

ipcc

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change



Indigenous Knowledge and the IPCC

Current IPCC practice | Practice in peer body | What could the IPCC aspire to do

ASSESSMENT CYCLE

WORKSHOP ON ENGAGING DIVERSE KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS • 10–12 FEBRUARY 2026 • READING, UNITED KINGDOM

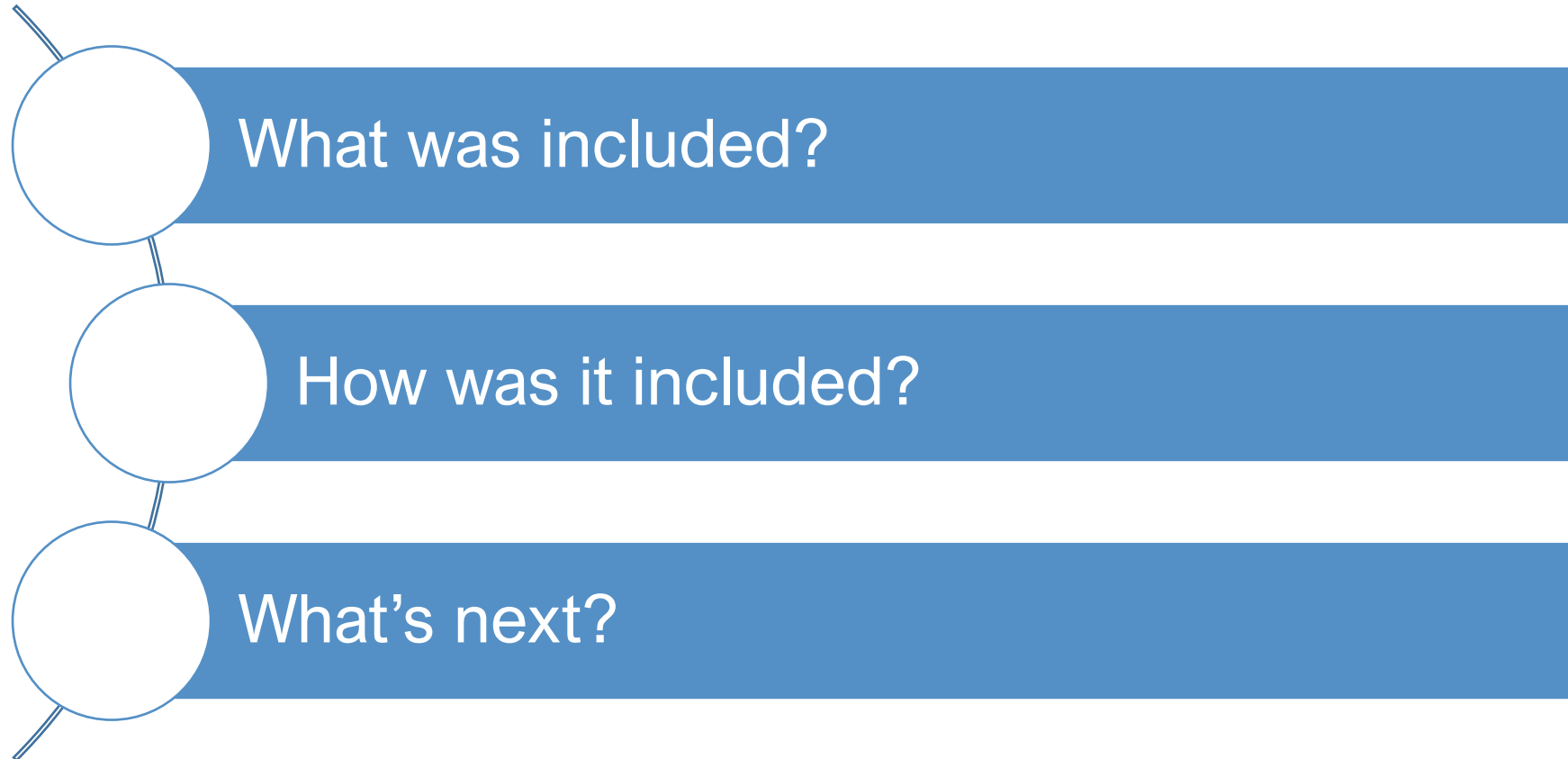


ASSESSMENT CYCLE

Current IPCC practice

Sherilee Harper

Indigenous Knowledges in IPCC



Indigenous Knowledges

IPCC Glossary Definition:

"The understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings. For many Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of life, from day-to-day activities to longer term actions. This knowledge is integral to a cultural complex that also encompasses language, systems of classification, resource use practices, social interactions, values, ritual and spirituality."

**Distinct from
local
knowledge**

What was included? Indigenous Knowledges in IPCC AR6

ASSESSMENT CYCLE



#SROCC

IPCC SPECIAL REPORT ON THE OCEAN AND CRYOSPHERE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE



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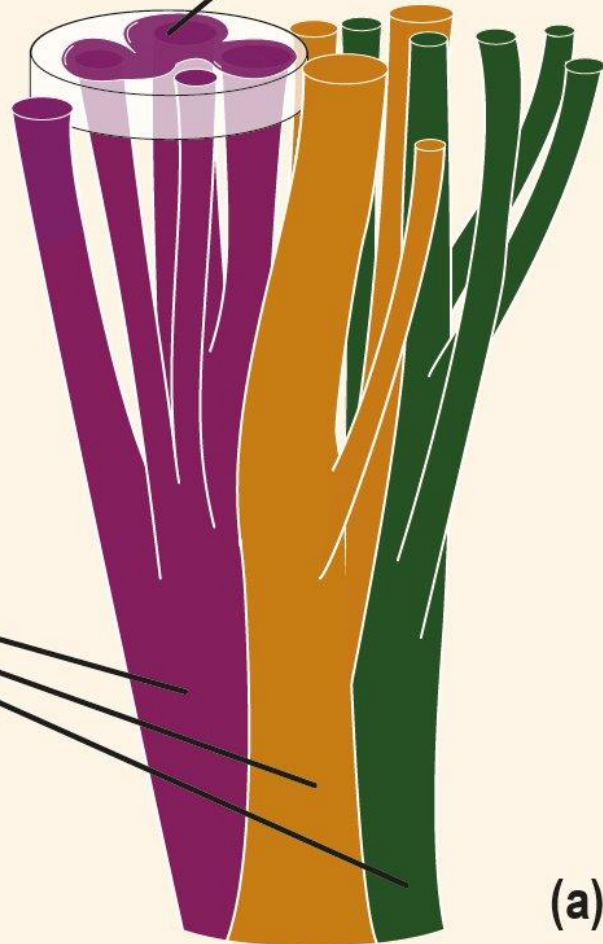


**“Either Indigenous Knowledge
alone, or used with scientific
knowledge inform [climate
change] responses...”**

IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate

Co-production
of new knowledge

Independently
available
knowledge
systems



(a)



(b)

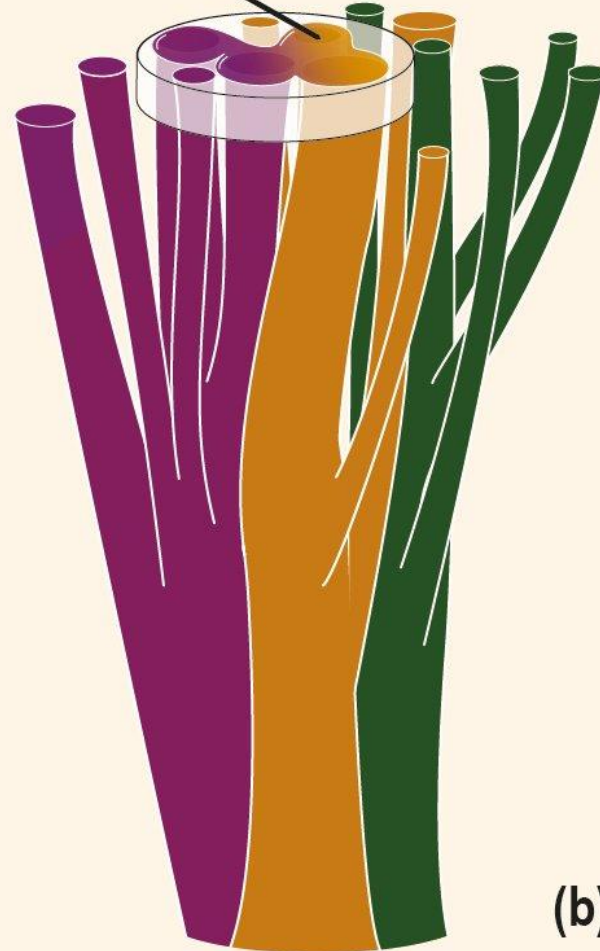
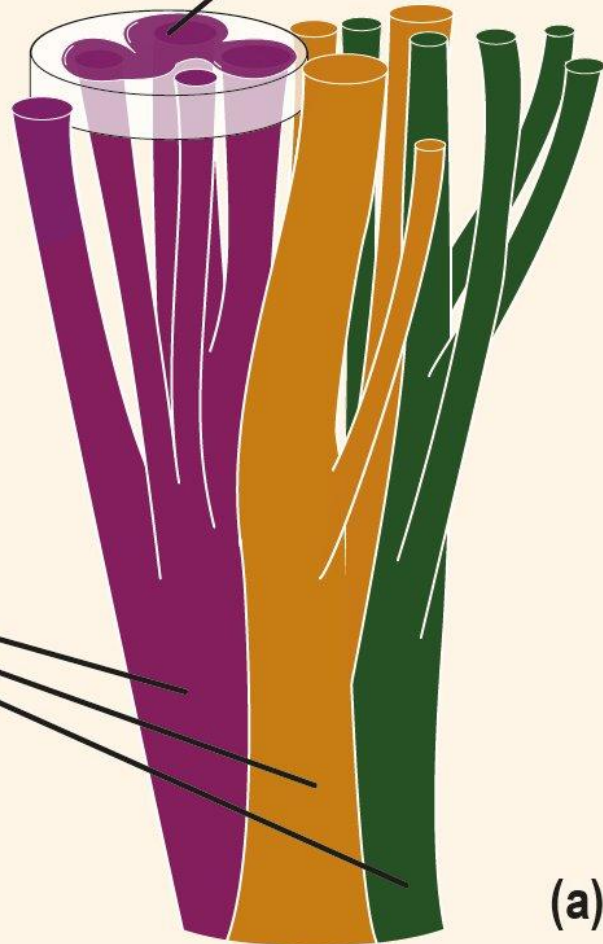


