POST2015/UNU-IAS **Conference Report**

Building Blocks for the Institutional Architecture of the SDGs Science-Policy Interface

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Building Blocks for the Institutional Architecture of the SDGs Science-Policy Interface (Workshop, 19-20 June 2015, New York)

1. Introduction

On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the post-2015 development agenda, called "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." The Agenda marked a historical decision to mainstream sustainable development in the holistic agenda for global development. In other words, from now on all development has to be sustainable. Several principles underpin the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). First, *inclusiveness*, the idea that "no one will be left behind." Second, *universality*, the idea that as unlike the previous set of goals (Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs), the SDGs are universal and apply to both developing and developed countries. Third, *diversity,* the idea that policies and targets should be set at regional and national levels, guided by global ambition. And fourth, *integration*, the idea of incorporating the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—as a key to achieving the goals.

The importance of the science-policy interface for the successful implementation of the new agenda has been stated repeatedly. The Rio+20 outcome document, "The Future We Want," calls for the promotion of a "a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks (…) as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making" (UNGA 2012, paragraph 88). The United Nations Secretary-General further emphasized its importance in his synthesis report "The Road to Dignity by 2030," by stating that a transformational and universal post-2015 development agenda needs to be "buttressed by science and evidence" (UNGA 2014, paragraph 49). This was also echoed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD3), adopted on 27 July 2015, that recognizes the importance of "harnessing the potential of science, technology and innovation (…) for the shift towards sustainable development and poverty eradication" (UNGA 2015a, paragraph 5). The outcome document from the September 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit assigns the "central role in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level" (UNGA 2015b, paragraph 47) to the new High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Many important details regarding its mandate are yet to be decided, but the document specifies that the HLPF will be convened once a year under the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every four years under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly. On these occasions the HLPF will be informed annually by two separate reports: the annual SDG Progress Report, to be prepared by the Secretary-General in cooperation with the UN system, and the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), "which shall strengthen the science-policy interface and could provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development" (UNGA 2016, paragraph 83). In his report on critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level from January 2016, the Secretary-General recommended that each HLPF have a certain thematic focus "reflecting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development" (UNGA 2016, paragraph 92). He further suggested two basic options for reviewing all of the SDGs during the four-year cycle: first, a comprehensive review of all goals each year guided by the theme, or second, an additional in-depth review of a certain subset of goals (UNGA 2016, paragraphs 96-97). The current proposal suggests the following themes for the HLPF.

2017 Theme: Ensuring food security on a safe planet by 2030
Set of focus goals: 1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 15 and 17

2018 Theme: Making cities sustainable and building productive capacities

Set of focus goals: 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 17

2019 Theme: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness
Set of focus goals: 3, 4, 5, 10, 16 and 17

With this background, we convened a workshop on 19-20 June 2015 in New York focusing on the role of science, scientific assessments, and inputs in the implementation of the SDGs, as well as review and monitoring processes. The workshop was held under the Chatham House Rule and was attended by 17 researchers and 13 practitioners, including delegates to the SDGs negotiations, non-governmental organizations and representatives of UN organizations. The participants considered what types of knowledge would facilitate successful implementation and monitoring processes for the SDGs, how such knowledge could be inserted into the global SDGs process, and what institutional architectures would enhance overall effectiveness from global to regional and national level science-policy interfaces for the SDGs. One of the challenges for effective institutional architecture for the SDGs is finding ways to accommodate effective science-policy interface throughout all stages of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Transdisciplinarity requires "co-design" of the agenda before "co-production" and "co-delivery" of the outcomes. The workshop therefore also discussed the methodology for transdisciplinary research and its practical applications for the SDGs. On the first day, practitioners and academics shared their views, generated new ideas, and identified options for the institutional architecture. On the second day, participants discussed how the output of the workshop could inform the ongoing policy process. A series of small group discussions took place to generate new and innovative ideas for institutional architecture in the face of challenges presented by the SDGs. Summaries of the small group discussions were reported back to the plenary, where they served as a basis to further develop ideas. The following section describes five building blocks that emerged out of the two-day exercise.

