

Information on strengthened communication

Introduction

1. The Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), in its decision IPBES-3/4, on communications, stakeholder engagement and strategic partnership, took note of the communications and outreach strategy set out in annex I to that decision and requested the secretariat, subject to the availability of funds, to undertake the activities described in the initial implementation plan set out in the appendix to annex I. An update on that implementation was noted by the Plenary in its decision IPBES-4/4.
2. Subsequent reporting by the secretariat on progress on communications activities and stakeholder engagement, outlined in documents IPBES/5/9, IPBES/5/INF/15, IPBES/5/INF/16, IPBES/6/INF/19 and IPBES/7/INF/14 was noted by the Plenary at its fifth, sixth and seventh sessions.
3. The Plenary, in decision IPBES-7/1, adopted the rolling work programme of IPBES up to 2030 with six objectives, including objective 5, communicating and engaging, which aims to strengthen the involvement of the members and stakeholders and to increase the visibility of IPBES and the use of IPBES products. The objective would be achieved, building on the work initiated and lessons learned during the first IPBES work programme through, among others:
 - (a) Strengthened communication, including the continuation of the implementation of the IPBES communication and outreach strategy with a view to increasing the visibility of IPBES and its products and the use of IPBES products by Governments and stakeholders.
4. The annex to the present note sets out information on the further implementation of the communications and outreach strategy. The annex is presented without formal editing.

Annex

Implementation of the communications and outreach strategy

I. ‘Traditional media’

1. The focus for traditional media outreach in this period has been the continued promotion, uptake and impact of the IPBES Global Assessment Report, bolstered by the release of the IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics, as well as by the IPBES-IPCC co-sponsored workshop on biodiversity and climate change.
2. In terms of traditional media reach, from 1 May 2019 to 31 December 2020, IPBES tracked a total of more than 54,750 online media articles relating to IPBES and IPBES work programme deliverables. These articles, which specifically exclude both print and broadcast reporting, appeared in 188 countries, and in 59 languages. They represent a likely absolute reach of more than 2.5 billion – based on industry standard estimates of 2.5% of possible total reach. By way of comparison, total online article mentions of IPBES tracked in the whole of 2018, including the successful launch of the four IPBES Regional Assessment Reports and the Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment Report, were 6,553 articles, in 37 languages, across 126 countries.
3. In just the first week following the launch of the IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics, IPBES tracked 2,262 online articles linked to the report, which appeared in 1,876 different media outlets, across 110 countries, in 41 languages – representing ‘likely’ reach in excess of 157 million views.
4. It is also noteworthy that, by average, the likely reach of each IPBES online hit in 2020 exceeded that of 2019 by a factor of 2.5 – evidence that the coverage of IPBES has continued to shift to media outlets and portals that have significantly greater numbers of readers, subscribers and visitors – a useful proxy for higher levels of traditional media influence.
5. Among the most successful traditional media activities for IPBES in this period were a number of very high-profile opinion-editorial articles that were covered extensively by global media outlets – most notably an IPBES guest article by the co-chairs of the Global Assessment Report and the chair of the platform workshop on the links between biodiversity loss and the risks of infectious diseases and pandemics. This renewed focus on opinion-editorial articles, and the authorship of experts additional to those of the Chair and the Executive Secretary, are also in line with specific recommendations made in the report on the external review of IPBES.
6. Professional global, regional and national online traditional media monitoring has continued throughout 2019 and 2020. The secretariat is still exploring the expansion of this service to include both print and possibly broadcast monitoring as well – such additions will be contingent on available resources and on the assessed cost-effectiveness and quality of these options.

