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Initial work programme of the Platform

Preliminary review of the motivations for participating in Platform assessments

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note, prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre on behalf of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, contains a preliminary review of the motivations for participating in assessments of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, building on discussion that took place during the workshop on the thematic content of the first work programme of the Platform, held in Copenhagen from 16 to 18 January 2012; the report of the workshop is contained in document UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/INF/8. The annex has been reproduced as received, without formal editing.

* IPBES/1/1.



Annex

PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF THE MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN IPBES ASSESSMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper aims to inform discussions concerning the participation of experts in potential IPBES assessments, using interview responses to illustrate the positive and negative incentives to participate in assessments. The ideas of positive incentives – a benefit of participating in IPBES assessments – and negative incentives – the costs of participation – are used to frame the discussion in this paper. The likelihood of any expert participating in IPBES assessments is likely to depend on the balance they, or their employer, perceives between these positive and negative incentives. In order to attract the best qualified experts to contribute the right incentives need to be offered and, at the same time, the extent of disincentives must be as small as possible, so that the balance is positive for these experts. The discussions and recommendations in this paper are taken from members of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI), a network of organisations all working in fields related to IPBES. Hence, the conclusions of this paper should be representative of many of the experts that could make useful contributions to IPBES assessments.

For a sample of 15 interviewees based in Cambridge the balance of incentives is mostly positive for low-intensity inputs (reviewers, authors and contributors), although this balance becomes slightly negative for the more time-intensive roles (Lead Authors, Co-ordinating Lead Authors). The following are the six most significant recommendations from interviewees that would reduce the extent of negative incentives and increase the positive incentives of participating in IPBES assessments.

- **Communication of Potential Impact:** Evaluate and communicate the way in which assessments make a difference to environmental policy-making, so as to encourage wide participation in development and delivery of assessments. If experts do not feel that an assessment will have a policy impact they are likely to decline an invitation to participate.
- **Research and Interest relevance:** Ensure experts are asked for targeted inputs, related to their specialism, and explore ways in which ideas can be exchanged between academics.
- **Compensation for Time:** Explore ways to allow for some sort of financial compensation for intensive time commitments, so that key potential participants do not have to decline because existing paid work already fills their diary or because there is no funding to pay their wages through the 'project' of assessment input.
- **Timetabling:** Set firm, realistic timetables for assessments well in advance of the start dates for work so that participants have time to make room for input to assessments in their work schedules.
- **Gaining Recognition:** Explore ways in which assessment inputs could be translated into academic papers, as assessment outputs are not valued as much as academic research for university experts. Additionally, clarify how organisations will be acknowledged, because building profile is an important positive incentive for non-university participants and their organisations.
- **Beneficial Networking:** Ensure that a large and representative network of experts is created and used, because many participants will respond positively if they can raise their profile with a wide audience and also learn from a wide group of experts.

A – INTRODUCTION TO IPBES AND ASSESSMENTS

1. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was established on 21 April 2012 when representatives of consenting Governments adopted a resolution¹ to establish IPBES as an independent intergovernmental body. IPBES aims to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services, so as to improve the conservation and sustainable use of nature. This resolution outlines four main functions in order to achieve these goals:
 - a. Providing key scientific information needed for policymakers at appropriate scales, as well as supporting the creation of new knowledge through existing organisations, institutions and mechanisms.
 - b. Assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services at global and regional levels, potentially complemented by sub-regional and thematic assessments.
 - c. Providing policy-relevant tools to aid decision-makers.

¹ UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9

- d. Capacity-building to improve the use of and generation of scientific knowledge concerning biodiversity and ecosystem services.
2. This paper focuses on the role of scientists and other experts in the coordination and delivery of assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services (part b above). IPBES is likely to produce outputs similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Reports, the Global Environment Outlook (GEO), the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). This is likely to require expert participation in the process, as with other assessments. It is assumed that much of this expert participation will be on a voluntary basis – or at least not paid for directly by IPBES.
3. There were a range of different roles that experts could have played to support assessments, but most followed a similar division of responsibilities. Table 1 summarises the structure for the IPCC assessments, which is roughly similar to other assessments and is perhaps most similar in its purpose to IPBES. All of the IPCC roles are voluntary, but carry with them a varying degree of responsibility. Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs), for example, are charged with overall responsibility for the contents of each chapter, which contrasts with an author or contributor, who may only write one or two paragraphs of text.

Table 1: The responsibilities and time commitments of various roles in the IPCC assessment^a

<i>Role</i>	<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Time Commitment</i>
Coordinating Lead Author	Co-ordinate the content of the chapter they are assigned to	High
Lead Author	Produce the actual content of the chapter	High
Contributing Authors	Prepare some technical information and help where necessary	Low
Review Editor	Identify reviewers and ensure all comments are considered equally	Medium
Reviewers	-> Provide comments on drafts -> Some are chosen to review, others volunteer	Low

4. The way that experts may become involved specifically in IPBES assessments is yet to be finalised. For this study it will be assumed that the Plenary will choose to follow a similar structure to the IPCC and other assessments, as outlined in Table 1.

B – INCENTIVES AND DISINCENTIVES TO PARTICIPATE IN ASSESSMENTS

5. Early in 2012 the European Union Presidency and European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) convened a workshop in Copenhagen on 'The thematic content of the first IPBES work programme'. During that workshop participants identified a list of potential 'benefits' and 'disincentives' for expert participation in IPBES assessments. The idea underpinning these discussions was that there are certain benefits to participating in the assessment process which incentivise participation, and potential drawbacks which might disincentivise participation. For example, the prestige of becoming a lead author would draw some experts to play a role in a certain assessment, while others may not participate due to the

^a http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization_structure.shtml#_UMCvR-RdaQ <Accessed 29/11/2012>

associated time commitments. The full list of potential incentives and disincentives that the Copenhagen workshop produced is found in Box 1.