2. Five Models for the Institutional Architecture of the SDGs Science-Policy Interface

The meeting identified five models for the science-policy interface (SPI) to effectively implement the SDGs. Each one identifies core elements of the model, options for its development and implementation, pros and cons for those options, and additional considerations. In many cases, elements of the models address the science-policy nexus at multiple levels—global, regional, national and/or local. Although these models are presented individually, some could be developed in tandem and are not mutually exclusive. The concluding section of this report briefly discusses and compares the different models and highlights a number of cross-cutting issues important to all of them.

Model 1: Extended Global Expert Panel on the SDGs

- Description and purpose

This model envisions a global assessment organization for the SDGs, similar in structure to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) or the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). These organizations conduct assessments based on reviews of peer-reviewed literature and compile their results into reports that are adopted by governments. Although the IPCC's stakeholder involvement has been limited, its model as a global expert organization may be more conducive to the type of multi-stakeholder structure needed for the SDGs. It can also provide or inspire solutions that may not need decision-making to be done by consensus. Because of the multi-faceted and integrative character of the SDGs, the findings of a panel could be fed as knowledge into existing decision-making bodies (e.g., UNFCCC's SBSTA type of bodies).

- Who appoints members?

As is currently the case for the IPCC and IPBES, governments would nominate scientific experts from academia. Governments could also nominate national stakeholders if the model was to include multi-

stakeholders in the panel to ensure greater legitimacy. Such stakeholders might include policymakers and experts related to the different SDGs—from the private sector and nongovernmental organizations, for example.

- Options for organizational responsibility (who runs the secretariat)

A new board to govern the organization would need to be established, and a secretariat inside or outside of the United Nations would be needed, to support the board. The secretariat could coordinate the relevant stakeholders (scientists, governments, NGOs, etc.). Each goal might require a technical support unit to coordinate and manage scientific knowledge. For example, the IPCC has its secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, and each working group has technical support units run by universities or research institutes in different countries.

- How to secure vertical linkage (from national to global and vice versa), where needed

Vertical linkage would be high with this model, as national governments would nominate national experts (stakeholders) to the organizations.

- Pros and cons

Pros

✓ Procedures for decision-making and selecting experts would be formally established with this model, and relevant actors would meet regularly. Thus, legitimacy would be high.
✓ Synthesis reports would be published, and would be useful.
✓ Potential levels of public awareness and legitimacy would be high.
✓ Through national nominations there would be "co-ownership" by member states, which could help in "uptake" of the outcomes.

Cons

✓ In the process of developing and adopting reports, there would be strong and regular interface between scientist and policymakers, but entry points for science are often limited in the policy arena once reports have been published.
✓ IPCC and IPBES were established to deal with specific issues such as climate change and biodiversity; i.e., they have a single-issue focus. In contrast, a global expert organization on the SDGs would need to focus on multiple goals (17 goals and 169 targets). Coordination of assessments or identification of emerging issues would be complex.
✓ The panel should provide knowledge to decision-makers with appropriate political scales and timeframes (for example, forecast at 2030 but not 2100), following the IPCC example with both a summary for policymakers and a larger report.
✓ By opening up participation to relevant stakeholders, legitimacy increases, but scientific integrity may decrease.
✓ There is a risk that a more centralized mechanism would focus on only priority issues, with less attention to other issues, which would ultimately weaken the SDGs and risk undermining their integrative approach.

- Other ideas and alternatives:

✓ One panel cannot handle all problems related to SDGs or sustainable development. Setting parallel processes may be one solution (e.g., working groups of the IPCC, work programmes of the IPBES).
✓ Clear interlinkages are needed between the SDGs and other existing mechanisms. Therefore, a coordination mechanism may be necessary.
✓ Whatever new mechanism is created, it cannot only focus on a few "priority" issues. Otherwise many of the issues would not get the attention they deserve, thereby weakening the SDGs.

Model 2: Thematic Task Forces

- Description and purpose

In this model, oversight of the SDGs would be assigned to thematic task forces that are either working on

specific goals, or on cross-cutting issues, to move beyond "silos" (UNGA 2015b, para 85). In contrast to the Extended Global Expert Panel, the task forces themselves would not be permanent, but rather, always flexibly constructed by a permanent steering board in response to the respective annual theme of the HLPF or the subset of goals chosen for the annual thematic reviews. There could be a choice of two approaches for the form of task forces: (1) inter-governmental, or (2) non-governmental. Their annual working cycles would have to be organized in a way that their output could inform the regular HLPF sessions and cover all 17 SDGs within its four-year reporting cycle. As for the inter-governmental bodies, the collection of thematic reporting by UN agencies or other inter-governmental bodies inside and outside the UN system could form one option. A non-governmental approach could, for example, follow the IUCN model of bottom-up (voluntary) involvement of expert task forces. In both options, the task forces should also engage with all relevant stakeholders and align with the working cycles of the HLPF and the SDG Progress Report. Additional task forces could be created to deal with emerging issues, orphan goals, or cross-cutting issues.