(c)

↑
Trajectory of
knowledge
systems
over time

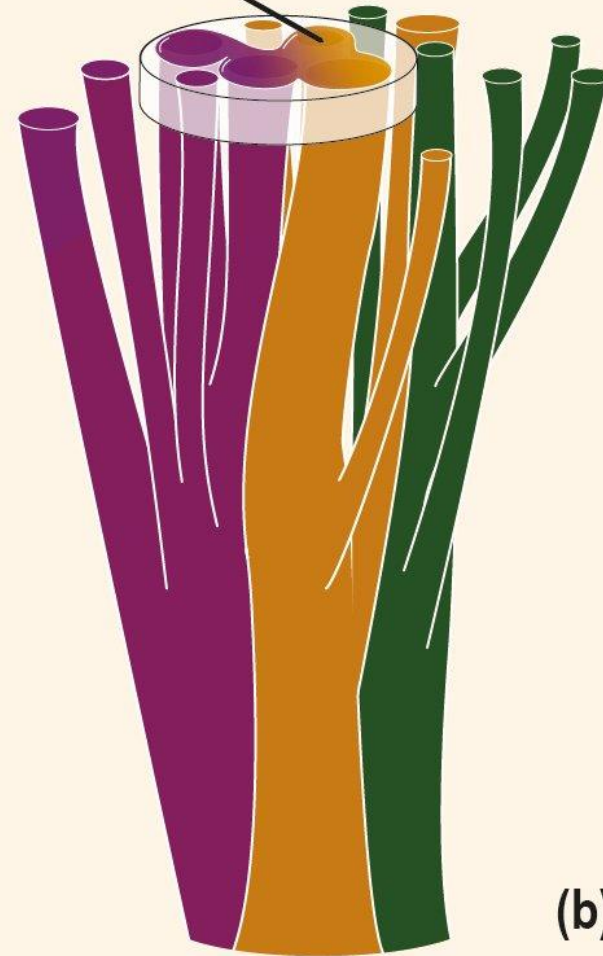
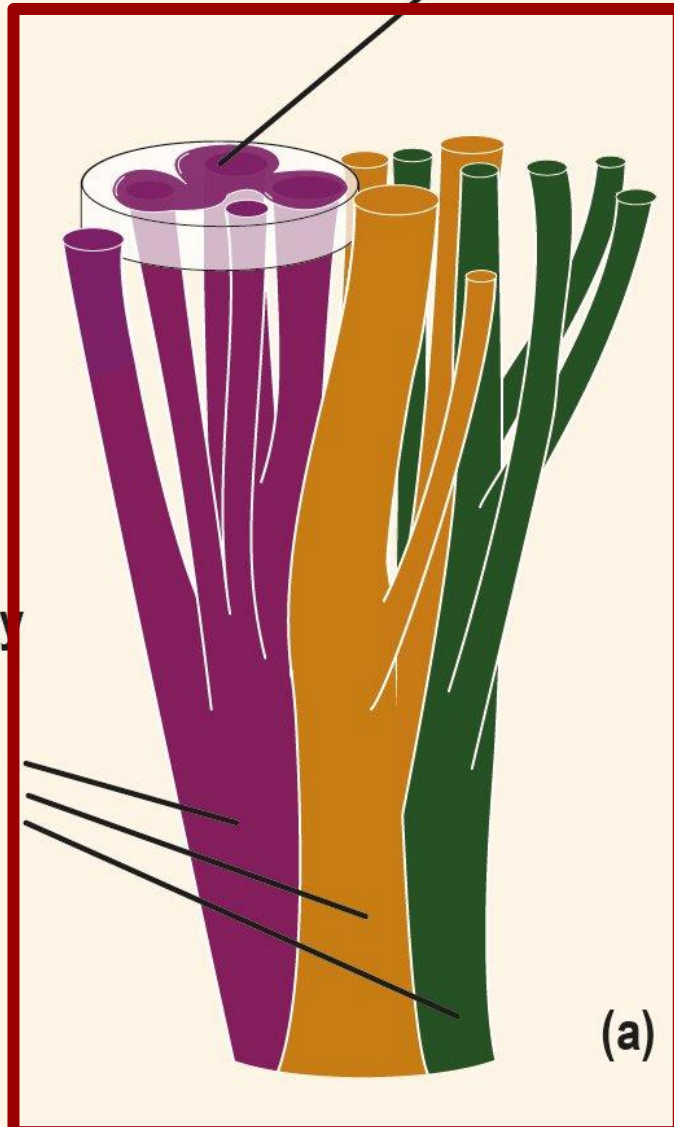
Co-production
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Co-production
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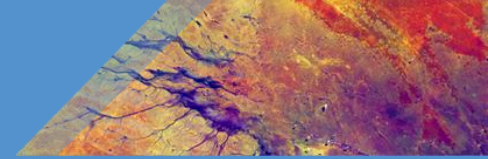


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Trajectory of
knowledge
systems
over time

IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate

Indigenous Knowledge is critical to:

- 1) Understanding climate change
- 2) Responding climate change
- 3) Governing climate change



Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability



Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability

Indigenous Knowledge is critical to:

- 1) Understanding climate change
- 2) Responding climate change
- 3) Governing climate change

... via self-determination

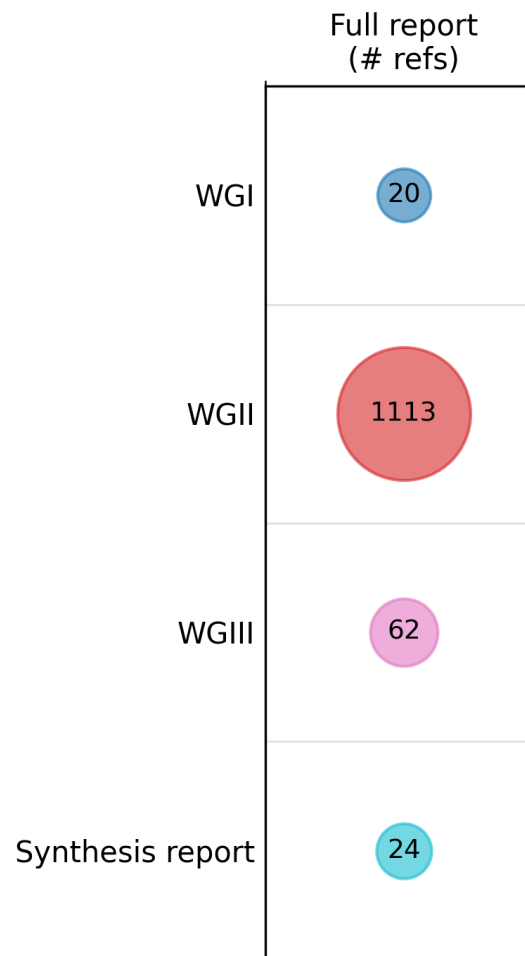
Noteworthy in WGII AR6

IPCC firsts:

- IK was included in every chapter
- Colonialism explicitly named in the Summary for Policymakers
- Indigenous Rights explicitly named in the Summary for Policymakers

