EKLIPSE
Knowledge & Learning Mechanism
on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services

Developing a mechanism for supporting better decisions on our environment based on the best available knowledge.

EKLIPSE Document of Work: IPBES request

Content:

EKLIPSE Executive summary

How could the EU scientific community support the negotiators from the EU ans its Member States of the IPBES Global assessment Summary for Policy-Makers (SPM)?

Objective: Ensure that the Summary for Policy makers (SPM) is complete and reflect the key and most policy-relevant findings of every chapter from the IPBES Global Assessment.

Background: EU and its Member States will have to negotiate the SPM of the Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem services at the IPBES-7 plenary in Paris in May 2019. The assessment being led by Science, it is important for Parties that their comments and suggestions for improvement of the SPM are backed up and justified by references from the main Global Assessment to be taken on board by IPBES co-chairs and Coordinating Lead Authors of respective chapters. It is not possible for policy-makers to read the full assessment because of its size, technicality and time constraint. It would therefore be extremely valuable to get scientific support to evaluate the details of the full assessment and ensure the SPM is effectively reflecting the policy-relevant content of the Assessment's chapters and, if necessary, to make requests for changes in the SPM with supporting references and justification linked to the full Assessment.

EKLIPSE's role: EKLIPSE will establish a transparent and inclusive consultative process to engage the EU scientific community in this endeavour by selecting an expert team from different disciplines for an in-depth analysis of the IPBES global assessment for supporting the negotiators from the EU and its Member States. This will help to improve the quality and policy relevance of the SPM.

- In a first phase, the aim will be to raise awareness on the importance of IPBES assessments for policy-making in a wide range of disciplines and scientific communities who may not be fully aware of the relevance of IPBES, and in particular of the potential impact of the upcoming global assessment for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) in October 2020 in Beijing. This phase should aim to both raise interest among various actors on the importance of the IPBES Global Assessment and ensure that a diversity of expertise is involved in phase 2.
- The second phase will aim to actively engage EU experts in a special expert working group (EWG), to evaluate whether the Global Assessement SPM is properly and effectively reflecting the key and policy relevant outcomes of individual chapters of the Global Assessment, and provide suggestions for amendments, thereby providing direct support to negotiators from the EU and its MS, similarly to what Vilm working group meetings do for the CBD.

This would give an alternative model to the ones existing on how experts can be directly involved in policy processes and negotations also at other levels (national, EU…).

EKLIPSE will produce a scientific synthesis report structured around the SPM and addressing the policy comments, which could be raised by policy-makers if considered as relevant. This synthesis would be shared with the EU and its Member States, through for instance the EU expert group on IPBES from the Council Working Party on International Environmental issues (WPIEI) Biodiversity, which will prepare for the negotiations at IPBES-7. The EKLIPSE synthesis would also be relevant to support the global and EU discussions on the post-2020 biodiversity policy frameworks to be adopted at CBD COP15 in Beijing in October 2020 and by the new Commission in the first quarter of 2021 (tbc).

Time frame: The first step (November 2018/January 2019) will be to present IPBES and its role as

science –policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services, share the existing drafts of the full IPBES assessments and SPMs, as well as available comments from EU and its Member states to the EU wide scientific community. The second step (February – May 2019) will be to alert the scientific community when the revised drafts will be available in February. Meanwhile, EKLIPSE will launch a Call for Experts to be selected for a EWG, which will work on a synthesis report of potential comments to improve IPBES Global Assessment SPM. This synthesis report will be shared with negotiators from the EU and its MS in time for the EU preparation of the IPBES-7 plenary, to take place from 29 April - 4 May 2019 in Paris. It is foreseen that the co-chairs of the EWG will join the EU delegation during the negotiation of the SPM. Finally, a last debriefing meeting between the EWG and the negotiators from the EU and its MS will be set up to draw the lessons learned and provide recommendations for the future.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Topic of the request:

How could the comments from the EU scientific community support the comments/questions of the negotiators from the EU and its Member States of the IPBES Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) of IPBES Global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services?