- Who appoints members

In the inter-governmental approach, the chairs, steering committee and other members of the task forces could be nominated by the relevant UN agencies or programmes, thereby using their existing mandates, resources and expertise. A major role in this process could be assigned to the respective chief scientists of the agencies or programmes and science organizations (like Future Earth or SDSN) could be invited to participate. However, the criteria of accreditation and selection processes must be transparent and public, and should be overseen by the HLPF, to lend legitimacy. In the non-governmental approach, concerned experts would voluntarily cooperate in bottom-up, problem-specific initiatives, perhaps organized by national and international science organizations like Future Earth.

- Options for organizational responsibility (who runs the secretariat)

The composition of the task forces and annual reviews would be aligned with the annual theme of the HLPF or the subset of goals chosen for the annual thematic review. The task forces would be coordinated by a permanent (inter-agency) steering body and supported by a secretariat, based either in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) or outside the UN system. The secretariat could coordinate the task forces, each of which might need to establish a technical support unit to coordinate and manage scientific knowledge. The reports of the task forces would feed into a synthesis report, for example the GSDR. The report would also showcase best practices and lessons learned, would also look at the nexus of topics or cross cutting issues, and conduct its own reviews of specific areas related to the SDGs.

- How to secure vertical linkage (from national to global and vice versa), where needed

In both approaches, task forces could form around relevant goals or cross-cutting issues at the (sub-)national and regional levels. However, capacities to conduct reviews vary greatly between countries, and not all goals and targets are equally important for all countries and regions. A central role in this model could therefore be assigned to regional forums (UNGA 2015b, paragraph 81) to organize regional efforts and to report to the global level. National and regional synthesis reports could be created to make the reviews more accessible and relevant to (sub-)national governments and stakeholders.

- Pros and cons
  - Each task force would focus on its respective goals and clusters and deliver its results for the synthesis report to the higher levels—either the steering body at the HLPF or the respective national or regional forums (in case of national or regional synthesis reports).
  - The publishing of synthesis reports at all levels could help to engage (sub-)national policymakers and stakeholders and to make the results more meaningful to them.
  - A task force for every goal would be complex and could easily overstretch resources; therefore, some kind of clustering (e.g., cross-cutting issues or nexus of topics) might be advisable; this clustering would also avoid the danger of "silo" thinking.
  - What could be done to include stakeholders and non-scientific knowledge? By opening up participation to relevant stakeholders, legitimacy increases, but scientific integrity may decrease.

- Incentive structures for scientists need to be considered, especially for the non-governmental option.
- The different reporting cycles of UN organizations are a major disadvantage for the synthesis reports and should be aligned, wherever possible.
- Legitimacy is high, but involvement of science organizations on all levels could give the task forces greater credibility in the science communities.

- Other ideas and alternatives

✓ Model could be combined with separate mechanisms on emerging issues; for example, the foresight conference or the roster model.

✓ Funding needs to be considered to support scientists' involvement: One option could be the establishment of a dedicated voluntary fund (maybe outside the UN).

✓ For the non-governmental option, a competition model similar to that used by the IUCN could be utilized to address specific issues arising during the implementation of the SDGs: policymakers would formulate questions and problems, and the concerned scientists or science organizations would consider what their communities can offer. This would result in many proposals policymakers could choose from. Also, the HLPF could provide legitimacy for the process.

Model 3: Network of Networks

- Description and purpose

The "network of networks" would be a science-policy interface to bring together a wide range of existing information and assessments on sustainable development, and conduct reviews in a comprehensive manner at the international level. However, in contrast to the previous models, the "network of networks" would not be conducting its own scientific assessments, but rather, serving to do an "assessment of assessments." The GSDR would likely be a central node in a network of networks as the main assessment report that would inform discussions on sustainable development at the HLPF. The United Nations General Assembly has mandated the HLPF to strengthen the science-policy interface "by examining documentation, bringing together diverse information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments, enhancing evidence-based decision-making at all levels and contributing to the strengthening of ongoing capacity-building for data collection and analysis in developing countries" (UNGA 2013, para. 20). The GSDR would be designed as an assessment of assessments, which would reflect existing knowledge rather than produce new knowledge on sustainable development.

