
Report for the Snow Leopard Trust

IPBES Plenary

June 2019



Prepared by: Anna, Ranjini, Hyuenjyu, Alejandra, and Albuela



Science and Policy for People and Nature

What is IPBES?

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is an independent, intergovernmental body established in 2012. Their mission is to bridge the science-policy interface by providing knowledge to create better policies targeting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. It provides policymakers with objective scientific assessments about the state of global biodiversity and the benefits they provide people, as well as the tools and methods to protect and sustainably use these ecosystems. 132 countries are member states of IPBES.

IPBES has become an increasingly important voice on biodiversity and ecosystem services at the global level.

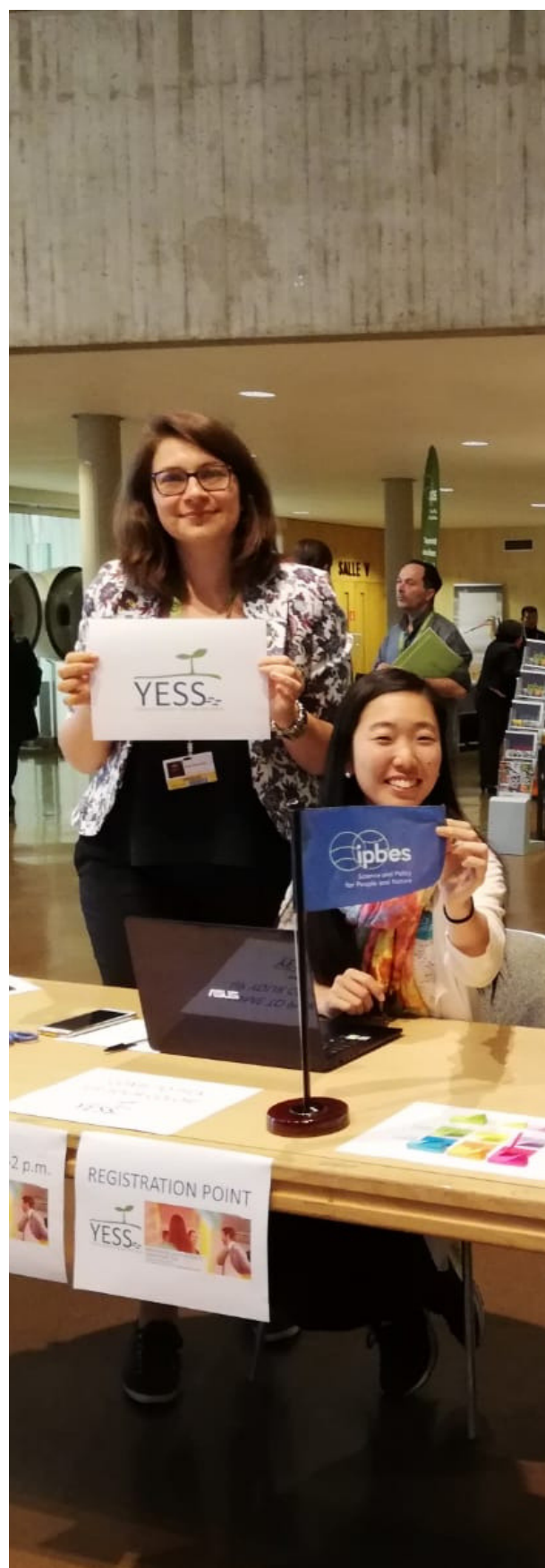
The 7th IPBES Plenary was held in Paris, France from 29th April – 4th May, 2019. One of the highlights of the Plenary was approval of the summary for policy makers (SPM) and acceptance of the chapters of the Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the first intergovernmental global assessment of this kind and the first comprehensive assessment since the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) released in 2005. More than 150 leading experts from 50 countries collaborated to produce the Global Assessment, while additional contributors raised the number of experts to 400, from a wide array of natural and social sciences.

The work lasted more than three years, drawing from 15,000 references, including scientific papers, government information, and additional relevant documents. In addition to scientific knowledge, the Global Assessment systematically included indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) to integrate all forms of knowledge.

