



Scientific Committee for the international Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (PECS)

Background

Based on the report “Ecosystem Change and Human Well-being – Research and Monitoring Priorities Based on the Findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment”, developed by an ICSU-UNESCO-UNU *Ad hoc* Group (ICSU-UNESCO-UNU, 2008), it has been decided to establish a 10-year research programme to fill gaps in scientific knowledge identified by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. The strengthening of the scientific knowledge base should significantly contribute to more effective policy making in this area. It should inform the proposed Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) or any similar mechanism that might be implemented. The results will also be important in setting the stage for a possible future global assessment on ecosystem services and human well-being.

The Scientific Committee for the international Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society is appointed jointly by the International Council for Science (ICSU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and any other agreed co-sponsors.

Terms of Reference

The Scientific Committee:

1. Is responsible for scientific planning, coordination, guidance and oversight of the Programme;
2. will engage with all relevant organizations centrally involved in the follow-up to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA);
3. will ensure effective links between the programme and the four UN conventions directly addressed by the MA: the Convention on Biological Diversity; Convention to Combat Desertification; Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; and the Convention on Migratory Species
4. will ensure coordination and collaboration, as appropriate, with the four global change research programmes (DIVERSITAS, IGBP, IHDP, WCRP), and the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP).

In performing these functions, the Scientific Committee will be supported by an International Programme Office or equivalent support mechanism.

Committee Membership

The SC PECS consists of a Chair and no more than 14 additional members appointed by the sponsors. Members are appointed for a period of three years, renewable once. In addition, each sponsor will appoint

an *ex officio* member. The Scientific Committee for DIVERSITAS and (if established) the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) will be invited to nominate *ex officio* members on the Committee. The Chair can invite additional persons to attend sessions for specific agenda items as necessary. The SC shall meet at least twice a year. It will report on a regular basis to the Programme sponsors.

Initial tasks of the scientific committee (and its dedicated supporting structure) include:

- 1) To further elaborate the framework for (a) the comparative research to be carried out at a limited number of research sites and (b) the cross-cutting research on the global drivers of change in ecosystem services, and the global implications of ecosystem service change at multiple scales as outlined in the report from the ICSU-UNESCO-UNU *Ad hoc* Group;
- 2) To develop, and keep under continuous review, an implementation plan for the Programme in consultation with the network of sub-global Millennium Ecosystem Assessments (and additional assessments launched under the IPBES process) and to ensure that the plan develops in such a way as to make optimal use of available resources;
- 3) To develop scientific criteria for selection of a limited number of sites, where coordinated research will be carried out based on the conceptual framework of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment;
- 4) To encourage the establishment of national or regional research sites and establish relevant mechanisms for interaction with national and regional research initiatives on ecosystems and human well-being;
- 5) To establish a mechanism for the design, guidance, development and oversight, including, for example, Sub-Committees for Data Policy and Management, and for Education, Outreach, and Communication in order to provide leadership in developing data policy and data management protocols;
- 6) To promote the goal and objectives of the Programme, its deliberations and achievements through development of education and outreach programmes in order to attract new generation of scientists that can address linked ecological and social systems, and to capture the interest of the general public and decision-makers in the importance of ecosystem services for human well-being and sustainable development;
- 7) To take into consideration the proposed IPBES to ensure a two way dialogue between science and policy;
- 8) To work with appropriate organizations, including the Global Terrestrial and Ocean Observing Systems (GTOS and GOOS) and the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) to ensure the development of sustained monitoring, including socio-economic variables, to enable continuous observations of changes in key variables relating to ecosystems and human well-being;
- 9) To convene sessions of an Open Consultative Forum to which all stakeholders will be invited. The Forum will serve as a consultative process for expressions of views on the Programme development, as a platform for dialogue among the various stakeholders and as a venue for exchange of information on Programme development. The Consultative Forum should preferably be convened in conjunction with the proposed IPBES Plenary ;
- 10) To raise additional funds for the planning and coordination activities, including activities of Sub-Committees that the SC may wish to set up, and to assist in convincing national and international funding bodies to fully support the network of research sites.