6. The likelihood of any expert participating in IPBES assessments is likely to depend on the balance they, or their employer, perceives between the positive and negative incentives. If the balance is in favour of the positive incentives, the expert is more likely to be willing to take part in global assessments and vice versa. If IPBES is to be able to make use of expert participation, positive incentives will need to outweigh negative incentives for a sufficiently large number of experts. In difficult economic times, and with a constantly increasing workload for many professionals, it may be less likely than in the past that the balance of incentives will be positive for many of these potential experts.

Box 1: Potential incentives and disincentives of participation in IPBES

➤ Incentives to participate:

- *Prestige* and opportunities to engage with peers in a project of scientific excellence
- Participating in something that can be seen to be having an impact and *making a difference*
- Ability to work on *something they consider important*, independently and without constraints
- Addressing questions of interest to them personally, and *relevant to their research interests*
- Contribution of their components to a *bigger picture*
- *Networking* opportunities
- *Grants*, scholarships and fellowships linked to IPBES, and potentially prizes

➤ Disincentives to participation:

- For senior scientists there is perhaps a disincentive to engage in a process where they have *not been engaged in developing the questions* that the process is addressing
- Meetings and discussion can take a *huge amount of time*, and intergovernmental processes can appear slow, unintelligible and uninviting to scientists and other knowledge holders
- Opportunities to engage can be *restricted if it is entirely voluntary*, so funding behind it is important - if not this can bring its own biases where only those able to afford to will participate
- Potential *lack of recognition for the contributions* that individual scientists make by institutions that employ them, where the value of doing so is unclear and the institution supports the cost
- It may be possible for incentives to be set up by research funding agencies, but at present *how incentives might be established is unclear*
- Lack of clarity on how to participate

Source: EPBRS, 2012. *The thematic content of the first IPBES work programme*. University of Copenhagen, 16-18 January 2012, EPBRS.

7. As yet there has been no research to expand on the discussions held at the Copenhagen workshop on the incentives and disincentives of participating in IPBES. This paper aims to address this gap, elaborating on the incentives and disincentives outlined in Box 1. An understanding of the balance and weighting of incentives and disincentives of participation in IPBES assessments for potential expert assessors could help IPBES during its discussions of future work programmes, so that the right incentives can be offered and, at the same time, the extent of disincentives can be reduced.

8. Specifically, the paper aims to provide preliminary answers to the following questions:
 - a. Which positive and negative incentives of participating in PBES assessments would potential participants respond to?
 - b. Do individuals who have participated in previous relevant assessments have observations on the best practices for promoting engagement from those assessments?
 - c. Are there any relevant incentives or disincentives that the Copenhagen workshop missed?
9. The paper concludes with a summary of the findings and recommendations for IPBES.

C – METHOD

10. This study used semi-structured interviews to investigate the opinions of a range of experts regarding incentives and disincentives of participation in global assessments. Using this strategy allows a more open exploration of issues than would be achieved if a questionnaire were used, allowing new ideas to come forward that were not considered in Box 1 or during the research design. At the same time, this format permits an in-depth discussion of the list of incentives and disincentives produced by the Copenhagen workshop. Moreover, open interviews produce a more narrative-based description of an individual's experiences and opinions, as opposed to a closed set of answers produced by a survey. Interviews were recorded (if the participant consented) to verify that notes made during the interview were correct and represented the opinions of the interviewee.
11. Towards the end of each interview a worksheet was given to the participant, on which they marked which positive and negative incentives would be important for them if they were deciding whether to participate in an IPBES assessment. As such the responses are hypothetical and not predictive e.g. ticking 'research overlap' as a possible positive incentive means that the participant would respond positively *if* the assessment related to their research and interests and not whether they think it will at this point in time. The options available on the worksheet are based on the statements in Box 1, but were modified following pilot interviews as the respondents wished to be more specific about what the incentive related to. A copy of the worksheet is presented in Appendix 1. This was intended as a quick summary activity to follow the main discussion of incentives, so analysis of worksheet responses provides an introductory context for the more in-depth, qualitative discussion which is based on the conversations that formed the bulk of each interview. Two interviews were not conducted face to face so the worksheet could not be completed; hence there are only 13 responses to the worksheet, whereas there are 15 respondents considered in the main discussion of incentives.
12. Appropriate respondents were identified within the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI), a partnership of organisations based in and around Cambridge, United Kingdom that monitor and study biodiversity and implement conservation schemes. CCI aims to "secure a sustainable future for biodiversity and society through an effective partnership of leaders in research, education, policy and practice"³. Member organisations include⁴:
 - A number of departments of the University of Cambridge

³ <http://www.conservation.cam.ac.uk/cambridge-conservation-initiative-cci> (Accessed 7/12/2012)

⁴ <http://www.conservation.cam.ac.uk/cci-collaboration> (Accessed 7/12/2012)

- Department of Zoology
 - Department of Plant Sciences
 - Department of Geography
 - Department of Land Economy
 - The Judge Business School
 - The Cambridge Programme for Sustainable Leadership
 - UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre
 - International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
 - TRAFFIC
 - Birdlife International
 - The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
 - Flora and Fauna International
 - British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
 - Tropical Biology Association (TBA)
 - Cambridge Conservation Forum (CCF)
13. These organisations are respected for their level of expertise and often contribute to national and international discussions concerning a wide array of topics related to biodiversity, conservation and ecosystem services⁵. The breadth of expertise covers a range of different disciplines (from Human Geography and Economics to Plant Biology) and geographical areas. CCI organisation staff members have previously contributed to the global environmental assessments noted in paragraph 2, and many CCI staff members are likely to be asked to contribute to IPBES assessments, making this an ideal sample group. The respondents were chosen, firstly, because they had expertise that could be relevant to an IPBES assessment. Secondly, respondents were picked to represent the range of previous environmental assessments (IPCC, GEO, GBO, MA and the UK National Ecosystem Assessment), utilising experiences and best practices from previous assessments. Participants who have not previously participated in assessments were also included to assess their opinions on joining an international assessment for the first time. Thirdly potential candidates were chosen in line with operating principle h (relating to *"an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach"*⁶) so that there was a balance of social and natural scientists. There was an approximate 50-50 split of members of the University of Cambridge and non-university organisations. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and the above criteria the sample is not gender balanced.
14. Direct quotes from interviewees are referenced anonymously, with each respondent assigned a unique code beginning with the letter 'R' followed by a random number between 1 and 15 (as there were 15 respondents in total). As two of these interviews were not conducted face to face, there are only 13 responses to the worksheet. Appendix 2 indicates the different assessment experience of each participant and whether or not they belong to the University of Cambridge.

