

CONSULTATIVE PROCESS TOWARDS AN IMoSEB

INTERNATIONAL MECHANISM OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE ON BIODIVERSITY

After the conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance in 2005, an international consultation was launched to assess the need, scope and possible forms of an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB). The consultation is an exploratory process, a broad, multidisciplinary consultation with numerous parties involved and a political and media audience. Its aim is to provide real added value, taking full account of what already exists.

The word “biodiversity” is used here in its broadest sense covering the totality of living things in interaction, including micro-organisms and the services rendered by ecosystems. Biodiversity is considered in connection with such major issues as poverty reduction, food security and clean water supply, economic growth, conflicts over resource use and appropriation, human, animal and plant health, energy and climate change.

The first consultations set guidelines for reflection on how to improve the interface between expertise and decision-making. The Executive Committee of the consultative process towards an IMoSEB, meeting in December 2006, wished to broaden and deepen the consultations by holding meetings on each continent.

The Pacific regional consultation meeting

The regional consultation was co-hosted by SPREP and held in conjunction with the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. It took place in October 19-20, 2007 at the Media and Disaster Centre, in Alotau, Papua New Guinea.

There were 19 participants from 9 Pacific countries. The meeting was chaired by Stephan Schnierer, member of the Executive Committee of the consultative process towards an IMoSEB.

This meeting was the sixth and the last regional consultation meeting scheduled by the Executive Committee of the consultative process, after Montreal, Canada for North America, Yaoundé, Cameroon for Africa, Geneva, Switzerland for Europe, Beijing, China for Asia and Bariloche, Argentina for Latin America.

It was hoped that the Pacific meeting would develop in greater depth the Executive Committee’s proposals, specify needs in Pacific and make practical proposals that would widen the consultation, bring an exchange of ideas.

The Pacific consultation therefore represents an additional step to gather feedback and proposals for the IMoSEB International Steering Committee (ISC). The ISC will reconvene in November 2007 and will give final recommendations that will be brought to the attention of governments and international bodies.



Main recommendations of the IMoSEB Pacific Consultation

1. Participants of the Pacific regional consultation agreed that there is a real need to improve the knowledge-decision making interface on biodiversity, in order to sustain ecosystem services for human well-being.
2. They strongly recommend to the international biodiversity community to establish a globally/internationally recognized mechanism of expertise.
3. To insure that these concerns are addressed, participants called for full and effective involvement of Pacific in the International Steering Committee and in any future 'mechanism'.

Several options were explored for the structure, scope and governance of this 'mechanism'.

Participants emphasized that this 'mechanism' should take account of diverse forms of knowledge existing including traditional knowledge.

The goal of this 'mechanism' will be to synthesize and communicate a knowledge base on biodiversity and provide scientific advice to support decision-making at any levels.

Participants drew attention the uniqueness of the region in terms of biodiversity, geography and cultural diversity and their reliance on that biodiversity.

They emphasized the need to manage biodiversity at the local level using local knowledge systems linked to others relevant knowledge systems.

Participants however stressed that there is a general lack of capacity to link with these other knowledge systems in order to share useful information. Therefore the 'mechanism' should also advocate for resources to build capacity to make the connections between various knowledge systems.

**Full report will be available soon
in English, French and Spanish
at <http://www.imoseb.net>**