Requester

DG ENV.

Date request received:

August 2018

Date of first meeting with requesters: 25th of October 2018

Expected deadline for deliverables: EKLIPSE science synthesis report would be needed for EU negotiators in time for the EU preparation of the IPBES-7 plenary on 29 April - 4 May 2019.

EKLIPSE KCB Focal Point for the request:

EKLIPSE Deputy for the request:

EKLIPSE Secretariat contact point for the request:

CONTEXT AND SPECIFICATION OF THE REQUEST

Background of the request

In June 2018, the review of the 2nd order draft of IPBES global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services and first order draft of its Summary for Policy-Makers (SPM) was launched. Parties, like the EU and its Member States, did provide comments on both reports. Revised versions of the full assessment and SPM will be provided in February 2019. The comments on these final drafts will be the basis of the negotiation of IPBES global assessment SPM, which will take place in Paris from 29 April - 4 May 2019. The outcomes of IPBES Global Assessment will be released to the press on 6 May 2019.
IPBES assessments being led by Science, it is important for Parties that their comments and suggestions for improvement of the SPM are backed up and justified by references from the main Global Assessment to be taken on board by IPBES co-chairs and Coordinating Lead Authors of respective chapters. It is not possible for policy-makers to read the full assessment because of its size, technicality and time constraint. It is therefore it would be extremely valuable to get scientific support to evaluate the details of the full assessment and ensure the SPM is effectively reflecting the policy-relevant content of the Assessment's chapters and, if necessary, to make requests for changes in the SPM with supporting references and justification linked to the full Assessment.

The objectives is also to raise awareness of the EU wide scientific community on the importance of IPBES global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for policy-making and in particular for the post-2020 biodiversity policy frameworks to be adopted at EU and global level.The longer-term objective is to ensure a better engagement and active involvement of EU scientists in international policy negotiations as a recurring process supported by the EU and its Member States and activated through platforms such as EKLIPSE.

What is the policy context of the request?

EU negotiators would welcome a synthesis of scientific comments to improve the IPBES global assessment SPM framed according to the main assessment and possibly taking into account their specific questions, beginning of 2019 when the revised version will be available. EKLIPSE science synthesis report would be needed for EU and MS negotiators in time for the preparation of the IPBES-7 plenary on 29 April - 4 May 2019. This synthesis would be shared with the EU and its Member States through the EU expert group on IPBES from the Council Working Party on International Environmental Issues (WPIEI) Biodiversity, which will prepare for the negotiations at IPBES-7. EKLIPSE synthesis would also be relevant to support the global and EU discussions on post-2020 biodiversity policy frameworks to be adopted at CBD COP15 in Beijing in October 2020 and by the new Commission in the first quarter of 2021 (tbc).

What are the objectives of the request?

The request covers two different phases:

- First, the Commission would like to reach a wider scientific community in the EU and a larger scope of disciplines than the currently involved in IPBES and raise awareness on the importance of the deveries of the IPBES science-policy platform. Not enough experts outside a restricted natural sciences biodiversity community are aware of the importance of IPBES assessments, tools, capacity-building and knowledge generation for strengthening the knowledge and evidence base for policy-making.

- Second, the Commission would like EKLIPSE to develop and test an approach engaging a

group of EU experts from a wide range of disciplines into a direct support to negotiators from the EU and its MS on biodiversity policy issues at the EU and global levels. This group will directly support the EU and its MS negotiators at IPBES 7 plenary meeting where the global assessment SPM will be adopted.It would also profile EU-funded research n the global context and help shaping the EU research policy according to international policy agenda.

Specific tasks for EKLIPSE

The EKLIPSE approach would help set a consultative process that would be transparent and inclusive. This would give a sort of model on how experts can be directly involved in policy processes and negotations also at other levels (national, EU…)

- In a first phase, the aim is to raise awareness in a wide scope of disciplines and scientific communities within EU about IPBES. This will require tools to organise, for example webinars, and efforts to find ways to reach out of the usual biodiversity natural sciences community.