D – RESULTS

15. This section will begin by analysing the responses to the worksheets, providing a quantitative context for the more detailed discussion that follows, based on the conversations in the interviews. Recommendations from participants are considered alongside the commentaries they provided, indicating some of the preferred mechanisms for enabling participation in IPBES

⁵ ibid

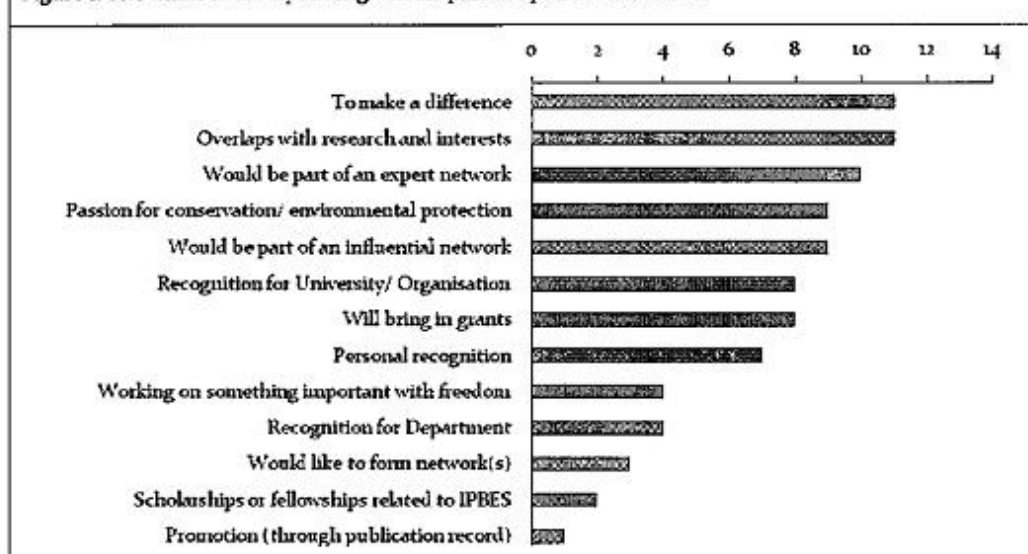
⁶ UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9

assessments. Additionally, reflections on past experiences with global assessments (such as IPCC, GEO, GBO, MA) are incorporated to highlight some of the best practices from those assessments and some of the issues to steer away from. The discussion section is ordered into themes based on the main points of discussion in the interviews. Sections D.2 to D.7 cover themes related to Box 1, with section D.8 looking at some of the novel points raised by participants.

D.1 – WORKSHEET RESPONSES

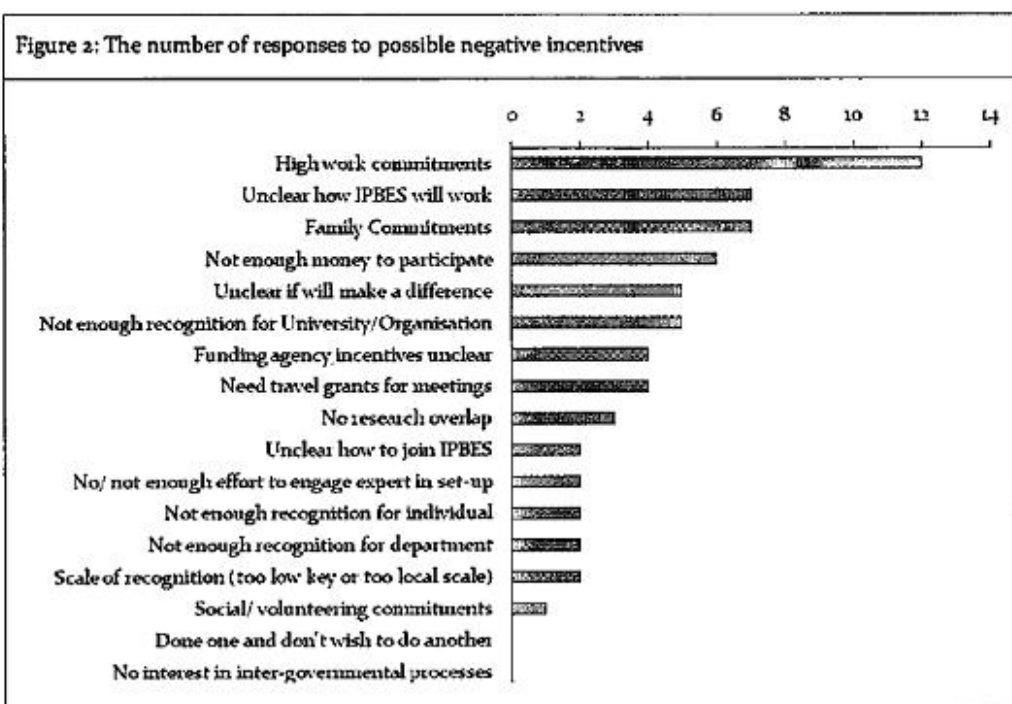
16. The responses of the 13 participants who completed a worksheet are analysed in this introductory section, illustrating which incentives and disincentives would be important when considering participation in potential IPBES assessments. As mentioned in paragraph 11 the worksheet answers indicate the level of response to certain hypothetical situations; i.e. ticking 'recognition for department' means the respondent would respond to that if their department was recognised, rather than because that is how they perceive it currently.
17. For the potential positive incentives Figure 1 indicates that the most important considerations would be about an assessment's potential impact and how close it was to their interests and research. An expert's passion for conservation or environmental protection is also a very large positive incentive. In terms of 'networking opportunities', many experts would respond positively if assessment participation meant being part of an influential network and an expert network, although the process of actually forming networks through IPBES is not viewed with similar importance. "Recognition for University/ Organisation" would be a positive incentive for eight out of the 13 respondents, with seven responding positively to personal recognition. This would suggest that the way in which contributions are acknowledged in potential IPBES assessments may attract some experts to participate. Grants would also be a positive incentive for eight respondents, indicating that a fairly large number of experts would react positively to financial support.

