPBES regional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa on the ground

The GIZ ValuES approach and the case of Ivory Coast

What is IPBES?

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is an independent, intergovernmental body established in 2012, under the auspices of UNEP, FAO, UNESCO and UNDP. Its main mandate is to synthesize the state-of-the-art knowledge on biodiversity, ecosystems and their contributions to people, as well as the tools and methods to protect and sustainably use these vital natural assets.

IPBES has four working areas:

- **Assessments:** IPBES prepares global and regional reports on the state of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as on specific biodiversity topics.
- **Policy Tools and Methodologies:** IPBES identifies tools and methodologies to use the results of assessments in policymaking.
- **Capacity Building:** IPBES identifies capacities and competencies required to work with IPBES, and to use its products.
- **Knowledge Generation:** IPBES identifies knowledge gaps and fosters closing them; IPBES itself does not conduct research.

What are the IPBES regional assessments?

In January 2015, the third IPBES plenary session approved the launch of four regional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services in terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, namely for Africa, for the Americas, for Asia Pacific, and for Europe and Central Asia¹.

The overall scope of the regional assessments is to assess:

- the status and trends regarding biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and their interlinkages,
- the impact of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and threats to them on good quality of life, and
- the effectiveness of responses, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The overall objective of the regional assessments is to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services at the regional and subregional level (IPBES 2018a).

The IPBES regional assessment for Africa

The Africa regional assessment² is the first of its kind in the continent. It is a synthesis of the state of knowledge on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people. The assessment aims to provide the foundation for a meaningful dialogue across the full range of stakeholders involved in African development (policymakers, African communities, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders involved in environmentally sensitive investments and land-use decisions)³. It integrates evidence from peer-reviewed literature, grey literature, and indigenous and local knowledge.

¹<https://www.ipbes.net/deliverables/2b-regional-assessments>

²<https://www.ipbes.net/deliverables/2b-africa>

³ IPBES/6/L.4 : Summary for policymakers of the regional and subregional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa, p 9



The African Regional Assessment covers five subregions, encompassing the following countries:

Subregions	Countries and territories
East Africa and adjacent islands	Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Reunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania
Southern Africa	Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe
Central Africa	Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe
North Africa	Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Western Sahara
West Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo

The thematic priorities of the assessment comprise:

- Food-energy-water-livelihood nexus;
- Climate-related risks;
- Land degradation;
- Invasive alien species;
- Sustainable use; and
- Technological innovations.

The assessment pays attention to questions of equity, poverty reduction, rights, social relationships, economic contributions, spirituality and cultural heritage. It further considers the impacts of trade and investment, along with the contribution of low-carbon, ecological and social transformations of the economy. Finally, the assessment seeks to understand policy options for decision-makers to manage biodiversity and

nature's contributions to people under different future scenarios.

What are the key messages of the IPBES regional assessment for Africa?

In March 2018, in Colombia, at the sixth plenary meeting of the Platform, 129 IPBES Member States discussed the regional assessment for Africa consisting of two documents: a 580-pages long technical document and the so-called Summary for Policymaker (SPM) of the African Regional Assessment (IPBES 2018), its 35-page long digest, which successfully was endorsed by the plenary. The SPM now is the latest document regarding the status, trends and policy options on biodiversity and ecosystem services for the African region on the globe.

The document is the result of a three-year process in which nearly 100 experts from three UN regions (Africa, WEOG, Asia-Pacific) and 33 countries, synthesized the existing knowledge on the status and trends of Africa's biodiversity and the direct and indirect drivers of its loss (Heubach et al. 2017). The experts furthermore analysed the political frameworks to consider when designing measures to address the predicted developments such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the CBD Aichi Targets as well as the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

The SPM summarizes the most important information from the chapters into five thematic sections, and contains 22 key messages (Table 1):

- A. Africa's natural assets are unique
- B. Africa under pressure
- C. Strengthening African transformation frameworks
- D. Africa has options
- E. The future we want – making it happen together