- The second phase is to engage experts into a special "Expert Working Group" (EWG) work where they would analyse the chapters of the full global assessment and see ifthe key and most policy-relevant outcomes are well reflected in the SPM. This could be a special EWG that would be tasked with analysing specific assessment chapters for improving the policy relevance of the SPM. It would be expected that the co-chairs of this EWG attend the IPBES plenary to directly support the EU delegation and better understand the science policy process.

What is the spatial scale of the request?

The request is first at EU level as this is a about supporting the EU and its MS in effectively negotiating IPBES global assessment SPM. However this appraoch could be a source of inspiration for other levels/processes where experts could get more involved in policy processes and negotiations.

What is the level of controversy?

What sources of knowledge should be included?

- Scientific knowledge.
- Indigenous and local knowledge
- Technical know-how
- Opinions and values

What types of knowledge synthesis and information are useful or acceptable?

Facilitation techniques and methodologies

What methods or approach could be envisaged?

Expected outputs

A scientific synthesis report from EKLIPSE structured around the SPM and addressing the policy comments raised by policy-makers (cf. EPBRS Declaration and Recommendations on biodiversity researchs, Vilm reports for CBD)

Which sectors and societal groups will be affected by or will benefit from therequest and how?

It is expectedthat the approved outcomes of IPBES global assessment SPM will support awareness raising on the issue of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the public and be better taken into account in the political agenda up to the highestl evel (e.g. EU Summit on the Future of EU on 9 May, G7 Ministerial meeting in May, G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for SustainableGrowth on 15-16 June, G7 and One Planet Summit in August)[1].Potentially all sectors could benefit from an improvement of the evidence base for biodiversity policy but in the first place the negotiators from the EU and its Member states.

Time frame of the request – by when would results be needed?

First step would be to share the existing IPBES drafts of the full assessment and SPM and comments from EU and itsMember states. The second step would be to alert the scientific community when the revised drafts will be available in February 2019. The delivery of the output would be in March-April 2019.

[1] All these meetings need to be confirmed when agenda and dates are agreed.

SCOPING OF THE REQUEST

Dos and Don'ts:

- DO engage academics as early as you can.
- DO consider all disciplines; lots of issues may obviously be natural science, but what could the social sciences offer?
- DO find out who in your departments has the knowledge of the research landscape (e.g. make use of networks of advisors such as Science Advisory Councils).
- DO contact analysts within your department for help and to make sure you are not repeating work that has already been done.
- DO work closely with your academics to ensure the outputs are valuable and appropriate for a government audience (and follow all necessary procurement guidelines)
- DO be upfront about issues like payment for services and the potential for conflict of interest.
- DO explore opportunities to bring in placements to government, for instance from the Research Councils.
- DO ensure your academic partners know they need to consult with you before communicating research findings.
- DO try to keep up your links with academics you have worked with.
- DON'T forget the different environments academics and officials work in. Academics are often used to producing large pieces of work over a long period, whereas Ministers often need to make decisions on a short deadline, using the best evidence available at the time.
- DON'T forget to use your networks to see if there are collaborative opportunities with other government departments. For example by using the Government Science & Engineering community's LinkedIn page.
- DON'T be tempted to go to the same academic again and again on similar issues; it is better on both sides to seek out a range of sources.
- DON'T assume it is going to cost a lot. Engaging with academia can be free.

Selecting the advisors:

Involving the right experts and avoiding conflicts of interest is critical for the quality and legitimacy of any science advisory process. As issues become more complex, advice from more diverse fields needs to be integrated. Increasingly this means bringing natural and social scientists together and overcoming the inherent differences in scientific language and terminology. For some issues it means also the inclusion of non-scientific experts and/or lay members. Avoiding conflicts of interest can be a significant challenge as advisory groups become more diverse.