- Who appoints members

A coordinating body or clearing house mechanism would be located in the future HLPF secretariat to ensure political oversight and close linkages to GSDR development. It could be assisted by a permanent Scientific Advisory Board that would provide oversight and include chief scientists from each agency, representatives from science organizations, and stakeholders.

- Options for organizational responsibility (who runs the secretariat)

A coordinating body or clearing house mechanism for the "network of networks" would be located in the future HLPF secretariat to ensure political oversight and close linkages to GSDR development. It would provide leadership in promoting and coordinating the implementation of the sustainable development agenda of the United Nations. Its core functions would be divided into five categories: support to UN inter-governmental processes on sustainable development; analysis and policy development; capacity development at the national level; inter-agency coordination; and knowledge management, communication and outreach.

- How to secure vertical linkage (from national to global and vice versa), where needed

This model would ensure vertical linkages through top-down reporting from the UN and bottom-up verification from grassroots to regional levels. The global report would be informed by regional reports, to make it more relevant for regional and national policymakers and stakeholders. UN regional commissions

could take the lead in compiling regional reports, thereby also drawing from and encouraging national reporting.

- Pros and cons

  Pros
  - ✓ Already exists and has a mandate
  - ✓ Comparatively low cost, but coordination efforts necessary
  - ✓ Orchestration of dispersed information and assessments
  - ✓ Illustration of interlinkages across goals, sectors and issues
  - ✓ Provision of policy-relevant scientific knowledge.
  - ✓ Identification of priority issues
  - ✓ (Multi-)stakeholder engagement
  - ✓ Could be a periodically updated electronic report
  - ✓ Experience exists within UNDESA to translate scientific knowledge to policymakers and vice versa.

  Cons
  - ✓ Possible lack of coherence
  - ✓ Lack of independent analytic capacity or analysis which may be needed to truly synthesize existing reports
  - ✓ Complexity of the issues and limited capacity within UNDESA

Model 4: Ad-hoc Roster

- Description and purpose

In this model, experts are selected from rosters at irregular intervals and on a temporary basis to review specific thematic areas of SDGs implementation, follow-up and review, or emerging issues as the agenda emerges. Ad-hoc rosters could be defined as registers of professionals and their respective areas of expertise. They would be called upon to establish temporary technical expert groups only when there is a significant assessment need, ideally always with due regard to geographical representation and gender balance. It would be especially important for rosters to address thematic areas where implementation of the SDGs is off-track or "orphan issues from the SDGs that don't have a clear home in the UN" (ECOSOC President's Summary, p. 8). In addition they could be called upon to deal with emerging problems—globally, regionally or nationally—or to address specific local or small-scale issues at the (sub-)national or regional levels.

- Who appoints members

The legitimacy of this model greatly depends on the appointment mechanisms. Rosters have been used in many UN agencies and programmes in the past, and various approaches have been followed. Some are very transparent and provide the possibility of self-registration (e.g., UNEP's Roster of Experts[1]), while others are more restrictive. Another approach, though arguably less appropriate for sustainable development, is the Security Council Affairs Division (SCAD) Roster of Experts.[2] It purposely avoids transparency as its rosters are by invitation only and it does not reveal the identities of the experts. A weakness of the ad-hoc roster model is its tendency in practice towards a lack of transparency in the selection and appointment criteria. Thus, a feasible approach for the SDGs that would lend legitimacy to the process and build on existing infrastructure could be the involvement of independent, non-governmental outside organizations in nominating experts under the auspices of the HLPF, for instance the international science organizations. A similar process could occur at regional and national levels where the respective assessment bodies (e.g., the regional commissions or governments) would involve the respective science organizations (e.g., regional chapters of science organizations or national academies of science). Alternatively, the model could follow the approach of the UNFCCC Roster of Experts[3] and assign the task of nomination of experts to national focal points in the respective governments.