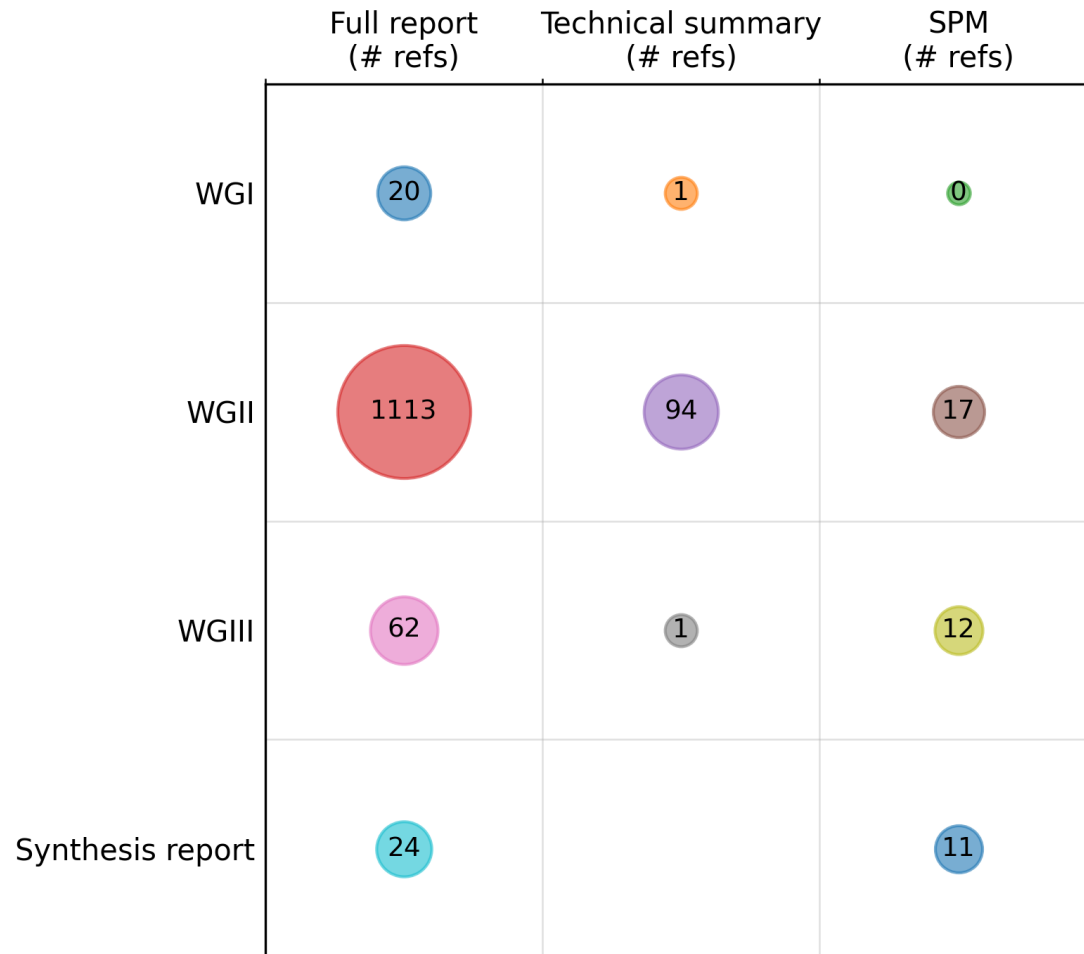
What about the other WG Reports?

References to Indigenous Peoples in IPCC AR6



Carmona, et al. (2023). Analysing engagement with Indigenous Peoples in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report. npj Climate Action, 2, 29.

References to Indigenous Peoples in IPCC AR6



Carmona, et al. (2023). Analysing engagement with Indigenous Peoples in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report. npj Climate Action, 2, 29.

References to Indigenous Peoples in IPCC AR6

	Full report (# refs)	Technical summary (# refs)	SPM (# refs)	Recognises vulnerability	Acknowledges knowledge systems	Acknowledges contributions	Refers to rights	Acknowledges demands
WGI	20	1	0	✓	✓			
WGII	1113	94	17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WGIII	62	1	12	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Synthesis report	24		11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Carmona, et al. (2023). Analysing engagement with Indigenous Peoples in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report. npj Climate Action, 2, 29.

How was IK included? Engaging with Indigenous Knowledges in IPCC AR6

ASSESSMENT CYCLE



Process of including IK in the AR6 Reports

- The process varied by report and by chapter
- Example: WGII Chapter 14: North America
 - Team of Indigenous Contributing Authors wrote the text related to Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledges
 - Indigenous Contributing Authors from Canada, USA, and Mexico
 - Indigenous Contributing Authors worked collaboratively as a team together
 - Chapter content:
 - One section dedicated Indigenous Peoples – as a Level 1 Heading (increased visibility)
 - One Box dedicated to IK: “Integrating Indigenous Responsibility-Based Thinking into Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience”
 - Indigenous content and references throughout the chapter
 - Indigenous content in the Executive Summary

What is next? Indigenous Knowledges and AR7

ASSESSMENT CYCLE



AR7: Engaging with IK

- IPCC Expert Meeting on Gender, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity
 - Included recommendations on diverse authorship, as well as inclusive and equity-centered practices
- IK was included in every AR7 Report Outline
- AR7 Authors:
 - Indigenous Lead Authors in every report
 - Coordinating Lead Authors in WGII
 - Indigenous Chapter Scientist

Improve and Strengthen IK in IPCC:

IPCC Workshop on Engaging Diverse Knowledge Systems

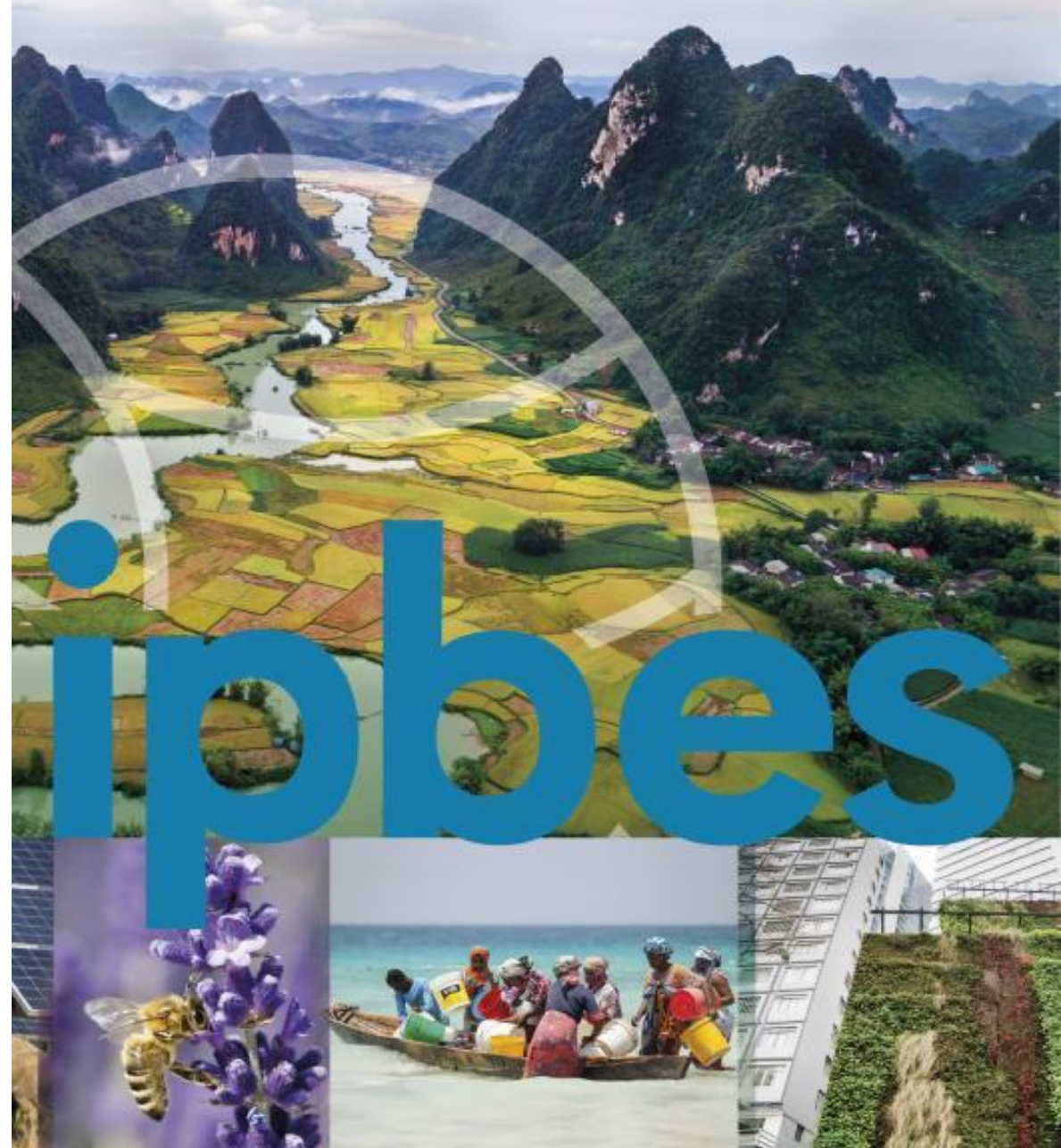
ASSESSMENT CYCLE

ASSESSMENT CYCLE

Practice in peer bodies

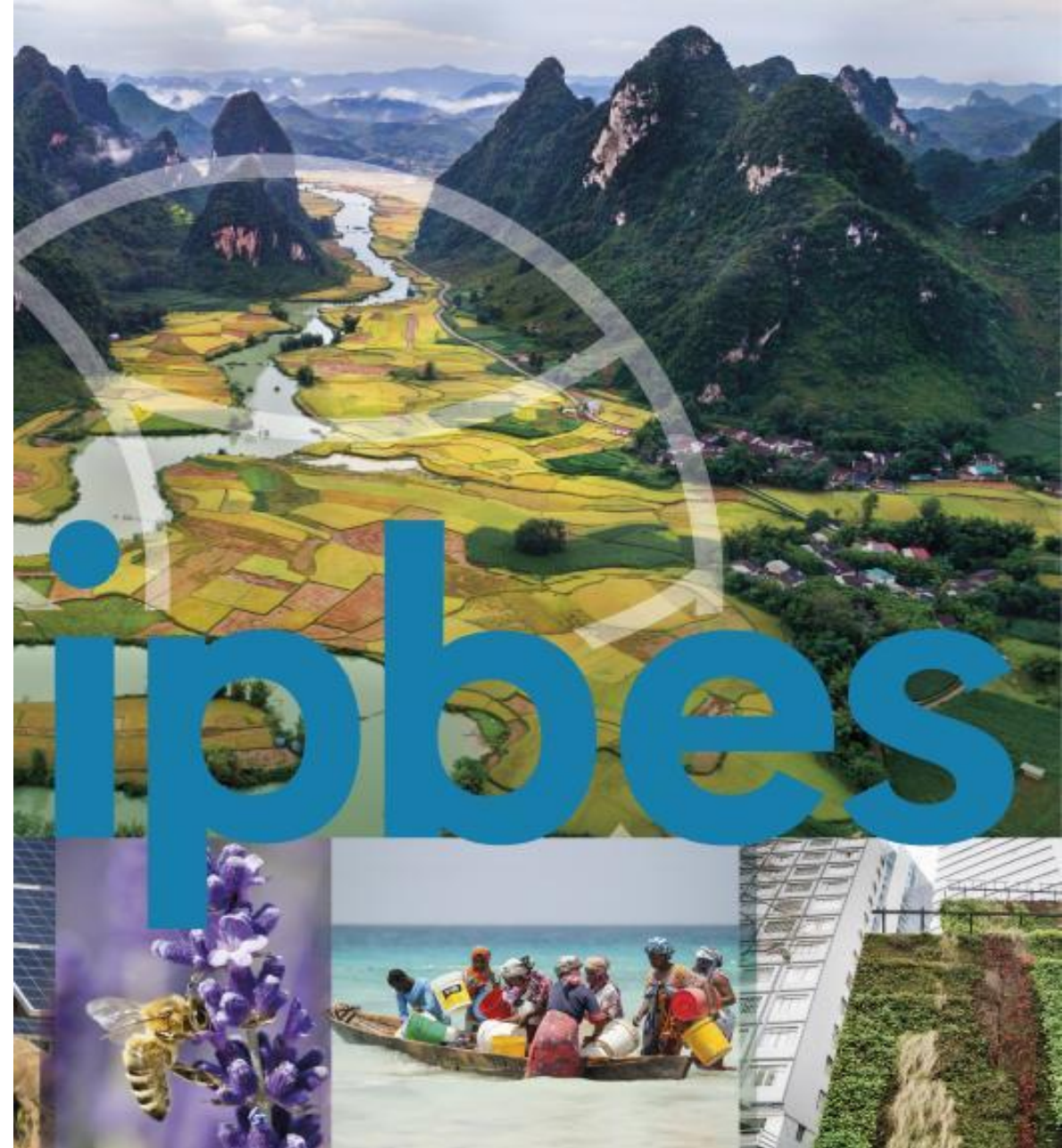
Peter Bates, IPBES

Indigenous knowledge in IPBES



Acknowledging

- Authors, task force members, workshop participants, organizations and networks that support IPBES



Background to IPBES

- Full name: The **Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services**
- Independent intergovernmental body, established by Member States in 2012
- 152 member countries (new members are still joining)
- The **overall objective** of IPBES is to strengthen the science-policy interface for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.



Background to IPBES

The current IPBES work programme (from 2019 to 2030) has **5 main objectives**:

1. Assessing knowledge (through the IPBES assessments)
2. Building capacity
3. Strengthening knowledge foundations
 - Which includes **enhancing work with Indigenous and local knowledge** (but ILK is woven throughout all objectives)
4. Supporting policy (including work on future scenarios)
5. Communicating and engaging



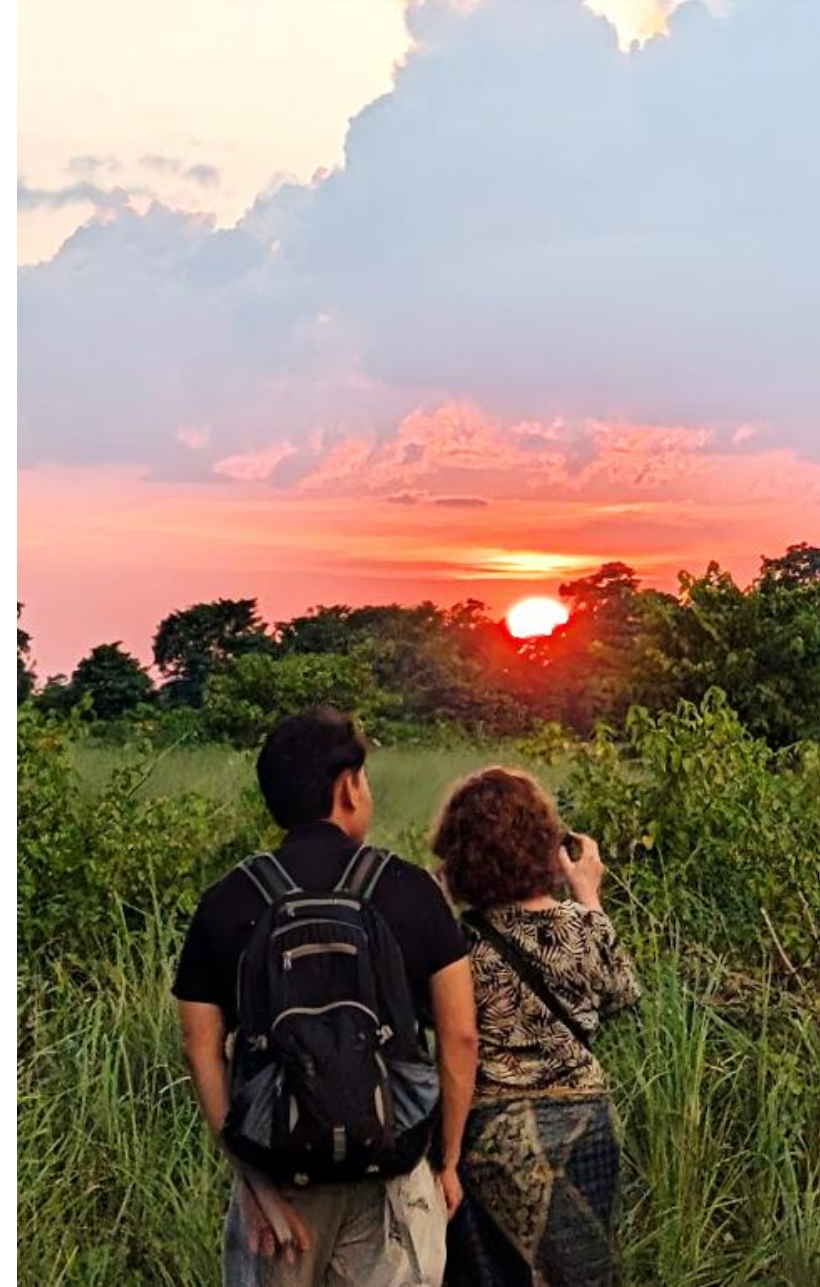
IPBES and Indigenous knowledge

- Since its inception, IPBES **recognised the importance** of Indigenous knowledge and the roles of Indigenous Peoples and also local communities for the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems
- Work with Indigenous knowledge is enshrined in IPBES **deliverables and objectives**
- The IPBES **conceptual framework** explicitly considers multiple knowledge systems and types of values



Key challenges

- Working with diverse knowledge systems that are often not documented (and/or cannot be documented without losing context), in an assessment process that often relies on written, publicly available information
- Working with the vast diversity of Indigenous knowledge systems and languages at the global scale
- Enhancing participation in a process that can be complex and inaccessible
- Ensuring and monitoring benefits to communities in a process where clear impact chains can be hard to trace