Figure 1: The number of responses given for possible positive incentives



18. The most important negative incentive would be high work commitments, with 12 out of 13 respondents (as shown in Figure 2) indicating that this would be a reason not to participate in

IPBES assessments. Family commitments would also be negative incentive. As seven out of the 13 respondents ticked "unclear how IPBES will work", it would appear that some experts will react negatively if it is not clear to them exactly how an assessment would work. Similarly, some experts may react negatively if it is unclear whether the assessment will make a difference. There could also be a fairly negative response if there is no financial compensation for participation (6 out of 13 ticked "not enough money to participate") and if organisations are not acknowledged fully for their contributions.



19. In this section some of the incentives have been discussed in both a positive and a negative way. For example, experts responded both positively and negatively to the idea of recognition, indicating that the right level of recognition may be a positive incentive, but an insufficient level of recognition could be a negative incentive. The subsequent discussion of incentives incorporates the positive and negative reactions together to establish the idea of a balance. In some cases (as indicated in the introduction to each sub-section) there are only positive interpretations and in others mostly negative.

D.2 – PASSION AND INTERESTS

20. As outlined in Box 1 and demonstrated in Figure 1, there are fairly important positive incentives to participate in IPBES assessments relating to an expert's current work interests or their passion for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. The main points of discussion concerning an expert's interests revolved around "how closely aligned it [assessment work] is to the work we already have" (R7). This can be split further into two strands that emerged from the interview.

- a. In the first strand, participants suggested that assessment work was an important way to use their expertise to make specific contributions relating to their specialism. University academics in particular spoke of "uniquely identifiable" (R15) inputs, using their specialism to improve the understanding of a topic, while non-university

participants tended to express this in terms of the subject or issue their organisation targets specifically. This stands to reason: an expert in one field is not going to be able to contribute effectively to a section outside of their specialism, a reason that five participants gave for potential non-participation. The positive incentive felt here is that contributing to IPBES assessments would be a chance to mobilise their existing knowledge to improve global understanding of a topic.

- b. In the second strand, participants discussed the “*intellectual payoff*” (R₁) from the process, specifically the exposure to new ideas which could contribute to new lines of work or further support existing work. University lecturers, for example, hoped to be able to “*feed back into teaching...and research*” (R₉) and to “*draw on examples from other parts of the world*” (R₁₂). Non-university participants also saw a positive incentive in exchanging ideas, with one respondent even noting that lack of two-way information exchange was an issue with their previous involvement with assessments.
21. In terms of conservation and environmental protection, most respondents quickly jumped to a discussion of policy impact. In this sense, the ‘passion’ for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity would be an “*obvious...motivating force*” (R₁₅) but it is the impact that an expert could have on policies to improve environmental protection and the conservation and sustainable use of species that is the positive incentive. As such there is further discussion of ‘passion for conservation/ environmental protection’ in the next section (paragraph 24).
22. There were two main recommendations made to highlight this passion and interest incentive, both of which are related to discussions below so will be dealt with there. The first is to clarify whether underlying research completed by researchers could be used in academic papers after the assessment period, which is discussed in paragraph 32. The second involved inviting as wide a range of experts to participate in assessments as possible, which is elaborated in paragraph 28a.

D.3 – MAKING AN IMPACT

23. ‘Making a difference’ and having some influence on the policy process, as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, can be both positive and negative incentives for experts to participate in assessments. For many of those interviewed the ability of their contribution, and the report overall, to have an impact on the decision-making process would be a key positive incentive, although some would react negatively if they thought that the assessment may not have an impact.
24. When discussing ‘making a difference’, 10 participants were very clear that they wished to make a “*transformational difference*” (R₄) to global environmental policy through their participation in IPBES assessments. Being able to “*interact with governments at the highest level*” (R₈) and “*having a positive impact on conservation*” (R₃), or words to that effect, were used very often. These sentiments were highlighted as a benefit of previous assessment participation. For five participants this was the most important potential positive incentive for participation. The positive incentive here, as mentioned in paragraph 21, is “*to be doing something that’s policy related*” (R₂). The converse was stated in eight interviews: non-participation will occur “*if I don’t think it’s going to be useful*” (R₇). As such, it was suggested that IPBES communicates how it “*navigates to be the one as opposed to another assessment*” (R₄) and makes clear how its assessments will interface with policy-makers, in order to clarify the extent of this positive incentive and remove concerns about a lack of impact (a negative incentive). Communicating the extent of impact when decisions are taken would also increase this incentive.