1 http://www.unep.org/gender/data/GenderExpertsRoster/FrequentlyAskedQuestions/tabid/54773/Default.aspx
2 http://www.un.org/sc/committees/expertroster/index.htm
3 http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/roster_of_experts/items/534.php

- Options for organizational responsibility (who runs the secretariat)

Depending on the final architecture of the science-policy interface for SDGs, the ad-hoc rosters could be created and maintained by the relevant agency or programme designated as the lead for a particular SDG, or in a centralized form by the ECOSOC secretariat, possibly in cooperation with the involvement of science organizations. The same model could be applied to the regional and national levels to deal with more localized challenges of SDG implementation.

- How to secure vertical linkage (from national to global and vice versa), where needed

The vertical linkages could be strengthened by the involvement of the national and regional chapters of the science organizations in the process of nomination. Also, experts can be deployed at the most appropriate level, not necessarily always global. This approach could also serve as a mechanism to ensure the participation of experts from otherwise under-represented regions, while at the same time function as a capacity building measure.

- Pros and cons

Pros

- ✓ Easy to establish, very flexible and low-cost
- ✓ The UN has a lot of experience with this model and many agencies and programmes already have existing rosters (e.g., Democratic Governance Experts Roster (UNDP), Gender Experts Roster (UNEP), UN WOMEN roster, FAO Food Safety Expert Roster etc.)
- ✓ The model can also be used to address small-scale or local issues by (sub-)national and regional bodies.
- ✓ Experts can be selected for a specific issue, a specified period of time, and for specific deliverables.
- ✓ Can build on existing mechanisms, mandates and resources.

Cons

- ✓ The Integration of stakeholders and non-scientific knowledge is difficult due to the temporary nature of the assignments.
- ✓ A roster once created has to be constantly updated.
- ✓ Legitimacy and acceptance by the public and the science community are highly dependent on the appointment mechanisms (transparency, openness, involvement of science organizations etc.).
- ✓ The public's perception depends on the issues that are dealt with as well as on the reputation of the experts involved
- ✓ This model has no regular interaction and development of trust between scientists and policymakers due to the temporary nature of the involvement and only few possibilities of interaction.

Model 5: Quadrennial Foresight Conference

- Description and purpose

A global "Foresight Conference" could serve to identify emerging problems in addition to the follow-up and review process as the SDGs agenda evolves. The conference would be held every four years, a few months ahead of the HLPF meetings under the UNGA, to allow enough time to provide input into the UNGA. The conference could play the role of an "engagement platform" that facilitates an active interaction between scientists, policymakers and other important stakeholders in order to translate scientific knowledge into political language and vice versa. By doing so it would help to bridge the various timescales in which scientists, governments and the UN system operate. The conference could also be complemented by smaller annual events that focus on specific goals or issues. An example for this model of active engagement between scientists and policymakers is the "Planet under Pressure" conference held in the run-up for Rio+20,[4] but it is also feasible to build on existing, regularly-held scientific meetings such as the World Science Forum jointly organized by UNESCO, the European Commission and the International Council for Science (ICSU).[5]

- Who appoints members, and options for organizational responsibility (who runs the secretariat)

The conference could be organized as an inter-governmental forum (e.g., under the auspices of the HLPF or by an inter-agency science group), as a non-governmental scientific forum (e.g., organized by

4 http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net/

5 http://www.sciforum.hu

science organizations like ICSU and Future Earth), or as a combination of both. In all models a leading-organizing role by the major science organizations is a prerequisite to lend the conference legitimacy in the science community, as a leading role by the HLPF or another UN body would not provide the right form of organizational support and incentives for scientists and science organizations. The organizational responsibility of the conference(s) should thus rest with a steering body in which the science organizations involved would collaborate with the relevant UN bodies. To lend more political legitimacy to the non-governmental option, the agency's chief scientists and the Secretary-General's scientific advisory board should be involved in the process.

- How to secure vertical linkage (from national to global and vice versa), where needed

In addition to the Quadrennial Foresight Conference, regular supporting conferences at the regional and national levels could be held to address more local challenges. Analogous to the global level, they should be organized as (inter-)governmental events (e.g., by the regional commissions) or as non-governmental scientific forums by the national or regional chapters of international science organizations or by national academies of science. The conference could serve to engage policymakers on these levels and to foster exchanges between policymakers, scientists and stakeholders. While securing vertical linkages by feeding outcomes into the global conference, these events could also double as a means of scientific capacity building in developing regions.