ILK task force

- 14 members, 10 Indigenous
- Technical support unit based at UNESCO

Task force members:

Co-chairs:

Nicholas Rahiri Roskruge
Catherine Febria (MEP)

MEP: Adriana Flores Diaz

Members:

Wilfredo Alanguí, Myrle Ballard, Joji Cariño, Binota Moy Dhamai, Guadalupe Yesenia Hernández Márquez, Mariaelena Huambachano, Paulina Karim, Pius Loupa, Q'apaj Conde, Ethel Chisomo Kamba Chikoti, Kanembwa Mukoma, John Scott, Nataliya Stryamets, Kyle Whyte



IPBES and Indigenous knowledge

The task force developed an “[approach to recognizing and working with ILK in IPBES](#)”

- approved by the member states at the 5th plenary meeting in 2017
- provides an agreed upon foundation for the work
- 4 phases:
 1. The collaborative definition of problems and goals
 2. Synthesizing and incorporating a wide array of evidence and data from multiple sources of Indigenous and local knowledge
 3. Appropriate engagement in the review of the various drafts of a specific assessment
 4. Sharing knowledge and insights gained through an assessment once the assessment is concluded



IPBES and Indigenous knowledge

The task force also developed a [methodological guidance](#)

- enhances implementation of the approach, and participation
- We are always **Learning** through assessments and other activities, reviewing our progress and trying to develop further
 - e.g. through a recent methods workshop, annual reviews of ILK in IPBES etc



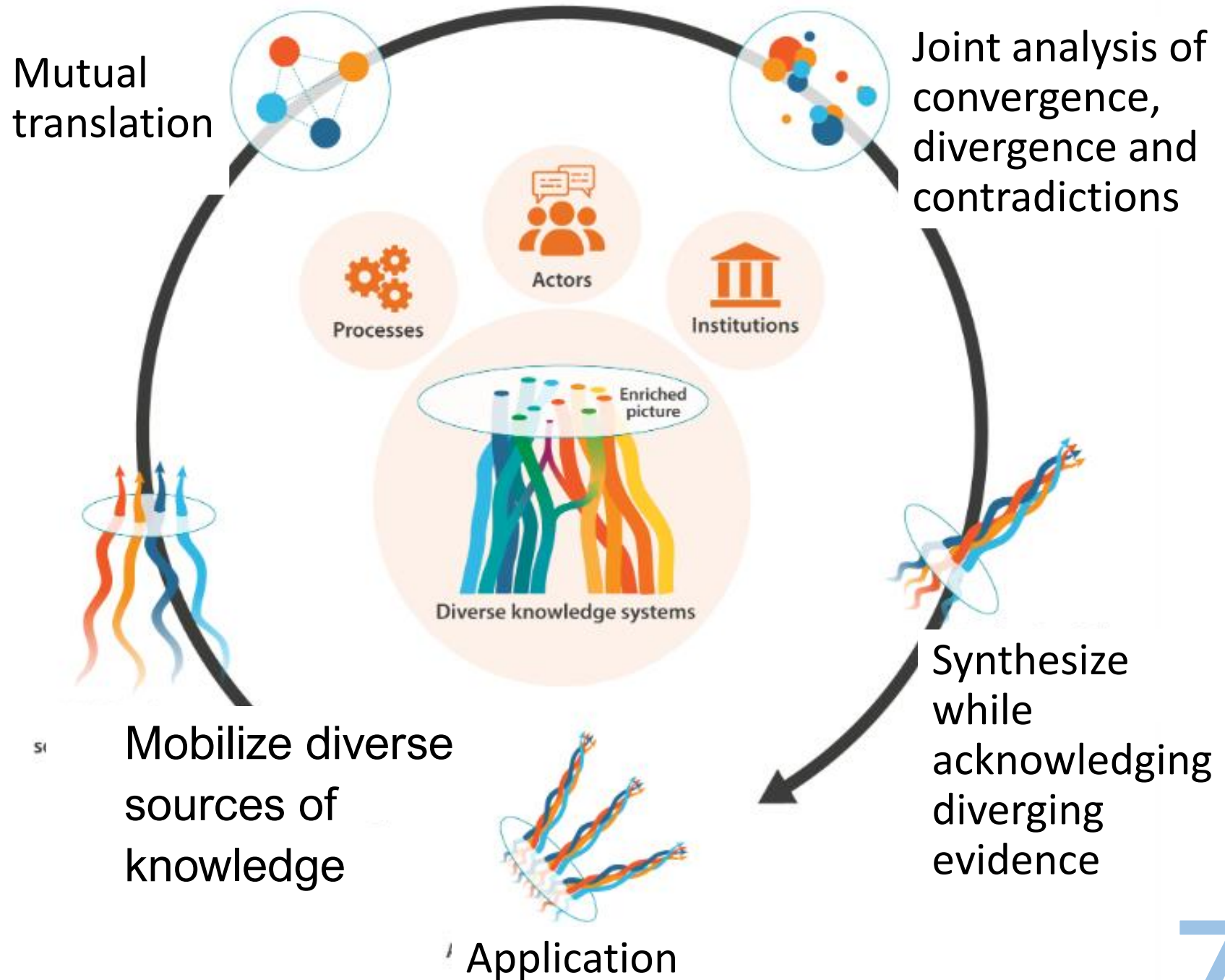
Multiple evidence base approach

Tengö et al. 2014 and 2017

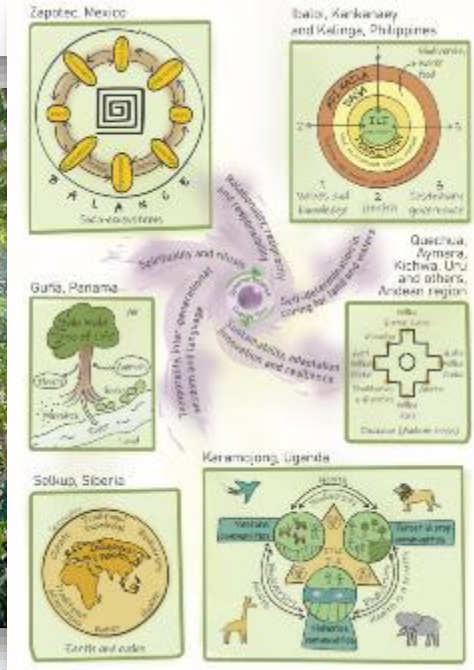
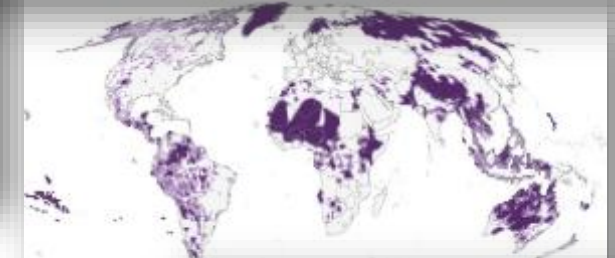
<https://swed.bio/meb/>

Focus on “weaving” –
not “integration”

ILK validated through
ILK systems

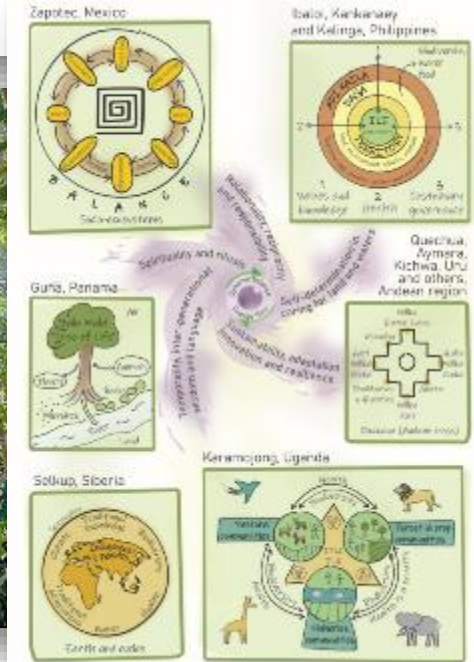
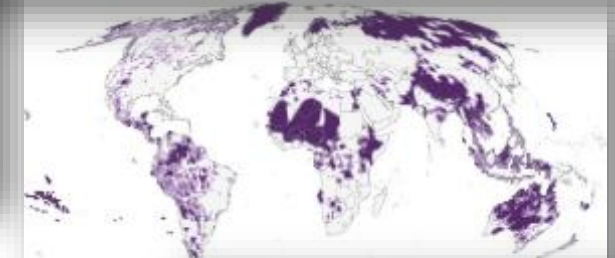


Current ILK methods within IPBES assessments



ILK liaison groups

- Authors form an “**ILK liaison group**” for each assessment (a group of authors tasked with working on ILK)
- Regular meetings of the ILK liaison group and the task force on ILK



