



# Framework for Collaboration between IUCN and IPBES

Information Paper on IUCN's products and services which could support the emerging Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)



IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, works for a just world which values and conserves nature, contributing to pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. Throughout its history of more than 60 years, IUCN has focused on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services and related governance, providing for fair and equitable livelihoods. IUCN supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world, and brings governments, civil society, business, international agencies and the scientific community together to develop knowledge, policy, laws and best practice pertaining to nature conservation and sustainable development.

The Busan Outcome recommended that IPBES should collaborate with existing relevant initiatives and processes. This paper outlines cooperation between IPBES and IUCN. It provides an overview of

the functions and services provided by IUCN which could support IPBES. More details on the most prominent IUCN knowledge products are provided in a brochure entitled "IUCN Knowledge Products: The basis for a partnership to support the functions and work programme of IPBES". The brochure was prepared to inform the second plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements of IPBES (16-21 April 2012, Panama City, Panama).

The mission of IUCN is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. In carrying out this mission, IUCN builds on its value proposition of providing credible, trusted knowledge, drawn from scientific findings.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE





## IUCN is a relevant partner for IPBES

The knowledge generated by IUCN is designed to be used. IUCN has been generating global knowledge about species, ecosystems, and human relations with them, for more than 60 years. IUCN provides high-quality assessments on status and trends of biodiversity and on conservation efforts worldwide. All IUCN products are open-access and are established along strict and transparent procedures. Other critical characteristics are the inclusiveness of the processes, the interdisciplinary approaches, predictability, responsiveness to policy needs, the broad range of beneficiaries and the demonstrated ability to address emerging global issues. Much of this knowledge directly influences policy at

all levels, including among governments, the private sector, and conservation organizations.

IUCN has been deeply involved in most of the global environmental assessments that have been prepared over the past few decades. IUCN has also worked with numerous governments in preparing national-level assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services, contributing to the development of resource management policies that are relevant to the country involved. Much of this work is carried out or coordinated by staff of IUCN's regional offices, in collaboration with Members and partners.

### Operating Principles of IPBES which are a priority for IUCN

IUCN strongly welcomed the Busan Outcome which is fully recognized by governments as embodying the basic principles for IPBES. IUCN highlights two principles as being a foundation on which to build strong partnership with IPBES.

Principle 7 (a) "Collaborate with existing initiatives on biodiversity and ecosystem services, including multilateral environmental agreements, United Nations bodies and networks of scientists and knowledge holders, to fill gaps and build upon their work, while avoiding duplication" contains the key for IPBES to find its niche as well as to leverage its impact. By endorsing the work of relevant high-quality initiatives, IPBES will more likely deliver the considerable mass of knowledge which is still needed on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Principle 7(j) "Address terrestrial, marine and inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interactions" recalls the needs to deliver knowledge to meet the needs of policy formulation and implementation in a balanced way across all biomes. The Platform should address with equal energy the status of biodiversity, the status of ecosystem services and the societal responses to the changes in biodiversity and in ecosystem services. Only 10% of the world's biodiversity may be known and only 1% of these known species have their status and trends documented.

IUCN's knowledge products have supported the development of international conservation efforts especially by identifying critical needs, playing a major role in the design and implementation of multi-lateral environmental agreements such as the World Heritage Convention (1968), the Ramsar Convention (1971), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES – 1971) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992).

IUCN seeks to build capacity as an organizational imperative. The IUCN networks of experts, organized in six Commissions, have developed tools and methodologies to build capacity for incorporating biodiversity issues into the mainstream of development and resource management. Partnering with leading universities, IUCN organizes numerous workshops and training courses throughout the world that link biodiversity and ecosystem science with development and conservation policy.