Table 1. Key messages of the IPBES Regional Assessment for Africa

<p>A. Africa's natural assets are unique</p> <p>A1. Africa's extraordinary richness in biodiversity and ecosystem services, and wealth of indigenous and local knowledge, comprises a strategic asset for sustainable development in the region.</p> <p>A2. Africa's rich and diverse ecosystems generate flows of goods and services that are essential in providing for the continent's food, water, energy, health and secure livelihood needs.</p> <p>A3. The full story of Africa's endowment by nature is yet to be told and, as a result, the true value of biodiversity's contributions to human well-being is underappreciated in decision-making processes.</p> <p>A4. Africa has opportunities to fully realize the benefits of having such rich biodiversity and to explore ways of using it in a sustainable way to contribute to its economic and technological development.</p> <p>A5. Certain ecosystems found in Africa are of great ecological, biological and cultural importance at regional and global levels.</p> <p>A6. Africa has important genetic diversity that reflects its unique and varied biological and cultural heritages, and is the product of interactions with, and adaptation to, an ever-changing environment, and of exchanges with other cultures.</p> <p>A7. Indigenous and local knowledge in Africa underpins the way nature benefits people. It is at the forefront of biodiversity conservation and is critical to the African vision for a good quality of life. It deserves more attention from Governments and society.</p>	<p>C3. Effective conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change to keep global temperature increase in this century below the 2-degree centigrade mark, and to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>C4. African countries are implementing their respective national biodiversity strategies and action plans and are making some progress in meeting commitments in the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, but progress in many of these actions remains insufficient.</p>
<p>B. Africa under pressure</p> <p>B1. The decline and loss of biodiversity is reducing nature's contributions to people in Africa, affecting daily lives and hampering the sustainable social and economic development targeted by African countries.</p> <p>B2. Indirect drivers, including rapid population growth and urbanization, inappropriate economic policies and technologies, poaching and illegal wildlife trade as well as socio-political and cultural pressures have accelerated the loss of biodiversity and the loss of nature's contributions to people.</p> <p>B3. Africa's current population of 1.25 billion is likely to double by 2050, putting severe pressure on the continent's biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, unless appropriate policies and strategies are adopted and effectively implemented. Africa is also one of the most rapidly urbanizing continents.</p> <p>B4. Africa is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>B5. Unregulated land cover change is detrimental to biodiversity, which in turn is detrimental to Africa's long-term sustainable development. Further, this unregulated conversion of forest, rangelands and other natural areas, such as wetlands, for food production and urban development is happening at a fast pace following the rapid transformation of African societies. Such conversion leads to habitat loss and fragmentation, degradation of water catchments, and soil erosion leading to loss of biodiversity and livelihoods.</p> <p>B6. Marine and coastal environments are of significant ecological and socio-economic importance to the African continent and are under immense threat from human activities.</p>	<p>D. Africa has options</p> <p>D1. Africa has a range of possible options for the governance of its biodiversity for the benefit of its people. The selection of appropriate options is critical to delivering benefits to its people through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the promotion of access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization. Furthermore, the value of local and indigenous knowledge, innovations and practice need to be acknowledged and promoted in support of human well-being.</p> <p>D2. Africa's existing policies, strategies, plans and programmes at the national, subregional and regional levels are progressively addressing both direct and indirect underlying threats to biodiversity and nature's contributions to people. Where these mechanisms encourage inclusive development and a transition to green and blue economies in the context of sustainable development, they support good quality of life.</p> <p>D3. Measures taken by African Governments to protect biodiversity and nature's contributions to people have contributed to some degree of recovery of threatened species, especially in key biodiversity areas, and these efforts could be enhanced.</p> <p>D4. Scenarios are underused in decision-making processes in Africa. The majority of the identified scenario studies were exploratory (80 per cent) and relied mainly on climate change as a single driver of biodiversity change. Concerted effort is needed to build the capacity of African researchers, policymakers and institutions to understand, carry out and make beneficial use of scenario analyses for intervention planning and informed decision-making.</p> <p>D5. Achieving the African Union's vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa by 2063 and associated Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets is problematic under the type of plausible future⁷ that prioritizes national sovereignty, self-reliance and security. Those plausible futures that balance strong economic growth with minimizing environmental consequences are also unlikely to fully meet the aforementioned vision, given their higher propensity to undermine the natural resource-base in the long term. The plausible futures characterized by heightened environmental caution, social equity and human welfare, however, provide the most likely options for achieving multiple goals.</p>
<p>C. Strengthening African transformation frameworks</p> <p>C1. Africa's unique and abundant biodiversity is an asset for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and can be sustainably and equitably used to reduce inequality and poverty on the continent</p> <p>C2. The alignment of Agenda 2063 goals, Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets, linked to the conservation of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people that enhance human well-being in Africa, facilitates the development of interventions that can achieve multiple positive outcomes.</p>	<p>E. The future we want – making it happen together</p> <p>E1. Africa can move towards achieving its development aspirations, while at the same time improving the conservation of its valuable natural assets and meeting its biodiversity commitments and targets through multi-stakeholder and multilevel adaptive governance, as well as improved integration of indigenous and local knowledge through recognition of traditional institutions (hereafter referred to as polycentric governance).</p> <p>E2. Governance options that harness synergies and deliver multiple benefits, supported by an enabling environment, can help to balance patterns of access and allocation of ecosystem services in Africa.</p>



How to use of the IPBES Regional Assessment for Africa on project and national level? – The GIZ-ValuES regional workshop in Côte d'Ivoire

After its successful endorsement by the IPBES Member States, the key question now clearly is how to make use of the IPBES regional assessment for Africa on a local and national practical level. Due to its regional character, the policy options given by the assessment naturally stay quite general with limited reference to the national level and to the specific contexts of the countries covered. Thus, discussing how to translate the guidance provided by the assessment meaningfully onto the levels relevant for implementation is critical to help leveraging the document's power.