25. A different kind of impact that some experts wish to make is to “influence significantly the content” of a chapter (R6). For four of the fifteen interviewees “how much voice I feel I have” (R8) would be an incentive; some experts would react positively to the ability to discuss issues and add a certain school of thought to a paper, which may previously have been left out. This takes the discussion in paragraph 20a a step further, with these experts wishing to contribute their expertise in order to ensure the assessment is truly inter-disciplinary and representative of all the different positions within each discipline. Three of the four who hold this view are from the University of Cambridge, so this may be related to each of them identifying with and wishing to represent a specific field within their discipline. Similarly, three interviewees, each from non-university organisations, suggested that their organisation, and others similar to them, were trying to get “a seat at the table” (R4) so that they could potentially have some ‘voice’ on the IPBES process. The positive incentive for these interviewees is to be able to bring their existing knowledge to the process, in order that as much evidence as possible is available for use in the assessment and that none is left out. A more cynical interpretation of this discussion would suggest that some participants may introduce bias by focussing the content on issues particular to them, potentially compromising the objectivity of the assessment output.
26. To conclude there is a large desire to provide meaningful inputs to the development of global policy and to ensure that “governments...use the best available information” (R10) when planning environmental management and protection. If IPBES cannot demonstrate how it makes an impact on policy, and how large that impact will be, then many experts may refrain from participating. Additionally, some experts wish to make an impact on the content itself, in order that a certain position or existing pieces of research are not left out of the assessment. In some cases this may increase the multidisciplinary nature of the output, but in others it may lead to the over-representation of some positions on a topic, at the expense of others. As such, IPBES could consider the ways in which it incorporates the available evidence and the range of disciplines, schools and organisations that may wish to contribute without introducing bias which could compromise the objectivity of the assessment.

D.4 – NETWORKING

27. ‘Networking opportunities’ were noted as a positive incentive in Box 1 and, as Figure 1 indicates, it is one of the more important positive incentives. However, there is very little negative response for this incentive so this sub-section may appear to be very biased towards positive incentives. As the discussion below elaborates, many interviewees will respond positively if participation in IPBES assessment also: provides a chance to meet and learn from other experts; allows an expert to build their profile; and involves participants from across the world, particularly from developing countries.
28. For 11 of the 15 experts interviewed, the “social process...has value” (R9) and would be an important factor when making their decision on whether or not to participate in an assessment. This value is threefold:
- Firstly, there is value in meeting new people. Through previous assessment experience, participants “met some interesting people that [they] wouldn’t otherwise have met” (R8) and gained new insights into their field. Especially for university academics, the chance to “feed back into teaching...and research” (R9) would be a positive incentive. This follows the discussion in paragraph 20b, where this incentive of ‘intellectual payoff’ was mentioned by many participants. It should be noted that “typically the people who will be involved [in global assessments] will get to know each other at other meetings” (R11),

so the value of networking through IPBES may not be as large for those already involved in global assessments. Further, one participant noted that there were already "so many opportunities" (R15) to network in Cambridge that networking through IPBES was not a particularly important incentive, while another noted that networks could sometimes be "a distraction" (R13). Hence, the positive incentive of networking is weighted differently by each expert depending on their previous experience and existing access to networks.

- b. Secondly, networks could be "helpful for profile" (R13). On a personal level, two of the 15 interviewees would respond positively if they could "raise [their] profile in a group of new people" (R3) and gain contacts which may provide routes to future work. On an organisational level, three participants wished to draw attention to the networks that they act as 'gatekeepers' to. The positive incentive here is to use networking experiences to build a profile that helps gain future work.
 - c. Thirdly, participants hoped that the networking experience would increase the effectiveness of IPBES. Six participants expressed the view that, by working with many partners from across the world, more effective action to reduce biodiversity loss may occur in addition to creating a truly global picture of the knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Linked to this, three participants noted that collaboration with experts from developing countries could aid the capacity building element of the IPBES work programme. The positive incentive in this case is to collaborate to increase the effectiveness of current and future IPBES-related actions. Both of these points are covered in IPBES operating principles a, d and f⁷, indicating that experts are likely respond positively to IPBES assessments if these principles are kept in mind.
29. Generally network-based incentives are viewed as positive, but are not necessarily of paramount importance. Suggestions that were made to increase this incentive include mechanisms for wide participation, including both junior and senior researchers in the assessment process as well as a variety of academics from different disciplines and different geographical locations (R12). This would help increase the positive incentives listed above: learning from others, raising profile and increasing the effectiveness of IPBES' activities.

D.5 – PRESTIGE AND RECOGNITION

30. The prestige of participating in an assessment is given as a positive incentive to participate in Box 1, while a "lack of recognition for contributions" was given as a negative incentive. Figures 1 and 2 highlight that experts would respond positively if they and their organisation were acknowledged but may react negatively if this recognition is insufficient. This sub-section discusses these reactions in more detail, indicating what part of the prestige of an IPBES assessment the respondent would like to draw upon (i.e. is it for themselves or for their organisation). This section also considers the lack of recognition by university authorities of participation in assessments and the potential negative incentive this constitutes. In fact, the importance of recognition and prestige appears to be significantly different for university respondents and non-university respondents, so each group will be discussed in turn.
31. Non-university organisations would see participation in assessments as beneficial for adding "profile and credibility" (R5) to the organisation. The positive incentive here, as mentioned in paragraph 28b, is to improve an organisation's profile by participating in assessments, which in

⁷ UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9

turn helps maintain a competitive edge. Only one university-based respondent mentioned the value of their contribution to the university, while five non-university respondents pointed out the value for their organisation.

