

REPORT

WABES PROJECT FIRST REGIONAL WORKSHOP *“Establishing a West African experts network for contributing to IPBES work program”*



**Hotel la Nouvelle Pergola, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire
28 – 29 – 30 November 2017**

GENERAL REPORT

From November 28 to 30, 2017, the regional workshop of the WABES project was held at the Hotel La Nouvelle Pergola in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) "Establishing a West African experts network for contributing to IPBES work program".

Under the chairmanship of the President of the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny (UFHB), this workshop brought together biodiversity experts from various research institutions, the administration, and the civil society of about twenty countries. Its main objective was to facilitate networking among West African experts for the implementation of the work program of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). This workshop was also an opportunity to formally launch the activities of the WABES project in the West African region.

In accordance with the agenda, the workshop took place in three days, following three main steps:

- (1) speeches and communications (followed by discussions) in the plenary,
- (2) working groups that strongly marked the participatory nature of the workshop,
- (3) a visit to the scientific and innovation pole of the UFHB.

I- FIRST DAY

I-1 Speeches and communications

I-1.1 Addresses of the Opening Ceremony of the Workshop

The beginning of the opening ceremony was punctuated by a minute of silence in memory of Prof. Adourahamane Konaré, former Director General of Research and Innovation of Côte d'Ivoire and former founding member of the WABES project.

Following the presentation of the objectives and the program of the workshop, the opening ceremony of the workshop was marked by three speeches.

First, the word of welcome to the participants was pronounced by Prof. Adama Diawara, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, responsible for education, research and employment. Afterwards, Dr. Henning Sommer, coordinator of the WABES project, highlighted the importance of the project for the West African region before inviting all participants to get involved. Finally, Prof. Abdoulaye Sangaré, Vice-President of the UFHB in charge of Research and Technological Innovation, expressed the recognition and support of the UFHB to WABES and opened the workshop on behalf of the President of the University. In addition to the aforementioned authorities, the opening ceremony was attended by the Director General for Environment and Sustainable Development (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Côte d'Ivoire), the representative of the Director General for Research and Innovation (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Côte d'Ivoire), as well as the Africa representative of the IPBES International Bureau.

I-1.2 Communications

Before the various communications, the presentation of the participants of the workshop was made by country and by specialty in connection with the science-policy interface.

Presentation of IPBES

This presentation, made by Dr. Chimère Diaw, addressed the following six key questions that help to know and understand this intergovernmental platform:

1. What is IPBES?
2. Why is IPBES important?
3. What does IPBES do?
4. How is IPBES structured?
5. What are IPBES products?
6. How to engage in IPBES?

He concluded his talk by recalling that IPBES is an intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, set up in 2012 in response to states' request for getting objective scientific assessments of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services. It has 126-member countries and is an important tool as it is currently the only interface between science and policy. A special address was made to emphasize on the need for sensitizing non-member countries to join and get involved.

Presentation of the WABES project

It was done jointly by Dr. Sommer, Prof. Konaté and Dr. Da. WABES aims at facilitating the contribution of West Africa to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). WABES targets the 15 ECOWAS countries. It includes: (1) a Master's program entitled "Science-Policy Interface for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services", based in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire); (2) the organization of annual workshops with experts in biodiversity and ecosystem services in West Africa; and (3) the establishment of a network of experts from ECOWAS countries and beyond.

Presentation on the situation of Africa within IPBES and its assessment

This communication was made by Prof. Alfred Apau Oteng-Yeboah (African representative in the IPBES Bureau) who showed that the 126 IPBES member countries include 14 African states. Africa is also represented at various levels of the IPBES organizational chart. The assessment of Africa was presented by Dr. Cosmas Kombati-Lambini. He focused on the assessment of West Africa. Four evaluations are planned from 2014 to 2018. The evaluations covered 56 African countries. The assessment is important in Africa because the continent is losing many species, and the assessment should be extended to all ecosystems (sea, land, coast, ...). The evaluation has already been carried out and has focused on research priorities. Its key messages are available for policy makers.

I-2 Working Groups

The setting up of the groups was done based on linguistic affinities, so there was francophone, anglophone and bilingual groups. This first group interaction session allowed participants to get to know each other better and to express themselves on three key questions: (1) How to engage in IPBES as an expert? (2) what are the potential benefits of their involvement in IPBES? (3) How to finance your commitment in IPBES? Results of the working groups can be found in Appendix 5 of this report.