- Pros and cons

Pros

- If held simultaneously or back-to-back with HLPF meetings the conference could bring together a wide range of stakeholders involved in delivering enhanced stewardship, including senior policymakers, industry leaders, NGOs, development agencies and the media. In doing so it could also draw crucial global media attention to the agenda and increase its visibility.
- The regular conference(s) would provide a platform to translate the respective community's perceptions and expectations to each other and open new opportunities for scientists to get involved in the policy process.

Cons

- The events could prove to be expensive and have limited outcomes (e.g., at best a declaration, instead of comprehensive assessments or detailed reports and policy options).

3. Discussion

The models presented in this report are not mutually exclusive, but should rather be seen as basic models whose elements can be combined. For example, the Quadrennial Foresight Conference on emerging issues might be a suitable addition to all other options, while the roster model could also provide ideas on how to create a pool of experts for the more institutionalized panel and task force options.
A number of aspects relevant to all five models need to be discussed.

First, the costs involved in setting up a new SPI body for the SDGs vary greatly between the suggested models. However, the question of funding needs to be considered for all options as it seems very unlikely that member states would be willing to fund what some perceive to be yet another costly UN body. The emergence of new donors during the last decade, including philanthropies and other actors from the private sector, has opened up new funding options that could be considered, even though the increased involvement of these outside actors has also been widely criticized due to fears of their alleged influence on agenda-setting and the "privatization" of the UN system's functions (Global Policy Forum 2015). The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) could offer a model to balance these issues by integrating external donors through enhanced participation rights, without losing control over agenda-setting or the drafting of output documents.

Second, legitimacy is another important aspect that needs to be considered in all models. This includes not only transparent appointment mechanisms, but also efforts to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including

policymakers, the private sector, civil society organizations, development agencies, and the media. Each option should incorporate institutional mechanisms that ensure that they are not only assessing and generating scientific expert knowledge, but also ensure a diverse representation of other important stakeholders in review protocols and decision-making processes (Turnhout et al. 2012). An example of improved engagement with multiple stakeholders is again the Committee on World Food Security that added the new category of "participants" to its institutional structure during its reform in 2009. The CFS is trying to avoid the traditional "member" and "observer" distinction that characterizes many UN bodies, by endowing this new group with enhanced rights to intervene in the panel or to actively contribute to the preparation of documents and proceedings.

Third, as for the assurance of scientific quality and the commitment of scientists involved, one option could be to treat the scientists as hired consultants compensated with honorarium payments, for example through the establishment of a dedicated voluntary fund (which would possibly be outside the UN). Although the voluntary (i.e., pro bono) participation of scientists would save resources and could possibly secure the involvement of motivated experts, it would not guarantee the participation of the most suitable or capable candidates available, as the incentive structure in the academic world differs considerably from this approach. Alternative, non-financial incentives relevant in the academic community might include the acquisition of titles and authorships, in particular, by engaging the young generation of scholars in need of scientific recognition, or the creation of rewarding environments through participation in professional networks and communities.

Fourth, without compromising scientific quality, each model should incorporate measures to address traditional barriers to the involvement of scientists from the developing world, such as language, financial resources, or the lack of professional networks.

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Workshop on the Institutional Architecture for the Science-policy Interface on the Sustainable Development Goals

Date: 19-20 June 2015
Venue: Japan Society (333 E 47th St, New York)

Background and aims of the workshop
As the Post-2015 Development Agenda will be launched at the UN Summit in September 2015, the Earth System Governance Project[1], POST2015[2] and Keio University will jointly organize a workshop with policy-makers and stakeholders to explore possible institutional architecture of the science-policy interface for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The workshop is endorsed by Future Earth, a ten year global research programme for sustainability, and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). It is supported by the Ministry of the Environment Japan and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JSPS).

The importance of the science-policy interface for the successful implementation of the new agenda has been repeatedly stated. Amongst others, the Rio+20 outcome document 'The Future We Want' aimed to "promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks (…) as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making" (paragraph 48). The Secretary General further emphasized the importance in his synthesis report 'The Road to Dignity by 2030', by stating that a transformational and universal Post-2015 Development agenda needs to be "buttressed by science and evidence" (paragraph 49). This was also echoed in the recent zero draft of the of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda 'Transforming our world by 2030' that recognizes "the central role that science, technology and innovation play in enabling the international community to respond to sustainable development challenges" (paragraph 33).

