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Leipzig Workshop Recommendations for a
Knowledge-Policy Interface for Biodiversity Governance
4 October 2006

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This document contributes to ongoing debates, including the IMoSEB consultation process, seeking to identify the optimal niche and conditions for the creation of an independent and effective international knowledge-policy interface[1] for biodiversity governance. A knowledge-policy interface is essential to support more effective biodiversity-related decision making and societal responses to the challenges of achieving sustainable development.

Mandate:
- Synthesize and communicate a knowledge base on biodiversity in support of decision making and implementation
- Bring together and acknowledge diverse understandings, perspectives, and values regarding biodiversity loss and change
- Create a mechanism for dialogue and exchange among holders of diverse knowledge and knowledge systems (i.e., all forms of traditional and modern knowledge and science)
- Foster deeper understanding of the ways in which biodiversity loss and change transcend scales (spatial, temporal, etc.) and jurisdictional boundaries
- Through its activities enhance and improve abilities to collect, exchange and disseminate knowledge and information, and promote actions in favor of better biodiversity management at all levels

Outputs and outcomes:
- Scenarios of human futures and biodiversity loss and change, in relation to poverty, food security, economic growth, water security, conflict, human health, energy, climate change, etc. illuminating policy options, choices, and strategies available to diverse actors
- Periodic assessments of:
  - existing biodiversity knowledges, including identification of gaps in existing assessments,
  - status and trends on biodiversity,
  - strategies and options for response,
  - policy effectiveness,
  - capacity at all levels of decision making
  - biodiversity knowledge-policy interfaces, and
  - cross-issue linkages (e.g., poverty, food security, economic growth, water security, conflict, human health, energy, climate change)
- Analyses of the causes of biodiversity loss and change, including key aspects of political economies[2], and the necessary elements of societal transformation to redress these causes
- Stock-taking and management of biodiversity knowledge, including for global trends, indicators, and monitoring systems

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[1] We use the phrase "knowledge-policy interface" to acknowledge that information and expertise relevant to policy must include all forms of knowledge.
[2] In this context we understand political economy as the analysis of economic and political dynamics, power structures, regulations, policies and dominant ideologies that affect biodiversity and people's relation to it.

- Comprehensive outreach and communication strategy in support of dialogue and action
- Identification of knowledge gaps and feedback into research policies and priorities
- Identification of gaps in capacity for linking biodiversity knowledge to action at all levels of decision making and implementation
- Creation and dissemination of tools and methodologies for assessments, analyses, and other means of connecting knowledge and policy

Process:
- Ongoing, dynamic, and independent process that brings together diverse forms of knowledge, expertise, and science
- Ensure that process is legitimate and has appropriate institutional support and authorizing environment
- Establish secure funding stream from multiple sources
- Engage governments, private sector, civil society, scientific community, indigenous communities, international organizations and conventions, etc., in the design and operation of the mechanism
- Networking process that links and builds upon—and does not reinvent or duplicate— diverse existing networks of biodiversity expertise and policy
- Innovating process that identifies and seeks to fill gaps in existing networks of biodiversity expertise and policy
- Catalyze nested networks and activities at national and sub-global (e.g., local, regional, trans-jurisdictional) levels
- Process that ensures interpretation and translation among relevant languages, cultures, and knowledge traditions
- Provide regular opportunities for appropriate internal and external evaluation and review
- Establish small and effective coordinating mechanism (e.g., governing board) that includes appropriate balance and diversity across geography, sectors, stakeholders, expertise, etc.

Questions requiring further reflection

Participants agreed that future consultations will require careful consideration of the following key questions given the reality of trade-offs among democratization of expertise, stakeholder involvement, political legitimacy and accountability, funding mandates, scientific excellence, trust and credibility, etc.:

- What is the appropriate form of funding, institutional framework, and authorization of the mechanism by governments, international conventions, and the United Nations system while maintaining independence?
- What are the appropriate means for developing the network described above?
- How to link the mechanism to the needs of the various international conventions?

Further information

More information on the Leipzig workshop, including a full report is available at http://www.ufz.de/spi-workshop