Technical Guideline Series

Contents

Part 9 - Considerations when working with Indigenous and local knowledge

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I. Introduction

The purpose of this technical guideline is to provide practical guidance for all IPBES authors and technical support units on how to work with and document Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK[1]) within IPBES. All IPBES experts working with ILK are expected to follow the requirements in the IPBES data and knowledge management policy and free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) as laid out in the IPBES methodological guidance on recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge.

The policy specifically requires all experts to follow the CARE principles for indigenous data governance and the FAIR guiding principles for scientific data management and stewardship. The policy is also built upon the concept of open science, reflected within the UNESCO recommendation on open science. IPBES experts are also required to follow the IPBES process for adhering to principles of free, prior and informed consent

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[1]The IPBES core glossary gives the following definition; "indigenous and local knowledge systems are social and ecological knowledge practices and beliefs pertaining to the relationship of living beings, including people, with one another and with their environments." See https://www.ipbes.net/glossary/indigenous-local-knowledge-systems

(FPIC) when working with ILK. Please refer to the methodological guidance which provides a detailed process for ensuring that FPIC principles are followed for assessments.

This guideline provides both practical advice and key considerations on how to apply these principles. Applying the principles will require careful consideration on a case-by-case basis, as opposed to following a rigid protocol. Additionally, this guidance is not intended to be comprehensive and depending on the nature of the project, other ethical guidelines could be consulted. Please contact the technical support unit on data (tsu.data@ipbes.net) and/or the technical support unit on indigenous and local knowledge (ilk.tsu.ipbes@unesco.org) with any specific questions, concerns, or recommendations. Note that this guideline is a working document and may be periodically updated. The newest version will always be available via **https://ict.ipbes.net/data-management/technical-guidelines/ILK-considerations**

II. FPIC and moving towards the CARE and FAIR principles

A. Overarching challenges There are some challenges for moving towards full FPIC, CARE, and FAIR alignment in IPBES products and their underlying processes, particularly:

- Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs[2]), like all other knowledge and data owners, do not have final consent over the findings of the assessments, as assessment findings are intended to be based on a process of reviewing available evidence.

- Most IPBES products are only available online and additionally only in English, with the exception of assessments' SPMs and some additional products. Therefore, full accessibility and findability of IPBES products for many IPLCs is not achieved within the standard IPBES distribution channels.

- Where authors rely on existing materials (including peer-review publications, grey literature and other sources) to work with ILK, it may not always be possible to know if FPIC principles were followed during the development of that literature, or to verify the veracity and reliability of the materials.

B. Overarching approaches for FPIC and moving towards CARE and FAIR Keeping these challenges in mind, IPBES strives to ensure that FPIC and the CARE and FAIR principles are fulfilled to the fullest extent possible within the mandate of the Platform, by the following overarching approaches:

1. Ensuring that IPLCs are informed of the IPBES process prior to providing contributions

- Information about IPBES processes, products, and goals, and how these relate to the activity in question, needs to be provided prior to IPLCs participating, so that they can decide how they wish to share knowledge and what they wish to share. This can be achieved either through an explanatory email or text provided prior to an activity, for example, in the case of the call for contributions or when approaching contributing authors, with follow-up discussions as needed. In the case of dialogue workshops, an initial session of the workshop is also set aside to further explain and discuss aims, uses and storage of information shared during the workshop.

2. Ensuring that IPLCs are engaged in developing assessments, informed of assessment content, and that they can review and comment on drafts

- The main mechanism for ensuring that IPLCs are engaged in developing assessments, informed of assessment content, and that they can review and comment on drafts is the dialogue workshops and other online webinars and events that aim to inform IPLCs of current IPBES processes. The scoping dialogue

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[2]The IPBES glossary gives the following definition: Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) are, typically, ethnic groups who are descended from and identify with the original inhabitants of a given region, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied or colonized the area more recently. IPBES does not intend to create or develop new definitions of what constitutes "indigenous peoples and local communities". See https://ipbes.net/glossary/indigenous-peoples-local-communities. Chapter 1 of the IPBES Global Assessment, and IPBES ILK methods guide also provide further detail and discussion.

workshop provides a first opportunity for IPLCs to learn about and help to frame an assessment. The first dialogue workshop further provides an opportunity for co-developing key themes and questions for the assessment, refining methods and approaches, and highlighting any risks or challenges relating to ILK and IPLC issues. The second and third dialogue workshops in an assessment cycle take place during the assessment review periods. These dialogues are designed to give IPLCs the opportunity to understand and comment on draft assessment materials, to provide any additional resources that could be used to improve an assessment text, and to raise any issues of concern in terms of representation of IPLCs and their knowledge, use of confidential knowledge, and information or gaps. Authors can use these dialogue workshops to raise any concerns they have with their chapters, especially where they are unsure whether FPIC was followed in materials reviewed, as described below.

3. Enhancing accessibility of IPBES products to IPLCs

The following activities and processes aim to enhance accessibility of IPBES products to IPLCs:

- Final assessments and associated IPBES products are publicly available online;

- IPLCs who contributed to the Assessments will be notified of their approval and online publication;

- Specific materials are developed to make assessment findings more accessible to IPLCs. For example, the document Key messages of relevance for IPLCs from the global assessment;

- Webinars and other events are held around these materials to enhance their outreach and uptake;

- IPBES will also aim to work with other organisations, including the BES-Net programme, to further develop outreach and communication materials in multiple languages.