II- SECOND DAY

In addition to the working group, two rounds of presentations were held during the work of the second day.

II-1 First round of presentations

The first round of plenary presentations focused on sharing experience in engaging national experts on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Presentation on the experience of some West African countries by the IPBES national focal points

Focal points from some African countries (Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and The Gambia) presented their country's respective contributions to the IPBES work program.

Presentation of existing initiatives to strengthen the participation of African countries in IPBES (case of Morocco, presented by Dr. Yasmina EL BAHLOUL)

The success story in Morocco has inspired the participants and generated ideas on how to succeed in mobilizing at national and regional level for a better contribution to IPBES.

II-2 Working Groups

This day's group work allowed participants to reflect on how to engage West African institutions and experts and strategies for IPBES awareness raising in West Africa amongst scientists, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), policy makers and business in the IPBES work program. Results of the working groups can be found in Appendix 6 of this report.

II-3 Second round of presentations

The second round of plenary presentations focused on current initiatives to support IPBES: FRB presented by Dr. Agnes Hallosserie, NeFo by Dr. Kristina Raab, GIZ-ValueS by Dr. Katja Heubach.

These initiatives allowed participants to draw on models that work relatively well and that could help boost the contributions of different West African countries.

II-4 Visit of the Scientific and Innovation Center of the UFHB

All the structures of the pole have been visited with emphasis on the Biodiversity Museum.

III- THIRD DAY

The activities of the third day started with thematic working groups to reflect on the expectations and suggestions of the participants for the experts' network and the implementation of the WABES platform.

III-1 Working Groups

Participants were invited to answer the following three key questions:

What do you expect from the expert network?

Answers to this question were various. The network should:

- ✓ be a place of valorization of the results / published products from research,
- ✓ encourages researchers to disseminate the results of their research because the network will expand their visibility,
- ✓ be a space for the dissemination and sharing of information and experience on biodiversity between experts and between countries,
- ✓ facilitate the mobility of experts for capacity building,
- ✓ facilitate collaborations between scientists,
- ✓ allow the dissemination of IPBES activities,
- ✓ build capacity on IPBES evaluations (how are they done?),
- ✓ spreads opportunities for authors and experts in IPBES.

What did you like about this regional workshop?

The responses of participants to this question are summarized as follows:

- ✓ the diversity of participants in terms of country of origin and function (multidisciplinary),
- ✓ sharing of experience on the case of Morocco, France and Germany,
- ✓ working groups' methodology, highly participatory, with interactive discussions,
- ✓ Visits or excursions included in workshop's agenda.

What topics and activities do you suggest for the next workshop?

The answers to this question have been very rewarding. **Proposed topics:**

- To present results on ecosystem services research.
- To present methods for assessing and quantifying ecosystem services.
- The use of biotechnology in respect of biodiversity.
- To undertake a mid-term review of IPBES and networking's achievements.
- Link between WABES and other biodiversity information sharing platforms.

Proposed activities:

- Simulations of theoretical notions (concerning ecosystem services) in the field.
- Make IPBES better known to the public and institutions, involve NGOs.
- Exchange of success stories between countries.
- Visits or field trips to learn or discover what IPBES does in practice.
- Analyze the results of evaluations.
- Propose a charter for the network.
- Present concrete examples of science-policy interaction for biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Present tangible tools of IPBES and how to use them in countries (pollination for example).
- Communication of focal points on activities in their country. Evaluate focal points from a matrix common to all countries.

- Make a communication on the economics of biodiversity (green economy).
- Invite people to present their local knowledge experiences on ecosystem services.

III-2 Communications and Speeches

III-2.1 Communications

Presentation on capacity building of IPBES

This presentation was made by Dr. Marie-Lucie Susini who addressed two main points: IPBES capacity building activities and outlooks for progress on the issue.

Presentation on Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) in the framework of IPBES

This presentation made by Dr. Jennifer Hauck, which clearly showed that IPBES aims at promoting in all its activities, an effective engagement with the local populations and the holders of local knowledge. This is why a local knowledge working group has been set up by the supreme authority of IPBES. In addition, this local knowledge is clearly included in regional assessments in Africa.

Presentation on Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) in West Africa.

Taking the example of Burkina Faso, Prof. Adjima Thiombiano presented an assessment of local knowledge of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Burkina Faso.