Dialogue workshops

4 dialogue workshops (2 for “fast track” assessments):

- **Scoping workshop** (online, before an assessment starts)

During the assessment itself:

1. **Framing / key ILK themes and concepts**
2. **Reviewing first drafts**
3. **Reviewing second drafts and summary for policymakers**
 - Discussions and community visits / ceremony
 - Comments for external reviews
 - Reports available [online](#), cited in assessments
 - Contributing authors
 - Co-developing figures



Methods within assessments

- Free, prior and informed consent processes
- Data management policy - CARE and FAIR
 - Capacity building and support to authors to follow FPIC and CARE
 - Clear communication with contributors and participants over their rights, ownership and IPBES proposed uses of information
 - Processes for confidential information to be stored but not made publicly available (rarely needed due to scale of IPBES work)
 - Verification during ILK dialogue workshops for reviews
 - Oversight by task force

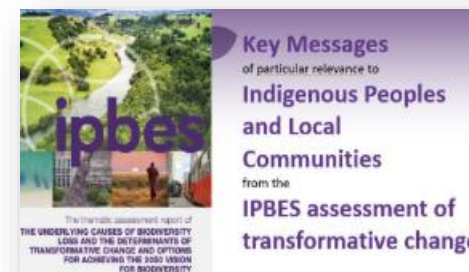


Benefits to Indigenous Peoples

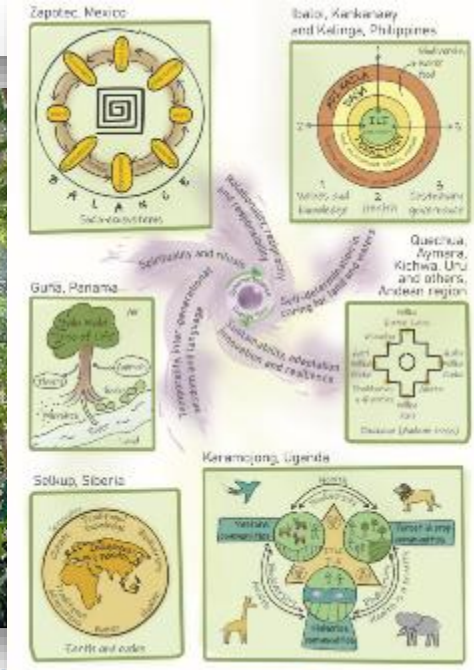
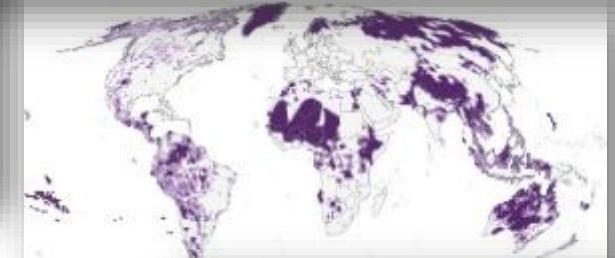
- Materials, webinars and now fact sheets for Indigenous Peoples from completed assessments ([here](#))

The aim is to ensure benefits, for example:

- Bringing issues and priorities from Indigenous Peoples and local communities to the attention of policymakers and decisionmakers
 - Catalyzing new research (and funding)
 - Assessments and other products as tools for negotiation, funding applications, educational resources... (e.g. KMGBF, local governance negotiations, etc)
- Work with BES-Net programme on dialogues (between policymakers, researchers and practitioners including Indigenous Peoples and local communities) and uptake e.g. in 2025 Southern Africa and Caribbean

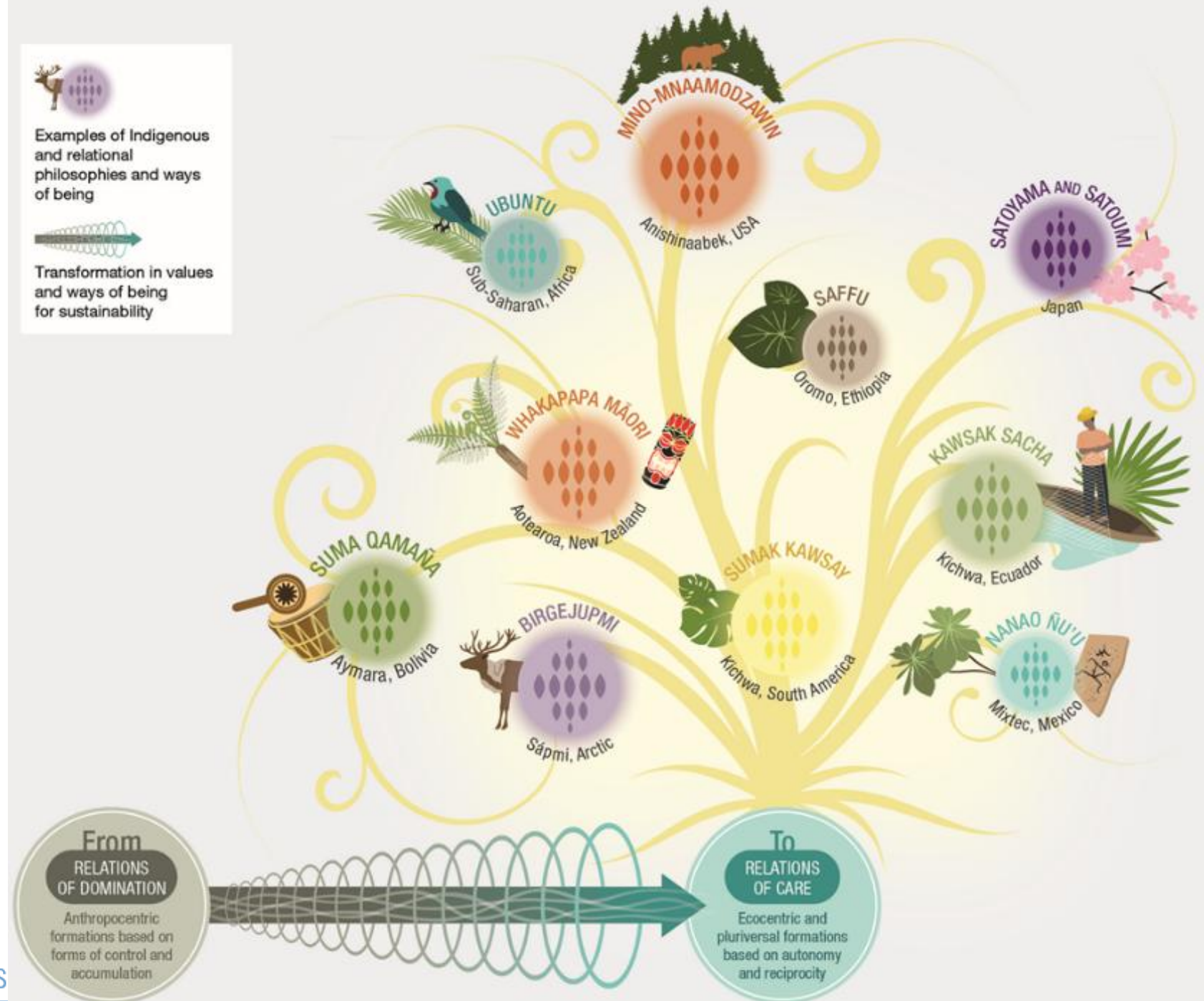
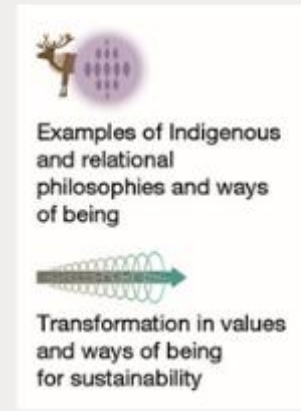


Methods examples from IPBES assessments



Exploring language and philosophies

- e.g. transformative change assessment
- through dialogue workshops and contributing authors



<p>Birgejupmi Sápmi, Arctic</p>	<p>Living in a modest way with interactions between humans and non-humans based on care and respect.</p>
<p>Kawsak Sacha Kichwa, Ecuador</p>	<p>'The living forest,' a conscious living being who is the subject of rights and is inhabited by beings that protect ecosystems, animal and plant species.</p>
<p>Mino-mnaamodzawin Anishinaabek, USA</p>	<p>The value of respect for the spirit in all things.</p>
<p>Nanao ñu'u Mixtec, Mexico</p>	<p>To rediscover human-nature bonds and reconnect with values of equity, respect and care with nanao ñu'u (our mother).</p>
<p>Saffu Oromo, Ethiopia</p>	<p>A principle impelling people to respect and do justice to their ayyaana (spirit) and that of other beings.</p>
<p>Satoyama and Satoumi Japan</p>	<p>The harmonious interaction between humans and nature in rural landscapes and seascapes.</p>
<p>Suma Qamaña Aymara, Bolivia</p>	<p>Living well together with harmonious relationships of all forms of life in the totality of Mother Earth as a living being.</p>
<p>Sumak Kawsay Kichwa, South America</p>	<p>Broad values that guide human-human and human-nature interconnections based on valuing and appreciating the distinctiveness of others as well as spirituality or lifestyle.</p>
<p>Ubuntu Sub-Saharan, Africa</p>	<p>Values system that focuses on reciprocity, dialogue and collective humanity.</p>
<p>Whakapapa Aotearoa, New Zealand</p>	<p>A cultural connectedness that encompasses both ancestry and nature and determines the relationships and obligations.</p>



Artwork

- e.g. Transformative change

Figure 5.14. Te Ira Tangata (The life principle of man).

