

## Workshop

### **Nested Networks: International workshop Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ Leipzig/ Germany 11-13 May 2011**

**Venue:** UFZ – Centre for Environmental Research  
Permoserstr. 15, D-04318 Leipzig, Germany

#### **Background and Relevance:**

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The main objective of this workshop is to discuss the major options on how to produce and govern global environmental assessments. The idea of this research project goes back to the *IMoSeb workshop* in October 2006 at Leipzig (<http://www.ufz.de/index.php?en=10436>). At this workshop, a group of highly experienced scientists, practitioners, representatives of national and international institutions and civil society organisations agreed on recommendations on how to improve the relationship between scientists and policy-actors and called for a necessary turn away from a monolithic, centralized and hierarchical epistemic community to more pluralistic, decentralized and heterogeneous ways of interaction that we call *nested networks*. The *Leipzig Recommendations* constitute a major milestone in the consultations setting up a science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services by highlighting the specifics of such a mechanism with regard to its mandate, internal process as well as its outputs and outcomes.

The 2011 workshop aims at deepening these discussions. Since 2006, major developments have been taking place that highlight the relevance of such a discussion: 2010 has been a challenging period for the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC)<sup>1</sup> that had enjoyed a pristine reputation and had even advanced to become a role model for biodiversity and food security assessments. Efforts to establish an IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), often called an 'IPCC-like mechanism for biodiversity', culminated in June 2010.<sup>2</sup>

These events reveal the challenges involved in generating authoritative, policy-relevant knowledge in the context of global environmental politics. The IAC review of the IPCC demonstrates that the scientific assessment of a complex problem such as climate change or biodiversity loss is a tremendously difficult task: It involves thousands of people with different expertise, cultures, interests, and expectations. The available information is extensive, multidisciplinary, multinational

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<sup>1</sup> Public trust and, with it, the IPCC's credibility eroded dramatically after November 2009 with the events that became known as 'climategate'. In spring 2010, the InterAcademy Council (IAC) was set up to conduct an independent review of the policies and procedures of the IPCC under an UN mandate (<http://reviewipcc.interacademycouncil.net/>). In August 2010, the IAC submitted a report with practical recommendations aimed at strengthening the IPCC's processes and procedures so as to be better able to respond to future challenges and ensure the ongoing quality of its reports. At the 32nd IPCC plenary session, the IPCC started with intergovernmental negotiations how to implement the IAC recommendations ([www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session32/draft\\_report\\_32.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session32/draft_report_32.pdf)).

<sup>2</sup> The third Ad Hoc Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Meeting on an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES III) met from 7-11 June 2010, in Busan, Republic of Korea. The meeting was attended by 232 delegates representing 85 countries, one observer, eight intergovernmental organizations and 21 non-governmental organizations, five conventions and six UN bodies and specialized agencies. Over the five day meeting, delegates discussed whether to establish an IPBES and negotiated texts on considerations for its function, guiding principles and recommendations. <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/biodiv/ipbes3/html/yimbvol158num11e.html>.

Anne Larigauderie and Harold A Mooney: The Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: moving a step closer to an IPCC-like mechanism for biodiversity. In: *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 2010, 2:9–14. DOI 10.1016/j.cosust.2010.02.006

and multicultural; extends across multiple spatial and temporal scales; is subject to different interpretations and has a wide range of uncertainties. The IAC also highlights that the magnitude and complexity of the assessment task has increased while the governance and management of such an endeavour have received very little attention. Not least because scientists are highly exposed to public scrutiny and work under the public microscope, assessments have to be responsive to the processes and structures in which scientific knowledge is validated for public use.

### **Workshop Goals:**

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The workshop is envisaged as an important step to bring together high-level expertise both from *key actors* (including scientists participating in global assessments and representatives from “user institutions” like UNEP, national governments, stakeholder and civil society organisations and *observers* such as outstanding scholars from different disciplines and backgrounds. We intend to discuss experiences from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) and the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology Development (IAASTD).

Our workshop will focus on reconsidering what we have learned over the past years and how we can insert it into recent assessments and how to cope with future challenges. It aims at three different goals:

- To collect and summarize experiences about strengths and weaknesses of former and existing arrangements.
- To discuss what general messages can be drawn for bridging the gap between science and policy at the global and other levels.
- To identify research gaps and hereby develop an agenda for future exchange.

The workshop conclusions thus surely will contribute to ongoing debates in different assessment bodies, including recent intergovernmental negotiations like the IPCC reform process and the establishment of the IPBES which will probably take place in autumn this year.

### **Workshop ISSUES/ Potential Questions:**

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Relevant issues are

- novel challenges like increasing complexities, uncertainties and contested values and questions of quality control for policy relevant knowledge
- integration of different kinds of knowledge (natural and social science, local and indigenous knowledge)
- political relevance, the functions and roles of scientific assessments in relation to politics (like the synthesis, translation and certification of scientific knowledge, monitoring of environmental performance and policy appraisal)
- potential addresses and “user” groups (like public administrations, stakeholders) and different forms of participation, representation and accountability
- tools which help to integrate research results like integrated models and scenarios that build a bridge between scientific disciplines (inter-disciplinary) and research and stakeholders (trans-disciplinary)
- cross-cutting and new emerging issues (like geo-engineering)
- procedures like the management of uncertainties and quality control for policy relevant information.

### **Workshop Structure and Procedures:**

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The *objective* of the workshop is to deepen the discussion on challenges and options for conducting international assessments. The workshop provides a forum to identify and analyse different features of scientific assessments while leaving room to discuss marginalised perspectives, focus on neglected issues, and identify a broad range of options and alternatives. The challenge, of course, will be to be

open for additional perspectives and collegial interactions. Rather than directly generating recommendations, it aims to collect experiences about strengths and weaknesses of existing arrangements, and to stimulate in-depth discussions about information needs, future challenges and options.