Presentation on Policy Support Tools of IPBES

One of the IPBES mandates is to support the formulation and implementation of policies that contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems. Through this communication made by Dr. Claire Brown main tools were presented.

Green economy: payment for ecosystem services (by Dr. Yelkouni)

In his communication, Dr. Martin Yelkouni stimulated reflection on how to finance the conservation of biodiversity through payments for ecosystem services rendered by biodiversity.

III-2.2 Speeches of the Closing Ceremony

On behalf of the participants, General Biramou Sissoko from Mali thanked the workshop organizers, the donors and the Ivorian authorities for the good conditions of the workshop and expressed the acknowledgment of the participants. Following him, Prof. Yeboah thanked all the participants and expressed his joy at seeing the network of experts set up through this workshop. He hoped that everyone would get involved in IPBES before giving wise advice to IPBES National Focal Points for national mobilization for future regional assessments. Dr. Sommer, coordinator of the WABES project, also thanked the participants for their fruitful contributions to the reflections carried out during this workshop. The closing remarks were delivered by Prof. Gnabeli Roch, Director of Doctoral Training in Sociology at UFHB and member of the WABES Project, on behalf of the President of the UFHB.

Rapporteur-general

Prof. YEO Kolo

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Workshop agenda

Appendix 2: Results from the working groups

Appendix 3: Workshop Communiqué

Appendix 4: List of participants

Appendix 5: Some pictures of the workshop

Appendix 1: Workshop agenda

Day 1: Tuesday, 28th November 2017				
Time	Session	Topic	Presenter	Chairperson
8.00-9.00	Registration and installation of the guests			
09.00-10.30	Plenary: Opening Ceremony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Welcome address by the Major of Marcory municipality – Speech of project coordinator – Speech of the President of UFHB – Presentation of Workshop Agenda 	Dr. Da	Pr. Konaté
10.30-11.00	Coffee break and Group photo			
11.00 – 12.30	Plenary: Introductory session to IPBES/WABES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of IPBES – Objectives, functions, current development (20min) • Presentation of WABES (20min) • Q&A 	Dr. Diaw Dr. Sommer, Pr. Konaté, Dr. Da	Pr. Oteng-Yeboah
12.30-13.30	Lunch			
13.30-15.00	Plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation on Africa situation in IPBES (20 min) • Presentation on African assessment (20 min) • Presentation on IPBES capacity building activities (20 min) • Q&A 	Pr. Oteng-Yeboah Dr. Kombat Lambini Dr. Susini	Dr. Heubach
15.00-15.30	Coffee break			
15.30-16.30	Working groups (5 groups)	Working groups to brainstorm/develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential benefits derived from IPBES involvement • Ways to engage in IPBES • Strategies for fund raising to engage in IPBES 	WG Facilitators Dr. Heuback Dr. Raab Dr. Brown Dr. Hauck Ms. Ziemacki	WABES team (Dr. Hauck)
16.30 – 17.00	Plenary	Working group feedback		Dr. Hauck
17.00	End: WABES Team meeting			

Day 2: Wednesday, 29th November 2017		Example of mobilizing national experts on BES		
Time	Session	Topic	Presenter	Chairperson
09.00-10.30	Plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West African countries presentations by focal points: 5 national focal points (7 min each) • Presentation of existing initiatives in relation to IPBES work in other parts of African continent (i.e. Morocco) • Q&A 	NFPs Dr. El Bahloul	Pr. Koné
10.30-11.00	Coffee break			
11.00-12.30	Working groups (5 groups)	Interactive working groups to jointly develop a strategy for IPBES awareness raising as well as involving institutions and people and their knowledge in West Africa in IPBES	WG Facilitators Dr. Heubachk Dr. Raab Dr. Brown Dr. Hauck Ms. Ziemacki	WABES team (Dr.Heubach)
12.00 – 12.30	Plenary	Working group feedback		Ms. Jasmin
12.30-13.30	Lunch			
13.30-15.00	Plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on current support to IPBES (FRB, NeFo, GIZ-Project ValuES, Afribes, BesNET) - 5min/presentation • Q&A 	Dr. Hallosserie (FRB) Dr. Raab (NeFo) Dr. Heubach (GIZ) Dr. Diaw (Afribes)	Pr. Thiombiano
14.30	Travel to the University/PSI			
15h30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit of PSI (UFHB) • Visit of the Museum of biodiversity • Conference Dinner 		Pr. Konaté
Day 3: Thursday, 30th November 2017				
Time	Session	Topic	Presenter	Chairperson
9.00-10.30	Thematic working groups (5 groups)	Working groups to brainstorm/develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations and suggestions for the WABES network and platform and for the next workshop 	WG Facilitators Dr. Heubach Dr. Raab Dr. Brown Dr. Hauck Ms. Ziemacki	WABES team (Dr. Hauck)
10.30-11.00	Coffee break			
11.00 – 11.30	Plenary	Working group feedback		Dr. Hauck
11.30 – 12.30	Plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on ILK in the context of IPBES(10 min) • Presentation on how ILK was included in the African assessment (10 min) 	Dr. Hauck Dr. Halmy	Pr. Gnabeli

