

IPBES-9

Ninth meeting of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany, 3 July–9 July 2022

Key messages:

IUCN congratulates and thanks all involved with IPBES for their hard work over 2021-2022, and is grateful for the acknowledgement of our in-kind contributions. A summary of IUCN's views is presented below and expanded in the following pages.

Regarding the Assessment of Sustainable Use of Wild Species Summary for Policy-Makers (SPM), IUCN highlights:

- √ The SPM figures are dry; addition of a few data-driven figures from the main text (e.g. insert Fig 3.9 from {3.2.2} into key message A.3.2) would significantly strengthen the SPM.
- √ The SPM is weak on land tenure {4.2.2.6}, gender equity {4.2.3.6}, and education {4.2.6.4} for sustainable use – it would be valuable to strengthen these themes.
- √ The introduction of a new definition of sustainable use risks policy confusion. IUCN suggests using the definition of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), or at least adding text e.g. *“This is considered functionally equivalent to the long-established CBD definition of sustainable use.”*
- √ Key Message A.3.1 would be strengthened by addition of a sentence reading e.g. *“Overall, it can be inferred that use of at least 34% of used species is sustainable, based on assessment of 10,098 species from 10 taxonomic groups documented on the IUCN Red List as being used, not threatened, and having stable or improving population trends {3.2.1, 3.2.2, 4.2.4.3.1}.”*
- √ Key Message A.3.2 would be strengthened by addition of a sentence reading e.g. *“Overall, unsustainable harvest contributes towards elevated extinction risk for 28-29% of near-threatened and threatened species from 13 taxonomic groups assessed on the IUCN Red List {3.2.1, 3.2.2}.”*
- √ Table SPM.A2, section on “Data and information availability and access”. Add a row for “Strengthen consistency, breadth, and depth of documentation of threats and use & trade classification schemes in IUCN Red List assessments {3.2.1, 3.2.2}.”.

Regarding the Assessment of Values and Valuation of Biodiversity SPM:

- √ Key Messages 2 and Box SPM.2 risk giving an impression of monolithic values of nature within different sectors of society. Rather, many local communities and individuals value nature for its own sake, while many conservation organisations focus heavily on utilitarian values. IUCN therefore suggests editing to avoid misleading conclusions here (e.g. delete sentence at Lines 83-85).

Regarding the Scoping of the Assessment of Business and Biodiversity:

- √ IUCN suggests considering whether this planned assessment might be better framed as a thematic rather than a methodological one.
- √ Paragraphs 4 and 28-31, IUCN recommends mentioning tools alongside frameworks, metrics and indicators.
- √ Paragraph 10, IUCN suggests referring to the application of the IPBES Conflict of Interest policy.
- √ Paragraph 22, IUCN emphasises the need to be clear about using established definitions instead of inventing new ones.

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Initial considerations

IUCN has for 70 years served as a science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services, with its scientific excellence delivered by its independent expert Commissions, and its policy demand delivered from its Membership of states and government agencies and of national and international NGOs and indigenous peoples' organisations. The governance structure of the Union is neatly complementary with that of IPBES, as a wholly intergovernmental mechanism. Given that the functions of the two institutions are so similar, IUCN's Members adopted [Resolution 118](#) at the 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress, mandating "A significant role for IUCN in IPBES".

IUCN and IPBES formalised their collaboration through a broad-based Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two organisations (2016). The Memorandum of Understanding is structured such as to allow the development of Supplemental Agreements to advance specific areas of collaboration. The first of these for example, dedicated a half-time position from IUCN to IPBES to support implementation of the IPBES stakeholder engagement strategy. The Memorandum of Understanding was updated and renewed in 2019 and 2021.

Since 2016, numerous elements of the Supplemental Agreement on stakeholder engagement between IPBES and IUCN have been advanced, thanks to IUCN in-kind contributions (see Table 3.2 in IPBES/9/5). Further, IUCN has continued to support and facilitate the operations of the Open-Ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders (ONet) and to provide in-kind contribution and financial support to the organization of the Stakeholder Days preceding the IPBES plenary. IUCN welcomes recognition of this support in the IPBES9 Report of the Executive Secretary on Progress in the implementation of the rolling work programme up to 2030 (IPBES/9/4), Section E.3, paragraph 37.

This position paper is offered in the light of the context above. IUCN is grateful to the Government of France for their support to IUCN's engagement with IPBES.