32. In terms of personal recognition, there were two divergent views. R3, a fairly senior participant in a previous assessment, was *"quite upset"* about being left out of the acknowledgements list. Another participant echoed this sentiment with regard to IPBES, hoping for *"some acknowledgement"* (R6). On the other hand, two other participants were not particularly concerned about individual recognition, so long as they could demonstrate on a CV that they were involved; however, these participants were interested in taking more minor roles. The positive incentive here is to be associated with the assessment on a personal level, although this may become negative if experts do not feel they will be acknowledged fully. Recommendations to maximise the positive incentive involved extensive lists of every contributor to the report, although one respondent suggested introducing some differentiation so that the differing levels of contributions could be more easily identified.
33. University academics, on the other hand, expressed concern that assessment participation *"doesn't really seem to count"* (R8) in the eyes of research councils or university bodies. While academics can gain improved *"reputational standing"* (R12) from assessments, they are expected, first and foremost, to contribute to high impact academic journals, especially at a research-intensive establishment like the University of Cambridge. One suggestion made in order to overcome this was the *"promise of a paper"* (R3), the idea that assessment contributions could also end up in academic journals. For some chapters in an assessment this may be possible, but others (particularly the synthesis) often do not translate well into academic publications. It will be interesting to monitor the progress of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) which will be used to assess research quality of UK Universities from 2014. In this, 20% of the overall grade for a university's research quality will be based on *"Impact"* and the *"reach and significance"*⁸. As R12 suggested, assessment participation could provide a *"compelling impact story"* so would, under the REF, 'count' and be valued more highly than it is currently. Hence, this change may lead to academics responding in a less negative way to assessment participation.
34. In summary, the prestige and recognition of participating in an IPBES assessment is a fairly important positive incentive. Interviewees from non-university organisations would respond positively to recognition for their organisation, with personal recognition secondary to this but still important. The main recommendation for this group was to make it clear from the beginning how contributions will be acknowledged and to ensure that the organisation is mentioned in some way. University-based interviewees, however, explained that they would not benefit from recognition for assessment work because these outputs are not valued very highly by universities or research assessment bodies. The main recommendation for this group would be to make inputs 'journal-friendly', either at an individual level (so experts can use their experience for their own research) or for a whole chapter. Alternatively, IPBES could liaise with governments and try to change the funding and appraisal structures that prioritise journal output, although this would be a long-term and complex process.

D.6 – MONEY AND TIME

35. This section looks at issues of time and resources, as they are closely interlinked, in that in order to have the time to participate in assessments a certain amount of money may be

⁸ <http://www.ref.ac.uk/panels/assessment/criteriaandleveldefinitions/> <Accessed 8/1/2013>

necessary to 'buy' that time. This section also analyses the discussion of the absolute amount of time required by the assessments and whether this would prove to be a negative incentive on its own. Finally, it considers whether money is an outright incentive to participate or simply a means by which to put assessment work on a par with existing paid commitments. As indicated in Figures 1 and 2, many experts could respond negatively to the level of time and money related incentives, but may respond positively to the provision of grants.

36. As indicated in Figure 2, the workload of participants can pose a significant impediment to assessment participation. To participate in assessments there would be a *"trade-off between types of work"* (R1) or some discussions about *"where to devote our energies"* (R5) so as to minimise the impact on time spent on core work. Some participants of previous assessments, mostly at the contributor level, noted that they had spent *"a couple of nights on"* (R2) assessment work so as to contribute without compromising on time allocated to core work; this would not be possible for those making significant contributions (i.e. CLAs or Lead Authors). Not everyone was in a position to trade-off time though: six participants suggested they *"can't compromise"* (R15) on core work-time at all during certain parts of the year (e.g. teaching periods, deadlines for existing work). It was suggested that sufficient *"lead-in time"* of at least *"four months"* (R7) would allow assessment time to be *"factored into workplans"* (R6). This would reduce the incidence of negative responses to invitations to participate in IPBES assessments due to an expert's existing work commitments.
37. Related to this is a discussion of the amount of time demanded and whether enough time is allocated to complete the task. Many contributors to previous assessments suggested that the time demands were always *"underestimated"* (R1), so if there is *"not enough time to do a good job"* (R10) then the expert would not participate. An impractical timetable may then lead to deadlines being missed, setting back subsequent deadlines. If organisations and individuals have planned to this initial timetable, any major changes may clash with existing commitments and preclude participation. A fixed but practical timetable provided well in advance of the commencement of responsibilities is most likely to reduce time-related negative incentives and increase the likelihood of participation.
38. The discussion of time is directly related to money: the amount of time a particular expert can give to an assessment is *"to do with what you're paid for"* (R8). Academics are paid to teach and do research, so most of their time is spent on those things. Non-university organisations are often reliant on project-based funding to pay for wages and other overhead costs, so the work undertaken by staff is related to what projects are funding time and when their deadlines are. Pro bono assessment work for both of these groups is problematic if significant time inputs are needed, because either their calendars are already filled with paid work commitments or there is no money to cover their wages for this time. As such there is a suggestion that IPBES *"offset some of [their] current responsibilities"* (R8), in effect purchasing the time of a participant, if significant time inputs are required. In doing this *"space is created"* (R10) in the participant's diary and in the finances of an organisation, which is likely to minimise negative responses (due to a lack of funds) and maximise positive responses.
39. However, this is not to say that payment is required for *all* participation. Many participants suggested that the costs of *"minor inputs"* (in terms of time and money) would be *"bearable"* (R14), as they would only require a small time input but still offer access to many of the benefits outlined above, such as prestige, recognition, making an impact and following one's interests. In this case it could be argued that many organisations are willing to pay a price (paying staff to work on non-funded work) so that they can receive some of the benefits of participation.

Importantly, 11 out of 15 interviewees suggested that a lack of financial resources would make it "difficult to put a significant amount of effort in" (R2) to assessments, meaning that CLA and Lead Author positions may be out of their reach. As the time inputs become more demanding an organisation may find it less easy to find the money to pay staff who are not contributing to paid outputs, hence will preclude participation.