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILK in West Africa (10 min) • Q&A 	Pr. Thiombiano	
12.30-13.30	Lunch			
13.30-15.00	Plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPBES policy support tools • Green Economy: payment for Ecosystem Services 	Dr. Brown Dr. Yelkouni	
15.00 – 15.30		Closing Ceremony		Pr. Konaté
16.00	End	Coffee and drinks		
Day 4: Friday, 1st of December 2017	Excursion to Lamto Reserve and Yamoussoukro			

Appendix 2:

Results from the working group

Summary of expert discussions on three key questions: (1) How to engage in IPBES as an expert? (2) what are the potential benefits of their involvement in IPBES? (3) How to finance your commitment in IPBES?

(1) How to engage in IPBES as an expert

Summary prepared by: SEA Kohan Edwige Ines, KOUAKOU Keessy Maria-Prisca, AWAI Paula Erdoo

Direct contributions to IPBES

Contribute to IPBES assessments

There are a number of opportunities to engage in IPBES work programme, e.g. as reviewer of its assessments, Multidisciplinary Experts Panel (MEP) member, scientific and Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) experts. Contributions could be providing publications, research data, monographs and information on Reduction of Emission from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

Contribute to IPBES capacity building

Another way of how to engage is to contribute to the IPBES capacity building work programme or task force, by providing technical support through trainings and seminars at local and global level.

Attend IPBES plenary

Expert also expressed their interest to attend the IPBES plenary as observer or country delegate.

Engaging in broader IPBES work

Sensitisation and raising awareness

Experts mentioned communication and knowledge sharing on IPBES activities through sensitisation and awareness of the public. Examples include publications in journals, disseminating information to students and scientists. Another activity mentioned was organising awareness networks to engage national stakeholders.

Teaching and research activities

Experts suggested linking the IPBES work programme to higher education curricula through teaching and research activities as well as the collaboration with early career scientists. Another opportunity described was the engagement of researchers to strengthen information on species not yet described.

Strengthening IPBES work programme at administrative level

Another way of engagement suggested by experts was increasing administrative commitment of their countries through lobbying for promotion of IPBES outcomes in

national programmes. Further, they mentioned assisting national focal points and strengthen linkages between administrators and researchers.

(2) What are the potential benefits of their involvement in IPBES?

Summary prepared by: Nestor Ouedraogo, Hadidjatou Nana Sogodogo, Bintu Sia Kamara

Platform for Information Sharing

IPBES is an intergovernmental platform that offers opportunities for global and regional networking to learn, share expertise and exchange knowledge based on best available scientific data for the protection and management of BES, using common tools and methods of assessment. It strengthens interconnection between researchers and provides solutions to policy makers.

Capacity Building

It provides a platform to strengthen knowledge, build capacities on biodiversity and ecosystem services and provide the best available scientific methods and tools to evaluate and value BES for sustainable development. Further, it creates means for inclusion of indigenous and local knowledge, practices and systems in assessments.

Policy support tools for Policy makers

Integrating scientific findings into policies is very important for IPBES. Therefore, it facilitates the interface between science and policy by providing policy relevant tools, methods and options to policy makers, thereby bridging knowledge gaps and ensuring future utilization for sustainable management of BES.

Promote sustainable management of BES

It helps to promote sustainable management of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services through the contributions of regional and global expert assessments, building capacities of experts and stakeholders to facilitate global emergence response to environmental challenges. Examples are the use of green and carbon economies, protected areas systems and provision of alternative livelihoods. Overall, this can contribute to improve the contribution to global & regional commitments (SGDS, Aichi targets).