II. Social media

7. IPBES achieved unprecedented levels of social media reach in 2019 across all measurement metrics. A selection of these achievements, for the period 1 May – 31 December 2019, include a total audience growth of 73%, with the largest growth on LinkedIn (112%) and Instagram (87%), followed by Facebook (71%), Twitter (54%) and YouTube (42%). In the 8-month period, the highest number of impressions was generated on Twitter (>23 million), followed by Facebook (>1 million).
8. In 2020, IPBES continued to grow its presence and impact on social media, while also significantly improving the already-high levels of online engagement with the work of IPBES. IPBES further developed its social media strategy by, for example, introducing a new content type across all platforms targeted specifically at IPBES stakeholders, by improving multilingualism and greatly increasing the focus given to producing and disseminating engaging audio-visual content.
9. The annual audience growth in the period under review on all IPBES social media channels in English was approximately 63%, far exceeding the 19% average growth target. In terms of specific performance per platform, IPBES exceeded its targets and grew its follower base by 120% on LinkedIn, 57% on Instagram, 56% on YouTube, 50% on Twitter, and 32% on Facebook. Reach and impressions grew significantly across all platforms, while maintaining high rates of engagement.
10. The social media campaign for the launch of the IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics generated more than 4 million social media impressions within a single week, with the

hashtag #PandemicsReport on Twitter alone used in almost 4,000 posts, by more than 3,00 accounts, representing 22.6 million potential reach and more than 52 million potential impressions.

11. In June 2020, IPBES launched its Facebook and Twitter channels in French and Spanish to further improve IPBES social media presence and multilingual outreach. In their first year, the IPBES French and Spanish social media audience grew to more than 6,800 followers and 7,600 followers, respectively, with all targets for the first year met and exceeded within the first nine months of activity.

III. Impact tracking

12. To help the IPBES community present compelling examples of specific impacts of IPBES' work, the secretariat has continued in 2019 and 2020 to update and expand the IPBES impact tracking database (TRACK). This fully searchable online public resource aims to collate a wide range of good indicative examples of IPBES impact at different scales, in different geographical areas, and across the whole work programme on, among others, decision-making, policy, actions, approaches and investments. With more than 400 separate impacts already tracked (representing an increase of more than 300% from 2018), of which more than 200 relate to the IPBES Global Assessment Report, the tool remains open for public submissions, and can be freely accessed at www.ipbes.net/impact-tracking-view.

IV. Outreach materials

13. As part of efforts to strengthen uptake of the IPBES assessments and the impact of the wider IPBES work programme, from May 2019 through December 2020, the secretariat produced and shipped to key events in every region, more than 2,000 brochures (in all United Nations languages), almost 1,300 summaries for policymakers, more than 600 summary guides to IPBES assessments, in excess of 300 USB drives, over 100 posters, and more than 600 IPBES stickers, as well as a range of additional branded collateral items. These were augmented by electronic presentations to introduce IPBES and its work programme, as well as presentations on the IPBES Global Assessment Reports. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in such shipments ceasing in early 2020 with the cessation of in-person meetings and events.

V. Website

14. The IPBES website currently has more than 17,000 active accounts and received an average of 158,000 visitors per month between 1 May 2019 and 31 December 2020. The secretariat has successfully launched a new IPBES website with new features, a simple navigation and a new look. The redevelopment work focused on improving the experience of website visitors and the presentation of information about IPBES and its work as well as on improving security and performance, a new site architecture, improved search functionality, a re-designed policy-support gateway, additional features, social media share and improved responsiveness to various browsers and on mobile devices.

VI. Multilingualism

15. In 2020, the secretariat piloted increased translation capacity from English into both French and Spanish specifically for IPBES social and traditional media communication outputs and to provide ongoing operational social media capacity to the secretariat for the first time in these languages. This pilot initiative has been closely monitored on the basis of key performance indicators. After nine months of increased multilingual capacity in French and Spanish, key targets for each of the four new IPBES social media channels have all been exceeded, with significant and demonstrable increases in the size and engagement levels of the IPBES community.

VII. Podcast

16. In July 2020, the secretariat launched a professionally produced, distributed and marketed podcast 'pilot' season of six episodes, with the objective of elevating lesser-heard but important voices from within the wider IPBES community. A key success has been the use of this medium to reach out to wider priority audiences and to help make the work of IPBES more understandable and relatable to new and existing stakeholders. It has also provided an opportunity to showcase the diversity of the IPBES community – in terms of demographics, regional representation, disciplines and knowledge systems. Despite the logistical challenges encountered because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the production team launched the *Nature Insight* podcast series, which was well received by the IPBES community, with more than 12,900 downloads from listeners in more than 100 countries.