



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

13th session Committee on Science and Technology

Item 3.a Interfacing science and policy, and sharing knowledge
Review of the Science-Policy Interface and its
achievements

I



Ordos, China 6-9 September 2017

Review of the Science Policy Interface

By its decision 23/COP.11, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided that the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) will function up to the end of COP 13, at which time it will be reviewed

The COP decided (decision 23/COP.12) that the thirteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology CST 13 should focus, inter alia, on the review of the work conducted by the SPI during the biennium 2016–2017 and on its overall achievements since its establishment in order to decide on the future functioning of the SPI

The secretariat commissioned an external assessment of the SPI
With the aim of ensuring that CST 13 would have available evidence-based, well-analysed information for the SPI review,

Review of the Science Policy Interface

The external assessment was prepared in the period January to May 2017

The assessment process involved the collection and study of both quantitative and qualitative data, involving SPI documents and meeting reports, statistics on the use of SPI products, two online surveys and interviews of various stakeholder groups

Overall, close to 200 people were consulted through the surveys and interviews during the assessment process,

The evaluation showed the SPI to have made excellent progress towards its work programme and identified useful ways forward

Performance review (1)

The external assessment found that the SPI has taken action to address all of its work programme objectives and coordination activities

Some activities were reported to having been dependent on the development of new collaborative partnerships

Collaboration with other agencies has been successful in some cases, but it was noted that often such efforts had been delayed owing to reasons beyond the control of the SPI members,



Performance review (2)

The task allocation was based on voluntary commitments and, most importantly, the necessary activities were actively pursued.

The current size of the SPI seems appropriate for meeting its expectations. The SPI has considerable flexibility in organizing and scheduling its tasks, it is very resource efficient and its meetings and other service needs can be managed by the secretariat

The external assessment suggested that the financial support progressively mobilized for the SPI activities had been sufficient, although some respondents had indicated the need for more visibility and transparency about available resources

All SPI members had expressed appreciation of the strong and efficient support provided by the secretariat throughout the process

Overall achievements

The most significant SPI work, according to interviewees for the external assessment, is the *Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality*

SPI publications were perceived as of high quality and established on solid scientific grounds; they are based on duly cited publications. This allows the tracing of the information provided and used

Some interviewees considered the SPI documentation as a major improvement in the provision of verified, credible (numerical) information published under the UNCCD.

Overall achievements

More than 80 per cent of the respondents considers that the documents produced by the SPI are informative and their content is easy to understand.

80% of the CSOs answering the survey are aware of the SPI

However the overall impact of the SPI products beyond those familiar with the UNCCD process and the activities of the secretariat is still low, as a wider audience of end users has not yet been reached.

Overall achievements

The SPI is designed not to compete with larger and more resource-intensive science-policy interfaces, but rather to work collaboratively with them on topics related to DLDD

The role of the SPI vis-à-vis the other bodies is essentially to deliver to the UNCCD the products that others do not produce, building on the specific priorities/guidance from the COP

The awareness of the scientific community of the SPI is still low and the impact of the SPI products could be greater

Recommendations

- (a) The SPI members should contribute through their own work to a better recognition of the SPI
- (b) Interaction between the SPI and IPBES, and the SPI and the IPCC, should be formalized
- (c) The CST Bureau, supported by the secretariat, should refine the terms of reference for the SPI membership, including more detailed membership criteria, specification of what is expected from the members and a revision of the process to renew the members. On the last point, the external assessment proposes a rotating system whereby only half of the SPI members serving a four-year term are renewed at a given time
- (d) The external assessment recommends an increase in the observer seats;

Recommendations

- e) Each SPI work programme should be limited to 1–2 priority topics, to be implemented in a realistic schedule
- f) The SPI should continue engaging partners to support its substantive work
- g) The SPI should continue engaging partners to support its substantive work
- h) The secretariat should continue to ensure that the SPI has adequate resources for its work.

13th session Committee on Science and Technology



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification



Thank you !!!