Awareness raising for stakeholders

Raising awareness about the importance and values of biodiversity and ecosystem services is an important function of IPBES and beyond. Some key examples included: communicating with relevant stakeholders, sensitization of its membership and mobilizing means for exchange of conservation actions and data on BES.

(3) How to finance your commitment in IPBES?

Summary prepared by: Hassane Yacoudima Abba Oumarou, Amiar Mohammed Taha, Camara Mariama

National Funding Opportunities

The use of budgets from government to implement the existing projects in Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services by raising awareness of the Environment through engaging the

conservation authorities. The government should integrate Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services into its budget. In order to raise national budgets Environmental taxes could be introduced. National budget should be plan to contribute to BES projects and set up a fund to facilitate and integrate platform for awareness and dissemination of IPBES work programme.

International Funding Opportunities

In the framework of the implementation of work programmes on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, international agencies and organizations such as:

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and International Climate Initiative (IKI) etc; can be involved in funding relevant programmes, projects and sub-projects on the issue of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Thus, each launch of calls for projects for the benefit of UN member countries could contribute to the activities of IPBES.

Alternative Funding

Alternative funding possibilities mentioned included royalties and fees on biodiversity services, existing funding mechanisms such as IUCN, responding to applied calls for projects, Funding charity donor organizations. Another important potential funding source mentioned several times was the private sector and here in particular companies whose activities are related to BES for example Core research funds from WASCAL and relevant projects.

None-monetary contributions

Experts also stressed to go beyond financial matters and highlighted in-kind contributions, e.g. scaling up outcomes of workshops and seminars through regular and continuous contact and capacity-building effort. Voluntary contributions of working time and data were also mentioned.

Summary of expert discussions on strategies for IPBES awareness raising in West Africa
Summary prepared by: DENNIS David D., MORO Seidu, DAO Prénébé, KPODO Esther, SENGHOR Khadijatou, DELAMOU Roger

Awareness raising amongst scientists

Personal exchange platforms

The strategy for raising awareness that was mentioned most often amongst experts was the creation of personal exchange platforms, where people meet face-to-face. Examples given for these personal exchange platforms were conferences and workshops, seminars and information meetings, e.g. between scientists and other stakeholders or policy makers.

Web-based exchange platforms

Another opportunity to raise awareness was seen in web-based or online exchange platforms. Examples included interactive formats, such as webinars or web conferences. Other suggestions covered social media or social networks (twitter, facebook, whatsapp), distribution of information or reports on IPBES via websites.

Publications

Raising awareness amongst scientists could also be done using formats that are well known to scientists, namely via peer review publications, preferably in Open access journals, or via articles on IPBES in popular magazines.

Projects and direct engagement in IPBES

Most scientific work is done in projects. One way of raising awareness amongst scientists is to fund projects, e.g. thematic IPBES projects by countries but also create more assessments, which can serve as projects for scientists to engage. Establishing a database of scientists, doing research on IPBES relevant topics would be helpful.

Provide incentives

Raising awareness for IPBES will be easier if there are incentives connected with the work for IPBES. These incentives can be monetary, but can also be none-monetary, for example by allowing scientists to make an impact with their science on decision making or providing free training and capacity building. Another way to create incentives is formalizing commitments of scientists and allowing for formal recognition and appreciation for their work.

Education

Integrate the IPBES into curricula, and organize seminars at universities will raise awareness and future scientists will likewise raise awareness amongst students as well as their lecturers.

Awareness raising amongst CSOs/NGOs

Education

NGOs can use both scientific knowledge and ILK to strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders relevant to its operations. Examples of these capacity-building initiatives includes seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. Through these engagements, local and scientific knowledge bases are synthesized, managed, and used to achieve IPBES deliverables and raise awareness in the process.

Advocacy

NGOs can be considered key component of society and play a mediatory role between the scientific community and public sector. This usually involves championing the call (raising awareness) to conserve biodiversity because of its intrinsic value to people.

Collaboration/Networking

Collaborative approaches by NGOs (local and international) are important in working to achieve IPBES' objectives. Networking creates a platform for organizations already knowledgeable about the objectives of IPBES to work with others in promoting awareness and pushing the implementation of IPBES' work programme.

Communication

Strategic information dissemination is cardinal to achieving the objectives of a platform such as IPBES. A good example of a communicating medium are social media (facebook,

whatsapp, twitter, etc). Research (ex. Assessments, reports) and community based communication strategies has the potential to increase awareness raising.