Artwork by Makuini Te Whata-Chadwick in 2003 and kindly provided by Nick Rahiri Roskruge – CC BY 4.0.

This artwork depicts the Te Ao Maori creation of the world in which humankind celebrates the relationship that moved Maori peoples' whakapapa from the spiritual to the physical world to parent humankind.

Analysis of Indigenous and local indicators

- e.g. Nexus (ch 2):
- for biodiversity, water, food, health and climate
- From 87 case studies reporting observations and indicators from Indigenous peoples and local communities

*With qualitative descriptions



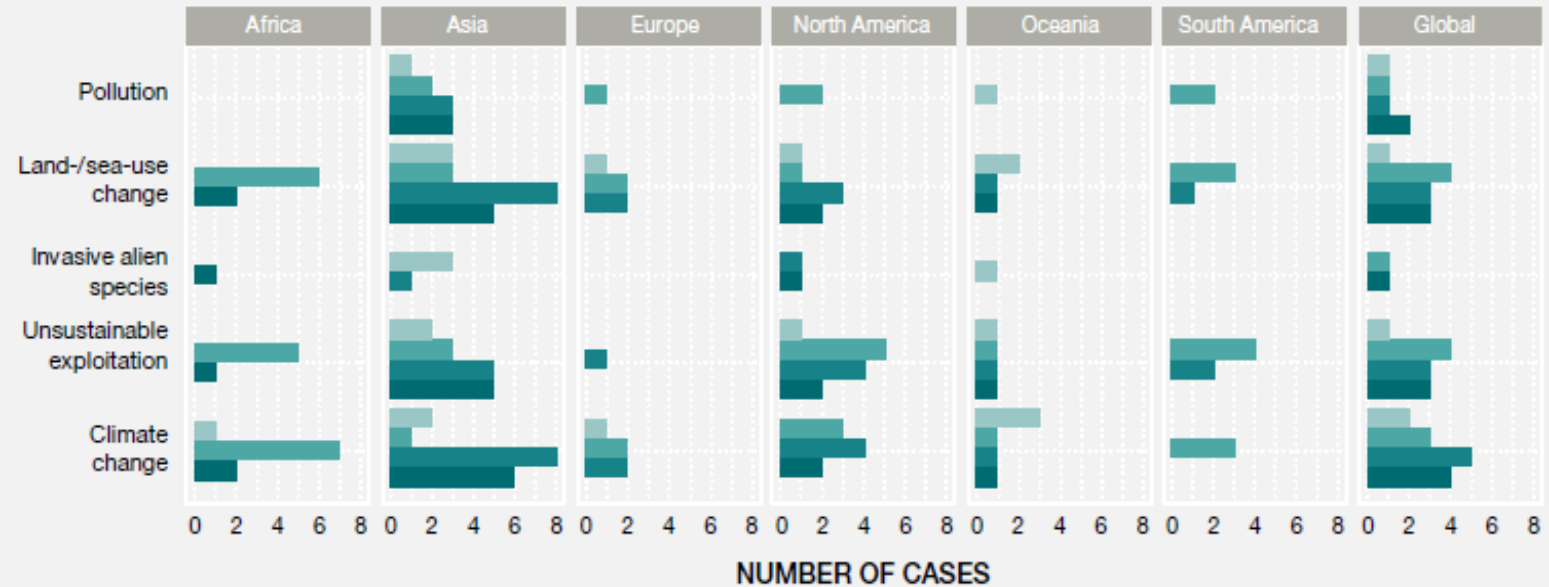
Figure 2 32 Number of cases from studies relevant to Indigenous Peoples and local communities and Indigenous and local knowledge focusing on regional trends in the nexus elements and their interactions.

Analysis of direct and indirect drivers

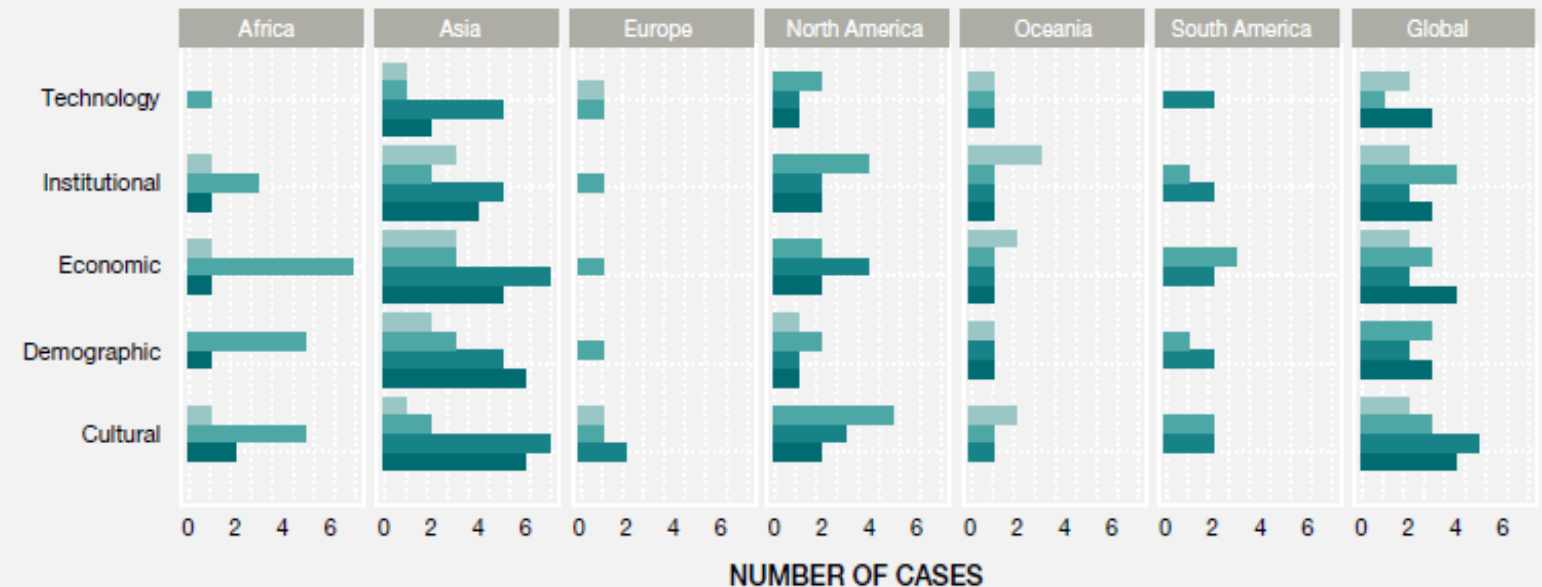
- e.g. Nexus (ch 2):
- from studies by and with Indigenous Peoples and local communities

