

Participation of experts and knowledges:



Realities and Challenges for IPBES

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Back in 2013...



UN Region	Number of Nominations
Africa	18
Asia-Pacific	20
Eastern Europe	3
Latin American and Caribbean	11
West European and Others	32

We realised quickly that...



- There are different types of participation
 - ✦ (as part of “global” knowledge-making /
 - ✦ regionally and sub-nationally, in science *and* policy
 - ✦ locally: professionally, socially)
- Different areas “do” different types of science
 - ✦ Variations in what gets funded, by whom...
- Different types of sciences and knowledges “do better” than others
- There are multitudes of different science-policy interfaces!
 - ✦ (which ones are important for the working of IPBES?)
- “ecosystem services” valuations aren’t great at picking up other ways of seeing the world

Arising from this...



- 1/ we interviewed MEPs
- 2/ participated in a range of regional and Plenary events

We tried to understand:

- **What influenced MEP's experiences for participation**
- **What "missing needs" or capacity building opportunities might be**
- **What don't we talk about?**

Who are MEPs? Why are they MEPs?



- Participation motivations:
 - Academics: belonging, cutting edge, challenges and promises of interdisciplinarity
 - ✦ “If I can’t influence policy at home, what’s the point?” (MEP_D_Jan15).
 - ✦ “Finally, science can *do* something” (MEP_L_Dec13).
 - ✦ “Did you know that the IPCC authors won a Peace Prize?!” (MEP_F_Dec13).

Common challenges



- Regionality, capacity
- Representation: regionally and internationally
- Knowledges' integration, translation

Not all MEPs are equal



- Regionality, capacity
 - **TIME!**
 - Budget ; “financial support is political, at home and here” (MEP_E3_Jan15)
 - Institutional support
 - ✦ A number of MEPs reflected that the constraints that they faced as part of IPBES resembled the challenges in their home countries

Representation



“Know your region! Or at least the people that will know your region!” (MEP_E3_Dec13)

“What kind of guidelines are going to work in policy **if you don’t know what’s going on at the local level**, or what type of conflicts the formal and informal institutions and indigenous institutions have? [...] But if you don’t touch base [with the ground] then you cant deliver any simple guidance to deal with it, and I can’t speak for it,”
(MEP_L2Jan15)

Representation



*“MEPs are not associated anymore with countries.
We are scientists.”*

- Relationships between member states and experts – interviews show fine lines between advice, instruction, lobbying
- A reassertion of nationalist interests into the “doing” of science

MEP Experiences: ECA Assessment



“Availability” of ILK in ECA

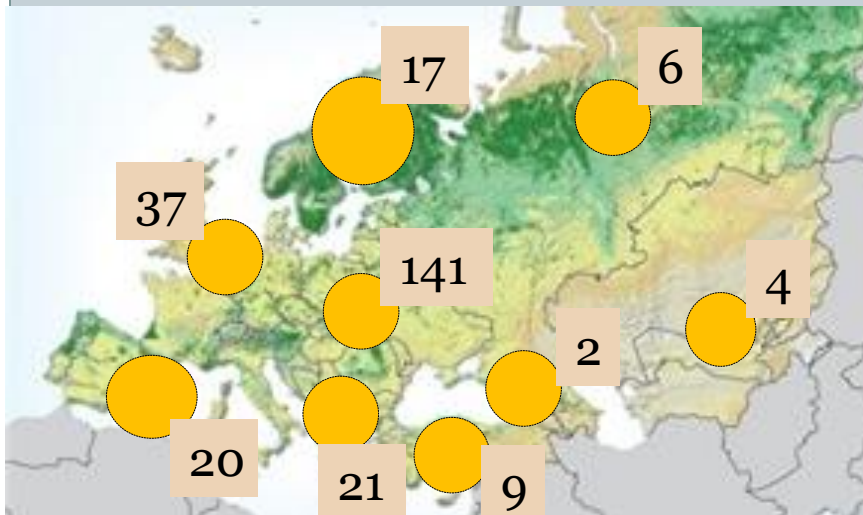
Map of co-chairs, CLAs and LAs



Map of ILK holders/experts (incl. TF) present



Map of available ILK literature
potentially > 800, 250 refs already listed



“Emergent silences”



“there needs to be a downplaying of cultural difference or ignoring spatial relationships of power [for international governance to] work”
(Hulme 2010)

- Differential opportunities
- The politics of being a researcher, of *representing knowledge*
- Where does knowledge COME FROM?
- Does where you come from “count”? Should it? Are there different answers to this question based on the type of ‘knowledge’ in question?

ES as “traveling theory”



- What does this mean? – from post-colonial writers
 - What do “ecosystem services” mean in different areas of the world – can it travel well and easily, as an idea and as an applied field of research?
 - ✦ “For traditional and local knowledge you can’t use Google, you’ve got to either go out and find the people that are willing to share the information with you, the knowledge is there on-the-ground. Or you have to have those people here, ... **you have to be one of those people**” (MEP_E2_Jan15).

IPBES bricolage: At Plenary



“with assessments, we really have seen a premium place on people who have had prior experience with assessments and I think that’s a good step, as to go in without understanding **that this is not an academic science peer review exercise, it’s really putting your science into a decision-making framework**” (MEP_W1, 2015).

--- **this demonstrates well that it’s not about knowledge only, but the “place” of knowledge – the politics of *knowledge into use*.**

– for further discussion



- Who is IPBES for, what is it trying to achieve?
 - Be careful to not simplify and assume linearity – more data does not equal policy change!

“arguments for the Platform’s success or failure in conforming to norms of independence, credibility, legitimacy, relevance, or otherwise, will be inescapably relative to certain normative positions on who and what the Platform is for” (Montana, 2016:10)

Conclusions - Outstanding EE regional needs



- Time – to encourage and harness more people; for the use of “different” data sources; to be able to participate and complete the work
- Involvement with civil society groups – flow of engagement, information between/within regions different
- Networking and outreach platforms

Thank you



Please get in touch:

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