Awareness raising amongst policy makers

Education through workshops

One of the way to raise awareness for policy makers is education through workshops in order for IPBES to disseminate its work programme findings; this will also contribute to build the capacity of policy makers on biodiversity.

Sensitization of target groups through debates

Sensitize youth (future decision makers) and the policy makers is another method that is proposed to raise awareness among policy makers. It can be done through field visits to their respective work environment to have direct contact with these policy makers to better understand issues pertaining to biodiversity.

Network and communication

Among the strategies of raising policy maker's awareness, communication is the most suggested either by advertising or networking or policy brief. Medium such as websites, socials media, poster or billboard and fliers are suggested to have the potential of increasing awareness raising.

Communication into local language

Local language is proposed to be used for awareness raising amongst policy makers so that they can better understand the usefulness and values of biodiversity. Local communities are more involved in biodiversity issues when information is diffused in their own language.

Institutions

Setting up specialized structures like planning departments, extension structures were suggested to have the potential to raise awareness for policy makers. These institutions will serve as an intermediary between IPBES and policy makers.

Awareness raising amongst businesses

Personal exchange platforms and web-based exchange platforms

The strategies for raising awareness were the creation of personal exchange platforms and web-based exchange platforms. Examples given for the personal exchange platforms were workshops, fact sheets, visits and demonstration or consultations at their business centers. Examples given for the web-based exchange platforms are media: print and electronic media, newsletters and adverts.

Interest of businesses

One way of awareness raising amongst businesspeople is to highlight how the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services suits their economic interest; establish a commitment in IPBES for private companies by creating sustainable development units in private

companies. One suggestion was to make great a certification (labels), allowing companies to advertise with their contribution to IPBES. However, as IPBES is an intergovernmental platform the implementation of such a certification scheme would need careful legal guidance.

Projects

One way of raising awareness amongst businesspeople is to find environmental projects like Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) program and help companies to develop environmental strategies in their activities by considering biodiversity and ecosystem services aspects.

Awareness raising amongst broader public

Human well-being

One of the most important strategies for raising awareness for the wider public is the contribution to their well-being. The majority of the population is reached when the awareness is connected directly or indirectly to their survival such as the provision of food, portable drinking water as well as raising their standard of living. However it is important to also communicate that IPBES is a science policy interface in order to avoid false expectations.

Personal information exchange/sharing and education

Face to face or personal interactions were observed to be another means of raising the awareness of the broader public. This includes town and community gatherings where people get the opportunity to deliberate issues as well as exchange information. Including IPBES and related topics in learning modules for schools and/or universities about the IPBES work programme could also be used for awareness raising.

Social media information exchange/sharing

Social media such as community radios, radios, televisions as well as the print media is also a medium for increasing awareness raising. This is one of the effective methods of raising the awareness of a larger or wider population.



1ST WABES WEST AFRICAN EXPERT WORKSHOP

TO SUPPORT THE WORK PROGRAM OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES)

ABIDJAN, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, 28 – 30 NOVEMBER 2017

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

WABES is an initiative to facilitate networking and capacity-building across West Africa to support the Work Programme of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and in particular the assessments. The overarching goal is to connect Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service experts from West African universities, research institutions, and existing science-policy interfaces. Annually conducted workshops will act as exchange platforms and as distribution hubs for IPBES developments, supplemented by discussion groups to connect experts and policy makers across West Africa and beyond.

The first WABES expert workshop was organized in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) on 28 to 30 of November 2017 which addressed the following objectives:

1. POOLING WEST AFRICAN EXPERTS AND ENCOURAGING EXCHANGE AND DISCUSSION

The workshop was attended by 78 expert participants from 20 countries from West Africa and beyond (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, France, Germany, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, United Kingdom, Belgium, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Sénégal and Togo). Amongst the participants, were many IPBES focal points, researchers, representatives from research institutions, NGOs as well as from the policy sector. Moreover, non-african experts on IPBES and the Science Policy Interface regarding biodiversity and ecosystem services were present and contributed their experiences. Throughout the workshop, exchange and discussion of IPBES roles facilitated through several working groups and panel discussions.