Item 7(a) of the provisional agenda - Thematic assessment of the sustainable use of wild species (IPBES/9/6)

Overarching comments on the SPM:

Importance of strengthening the SPM Figures. The content and text of the SPM for the "Thematic assessment of the sustainable use of wild species" is to a generally very high standard – IUCN congratulates all who contributed. However, one shortcoming is that the figures are rather dry – nearly all of them are largely or wholly conceptual. It would really strengthen the SPM to include a few data-driven figures from the main assessment. A core suggestion would be to insert Fig 3.9 (extinction risk for species subject to use and trade) from {3.2.2} into key message A.3.2 (Line 228). In addition, photographer credits are missing throughout the SPM.

Importance of strengthening attention to land tenure, gender equity, and education in the SPM.

The SPM covers ILK and IPLC-related themes effectively. However, Chapter 4 of the main assessment includes much excellent material on the importance of land tenure {4.2.2.6}, gender equity {4.2.3.6}, and education {4.2.6.4} for sustainable use (land tenure, in particular, was also strongly covered in the 2019 IPBES Global Assessment). It would be valuable to make sure that these themes are adequately reflected in the SPM – they are currently largely missing.

Definition of sustainable use (Lines 41-44). The introduction of this IPBES definition of sustainable use, diverges somewhat from the long established and widely accepted CBD definition "the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations". On the one hand, this new IPBES definition of sustainable use as both an outcome and a process is broadly sensible, and most of its components are equivalent to the CBD definition (with "does not lead to the long-term decline" broadly equivalent to "maintain", and "needs and aspirations" broadly equivalent to "human well-being"). On the other, the inclusion of "ecological functioning" is redundant (in that this is part of "biodiversity"), the new IPBES definition misses the key point from the CBD definition on intergenerational equity, and, perhaps most problematic, the introduction of this new IPBES definition risks policy confusion over proliferation of definitions.

On balance, IUCN therefore recommends using the existing CBD definition, or at least mentioning the CBD definition as functionally equivalent to this IPBES one (and thus adding a sentence after the IPBES definition saying something like “This is considered functionally equivalent to the long-established CBD definition of “sustainable use” as “the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining the potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations”.”).

Proposed modifications, corrections, and clarifications in the SPM main text:

Introduction (Line 52 and SPM.1). Surely “taxa” refers to a taxonomic group. Given that these groups are not taxonomic, better to refer to them as “species groups”.

Key Message A.1.1 (Line 74). It would be useful to add a couple of words to specify the definition of “vulnerable people”, especially to clarify if this is intended to specify the rural poor (which is perhaps implied) or whether it is also intended to include urban poor.

Key Message A.1.2 (Lines 81 and 82). Clarify “invertebrates” relative to “arthropods”. The latter is a subset of the former, so both totals can’t be 2,000. More generally, this material is derived from {3.2.1.3}, which is concerned with terrestrial animal harvesting overall (not just for food), and so the text here may need some editing to ensure accuracy.

Key Message A.1.6 (Line 125). Education is mentioned in passing alongside tourism, but there is then no serious mention of education as necessary to stem the tide of unsustainable collection of wild species. Intergenerational exchange is missing.

Key Message A.3.1 (Line 218). Add a sentence reading “Overall, it can be inferred that use of at least 34% of used species is sustainable, based on assessment of 10,098 species from 10 taxonomic groups documented on the IUCN Red List as being used, not threatened, and having stable or improving population trends {3.2.1, 3.2.2, 4.2.4.3.1}.”

Key Message A.3.2 (Line 224). Numbers should be checked (the correct number of sharks and rays currently assessed as threatened is 393, not 449), and please add text to read “...classified as threatened on the IUCN Red List...”.

Key Message A.3.2 (Line 225). Numbers should be checked. 301 is too low; 669 threatened mammal species are documented as threatened by hunting on the IUCN Red List, and 1,341 mammal species overall (ie including both threatened and non-threatened species). Please correct, and also mention “on the IUCN Red List” for clarity and appropriate attribution.

Key Message A.3.2 (Line 228). Add a sentence reading something like “Overall, unsustainable harvest contributes towards elevated extinction risk for 28-29% of near-threatened and threatened species from 13 taxonomic groups assessed on the IUCN Red List {3.2.1, 3.2.2}.”

Key Message B.2 (Line 355). This title reads “The sustainable use of wild species is influenced by social and environmental drivers”. However, Figure SPM.5 documents environmental, political, social, economic, cultural and technological drivers, as discussed in chapter 4. So, suggest expanding the title to read “The sustainable use of wild species is influenced by environmental, political, social, economic, cultural and technological drivers”.

