

# IPBES 2020: What's next?

A conference-workshop on the future of IPBES  
and its role in biodiversity conservation

18-19 December 2017 – University of Cambridge



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**18 December 2017**

Public conference, Lecture Theater, Trinity Hall, 15h00-17h30

**19 December 2017**

Workshop, Trinity Hall, 8h30-18h00

# PROGRAMME

**18 December 2017 – 15h00-17h30 – Public conference**  
***Trinity Hall, Lecture Theater***

## **IPBES and the past, present and future of conservation**

**15h00-15h15**      **Introduction**

**15h15-15h30**      **IPBES 2020: What's next?**  
Allocution by Anne Larigauderie, Executive Secretary of IPBES

**15h30-16h00**      **Four challenges for the future of IPBES**  
Aleksandar Rankovic, Researcher at IDDRI & Alice Vadrot,  
Research fellow at CSaP & University of Vienna

**16h00-17h30**      **Panel and Q&A with:**

- Kari de Pryck, Researcher at Sciences Po & University of Geneva
- Jean-François Silvain, President of the Fondation pour la Recherche sur la Biodiversité
- Susan Owens, Professor at the University of Cambridge
- Neville Ash, Director of the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre

***Chaired by Rob Doubleday, Director of CSaP***

**19 December – 8h30-18h00 – Workshop**  
***Trinity Hall***

## ***Please RSVP:***

***Dr Aleksandar Rankovic – [aleksandar.rankovic@iddri.org](mailto:aleksandar.rankovic@iddri.org)***  
***Dr Alice Vadrot – [av456@cam.ac.uk](mailto:av456@cam.ac.uk)***

One-day workshop on the future of IPBES, 2 groups and 4 themes (2 themes/group):  
Budget, Impact, Root causes, Diversified knowledge

<b>8h30-9h00</b>	<b>Welcome</b> <i>(coffee)</i> – <b>Terrace Room</b>
<b>9h00-9h30</b>	<b>Introduction</b> – <b>Bridgetower Room</b>
<b>9h30-12h30</b>	<b>First working session: groups on “Budget” and “Impact”</b> – <b>Stephen Hawking Room</b> – <b>Chetwode Room</b>
<i>10h30-11h00</i>	<i>Refreshments will be served in the Terrace Room</i>
<b>12h30-13h30</b>	<i>Lunch</i> – <b>Terrace Room</b>
<b>13h30-16h30</b>	<b>Second working session: groups on “Root causes of biodiversity loss” and “Diversifying knowledge”</b> – <b>Stephen Hawking Room</b> – <b>Chetwode Room</b>
<i>15h00-15h30</i>	<i>Refreshments will be served in the Terrace Room</i>
<b>16h30-17h00</b>	<i>Break</i> <i>Work on restitutions for group leaders</i>
<b>17h00-18h00</b>	<b>Plenary:</b> Restitution of working groups – <b>Bridgetower Room</b>

# BACKGROUND

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), sometimes referred to as the “IPCC for biodiversity”, released its first assessments in 2016, and has several others on the way. Compared to previous international assessment mechanisms on biodiversity, IPBES innovates in its ambition to integrate a great diversity of academic and non-academic knowledges, hence potentially rendering it more sensitive to the various worldviews and framings that can be found in biodiversity debates. It is thus an original institution that enables to integrate, synthesize and convey a diversified knowledge on Earth’s biodiversity, the causes and consequences of its dramatic decline, and what could be done about it. Launched in 2012, IPBES is progressively completing its first work programme (2014-2018), and it has recently been decided that its next programme will have a more evolving structure, on a 10-year window, roughly corresponding to the 2020-2030 decade . With the end of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s strategic plan (2011-2020), the next decade will also correspond to a next phase in the international cooperation on biodiversity. It will also likely see multiple developments in the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in other international arenas relevant for biodiversity. A collective stocktaking and reflection is thus needed to fuel the forthcoming discussions on the future of IPBES and its role in biodiversity conservation. In particular, there are four salient challenges that have emerged over the past few years and which need to be addressed.