2. GETTING BETTER INSIGHTS INTO IPBES AND ITS WORK PROGRAMME

IPBES was represented by the attendance of several experts that work for and with IPBES, in particular a member of the IPBES Bureau, national IPBES focal points, the capacity building task force, authors of the Africa assessment and other assessments, the IPBES fellow program, and others. The IPBES work programme was introduced through several presentations on the four major functions of IPBES, its structure and organisation, the assessments, indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) and the capacity building activities. The attendance and commitment of the several IPBES experts and their shared experiences in the workshop sessions and in discussions contributed to a profound understanding of IPBES and its functions.

3. ELABORATE THE RELEVANCE OF IPBES FOR WEST AFRICA

The participants highlighted the relevance of IPBES for West Africa as a region exceptionally rich in biodiversity, and in many regards depending on ecosystem services for sustainable development. They expressed the necessity of implementing policy tools that take this relevance into consideration in the national policies, and to raise awareness on these issues on all levels from policy makers to other stakeholder groups, business and the public. Through insights into the current work of the African delegation in IPBES plenaries and the West African IPBES focal points, the particular value of IPBES work programme for West Africa was highlighted. At the same time, challenges were also considered, such as insufficient means to transport information from IPBES to the relevant actors in West Africa due to language barriers and limitation in funding and institutional support, thus highlighting the need for a platform like WABES.

4. DISCUSS WAYS OF ENGAGING IN IPBES ACTIVITIES

The participants agreed that engaging into IPBES activities is crucial for West Africa. Many West African experts are already committing themselves to contribute to the implementation of the IPBES work programme in West Africa and internationally, and that there are still options for improving this. During interactive working group sessions, the participants collected ideas on how to better engage in IPBES. The IPBES focal points shared their experiences from their respective countries. Amongst others, the relevance of having national and regional platforms for exchange and discussions were highlighted, in order to better connect the experts, to develop strategies on how to engage in the different IPBES activities, and how to better represent West Africa in the IPBES plenaries. The participants expressed their appreciation for the WABES initiative that intends to provide such a platform at regional level. However, it also became evident that beyond WABES, many more initiatives and structures at national level are needed to enable West African countries to even more actively engage in IPBES.

5. COLLECT FEEDBACK ON NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE SET-UP OF THE WABES WEST AFRICAN EXPERT NETWORK

The participants identified the lack of a regional platform to exchange on and engage in IPBES as one of the major challenges in regard to the contribution of West Africa to the IPBES work programme in the past years, especially as the usefulness of such platforms is evident when looking at other regions and continents where such platforms already exist. Hence, the participants appreciated the WABES initiative to facilitate a West African network as an opportunity to fill this gap. In particular, the participants expressed the need of a platform to receive information on IPBES relevant for West Africa, to strengthen the national focal points and to facilitate exchange of experts in West Africa beyond language barriers. The participants expect WABES to continue with its approach and strongly engage in the networking activities through workshops and a well-managed internet platform that provides in both French and English language, relevant information about IPBES and relevant developments in and for West Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants expressed their sincere appreciation to the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) for its interest in the West African region and the establishment of WABES, and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) for actively supporting this workshop and its objectives. All participants therefore affirmed their interest and commitment to WABES and its implementation. The participants expressed their sincere thanks to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the Felix Houphouët-Boigny University (UFHB) of Abidjan for

hosting the workshop and facilitating the attendance of the delegates. They especially expressed their gratitude to their authorities for their commitment and political support with the presence of the Advisor of the Prime Minister in charge of research, education and employment and the relevant policy makers on biodiversity and ecosystem services of Côte d'Ivoire, at the opening ceremony.

Abidjan, November 30th 2017

The Participants

Appendix 5: Some pictures of the Workshop



Presidium of the opening ceremony; from left to right: Dr. Jan Henning Sommer (WABES coordinator), Prof. Alfred Apau Oteng-Yeboah (IPBES Bureau member), Prof. Abdoulaye Sangaré (Vice-President of the UFHB), Prof. Adama Diawara (Advisor to the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire), Prof. Annick Tahiri (representative, Director of research and Innovation) and M Gustave Aboua (Director General for Environment and sustainable development)



Welcome address by Prof. Adama Diawara, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire



Prof. Abdoulaye Sangaré, Vice-President of the UFHB in charge of Research and Technological Innovation, launch the workshop on behalf of the President of that University.



Group photo of the participant to the workshop



WABES coordinator, Dr. Sommer giving interview to the media



Participant at a plenary session



Working group session