40. The funding required, in this case, is largely going to be for salaries. This could be not only for the time of the expert, as outlined above, but to hire research assistants for a few months who can provide much of the underlying data necessary for the expert to make their contribution. All participants suggested that they were "not doing it [previous and future assessments] for any kind of financial gain" (R9). In terms of travel, it was suggested that some organisations may be willing to pay for some travel. In fact three participants pointed to their previous assessment experience to show that travel to local meetings was often paid for by an organisation's core budget. A related suggestion from three participants asked if IPBES may be able to pioneer web-based conference calls in order to reduce both environmental footprint and costs of travel.
41. In summary time and money, together, are the most important considerations when deciding the extent of an expert's participation. The potential benefits outlined in the previous sections are large enough that many organisations would allow their staff to work on them for free, but only for a limited amount of time (i.e. as a contributor or reviewer). Large time requirements on their own may be a negative incentive (if it impinges on existing work, family or social commitments), but will also increase the cost of participation and may become so great that participation is stopped. Experts would respond positively to grants to hire research assistants, to 'purchase' time in an expert's calendar or for long-distance or recurring travel. Participants are also likely to respond negatively to large time commitments with little monetary compensation. They may also respond negatively if they feel there is not enough time to complete an assessment. The conclusions of this section are of particular importance for the recruitment of CLAs and Lead Authors as there were largely negative responses to the time and cost implications of these positions.

D.7 – CLARITY AND COMMUNICATION OF IPBES OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE

42. This section will discuss issues of clarity, where respondents responded negatively to a lack of knowledge. Several of the statements from Box 1 are considered here, such as "how to participate", lack of engagement and "how incentives might be established". As shown in Figure 2, a lack of information on how assessments work or whether they have an impact would lead to negative responses. This sub-section may appear to be unbalanced as participants discussed their potential negative reactions to a lack of information much more than the positive reactions to full information.
43. Considering that there are still a lot of decisions to be made with regards to the structure of IPBES assessments, many participants did not have much to discuss with regards to this topic: as R7 mentioned, "it's all up for grabs". The most common clarification, sought by seven interviewees, would be regarding the involvement of those who are not currently involved in the IPBES discussions, particularly social scientists, the private sector and some stakeholders. The current lack of information is already regarded as "a turn-off" (R5) for these groups, so if this is still the case when asking for participation in assessments then there may be a few negative responses. Many participants suggested they would react positively to a wide engagement strategy explaining the value of the assessments and engaging a range of experts who are not currently part of the process, even though they may be able to offer a lot to assessments.

44. The only other point of discussion was regarding duplication, both of content and of work. On the one hand, four participants discussed the relationship of IPBES assessments to previous assessments and suggested that a negative incentive would exist if it was felt that IPBES was simply *"rediscovering the wheel"* (R13), instead of actually adding value to the suite of assessments currently available. The *"catalogue of assessments"* and *"critical review of assessments"*⁹ currently being undertaken by IPBES should go some way to ensuring these concerns are not felt. On the other hand, three participants would respond negatively if it was not clear that their input was actually needed: if *"other people are active [in IPBES assessments] and we're comfortable that they'll do a good job"* (R5) then there would be no need to contribute as well and duplicate effort. IPBES may want to consider ways in which to set up a transparent process so that organisations are aware of who is involved in which part of the assessment, so that they can best identify where they can contribute without duplication and reduce the incidence of negative responses.

D.8 – OTHER ISSUES RAISED

45. Thus far, the analysis has been structured roughly along the lines of the incentives and disincentives noted in Box 1 from the Copenhagen workshop. This section outlines some of the issues raised or recommendations made that were not picked up at this workshop.
46. **Strong leadership of the process** was raised by five participants. Three drew on previous assessment experience, commending their CLAs and the technical support staff for *"keep[ing] you on track"* (R9) and providing guidance and training where necessary to help the completion of the report. Secondly, a good *"administrative and technical framework"* (R11) was praised as it made it significantly easier to draw out the expertise and enthusiasm of experts. Furthermore, one participant suggested that the *"independent facilitation service"* (R14) provided by previous secretariats was useful in ensuring the impartiality of the output: this is anticipated to be replicated by IPBES¹⁰, so would meet some positive reaction. To summarise, respondents would respond positively to good CLAs, technical support and an independent secretariat that successfully manages the meeting of scientists with policy-makers.
47. **The role of non-economic social scientists** was discussed by three participants, who feel that some of the previous assessments they have worked on are full of *"just economists and ecologists"* (R14). The desire to include as wide a range of disciplines as possible, as noted in paragraph 28a, contributes to the learning benefit available from the network of experts. Two participants went further in saying that lawyers, geographers and political scientists (in particular) should be much more heavily involved at the highest level, as well as at the contribution stage, to ensure that the assessment is *framed* by a representative panel and not just *written* by a representative body of experts. Thus, some interviewees suggested that they would respond positively to a truly multi-disciplinary group of participants.
48. **The incorporation of different knowledge systems**, outside of a Western, academia-driven, peer-reviewed culture, was discussed by two participants. For these two (both of whom were members of the university), participation would help to represent the full extent of global expertise and also aid the capacity building arm of IPBES' work programme, as discussed in

⁹ UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, paragraph 7(a) and 7(b)

¹⁰ UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9

paragraph 28c. Positive response may result from the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and experts from developing countries, which is contained in operating principle f¹¹.

49. One participant expressed concern relating to sceptics and other people who may oppose the work of IPBES and "attempt to destroy careers" (Ru) in an effort to derail the process. In essence, there may be a case where contributing to IPBES assessments may be a reason for others to target participants (see for example 'climate-gate' and its impact on the University of East Anglia¹²). IPBES may need to consider whether this threatens the impact its assessments could make and what efforts it can take to engage a sceptic community that may wish to discredit those involved in the assessments.

E - SUMMARY

50. Following this survey, some recommendations can be made regarding the provision of incentives which would entice some of the best experts in the world to participate in IPBES assessments. The recommendations are presented below and are ordered according to the level of importance respondents placed on each issue.