*With qualitative descriptions

A DIRECT DRIVER

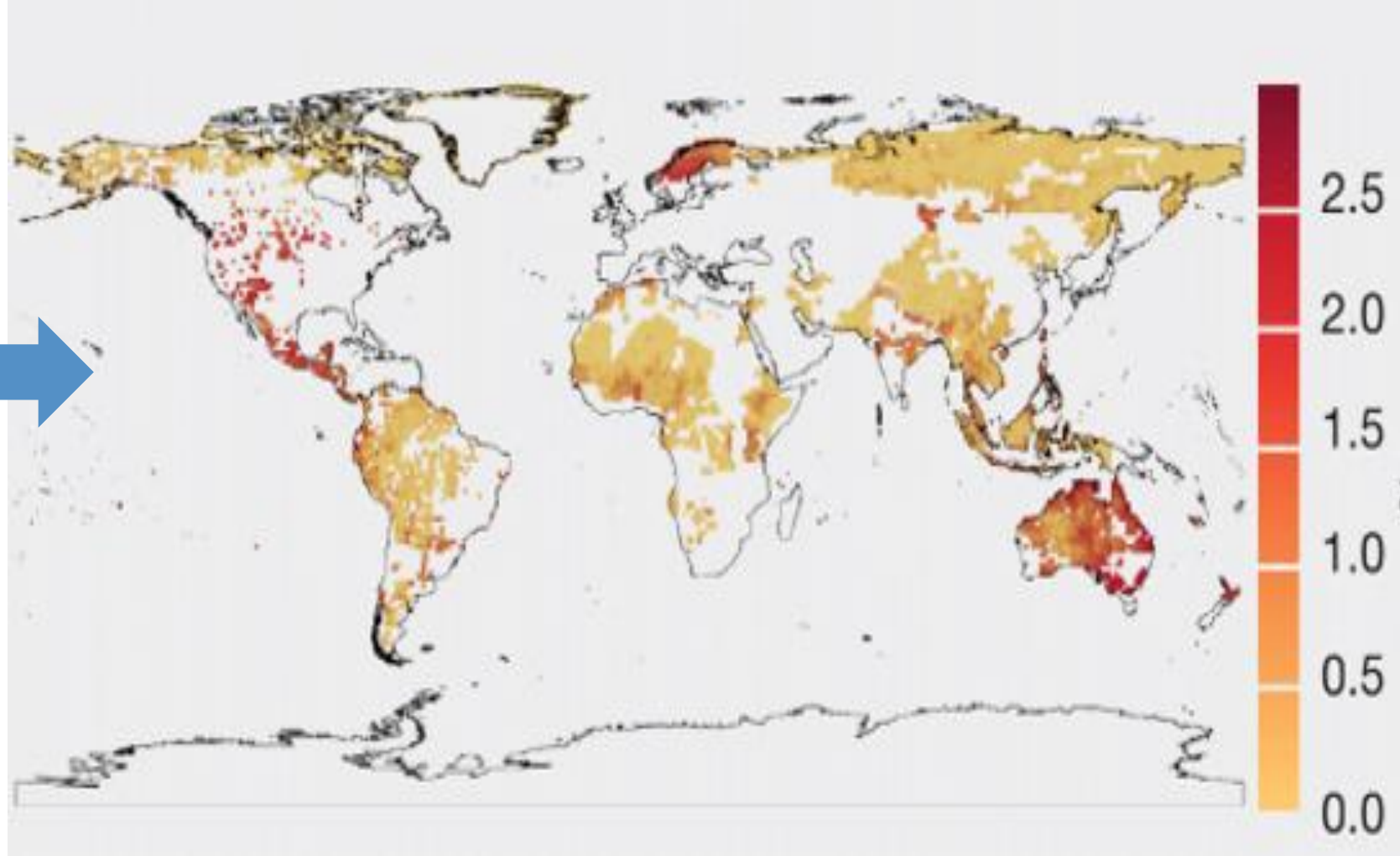
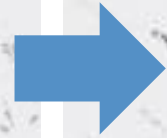
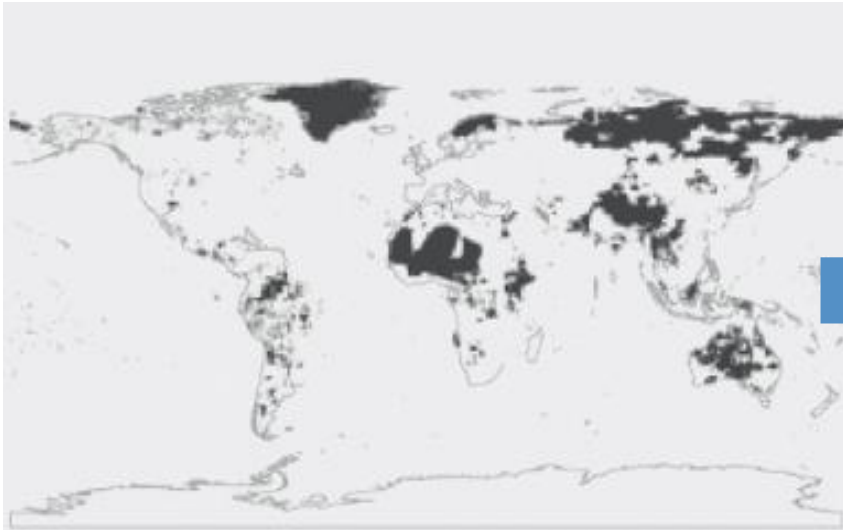


B INDIRECT DRIVER



Mapping of Indigenous lands

- e.g. Invasive alien species



Ongoing challenges

- Few members of Indigenous Peoples or local communities apply to participate as authors
 - Due to the **predominance of scientific frameworks, quantitative approaches, English as the main language, lack of funding and (home) institutional support**
- ILK interpreted through a **scientific lens, scientific frameworks and methods, by authors who are not Indigenous**
- **Language barriers**, as much ILK is not documented in English
- For many people, **knowledge of IPBES is very limited / Completed IPBES assessments may not reach local levels**
- **Lack of uptake of IPBES assessment findings at national levels**, often with few clear impacts on governments and business and industry
- **Tracking impacts**



Ways forward

- ILK should be integral to scoping and planning of chapter frameworks, structures and methods (space for qualitative information etc)
- Support is needed by all authors
- **Chapter 2 of the second global assessment**
 - More Indigenous authors / leadership
 - Techniques and methods drawn from Indigenous traditions and knowledge systems
 - Other ways of reflecting knowledge, including languages, videos, pictures, audio records, artworks and rituals
 - Framing and narrative throughout the assessment
- National ecosystems assessments, dialogues and more focus on uptake and tracking....



Thank you!



ASSESSMENT CYCLE

What could the IPCC aspire to do

Grace Balawag

Reference on PA and LCIPP

Paris Agreement / Decision 1/CP.21:

- Climate change as a common concern of humankind. In taking action to address climate change, with the respective obligations on human rights, inter alia, the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities should be respected, promoted and considered
- COP recognized the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of indigenous peoples and local communities related to addressing and responding to climate change.
- LCIPP was established for the following objectives:
 - Strengthen the knowledge, technologies, practices, and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change,
 - Facilitate the exchange of experience and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner
 - Enhance the engagement of local communities and indigenous peoples in the UNFCCC process.

Learning from LCIPP on key ethical considerations

- LCIPP under the UNFCCC adopted key ethical principles designed to protect the rights, knowledge, and sovereignty of indigenous peoples and local communities in climate change action. The core ethical considerations revolve around ensuring respectful engagement, the protection of traditional knowledge, and the equitable participation of Indigenous representatives.

Key Ethical Considerations and Principles

- **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC):** Any sharing or use of traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices must take into account the FPIC of the holders of such knowledge.
- **Respect for Self-Determination and Rights:** Operate with a commitment to respect indigenous peoples as rights holders and to uphold their right to self-determination at all levels.

Learning from LCIPP on key ethical considerations

- **Protection of Intellectual Property and Knowledge:** Prevent the misuse of traditional knowledge. It is not designed to be a repository for storing sensitive or private information but rather a space for exchange, ensuring that knowledge is not just extracted but respected.
- **Equitable Participation and Representation:** Ensure that indigenous representatives have equal status with Parties, particularly in leadership roles. It uses self-selection processes for indigenous representatives, adhering to their own procedures.
- **Cultural Safety and Recognition:** Emphasize IP culture and contributions, recognizing that it is rooted in distinct worldviews, languages, and cultural practices.
- **Intergenerational Equity:** Incorporate the "seventh-generation principle," aiming to ensure that actions taken today protect the needs of future generations.

Complementation of key considerations from IPCC regarding IPs

Acknowledgement of the IPCC on the role and contributions on Indigenous Peoples has increased over the years, including the following:

- **Frontline Vulnerability:** Despite contributing the least to global emissions, IPs face severe threats from climate change, including biodiversity loss, food insecurity, water scarcity, loss of livelihoods, and destruction of cultural heritage.
- **Essential Knowledge Systems of Indigenous Peoples:** Recognized as a key, yet underutilized, resource for climate adaptation, providing accurate baselines for environmental changes and offering sustainable land management technique
- **Climate Solutions:** IPs contribute thru their knowledge, customary protocols, culture and sustainable management of lands and resources with lower deforestation rates, making secure land tenure a cost-effective strategy for climate mitigation.
- **Right-Based Approach:** The IPCC stresses the need for self-determination, recognizing territorial rights, and ensuring free, prior, and informed consent in climate policies.
- However, challenges remain regarding the full inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives in scientific assessments and more active engagement of IP representatives in the research process and reports.

Aspirations and focus areas for consideration under IPCC

- **Capacity Building:** Support for training of Indigenous Peoples, State representatives and other stakeholders to ensure the ethical engagement of IP knowledge holders and to foster an understanding of IP knowledge, protocols and report
- **Inclusion:** Moving beyond mere consultation to actual, meaningful, and empowered participation for IP-led and co-designed researches, scientific assessments and decision-making processes.
- **Contextualizing Knowledge:** Indigenous Peoples knowledge must not be separated from its context, ensuring that it is not just used, but recognized and acknowledged for its contributions
- **Funding Access:** Simplified access to climate funding to support IP-led and co-designed researches and meaningful engagement in other IPCC processes
- **Ethical considerations and guidance on researches and scientific assessments,** including co-designed researches and practices, with reference to adopted principles and protocols of Indigenous Peoples