- **(i) Ensuring a sufficient budget.** The first issue concerns the increasing budgetary constraints faced by IPBES, which have hampered its activities during the first work programme and could in the middle term threaten IPBES’ progress. To address this challenge, it is necessary to make sense of these difficulties in the wider context of budgetary issues faced by other international bodies on biodiversity, but also national and local biodiversity policies worldwide, which also face chronic underfunding. A challenge for the future of IPBES is to identify innovative fundraising strategies, possibly in synergy with wider fundraising initiatives for biodiversity and other environmental issues (*e.g.*, climate change).
- **(ii) Assessing the impacts of IPBES.** IPBES was created to fill a perceived gap in synthesizing and communicating biodiversity knowledge to governments and the general public. Reflections on its future need to consider how IPBES works have influenced representations, debates and practices on biodiversity, as well as how they have influenced research itself. The external review of the platform by a consulting firm, that should take place in the coming years when enough funds are available, should already bring some interesting insight on IPBES’ impacts. However, the conservation community at large has probably much to bring, especially in terms of providing detailed research on several case studies. A central question here is how to frame and undertake such a research agenda.
- **(iii) Addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss.** An important feature



of IPBES' conceptual framework is that “indirect drivers” of biodiversity loss are given particular attention. In IPBES terms, these drivers include “institutions and governance systems and other indirect drivers”, and concern for instance how decisions are taken and implemented, how power is exercised, or how responsibilities are distributed. Assessing the available knowledge on these indirect drivers is key to identify how human collective action is driving biodiversity loss. This is also how we can understand why some conservation policies have worked and some have not, and to better assess what can be done and by whom to stop biodiversity loss. A proper integration of these topics in IPBES' works has proved challenging so far, *inter alia* because of a lack of attention on indirect drivers in assessment outlines and a lack of social and human scientists among selected assessment authors. In order to better integrate knowledge on indirect drivers in future works, it seems necessary to, firstly, make it more graspable, by mapping it out and suggesting ways to organize knowledge on indirect drivers, and secondly, to think about how this could be practically integrated into IPBES assessments.

- **(iv) Delivering diversified knowledge.** The rationale behind having a diversified knowledge-base in IPBES – integrative of social sciences and the humanities, of indigenous and local knowledge and of inputs from different stakeholders – can be considered two-fold. Its is first considered to be a way of seizing, through social scientific scholarship but also from practical and traditional experience and knowledge, how biodiversity issues manifest themselves and are represented, both in their causes and impacts, and what solutions to biodiversity loss have been experienced in different contexts. The second expectation is that diversified, more inclusive knowledge will overall be more legitimate and relevant to real-world action, because it will have encompassed the worldview and expectations of more actors. The production of such diversified knowledge, challenging in principle, has been challenging in practice during the first work programme. There is a need to assess what IPBES has achieved so far in this area, what seems to be the main blockage points and what options exist for IPBES to produce a more diversified and legitimate knowledge base for biodiversity conservation.

This conference-workshop will gather different actors – researchers of all disciplines working on biodiversity conservation and IPBES, experts and staff involved in IPBES and other multilateral bodies on biodiversity, members of national delegations, people involved in biodiversity and research policies, conservation practitioners at large etc. – to work on the four interconnected critical points listed above. In addition, the conference will also be the occasion to collectively perform a horizon scanning on the 2020-2030 decade and beyond, to identify some key moments and potential trajectories of international biodiversity cooperation, and how IPBES fits into this future(s).

The overall objective is to come up with insights on how IPBES could become an even stronger player for biodiversity conservation in the next decade, by jointly addressing its means, the types of knowledge it integrates and how to follow its impacts on biodiversity debates, policies and practices. After the conference, a

summary report will be produced and shared with all participants. Ideally, a collective summary paper could also be produced and options to convey the main results and messages in related international processes and events will be considered (side-events, subsidiary bodies, conferences, policy-making processes, etc.).