- a. **Communication of Potential Impact:** Evaluate and communicate the way in which assessments make a difference to environmental policy-making, so as to encourage wide participation in development and delivery of assessments. If experts do not feel that an assessment will have a policy impact they are likely to decline an invitation to participate.
- b. **Research and Interest relevance:** Ensure experts are asked for targeted inputs, related to their specialism, and explore ways in which ideas can be exchanged between academics.
- c. **Compensation for Time:** Explore ways to allow for some sort of financial compensation for intensive time commitments, so that key potential participants do not have to decline because existing paid work already fills their diary or because there is no funding to pay their wages through the 'project' of assessment input. As mentioned in paragraph 39, ¹³ participants feel that a lack of financial resources may mean they are only able to participate in the less time-demanding roles (contributor, reviewer).
- d. **Timetabling:** Set firm, realistic timetables for assessments well in advance of the start dates for work so that participants have time to make room for input to assessments in their work schedules.
- e. **Gaining Recognition:** Explore ways in which assessment inputs could be translated into academic papers, as assessment outputs are not valued as much as academic research for university experts. Additionally, clarify how organisations will be acknowledged, because building organisational profile is an important positive incentive for non-university participants.
- f. **Beneficial Networking:** Ensure that a large and representative network of experts is created and used, because many participants will respond positively if they can raise

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-18385500> <Accessed 21/12/2012>

their profile with a wide audience and learn from a wide group of experts. This network would also help to create a global picture of biodiversity and ecosystem knowledge and potentially contribute to capacity building exercises.

- g. **Provide Leadership and Support:** The quality of technical support and leadership of author teams can ease the assessment production process significantly, with some participants pointing to their previous good experience with the IPCC and the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA).
 - h. **Reducing Duplication:** Set-up relationships with existing global assessments to reduce duplication of content and investigate ways of allowing organisations to plan where their most valuable contributions can be, so as to minimise duplication of effort.
 - i. **Full participation:** Interviewees would respond positively if IPBES assessment participants spanned a variety of ages, genders, nationalities, disciplines and knowledge systems. This would help gain the widest coverage of knowledge and provide the maximum learning benefit to participants. These sentiments are in line with existing IPBES operating principles (a, d, f, h and i)¹⁹.
 - j. **Communication of participation mechanisms:** Make clear how individuals and organisations can become involved in assessments, including on what the various roles and responsibilities might be, and communicate this widely.
 - k. **Preparing for Sceptics:** Consider whether contributions to IPBES assessments may lead to targeting from 'vested interests' in order to discredit outputs and outline a communications policy to engage sceptics and reduce the risk of another 'Climategate'.
51. When asked if they were interested in participating, 11 out of 15 said yes, while the remaining four replied 'it depends'. This would suggest that there is a large pool of potential participants, but there are some who need to hear more information (on time demands, compensation etc) before committing to contribute to an IPBES assessment. While the balance of incentives was generally positive, most respondents were wary of the potential time and money aspects when deciding how intensive their participation would be. After illustrating the effectiveness of assessments and how this relates to an expert's specialism, the main incentive IPBES can provide is some sort of monetary compensation for the amount of time that is needed to complete the more demanding roles (CLAs, Lead Authors).
52. It should be noted that this survey was conducted with a small section of a wide network of conservation and environment related experts so will not apply to every potential participant in the world. However, it is likely to reflect the diversity of opinions held in 'Western' universities and NGOs, given the wide mix of organisations sampled.

F – FURTHER RESEARCH

53. This research project was conducted over the space of a short, four week period and sampled only a small section of one network of organisations working in fields related to IPBES. While the recommendations above should be broadly representative of potential experts, this study has by no means captured the whole variety of opinions on the incentives and disincentives of participating in assessments that exists globally. Another much larger project, looking at

¹⁹ UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9

experts from a variety of backgrounds, would be valuable and might also benefit from any clarifications arising from decisions taken at the IPBES plenary. This project is likely to be web-based in order to elicit a wider range of responses, allowing a better analysis of the impacts of geography, membership of different disciplines, gender and experience on the perception of incentives.

APPENDIX 1 – THE WORKSHEET GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS

POSSIBLE INCENTIVES		
Theme	Incentive	
Passion/ interests	To make a difference	
	Passion for conservation/ environmental protection	
	Research/ work overlap	
	Other:	
Networks	Would be part of an influential network	
	Would be part of an expert network	
	Will be able to form network(s)	
	Other:	
Organisation	Work on something important with freedom	
	Other:	
Prestige/ recognition	Personal recognition	
	Department recognition	
	University/ Organisation recognition	
	Promotion (through publication record)	
	Other:	
Money	Will bring in grants	
	Prizes	
	Scholarships or fellowships related to IPBES	
	Other:	
Other		

POSSIBLE DISINCENTIVES		
Theme	Incentive	
Passion/ interests	Done one and don't wish to do another	
	Not interested in inter-governmental process	
	No research/ work overlap	
	Other:	
Clarity	Unclear how to join IPBES	
	Unclear of how IPBES will work	
	Unclear if IPBES will make a difference	
	No/ not enough effort to engage experts in set-up	
	Funding agency incentives unclear	
	Other:	
Time	Family	
	Work commitments already very high	
	Social/ volunteering commitments	
	Other	
Prestige/ recognition	Not enough recognition for individual efforts	
	Not enough recognition for Department	
	Not enough recognition for University/ Organisation	
	Scale of recognition (too low key or local scale)	
	Other:	
Money	Not enough money to participate	
	Need travel grants to attend meetings	
	Other:	
Other		

APPENDIX 2 – PARTICIPANTS

Code	Organisation	Assessments
R ₁	Non-university	GEO, MA
R ₂	Non-university	NEA
R ₃	Non-university	NEA, GBO
R ₄	Non-university	GEO
R ₅	Non-university	None
R ₆	Non-university	GEO, GBO
R ₇	University	None
R ₈	University	NEA, MA
R ₉	University	IPCC
R ₁₀	Non-university	None
R ₁₁	University	IPCC
R ₁₂	University	None
R ₁₃	University	NEA
R ₁₄	Non-university	NEA, GBO
R ₁₅	University	None