It is also important to acknwolege before hand that policy makers and researchers are used to work with different resources and work time periods. Policy makers might be used to work quickly and don't need comprehensiveness, while academics may not have the experience or time to do so and may be tempted to seek perfection. This may narrow the chances of getting the best academics involved.

Tasks, roles and responsibilities:

Policy makers should respect and value the academic freedom, professional status and expertise of its independent scientific advisers.

Scientific advisers should respect the democratic mandate of the government to take decisions based on a wide range of factors and recognise that science is only part of the evidence that policy makers must consider in developing policy.

Policy makers and their scientific advisers should not act to undermine mutual trust.

There should be a clear understanding between scientists, advisers and policy makers on what advice is being sought, by whom and for what purpose. It should be made clear to the experts what role(s) they are being asked to perform and the boundary of their role(s). Boundaries should be reasonable and agreed at the start with external advisers to avoid any misunderstanding later in the advisory process. These roles can include :

- review of existing data and research sources;
- collection and analysis of new scientific data;
- interpretation of research from different sources;
- application of expert judgement where data is lacking or inconclusive;
- identification of policy options based on data and research evidence; and
- provision of expert scientific and engineering advice on policy options.

When asking experts to identify policy options or to comment on policy options prepared by others, those involved should respect the line between the responsibility of experts to provide advice, and the responsibility of departments for any subsequent policy decisions based on that advice.

It is important that the persons and the tasks they are going to perform are well matched. The aim should be to integrate these persons into a team, not to leave them isolated as the “academic”. There is therefore a process of managing expectations on both sides, which has to be carried out carefully.

Hints for succesful engagement:

To work together with researchers and policy makers is not always easy. They both work in very different ways, and for constructive engagement there needs to be mutual understanding. But the rewards of robust and innovative policy making are huge.

Although they bring incredibly valuable perspectives and a rigorous approach to evidence, academics who have not worked with policy makers before may not initially be comfortable with some aspects of the policy environment. There are a number of significant differences in working environment between academics and policy makers. Academics are subject to pressures such as peer acknowledgement, while pokicy makers must work to tight time frames. The notion of democratic decision making based on evidence is second nature to policy makers, but may not be intuitive for academic researchers.

Scientists who engage in science policy processes should be rewarded in their academic career (e.g. systems of extra points for policy relevance applied in some MS, such as UK and Spain).

Academics need to know that decisions are taken by poicy makers on a balance of politics, delivery (How much will this option cost? What are the legal implications? How long will it take to implement?, are there concrete achievable milestones towards longer-term objectives), and evidence (What does the evidence point to? Is it clear-cut, arguable or inconclusive?).

Also, the different working practices in academia and government mean that it is important to ensure that reports or other final outputs are relevant to their use. Avoid jargon and acronyms.

Pre-existing social networks can be an excellent, low-cost vehicle for interaction with a stakeholder community. Using social media such as communities or groups on Linkedin, or following key stakeholders on Twitter, can be a valuable way of mapping informal connections, helping policymakers got to the right place when they are seeking scientific input.

Quality assurance and peer review:

Quality assurance provides confidence in the evidence gathering process whilst peer review provides expert evaluation of the evidence itself. Both are vital tools in ensuring that advice is as up-to-date and robust as possible. All evidence should be subject to critical evaluation; however, this can take different forms and needs to be proportionate to the nature of the evidence and its use.

Also, as the complexity of an issue increases, so in many cases do the scientific uncertainties associated with it. As a general rule, scientific advice should include assessment and clear communication of uncertainties (or probabilities).

When responding to public concerns over emerging findings, it is important that policy makers clearly the level of quality assurance and peer review which has been carried out, whether they intend to subject the work to any further assessment or peer review and when the outcome of this is likely to be available.