What is YESS?

The Young Ecosystem Service Specialists (YESS), is a global network of over 300 early-career researchers and professionals in the field of ecosystem services. The main objectives of YESS is:

- 1) To stimulate the exchange of ideas and possibilities or training and capacity building.
- 2) To develop ideas for projects and elaborate these into funding proposals





The YESS delegation to IPBES

YESS has an observer status at IPBES and we organized a delegation to the 7th IPBES Plenary. The main objective was to improve our knowledge of IPBES processes and outputs, meet different stakeholders and explore opportunities for early career researchers' engagement in science policy interfaces. The YESS delegation consisted of 17 people. This funding covered the accommodation for five delegates during the Plenary. These were the five delegates who were also

involved in meeting the objectives of the funding which were:

- 1) Poster presentation of the work on ecosystem services carried out in five GSLEP landscapes.
- 2) Prepare a report detailing activities conducted at the Plenary.
- 3) Research project with a paper publication.



How is IPBES relevant for snow leopards and GSLEP?

Both IPBES and GSLEP are initiatives that aim to bridge the science-policy interface. There are several points of synergies where these two platforms can collaborate, as well as share information and resources. IPBES collates global information on various aspects of human-nature relationships and conservation. The information that is relevant for snow leopards and snow leopard landscapes can be useful for GSLEP and used by GSLEP. At the same time information collated by GSLEP can be useful for IPBES.

Currently, most of the environmental problems require global cooperation to solve. Politically, aligning with organizations that have similar mandates can be useful to have a stronger voice that can influence policy. IPBES is increasingly becoming a very powerful voice in the global conservation movement, and collaborating with them can provide GSLEP a useful ally.



How is YESS relevant for snow leopards and GSLEP?

YESS has over 300 early career researchers and some of these researchers come from the 12 snow leopard range countries. Capacity building for research and conservation across the snow leopard landscape is an important mandate for GSLEP. YESS can be a resource that GSLEP can use to identify people interested in working for snow leopard conservation. It provides GSLEP with a strong youth network.

Activities at the Plenary





Poster presentation: Valuation of Ecosystem Services in Snow Leopard Landscapes of Asia

The poster was first displayed on the Stakeholder Day on Sunday. It was then on display for the entire week of the Plenary, and a few mini presentations were made for participants about the work outline in the poster. We created a QR code for the project that was printed on the poster. The QR code could be scanned which would allow people to access the full report on the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) website.

Abstract

Snow leopards occur in Asia's high mountain ranges. In all the 12 countries where they occur, snow leopards face intensifying threats to their survival. These landscapes where the snow leopards occur are inhabited by agro-pastoral and pastoral peoples who depend on well functioning ecosystems for ecosystem services, i.e., the benefits that humans derive from nature. Many threats that impact snow leopards also impact the well-being of people living in these landscapes. However, till date, there have been no studies that have attempted to quantify peoples' dependence on ecosystem services in snow leopard landscapes, or understand the impacts that alternate land-use decisions such as mining or infrastructure can have on the ecosystem services and on the local people who are dependent on them.

We assessed the economic value of provisioning ecosystem services – the material goods from ecosystems – used by local people in five study sites from these landscapes: Spiti Valley and Changtang region of Ladakh in India's Hemis-Spiti Landscape, Gurez Valley in the Himalayan Landscape of Pakistan, Tost Nature Reserve in the South Gobi Landscape of Mongolia, and the Sarychat region in the Central Tien Shan Landscape of Kyrgyzstan.

Our work reveals substantially high levels of dependence of local communities on ecosystem services provided by snow leopard landscapes of Asia. The estimated economic value of provisioning ecosystem services used by human households in these landscapes ranged from 0.6 to up to 40 times the local annual household incomes. This economic support that nature provides people is critical for humanity but remains hidden and unaccounted for. Land use change decisions, especially those that are damaging for nature and biodiversity, must start accounting for the value of ecosystem services in their cost-benefit analyses.



