
AGENDA ITEM 14.1: Items Proposed by Members:
Biodiversity in Oceania IPBES workshop outcomes and recommendations

(Paper presented by the New Caledonia in collaboration with SPREP)

République Française



Background Paper

Purpose of Paper

1. To inform Members of the outcomes of the 'Biodiversity in Oceania' Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) workshop held in Nouméa, 24-25 June 2019.
2. Members to endorse the scientific expert recommendations for the Pacific region.

Background

3. Oceania is a global hotspot of biodiversity and an epicentre of the biodiversity crisis. It constitutes an ecological, social and cultural unit ('One Nourishing Ocean'), a high diversity of ecosystems and associated biodiversity and ecosystem services and cross-ecosystem connectivity (marine, reef, coastal, terrestrial, wetlands).
4. Existing internal pressures such as deforestation, fires, unsustainable use of natural resources, pollution and waste, and increasing external pressures such as invasive alien species, climate change, industrial overuse of natural and mineral resources and plastic pollution place Oceania under major stress. These issues are reinforced by the absence of a nature-culture dichotomy, the ubiquitous land-sea continuum, a great diversity of landscapes among countries and territories scattered across the vast ocean, diversity of land tenure status, status of protected areas management, and the legal status and relationship between international waters and EEZs.
5. Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum are strongly committed to the preservation of our Blue Pacific region and Blue Pacific identity. Pacific Leaders want to see our Blue Pacific future determined by our own priorities, ensuring our Blue Pacific voice is heard and our priorities, the things that matter most to the Pacific People, are clearly reflected in international biodiversity commitments.
6. The IPBES was established in 2012 and now includes 129 member States. France hosted its 7th plenary conference that took place in April-May 2019 in Paris. This meeting provided as an outcome key guidelines for the implementation of the post-2020 framework for global biodiversity assessment and conservation. Data for Oceania is included in the Asia-Pacific IPBES regional chapter (4 billion inhabitants) while the Pacific region (including Australia and New Zealand) represents only 40 million people.
7. Following this international conference in Paris, in light of the crucial biodiversity challenges facing Pacific island countries and territories, SPREP, SPC, Government of New Caledonia, CRESICA (Consortium for Research, Higher Education and Innovation in New Caledonia), RESIPOL (its counterpart for French Polynesia) and IRD (French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development) organised a regional event to complement the IPBES 7th plenary global conference, with the aim of bringing a regional approach to Oceania. The workshop aimed to shed light on the specificities of this region in terms of biodiversity crisis, challenges and solutions.

8. 80 experts from Australia, Canada, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Samoa, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna gathered in Nouméa 24-25 June 2019 to discuss 3 main thematic areas:
 - a. Terrestrial and marine protected and managed areas
 - b. Biodiversity, ecosystem services and resource based activities
 - c. Biodiversity, endogenous and customary law and traditional knowledge
9. Regarding biodiversity assessment and analysis in the Pacific, experts agreed on the following recommendations:

Knowledge, data and monitoring

- a. Ensure long-term monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services (observatories, databases, predictive models, 'future scenarios').
- b. Increase local research capacity (infrastructure and people) for Oceania, especially in SIDS, to strengthen networks between scientists, academics, managers and local communities and to provide the means for acquiring and sharing knowledge.
- c. Promote and protect indigenous knowledge and ensure the link with scientific knowledge.

Cross sectorial strategies and integration of biodiversity

- d. Articulate strategies of biodiversity heritage with the challenges of preserving Oceanian lifestyles and address biodiversity protected areas as a basis for the resilience of Oceanian societies.
- e. Identify the most relevant indicators and integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services (BES) into spatial planning strategies with local stakeholders at the Oceania scale.

Implementation of strategies and projects

- f. Move towards co-managed systems between states, local authorities and communities.
- g. Strengthen regional collaboration between customary authorities by creating an indigenous knowledge and practices network.

Building a strong and efficient legal system

- h. Encourage people ownership and respect of the laws by increasing community participation and make the customary law system the foundation for legal systems (where appropriate).
- i. Make endangerment of the environment/ecocide a new crime against the environment.
- j. Strengthen the law to recognize the Rights of Nature to exist, regenerate and evolve.
- k. Encourage a paradigm shift from Western Law to rethink how human society interacts with, uses, and cares for the living world, in the respect of indigenous cosmo-visions.

Awareness and education

- l. Package and disseminate in appropriate ways BES results for use in education and public awareness.
- m. Promote cross-generational transmission of BES knowledge, and mentor the next generation of Oceanian experts.

Recommendation

10. The Meeting is invited to:

1. **note** the relevance of a future IPBES regional chapter for the Oceania Region;
2. **endorse** the recommendations proposed by experts at the 'Biodiversity in Oceania' meeting in Nouméa in June 2019;
3. **endorse** submission of these specific Oceanian recommendations to international fora, and especially the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas (Nouméa, April 2020), World Conservation Congress (Marseille, June 2020) and CBD COP 15 (China 2020).

22 August, 2019