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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Outcome of the Eleventh Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-11) (9-16 December 2024, Windhoek, Namibia)
- Report by the Presidency and the Commission

Delegations will find in the [Annex](#), for information, a report by the former Hungarian Presidency and the Commission on the outcome of the abovementioned meeting.

**The Eleventh Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on
Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES 11)**

(9-16 December 2024, Windhoek, Namibia)

- Information from the Presidency and the Commission -

The eleventh session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES 11) convened from 10-16 December 2024, in Windhoek, Namibia. On 9 December, the Stakeholder Day brought together scientists, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and representatives of civil society organizations to discuss issues on the IPBES 11 agenda. In total, 896 delegates registered for the meeting. Since the last plenary, the membership of the platform has grown by 4 countries (Somalia, Lesotho, Kazakhstan, Seychelles), and thus the Plenary was composed of the 147 Governments that are members of IPBES, including 23 EU Member States, and the EU as enhanced observer.

IPBES 11 launched two key assessment reports, the ‘Nexus Assessment’, addressing biodiversity, water, food, health and climate change, and the ‘Transformative Change Assessment’, addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, determinants of transformative change, and options for achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

IPBES 11 was considered to be an unprecedentedly challenging meeting, with difficult and protracted negotiations, on the Nexus Assessment in particular, due to a few members expressing significantly different views on some issues and some countries questioning the scientific content of the reports. The main objective for the EU Member States that are members of IPBES and the European Union in its capacity as enhanced observer (hereinafter referred to EU and its Member States) was to ensure that the two summaries for policymakers (SPMs) were adopted and that most of the important messages were included in the summary texts. On several occasions, the EU and its Member States expressed their concern that some countries at this last stage of the process (and following three previous review rounds and two online workshops) were questioning the underlying science and the tremendous work of the assessment authors, thus compromising the integrity of the entire process.

Nexus Assessment

The Nexus Assessment addresses the complex and interconnected character of the crises and challenges of biodiversity loss, water availability and quality, food insecurity, health risks and climate change. In addition, it identifies more than 70 response options to tackle the crises and challenges linked to nexus interactions, and addresses governing the nexus for achieving just and sustainable futures. The report, approved on 16 December 2024, is the product of three years of work by 165 leading international experts from 57 countries who analysed 6,500 references.

The assessment highlighted among others the following:

- Global trends in a wide range of indirect drivers have intensified direct drivers of biodiversity loss and have caused negative outcomes for water availability and quality, food security, and health, and contributed to climate change.
- Governments are underestimating or ignoring the links between the five Nexus elements.
- Future scenarios that prioritize objectives for a single element of the nexus without regard to other elements result in trade-offs across the nexus, while scenarios focused on synergies among the nexus elements have more beneficial outcomes for global policy goals than siloed policy approaches.

During the negotiations, the EU and its Member States have managed to maintain a number of key messages in the text of the SPM, among others references to the Transformative Change Assessment, sustainable bioeconomy, nature-based solutions, sustainable healthy diets, and biodiversity mainstreaming, as well as messages on the impact of current food systems on other nexus elements.

A number of substantive changes were introduced by Brazil, significantly weakening the language on food production, food trade, and their link with land use changes and unsustainable agricultural practices, as well as on climate actions that have nexus-wide benefits, and on the possible unintended consequences of climate action.

After long and hard discussions and with particularly strong opposition from the Russian Federation, a reference to the complex and interconnected character of “crises,” such as biodiversity loss, water availability and quality, and food insecurity, health risks, and climate change was retained.

Transformative Change Assessment

The Transformative Change Assessment builds on the 2019 IPBES Global Assessment Report, which found that the only way to achieve global development goals is through transformative change. The report, approved on 16 December 2024, was prepared over three years by more than 100 leading experts from 42 countries who analysed 7,000 references, 400 visions and 800 case studies.

The Transformative Change Assessment warns that deep, fundamental shifts in how people view and interact with the natural world are urgently needed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and safeguard life on Earth, and explains what transformative change is, how it occurs, and how to accelerate it for a just and sustainable world.

The report also states that the cost of delaying actions to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and nature's decline around the world by even a decade is estimated to be double that of acting now. Acting immediately can also unlock massive business and innovation opportunities through sustainable economic approaches, such as nature-positive economy. Recent estimates are that more than \$10 trillion in business opportunity value could be generated and 395 million jobs could be supported globally by 2030.

Embracing insights and evidence from diverse knowledge systems, disciplines and approaches, the Transformative Change Assessment highlights five key strategies and associated actions that have complementary and synergistic effects, and which countries and people can pursue to advance deliberate transformative change for global sustainability:

1. Conserve, restore and regenerate places of value to people and nature that exemplify biocultural diversity;
2. Drive systematic change and mainstreaming biodiversity in the sectors most responsible for nature's decline;
3. Transform economic systems for nature and equity;
4. Transform governance systems to be inclusive, accountable and adaptive;
5. Shift views and values to recognize human-nature interconnectedness.