Networking Lunch

On the stakeholder day, the YESS delegation together with the Stakeholder Officer at IPBES organized a networking lunch, which lasted one hour, where participants at the Plenary were invited to attend. UNESCO sponsored the lunch. Participants were required to register and then they were directed to a table that seated six people. A member of the YESS delegation moderated each table. There were a total of 80 participants. Two questions were presented for discussion at each table:

- What are your expectations for the next work programme? How could you be involved in it?
- How is it possible to engage with more actors?

At the end of the discussion participants were asked to record their responses on post-its that were color coded according to their level of experience (early-career, senior) and sector (research, policy-makers, NGOs). We then analyzed the information from this activity using Voyant Tools, an online text analysis software. Results of the text analysis for each question are provided here.

What are your expectations for the next work programme?

- Contributed by Thuan Sarzynski

Increase the reach and engage everybody

The emerging common expectation for the next work programme among all interviewed actors was to increase the reach of the platform. “Raising awareness” and “sharing information” through “easy to use educational resources” and “summary for educators” were proposed by the researcher group. While the policymaker group agreed upon “spreading information”. In addition, early career researchers made the point to improve “interdisciplinary connection” and “engage with NGO.” Both the policy maker and other groups, emphasized the importance to “involve businesses”, “involve private sector”, “share best practices to private sectors”, get a “greater engagement of private sector” and “share more results with actors”. A suggestion was made to create an assessment on the “role of global corporation on biodiversity” as well as to make future “**assessments more relevant to the business sector**”.



The group composed of other actors (neither researchers nor policymakers) highlighted the importance to “strengthen local and national capacity” meaning “involve local actors”, “mobilize local communities” and “bridge the gap local/national/international” so “people working on the field use SPI outputs”.

More work, more action and more interaction

As for future assessments, various tasks were proposed like study “water issues”, “other knowledge system” such indigenous traditional knowledge, “urbanization” and the “footprint of cities” as well as the “ethics” and the “non-economic value” of nature. Researchers and policymakers encouraged the platform to engage more with “social sciences” in their future assessments. An early-career researcher highlighted that a “big data approach” can open new opportunities.

The group of other stakeholders asked for more “action”, “policy implementation”, “more action, application”, “more concrete recommendation” and more “concrete and implementable actions” as well as “concrete targets and solution for each actor.” They also encouraged the “development of measure of biodiversity.” The group of researchers added “sustainability indicators” and “measuring impact of the assessment” as key priorities. These measures and indicators could then be used in a “compliance mechanism” to ensure that countries and businesses conserve biodiversity.

The last important point shared by senior policymakers and senior researchers is the need to “ensure link” and “connection with climate change, sustainable development goals (SDG)” as well as connecting “SDG and biodiversity goal.”



Senior researcher



Early career researcher

Word clouds generated for senior researchers and early career researchers showed some differences in their expectations for the next work programme

How is it possible to engage with more actors?

Involve all actors early in the process

It was suggested that actors be engaged early in the process of the assessment, so they gain ownership over the piece of work. The group of researchers proposed that assessments should “target specific sectors”, have a “wider consultation during the scope”, “ask research questions related to local problems,” and “link with specific information needs of policymakers and sectors.” This could be done by creating “local work group with different actors,” have “representatives of local people,” and “representatives of different ages” like youth.

Engaging with local communities can allow a “bottom up process” which can create more “meaningful results.” The policymaker group suggested to have “media engagement within the process” and make the process “multilingual.” They highlighted the importance to “phrase questions to invite stakeholders” such as “local governments, rural communities, non-scientists, lawyer, teachers and businesses” to participate and contribute. “Citizen science” was also mentioned to increase the engagement of the public.

The group made of other stakeholders recommended to “involve all stakeholder including business” by creating a “private sector panel” for instance. Moreover, they suggested to have “open transparent opportunities for civil society organization to engage” for example as “mediators between scientific findings and farmers.” They recommended a “more open participation” with a “stakeholder enlargement” for example with a “formal integration with youth,” an inclusion of “local and regional governments” and “local actors.”