Transparency and openness:

Transparency in scientific advisory processes is of the utmost importance. As far as possible, scientific advice and associated evidence should be made publicly available in a timely manner. Policy-makers should be transparent in their use of scientific advice. They should be able to explain how any requested scientific advice has been considered when drawing up policy.

Any requirement for independent advisers to sign non-disclosure agreements, for example for reasons of national security, should be publicly acknowledged and regularly reviewed.

Policy makers should not prejudge the advice of independent advisers, nor should it criticise advice or reject it before its publication.

The timing of the policy makers' response to scientific advice should demonstrably allow for proper consideration of that advice.

Policy makers should publicly explain the reasons for policy decisions, particularly when the decision is not consistent with scientific advice and in doing so, should accurately represent the evidence.

Premature, inaccurate or biased reporting can undermine the whole advisory process. “Who is responsible for communicating what and to who?” is a critical operational question for any advisory process. The individual and institutional responsibilities and limits with regards to internal and external communication should be fully understood.

Check-list for science advice:

An effective and trustworthy science advisory process needs to:

1. Have a clear remit, with defined roles and responsibilities for its various actors. This includes having:

    a. a clear definition and, insofar as is possible, a clear demarcation of advisory versus decision-making functions and roles

b. defined roles and responsibilities and the necessary expertise for communication

c. an ex ante definition of the legal role and potential liability for all individuals and institutions that are involved

d. the necessary institutional, logistical and personnel support relative to its remit.

2. Involve the relevant actors – scientists, policy-makers and other stakeholders, as necessary. This includes:

e. using a transparent process for participation and following strict procedures for declaring, verifying and dealing with conflicts of interest

f. engaging all the necessary scientific expertise across disciplines to address the issue at hand

g. giving explicit consideration to whether and how to engage non-scientific experts and/or civil society stakeholders in framing and/or generating the advice

h. having, as necessary, effective procedures for timely exchange of information and co-ordination with different national and international counterparts.

3. Produce advice that is sound, unbiased and legitimate. Such advice should:

i. be based on the best available scientific evidence j. explicitly assess and communicate scientific uncertainties

k. be preserved from political (and other vested-interest group) interference

l. be generated and used in a transparent and accountable manner.

Although careful consideration and attention to these factors cannot guarantee that a particular scientific advisory process or system will be successful, ignoring them increases both the likelihood of failure and the potential exposure to legal pursuit.

Methods:

How experts are involved in policy development and the outcomes of their involvement has not been documented precisely. There is only a narrow arrange of methods for expert involvement. The choice of method usually is based on practical reasoining rather than because it was the best fit for the charachteristics (e.g. uncertainty) or goal of the policy. Experts could be involved based on the characteristics of the issue and the goal of the exercise.

Some methods that could deliver relevant information can be classified in the following situations:

- Consensus seeking: in cases where there is high ambiguity but little uncertainty regarding the potential impacts of a decision, consensus may be needed. The use of a workshop or a teleconference is recommended for the exchange of opinions and information.
- Consensus seeking and boundary setting: if the expert opinion is ambiguous and there is uncertainty regarding policy outcome, boundaries should be set to determine when and how information will influence policy.

Resources:

Enganging with academics, British Government office for sicence

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283129/13-581-engaging-with-academics-open-policy-making.pdf

The Government chief scientific adviser's guidelines on the use of scientific agineering advice in policy making, British Government office for sicence

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/293037/10-669-gcsa-guidelines-scientific-engineering-advice-policy-making.pdf

Principles of scientific advice to government, British Government office for sicence

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scientific-advice-to-government-principles

Science for Environment policy: evaluating expert involvement in policy making, The European Commission.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/evaluating_expert_involvement_in_policymaking_54si2_en.pdf

Scientific Advice for Policy Making, OECD

https://www.bmbf.de/files/scientific(1).pdf

LOGBOOK

Call for knowledge

Literature screening

Policy relevance of the request

Suggested way forward from the scoping

CARRYING OUT THE REQUEST

ANNEX X: 1st Meeting with the requester