The SPM was discussed by the IPBES working group for nearly 36 hours in a constructive atmosphere. The discussions around text proposals by Bolivia, who were keen to reflect Mother Earth-centric worldviews in a number of key messages, took up the most time. The work was made more challenging by the absence of Brazil (their one-man delegation followed the working group on the Nexus Assessment), and it was anticipated that the text approved in the working group would need to be re-opened in Plenary. Indeed, during the closing Plenary, Brazil highlighted a number of points, including the deletion of some text in the background messages B5 and B7, and emphasized the importance of their concerns being given due consideration. They noted that, as a one-man delegation, they found it challenging to follow the work of the two working groups running in parallel. Their argument was contradicted by other delegations in the same situation, e.g. Luxemburg. Finally, a consensus was reached in a small group with minor textual amendments, allowing the SPM to be approved.

During the negotiations the EU and its Member States have managed to retain and/or introduce a number of important elements in the key messages of the SPM (e.g. references to nature-based solutions, nature-positive economy, telecoupling), and although the SPM is weaker and its language more complex than the EU and its Member States had hoped, the adoption of the report is of particular importance. It represents another comprehensive milestone that has a good chance of defining and positively influencing the scientific-political dialogue, especially in the light of the Nexus Assessment and the Business and Biodiversity Assessment to be adopted at IPBES 12. It is therefore also an important achievement that the language and main messages of the two reports have been harmonized and that reciprocal references have been made in both texts.

Scoping report for a second global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services

The Plenary approved a scoping report for the second global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The second global assessment aims to evaluate recent knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services since the first global assessment adopted in 2019, focusing on progress towards sustainable development and harmony with nature. Key goals include reviewing biodiversity loss, assessing actions needed to meet targets, identifying critical intervention areas, and understanding socio-economic impacts.

The assessment, set to be delivered in 2028, will cover both regional and global dimensions, all biogeographic and oceanographic zones, assess relevant knowledge from all regions and focus on those processes, trends and issues that are global or that connect different regions, while highlighting critical vulnerabilities of particular regions. Building on prior findings, this assessment will emphasize the importance of transformative change and address critical gaps, including oceans and seas, regional challenges, urban biodiversity, potential irreversible tipping points, and interactions among multiple drivers. It dedicates a chapter to diverse knowledge systems, prioritizing Indigenous and local perspectives across the report. A special focus will be put on oceans and marine ecosystems, as requested by some parties, particularly France with support of the EU.

The assessment will contain five chapters on: setting the scene, different knowledge systems and the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, status and trends, future pathways, and options for action. The first author meeting is expected in the third quarter of 2025, and the finalized draft chapters and SPM are to be presented at IPBES 15 in the third or fourth quarter of 2028.

Engagement with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The Plenary welcomed further suggestions from IPBES members on thematic or methodological issues related to biodiversity and climate change for collaboration with the IPCC and requested the Executive Secretary to share this compilation with relevant experts, including those working on the second global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, the IPCC, and the Plenary at a future session. The Plenary also invited national focal points of both IPBES and IPCC to strengthen collaboration, and invited the Secretariat to explore ways to improve engagement at various levels. It also encouraged members of IPBES and invited members of the IPCC to participate in IPBES and IPCC activities, including review processes.

Building capacity, strengthening knowledge foundations and supporting policy

The Plenary approved the workplan for the intersessional period 2025-2026 for objectives 2 (a, b and c) on building capacity, 3 (a) on knowledge and data management and knowledge generation catalysis, 3 (b) on Indigenous and local knowledge systems, 4 (a) on policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies, and 4 (b) on scenarios and models, of the rolling work programme up to 2030. Regarding the workplan for advanced work on policy instruments, policy support tools, and methodologies the current arrangement with IPBES Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) members overseeing the work and a Technical Support Unit (TSU) providing administrative support was maintained. A set of indicators, measuring the effectiveness of all workplans, was also adopted.

Budget

The plenary adopted a revised budget for 2024, a budget for 2025 and provisional budgets for IPBES activities up to 2027, including additional training for session chairs and authors, and asked the secretariat explore options to facilitate contributions from potential donors, and further outreach to increase the donor base.

Date and venue of IPBES 12

The Plenary accepted the offer by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to host IPBES 12, tentatively scheduled to take place in London in January 2026 (exact location and dates tbc). At IPBES 12 the methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people (business and biodiversity assessment) is scheduled to be considered.

Other matters

The current Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie was given a farewell at the end of the meeting as she is retiring soon. Applications for the position will be open until 19 January 2025.