Communicate better and more

Improvement of assessment reach was proposed through “targeting assessments at country scales”, creating a “post-assessment outreach,” “communicate findings to various stakeholders using simple language,” and share “summaries outputs earlier in the production process.” They also proposed to “more publicity”, “mainstream SPI” and do “more broadcasting of SPI processes” through “international media.” SPI initiatives should hire “marketing and communication expert” to improve its “communication” and “social engagement.”

Money, the more the easier

Participants all agreed on a need for “financial incentives” like “funds from various sources for projects,” “more time, money, energy for policy support and capacity development,” “more funds to facilitate stakeholder participation” and “funding and recognition in home institution.” This money can be used to develop “strategies and methods on how to reach out,” create “small workshops at the local level” to “build capacity about the assessment” and “transfer knowledge from science to policy and society and business.”



Paris City Field trip

Nada, a YESS member, was able to organize a Paris city field trip with the city environmental department. During this field trip they showed us the urban roof garden initiatives where vegetables and fruits were grown on urban roofs.

Following this, we were taken on a city walk where aspects of Parisean urban environmental planning were highlighted. We were shown initiatives like the vertical gardens which were used to increase green cover in the city. Vertical gardens were built along urban structures.

The first few vertical gardens in the city had mainly exotic species but the newer gardens were built with local plant species as it was better for local biodiversity.

Mixed tree species planting is practiced in the city, where trees are planted along the streets. This is to increase their resistance to biological pests. Biological corridors for biodiversity were also factored into the urban environmental planning. Parks were created in several pockets across the city to increase overall green cover.

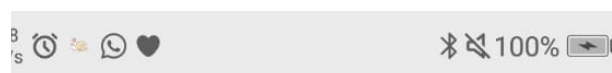


Tweets

During the event, we tweeted information that was relevant to snow leopards through the YESS twitter handle. We used the hash tags UNDP, GSLEP, SLT, GEF, IPBES7, YESSdelagtion, and Globalassessment. We tweeted an average of two tweets per day. This was retweeted by both the Snow Leopard Trust and IPBES.

Meet-the-expert interactions

The plenary was a good opportunity to meet experts who worked on different IPBES assessments. Each day between the sessions we organized meet-the-expert interactions where YESS members interacted with experts. We met four experts working in different capacities with IPBES. The experts were: Malte Timpote founder of the Onet network, closely coordinating stakeholder engagement; Christo Fabricius the co-ordinating lead



[#YESSatIPBES7] #YESSDelegat is witnessing the fascinating discussion amongst members c the summary for policy makers (SPM). We've learned every sing word has its weight! |

Thanks @snowleopards @theGl
@UNDP #GSLEP #IPBES7
#globalassessment @IPBES



Aggiungi descrizione...

Chi c'è in questa foto?