In order to make the discussion productive and responsive, we decided in favour of the following *form and procedures*:

- In order to be responsive to discussion needs of the participants, we will send a questionnaire to the participants and ask for a short, written statement with their experiences and views of the workshop's central organizing questions and issues. The results will provide the input into the workshop agenda.
- The workshop will be organized around group discussions rather than formal presentations. The workshop consists of alternating different plenary discussions, followed by breakout groups.
- The timetable of the meeting is structured, but the topics to be discussed will be determined by the participants. The results of the questionnaire, to which we ask you to respond, will be presented at the first session of the workshop to open up the discussion and to identify topics to be addressed in the discussions of the breakout groups.
- The number of participants is limited, to ensure an open fluid and profound discussion.
- The workshop is conducted "off the record" and designed to allow maximum time for conversation and engagement. Held under the Chatham House Rule (see: <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk>) all participants speak from their personal experiences and not as a representative of an institution or organised group. Your comments will not be attributed outside the workshop.

The workshop will result in a short set of considerations that the participants feel should be taken into account. These considerations will summarize the discussions at the workshop and will be completed by its end. They will be supplemented by a more detailed workshop report to be circulated after the workshop.

**Organizers:**

- Silke Beck
- Christoph Görg
- Josef Settele

The workshop is part of the Research Project "Nested Networks – New Governance of Science by Global Environmental Networks" (<http://www.ufz.de/index.php?de=19215>). It is funded by Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF): "Research on the relationship between science, politics and society" (<http://www.bmbf.de/en/4633.php>).

**About the UFZ:**

The Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) is member of the Helmholtz Association of Research Centres whose mission consists in problem oriented research. Its approximately 948 scientists focus on environmental issues such as sustainable use of landscapes, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning under accelerated change, water management, soil contamination especially in heavily contaminated megasites, and chemicals in the environment.

## **Preliminary Workshop Agenda:**

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**Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**

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### **Morning**

Arrival of participants  
Opportunity for Lunch

### **Afternoon**

**13:00-13:30**      **Welcome**

**13:30-13:45**      **Introduction to the workshop**

Explaining the objective, expected outcomes, terms of reference (Chatham House Rule), and structure of the workshop

**13:45-14:30**      **Introduction of participants**

The participants should briefly introduce into their background and their expectations of the WS. To be able to limit this introduction to the most relevant information the participants will be given workshop reader including a short bio and a short, written statement introducing into the experiences and views of the participants.

**14:30-15:00**      **Presentation of state of play of IPCC, IPBES, TEEB and IAASTD**

Input statements explaining the ongoing processes inside the IPCC, IPBES, TEEB and IAASTD/ HLPE, setting the official frame/picture into which our workshop is placed.

**15:00-15:30**      ***Coffee break***

**15:30-15:50**      **Presentation to set the scene for discussion**

A structured report from the input gathered from the participants beforehand. The aim is not only to stimulate, guide and frame the discussions that shall take place throughout the afternoon but also to introduce topics for the first round of breakout groups (Silke Beck).

**15:50-17:00**      **Discussion**

Participants exchange her/his experience of and opinion on challenges of climate change, biodiversity and agriculture and needs and priorities for the discussion.

**17:00-17:15**      **Short coffee break**

**17:15-18:00**                    **Definition of the issues and constitution of 4/6 breakout groups**

The participants select the break-out group, which they intend to join for the first break-out sessions. Each group should include 5-8 members. (It would be desirable if each group consisted at least of 2 practitioners, 1 observer, and 2 organisers). The breakout-group members will then come together and identify the issues and guiding questions to address in the session on Thursday morning (constituting session of the break-out group).

**19:00-**                         **Dinner**

**Thursday, May 12th**

**Morning**

**9:00-10:30**                    **Breakout Group Session**

Breakout groups to discuss the issues selected during the plenary on Monday.

**10:30-11:00**                    ***Coffee break***

**11:00-12:00**                    ***Plenary: Reporting on discussions of breakout groups and presentation of results***

**12:00-13:00**                    ***Lunch***

**Afternoon**

**13:00-14:00**                    ***Plenary: Identifying topics for 2<sup>nd</sup> Breakout Group Session***

The content of this 2<sup>nd</sup> Breakout Group session depends on the development of the first session. New issues or cross-links to be discussed may have arisen while some of the original groups may wish to continue their work.

**14:00-16:00**                    **2<sup>nd</sup> Breakout Group Session**

**16:00-16:30**                    ***Coffee break***

**16:30-17:30**                    ***Plenary: Reporting on discussions of breakout groups and presentation of results***

**19:00 -**                         **Dinner in town**

After dinner a group of volunteers will meet to elaborate a first concise draft of workshop considerations. Unclear or unresolved issues should be highlighted and brought forward for discussion in plenary the next day.

**Friday, May 13th**

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**Morning**

Before the plenary begins all participants should be given the opportunity to read the draft considerations before the plenary. Copies will be available during breakfast.

**9:00-10:30**      ***Plenary: Lessons learnt: agreed and disagreed topics, open questions to be discussed, marginalised views***

**10:30-11:00**      ***Coffee break***

**11:00-12:00**      ***Plenary: Discussion and finalising considerations***

**12:00-12:20**      **Final Statement and further procedures**

**12:20-13:00**      **Feed back (on the workshop and its results),**

**13: 00**              **End of the workshop**

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**Lunch**