4. Ensuring that access to confidential ILK is restricted

- Through direct discussion with IPLCs, including in the dialogue workshops, and through work with the task force on ILK, IPBES authors and TSUs should seek to determine the appropriate accessibility of materials submitted by IPLCs. With the formally documented consent of those providing the materials, these confidential materials may be documented and stored in long-term repositories (e.g. Zenodo) with restricted access. Authors should contact the data and knowledge TSU (tsu.data@ipbes.net) and ILK TSU (ilk.ipbes.tsu@unesco.org) to coordinate this process.

- Where appropriate, IPBES authors, together with the ILK task force and TSU, will work with IPLCs to ensure that their knowledge is only represented in ways that do not reveal confidential information with their permission (for example, a synthesis of medicinal plant use rather than specific details of this use).

III. CARE and FPIC when working with different ILK sources

Alongside the overarching processes described above, authors and TSUs can also work to ensure that FPIC, CARE, and FAIR are fulfilled to the maximum extent possible when working with different sources of ILK. ILK can come from a variety of sources, such as outcomes of IPBES dialogues, published materials, unpublished materials submitted during a review period, or from contributing authors. The recommended processes for different types of sources of ILK are discussed below. IPBES experts, including Contributing Authors, will need to document these processes within data management reports as explained in section IV.

A. Outcomes of IPBES dialogues (reports)   The IPBES ILK dialogue workshop process is designed to closely align with the CARE principles, and is an FPIC process, as follows:

- Participants are informed at the outset of the objectives of the workshop, and of the uses, storage and access to information provided;

- Participants are given the opportunity after the dialogue to comment on and edit the draft report and any other materials produced, and can remove the information they provided at any time;

- All information provided during the dialogue is included within the workshop report, which is publicly available, so there is no additional information stored by IPBES to which further access is needed, unless participants specifically request that their information remains confidential;

As such, when citing the reports, authors can be confident that it follows FPIC as well as the CARE and FAIR principles. However, there are additional considerations:

- If parts of the report will be quoted in their entirety, or case studies from the reports will be explicitly highlighted in the assessment, these portions of text should be sent to participants for their review and approval. Authors can contact the technical support unit on ILK to coordinate this. Appropriate credit should also be given to the dialogue workshop participants alongside these portions of text, rather than only referencing the IPBES report.

B. FPIC and CARE in review of other literature and published materials   IPBES authors review literature and materials describing ILK, which could include peer-reviewed articles, as well as published or unpublished grey literature such as NGO reports, community reports, and online videos, etc. Authors should be attentive to the possibility that FPIC may not have been properly sought by the authors of published materials, even where it appears to be published by a community. It is, however, generally not possible to trace each of these materials back to its source and check on FPIC and CARE compliance. However, there are key issues or themes within materials that can indicate that further attention may be needed:

- Materials that are critical of IPLCs;

- Materials that detail rituals or spiritual practices;

- Materials that detail uses of medicines, including plants and animals.

If such themes are detailed in a material, the following steps can be taken:

- Send any material in question to the ILK TSU for verification by the ILK task force or by participants of a dialogue workshop, including material that will become part of other IPBES products, such as a data management report.

Moreover, if a single paper or limited number of papers are used to build a detailed case study, authors could check that FPIC and proper protocols were followed, or engage with the community in question to verify.

C. Unpublished materials   In some circumstances, assessment authors may review unpublished materials, such as community reports, songs, artworks, or personal communication. In such cases, authors need to be particularly attentive to the issues and actions highlighted above, and bring any concerns to the ILK TSU. If requested, IPBES can support owners of unpublished materials to ensure that these materials are findable and accessible, including recommendations for storage. For example, supporting communities to publish the materials on a public website, or for confidential materials, making metadata available online but storing the materials inside a closed repository. A full process of free, prior and informed consent needs to be followed to make sure that the communities involved understand and formally consent to the use, storage and access rights for the materials.

D. Contributions from Contributing Authors Contributing authors, who may or may not be IPLCs, are invited to contribute text, figures, or other inputs to an assessment. Again, any mention of the key issues highlighted above can indicate that there is a potential sensitivity and the ILK TSU should be informed.

A FPIC process should also be followed with IPLC contributing authors, to ensure that they understand and consent to the full proposed use, storage of, and access to the information they provide, including that:

- The final assessment may not include their submitted contribution at all;

- The final assessment may not include their submitted contribution in full;

- The final assessment may include a highly edited or synthesised version of the their contribution;

- Their full submitted contribution may be made publicly available in a data management report or in supplementary materials.

Where possible, IPBES authors should send contributing authors the parts of the assessment which include their contributions so they can review and approve the use of their text. Further, our recommendation is to include these points in a first email when approaching all relevant contributing authors, so that they agree to these terms. These contributing authors should also acknowledge that they are authorised to share any ILK contributions and confirm that these are non-confidential. Additionally, coordinating lead authors should have the responsibility to ensure that contact with contributing authors throughout the assessment is maintained. The technical guideline available at: https://ict.ipbes.net/data-management/technical-guidelines/Contributing-authors-template contains an adaptable template for a first email to contributing authors which states these points.

IV. Documentation for each type of source

Finalised dialogue reports are openly available and published as open access on Zenodo.

Data management reports[3] should be used to document the process of working with other sources of ILK to enhance transparency. For data management reports that include descriptions of all ILK sources, a section describing the following for each source should be included:

- *Published materials* - If there were concerns identified including those described in section III - B, describe what steps were taken to address the concerns and the outcome. Rejected materials should be listed;

- *Unpublished materials* - Describe what steps were taken to store these materials and to follow the process of FPIC. Additionally, include the agreed terms of use and access, appropriate accreditation, and how these materials can be found and accessed in the future;

- *Contributions* - If there were concerns raised, describe what steps were taken to address the concerns and the outcome.

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[3]For more information on data management tutorials, Chapter 3 of the IPBES data management tutorials reviews the topic in detail, which is available here: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4014792