Aggiungi posizione

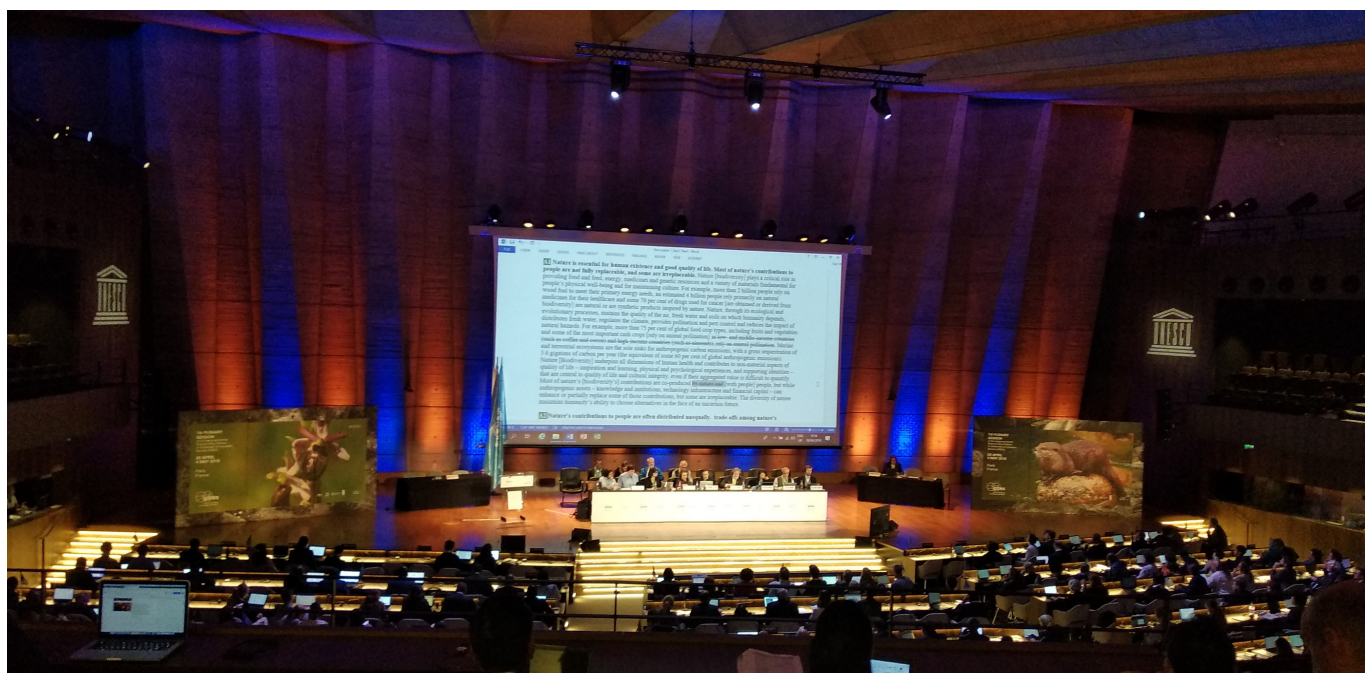


author for the sustainable use assessment; Carlo Rondinini, Modelling, lead author for the global assessment and closely involved with the IUCN redlist; and Marie Stenseke, Co-chair of Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.

IPBES focal point for GSLEP

As mentioned above, forming links between IPBES and GSLEP will be important. With this in mind, we approached the IPBES secretariat to suggest a liaison person between IPBES and GSLEP. The secretariat was useful in suggesting certain bureau members from the region who could be potential liaison persons. They also introduced us to them. The liaison person could potentially attend the next GSLEP forum.





Plenary discussions

Members of the delegation also wrote blog articles sharing their experiences at the Plenary, introducing IPBES, and a summary of the main messages discussed.

The plenary discussion for the approval of the Global Assessment (Global state of biodiversity and ecosystem services) was held from Monday, 29th April to Saturday 4th May. Most of the sessions lasted from 9 am in the morning to 6 pm in the evening. On certain days the sessions went on later into the night. These sessions were an important experience for the YESS delegation as they were provided a window to the uptake of scientific assessments at a global scale. The Earth Negotiations Bulletin provided coverage of the event and reports from each day which can be found [here](#).

Research Project Update



Meeting at the plenary

The YESS delegation is currently working on a research paper that explores the role of early career researchers (ECR) within the science-policy interface. All our meetings so far for the conceptualization of the paper have been online. The plenary was a good time to have a face-to-face meeting to work on concretizing ideas and brainstorming. We were able to clarify the question and objectives of the paper. We also finalized the framework. We conducted a pilot interview with two ECR groups composed of about fifteen ECR's each. The interviews provided us with important insight that helped in finalizing the questionnaires. These questionnaires will be sent out online to ECR's.

Future steps

- Ethics clearances to be done through the University of Reading
- Questionnaires for ECR's and Senior researchers to be sent out by early August
- Data analysis in September
- Paper write-up in October and November
- Paper submission in December

Thank you!

We would like to thank the Snow Leopard Trust, UNDP, and GEF for funding our accommodation to attend the 7th IPBES Plenary. It was an extremely enriching experience for us and gave us a behind-the-curtains peak into the science-policy interface. We would like to Thank YESS network for their support and UNDP for funding the networking lunch. Finally, we would like to thank the city of Paris for taking us on the field trip.