Key Message B2 (Lines 366-371). This figure is particularly abstract. Also, specifically, it is unclear what is meant by practices, uses, and wild populations having an impact on the “distribution” of nature’s contributions to people. What is meant by “distribution”? Geographic distribution? Clarify.

Key Message B.2.2 (Line 372). Suggest changing “landscape change” (which is rather romanticized language) to directly “habitat loss”? The underpinning chapter mentions land degradation, causes of rangeland degradation, and deforestation.

Key Message B.2.3 (Line 381). Suggest delete “but also some opportunities” given that no opportunities are mentioned under this key message B.2.3 (and also consistent with key message D.1.1, below).

Key Message B.3.2 (Lines 502 & 504). Typos. Correct “is” to “are” (or else correct “sets” to “set”; Line 502), and correct “targetssuch” (Line 504).

Box SPM.3. Change “social” to “economic” in the second line.

Box SPM.4. “fishermen” specifically? Or “fishers” generally?

Box SPM.4. change “listed” to “assessed”, and change “by the International Union for Conservation of Nature” to “on the IUCN Red List”.

Key Message D.2.1 (Line 738). Expand “local contexts” to something like “tailor policy to local contexts”.

Key Message D.3.2 (Lines 809-819). It is important to differentiate spillover risk (ie species jump) from pandemic risk; and the term “zoonotic pandemics” (Line 818) is therefore problematic in being too narrow (eg while COVID-19 and HIV are pandemic diseases, they are independent of animal hosts or reservoirs and so not “zoonotic pandemics”). Thus:

Change “They can also lead” to “They can also create novel interphases of disease risk, which could lead” (Line 822).

Change “amplify the spillover of novel or known pathogens from wild species hosts to domestic animals and humans” to “modify the spillover risk of novel or known pathogens among wild species, domestic animals and humans” (Lines 816-817).

Change “zoonotic pandemics” to “spillover events” (Line 818).

Table SPM.A2, section on “Data and information availability and access”. Add a row for “Strengthen consistency, breadth, and depth of documentation of threats and use & trade classification schemes in IUCN Red List assessments {3.2.1, 3.2.2}.”

Item 7(b) of the provisional agenda - Methodological assessment regarding the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits, including biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services (IPBES/9/7)

Overarching comments on the SPM:

Audience for the assessment. The SPM for the “Methodological assessment regarding the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits” is an important piece of work – congratulations to all involved. IUCN is however rather concerned that the document is quite heavily theoretical and academic – it seems to face more towards researchers than towards policy-makers. Consideration of whether such methodological assessments should indeed be placed on the science-policy interface here is perhaps a question for future reflection. IUCN has only a few comments on the substance of the SPM itself, however.

Proposed modifications, corrections, and clarifications in the SPM main text:

Key Message 2 (Lines 83-85). Many (most?) local populations value nature for its own sake (often in much more powerful ways than do urban populations or international organisations). Conversely, many (most?) conservation organisations focus heavily on utilitarian values of nature. This sentence also contradicts the accurate text earlier in the paragraph (Lines 78-82; and see section A9). Suggest deleting this sentence.

Box SMP.2. The sentence on the “powerful protectionist discourse” is largely historical; current trends are very much the other direction, with the “international conservation movement” focused on utilitarian values and ecosystem services. Suggest re-framing this as a historical example rather than a current one.

Key Message C4 (Line 688). Change “are often” to “have historically been”.

Item 7(c) of the provisional agenda - Scoping report for a methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people (IPBES/9/8)

Overarching comments on the SPM:

Audience for the assessment. Further to our concern that methodological assessments may have researchers as their primary audience rather than policy-makers, we suggest considering whether this planned assessment might be better framed as a thematic assessment rather than a methodological one.

Proposed modifications, corrections, and clarifications in the Scoping document:

Paragraph 4. It would be useful to mention “tools” here as well as “metrics and indicators”.

Paragraph 10. Given the many sensitivities and risks of conflict of interest at the interface between business and biodiversity, it would be wise to include a sentence about the application of the IPBES Conflict of Interest policy in this paragraph.

Paragraph 22. It would be good to be clear here that this Chapter will “...provide established definitions...”, rather than inventing new ones.

Paragraphs 28-31. It would be useful to mention “tools” here as well as “frameworks, metrics and indicators”, in all instances.