The GIZ ValuES project addressed this question right away subsequent to IPBES-6, convening a regional workshop for francophone African countries in early April 2018 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. While this workshop followed the traditional series of ValuES regional workshops fostering multi-lateral exchange of experiences and lessons learnt regarding the integration of the ecosystem services approach into policy, practice and planning, this workshop in West Africa explicitly addressed the IPBES regional assessment for Africa. Furthermore, it was particularly dedicated to French-speaking African countries, which often suffer from the Anglophone character of such international policy processes.

The workshop brought together 40 participants from seven West and Central Africa countries, namely Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad (Figure 1). They represented the German development cooperation and its partner structures as well as delegates from universities and other scientific institutions. The workshop was jointly organised by MINSÉDD, CSRS, WABES, WASCAL, UFZ, PROFIBAB and ValuES, and supported by the IPBES Secretariat.

The workshop gained tremendously from the contribution of two key figures of the expert group to the assessment, one of the Co-chairs, Kalemani Jo Mulongoy, and the Coordinating Lead Author of chapter one, Mariteuw Chimère Diaw. Their in-depth insight into the assessment process and their hands-on experience from their multiple activities in the region allowed for an intense and honest dialogue on the appropriate use of the assessment results in the countries.



Figure 1. The participants of the GIZ-ValuES regional workshop on the IPBES Regional Assessment for Africa held 10-12 April 2018 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

National IPBES road maps for Côte d'Ivoire

From Côte d'Ivoire, representatives from the following institutions were present at the workshop: GIZ-PROFIAB, Parc National Tai, UFHB, OIPR, CSRS, CNF, Ministère du Plan, MINEF, Parc National Comoé, Wascal-UNA/UFHB, and MINSÉDD.

During three working group sessions, participants developed a road map sketching out how they are planning to use the assessment results at the national and local level, using an initial set of guiding questions (Box 1). This road map (Table 2) reflects the discussions on the relevance of the regional assessment for the project, and initially identify first activities to pursue regarding its use in the specific work situations on local and/or national level. After the workshop, GIZ-ValuES has been working closely with the project advising it on and monitoring the implementation of its road map.



Box 1. Guiding questions for the discussion related to the development of a road map on project and/or national level with regard to the use of the IPBES Regional Assessment for Africa

1. *Key messages:* Which are the key messages most relevant on the project/national level?
2. *Purpose:* What do you want to change were these key messages could be supportive?
3. *Entry points:* Which are the processes to leverage these key messages?
4. *Decision makers:* Who are the decision makers to pick up these messages?
5. *Results:* Which concrete results do you want to achieve with these messages?
6. *Activities:* Which activities are necessary to achieve these results?
7. *Responsibilities:* Who is responsible for the implementation of these activities?
8. *Monitoring:* How do you monitor the successful implementation of the results?

Table 2. Road Map of the Ivorian participants containing the intended activities related to the use of the IPBES regional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa

Objective/topic	Activity	Time frame
Appointing a National Focal Point for IPBES		Implemented in April 2018
Establishing a national platform to coordinate inter-sectoral cooperation of experts from science, policy and society in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Task Force • Identification of National Experts and Stakeholders • Inform and raise awareness of stakeholders • Formalise the platform 	July 2018
Implementing the Platform Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the strategic plan and the action plan • Search financing • Elaborate the communication plan • Build capacity • Integrate IPBES into national and sub-regional plans, programs and strategies 	September 2018



More information

- IPBES (2018): Summary for policymakers of the regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. E. Archer, L. E. Dziba, K. J. Mulongoy, M. A. Maoela, M. Walters, R. Biggs, M-C. Cormier-Salem, F. DeClerck, M. C. Diaw, L. A. E. Dunham, P. Failler, C. Gordon, M. W. Halmy, K. A. Harhash, R. Kasisi, F. Kizito, A. Mensah, L. Tito de Morais, W. D. Nyingi, N. Oguge, B. Osman-Elasha, L.C. Stringer, A. Assogbadjo, B. N. Egoh, K. Heubach, L. Pereira and N. Sitas (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. [] pages. (L-document)
- Heubach, K. & Lambini, C. K. (2017): Distribution and selection of experts in the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES): the case of the regional assessment for Africa. Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research. 31:sup1, S61-S77.
- IPBES website: <https://www.ipbes.net/>
- Website of the GIZ project ValuES: <http://www.aboutvalues.net/>
- Website of the GIZ project Biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management in the Democratic Republic of Congo: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/43909.html>
- Article about the workshop: https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/en/news/article/harnessing_ecosystem_services_at_national_level/?iki_lang=en

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