## Benefits of a strong collaboration between IPBES and IUCN

### 1. Leveraging IUCN knowledge products to fully support IPBES work programme

Having to respond to requests from its Members on such a broad scope of biodiversity and ecosystem services, IPBES will need to prioritize what activities it will do itself and what activities it will ask others to do on its behalf. It is in this regard that the assets that IUCN presents could be of value to IPBES in delivering its work programme. IUCN's own Programme 2013-16 (expected to be approved by the World Conservation Congress in September 2012) includes several activities directly aligned with and relevant to the mandate of IPBES. This programme 2013-16 is intended to maintain and continue to develop IUCN's already existing knowledge products as well as to provide new knowledge products, some of them involving collaboration with key like-minded partners, such as UNEP-WCMC. Such knowledge products could be considered by IPBES in two ways:

- **Information inputs for its work.** For example, the *IUCN Red List Index* provides a valuable input for the regional and global assessments that IPBES might undertake on status and trends of biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interlinkages.
- **Building blocks for its final products.** For example, an extraction of the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™* on pollinating insects could be an element of an assessment of status and trends of pollination services that IPBES might undertake.

IUCN plans to strengthen further the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™*, by updating the status of already assessed species and assessing the extinction risk of new sets of species. As a core priority, IUCN will develop two new assessments, one on the status of ecosystems (the *IUCN Red List of Ecosystems*) and the other on the spatial patterns of biodiversity (the *Key Biodiversity Areas standard*), which will increase the accuracy of all future global or regional assessments of biodiversity. IUCN is intending to

bring together spatial data from the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ with the emerging IUCN Red List of Ecosystems and overlaying this with information on the most important sites for biodiversity and Protected Areas. This will then provide the basis for fundamental decision making in land and seascape.

IUCN is maintaining the *Global Invasive Species Database* which provides information on one of the key drivers of biodiversity loss. IUCN is also tasked by its founding partners to deliver *ECOLEX*, the *international database of environmental law* developed in partnership with FAO and UNEP.

IUCN and UNEP-WCMC cooperate in producing and maintaining Protected Planet (which incorporates the *World Database on Protected Areas*) which maps all of the world's protected areas.

This database could work as a support to assess and then improve the effectiveness and equity of the management of protected areas. IUCN has already gathered some elements of methodology to elaborate a *green list of protected areas* (a project detailed further in the accompanying brochure).

The *IUCN Index of Human Dependency on Nature* will provide policy makers and programme managers with an independent, robust and differentiated assessment of the degree to which natural ecosystems and wild resources contribute to the material needs of rural and coastal communities as a proportion of total household income.

IUCN will also develop, test and apply a *Natural Resource Governance Framework*, a new knowledge product that will provide the same coherency and consistency of approach to understanding and assessing natural resource governance as the Red List does for the conservation status of threatened species, drawn from the knowledge of IUCN's strong network of social scientists.



All this knowledge follows the quality standards set for IPBES, since all the products and processes utilized by IUCN in developing them are scientifically credible, independent, peer-reviewed and identify uncertainties. According to IUCN standards, this knowledge has been and will be packaged for the purpose of policy formulation and implementation. It will provide numerous opportunities to build capacity especially of experts able to feed into them as well as of policy-makers to make the best use of them.

## 2. Supporting the Operations of IPBES

IPBES will need a strong initial momentum in order to build its legitimacy, broaden its impacts and meet its operational principles. This will be a major challenge for a body established with a lean secretariat, as it is planned today. IUCN is committed to work towards improved environmental governance at all levels and could therefore provide specific services to help meet this challenge.

IUCN could bring its experience and expertise to the IPBES Secretariat in three areas:

- 1. Facilitating engagement of relevant stakeholders** – IUCN could identify, inform and mobilize the relevant stakeholders who will add value in the expert dialogues which might be organized by IPBES;
- 2. Developing capacity for participating in IPBES** – IUCN could be a neutral capacity builder for experts to participate in the operations of the Platform, acting on demand of its State Members;
- 3. Advising on the quality of the work of the Platform** – IUCN could be a neutral broker to measure and report the effectiveness and efficiency of some processes of the Platform, particularly those that involve civil society organizations.

Furthermore, IUCN could provide **direct technical support** to the Working Groups that IPBES might establish. Depending on the mandate and the shape of these Working Groups, IUCN could support their operations including arranging their meetings and assisting their members.

- If Working Groups are global structures, IUCN could provide central administrative support. This would allow for a full use of the experience of IUCN gained in many assessment initiatives and of expertise within IUCN, which is itself a science-policy organization;
- If Working Groups are regional structures or nodes, IUCN could provide coordination across all activities of IPBES, based on the strength of its global to local reach and its distributed Secretariat function at the regional level. The IUCN Regional Offices and the network of National and Regional Committees and Regional Fora, which have robust experiences in bottom-up, multi-stakeholder processes, would be a leverage to assist IPBES work.

In both scenarios, existing IUCN capacities could be used, including networks, channels of communication and administrative services. As is the case for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, such arrangements would significantly improve the cost-efficiency of the IPBES Secretariat by saving structural costs. IUCN could also mobilize and facilitate partnerships to provide such support, recognizing that building collaboration with research centres, academies, conservation organizations or other international institutions – many of which are Members of IUCN – would make such support more durable in the long-term.

## 3. Optimizing the Use of IPBES products

IUCN fully recognizes the need of an independent, scientifically credible and transparent way to collect the needs of knowledge expressed by society and to produce outputs useful to society. This vision needs powerful networks to reach out to decision-makers and experts worldwide. With all its components - Members, Secretariat, Council, Commissions, National and Regional Committees – IUCN is ideally positioned to leverage the impact of IPBES. By disseminating IPBES Outcomes within the Union, IUCN could considerably increase the global buy-in for IPBES and thus strengthen its legitimacy.

Several activities of IPBES rely on organizing global or regional dialogues with relevant stakeholders, or carrying consultations. With its structured networks, IUCN could help in the facilitation of such dialogues, by providing a technical support to IPBES and mobilizing participation. In this manner IUCN would ensure, by activating its networks in Regions, that there is a bottom-up approach to the requests conveyed to the Plenary.

All components of IUCN could be empowered to participate in IPBES, including:

1. Drawing from the knowledge centres run or established by IUCN's Members to contribute to the knowledge base used by IPBES;
2. Appealing to the scientific expertise within the IUCN Commissions or within the IUCN Secretariat to provide knowledge and to mobilize potential authors and peer-reviewers;
3. Dedicating resources within the IUCN Secretariat to facilitate access to IUCN databases and to make them interoperable with the knowledge sources used by IPBES;
4. Calling on Regional and National Committees to facilitate a dialogue among key national scientific organizations, policymakers and funding organizations, in the field of conservation

If a strategic partnership is implemented with IPBES, IUCN would learn from this collaboration, and would adapt accordingly. The use of IUCN expertise, the involvement of IUCN Members and the mutual recognition of products between IUCN and IPBES could and should be done in ways that are mutually beneficial to both organizations.





## Conclusion

Having contributed to the negotiation process for the establishment of IPBES since 2008, IUCN is ready, willing, and able to support the work of IPBES. Its experience and expertise make IUCN a key partner for IPBES. Building a strong and early cooperation with IUCN with its long experience in bringing together its government and non-government Members and large network of volunteer experts to work together on the most pressing conservation issues and which has an undisputable track record of world-

class knowledge products - would allow IPBES to deliver early products. Civil society in particular would have a voice in IPBES through IUCN (IUCN's membership includes nearly 1000 national and international NGOs). Taken together, these benefits would reinforce the legitimacy and relevance of IPBES. Governments funding IPBES would also have good value for their investments by encouraging synergies and cooperation rather than duplication of efforts.



The brochure on “IUCN Knowledge Products: The basis for a partnership to support the functions and work programme of IPBES” (IUCN, 2012) can be accessed at:

<http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/2012-015.pdf>

### About IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,200 government and non-governmental members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. Every four years, IUCN's Members come together in the World Conservation Congress to approve a programme that defines the priority themes of work of the organization. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 45 offices and hundreds of partners in public, non-governmental and private sectors around the world.

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