With this background, the workshop will focus on the role of science and scientific assessments and inputs in the implementation as well as review and monitoring processes of the Sustainable Development Goals. The workshop will consider what types of knowledge would facilitate successful implementation and monitoring process of Sustainable Development Goals, how such knowledge could be inserted in the global SDGs process, and what institutional architectures would enhance overall effectiveness from global to regional and national level science-policy interfaces for the SDGs.

One of the challenges for effective institutional architecture for the SDGs is ways to accommodate effective science-policy interface throughout all stages of the Post-2015 Development agenda. Transdisciplinarity requires "co-design" the agenda before "co-production" and "co-delivery" of the outcome. This workshop therefore also discusses the methodology for transdisciplinary research and its practical application for the SDGs.

[1] www.earthsystemgovernance.org
[2] Research project under the Environment Research and Technology Development Fund, Ministry of the Environment, Japan. www.post2015.jp/en

Organization of the workshop and guiding questions

On the first day, practitioners and academics will share their views, generate new ideas, and identify options of the institutional architecture. On the second day, participants will discuss how the output of the workshop can inform the ongoing policy process. Introductory presentations will be given in order to develop a common understanding with regard to the current status of the negotiations on the SDGs and its science-policy interface. A series of small group discussion will follow to generate new and innovative ideas for institutional architecture in face of the challenges provided by the SDGs. Summaries of the small group discussions will be reported back to the plenary where they will serve as basis to further develop ideas. Chatham House rules will apply.

The following questions are examples of those that will be addressed at the workshop:

1. What is the role of scientific knowledge for the transformation towards sustainable development within the framework of the SDGs, especially considering the need to address simultaneously human and planetary well-being in a variety of thematic areas such as food and agriculture, transformation of energy and the transformation of life styles?
2. What are the options for institutional design for science-policy interface for the Post-2015 Development Agenda? For example, does global assessment model such as IPCC work for the SDGs, or would it be a collection of thematic review and assessment that enables effective SDGs process? Or, does a series of (regional or thematic) expert consultation work better for the SDGs?
3. What institutional architecture enables transdisciplinary research development with the research outcome being usable for policy-makers and stakeholders? What would be an effective feedback system for the result of review (scientific assessments) of the SDGs to the subsequent policy-making processes?
4. How to link global science-policy interface architecture with regional and national level, and vice versa? What role can indicators play?

These questions are indicative and might change as the discussion evolves.

Outlook of the workshop

Day 1: 19 June
9.15-9.30 Coffee
9.30-10.30 Opening and Introductory Presentations (including Q&A)
10.30-12.30 Discussion 1: Break-out and plenary discussions (2 hours)
12.30-14.00 Lunch
14.00-15.30 Discussion 2: Break-out and plenary discussions (1.5 hours)
15.30-15.45 Coffee break
15.45-17:15 Discussion 3: Break-out and plenary discussions (1.5 hours)
17.15-17.30 Wrap-up

Day 2: 20 June
9.30-11.00 Discussions on the outcome document of the workshop
11.00-11.15 Coffee break
11.15-12.45 Discussions (continued)
12.45-13.00 Conclusions and closing

Annex 2: Summary Table - Institutional Architecture of SPI for the SDGs

	Extended Global Expert Panel on the SDGs	Thematic Task Forces	Network of Networks (GSDR)	Ad-hoc Expert Roster	Quadrennial Foresight Conference
Scope & level of institutionalization	The permanent working groups of the panel **cover all 17 SDGs**. Additional project groups can be created to deal with emerging issues, orphan goals, or cross-cutting issues.	Flexible Task Forces are constructed to **cover all 17 SDGs** within a 4 year reporting cycle. Additional Task forces can be created to deal with emerging issues, orphan goals, or cross-cutting issues.	Annual reports and a quadrennial comprehensive edition will **cover all 17 SDGs** within a 4 year reporting cycle.	Experts are chosen in irregular intervals and on a temporary basis to **review specific problematic areas** of the SDGs implementation, follow-up and review or emerging issues as the agenda emerges.	Conference will be held every four years in alignment with the HLPF under UNGA to focus specifically on **emerging Issues or orphan goals**.
Organizational structure	The panel will need a new board to govern the organization as well as a secretariat inside or outside of the UN to support the board and to coordinate relevant stakeholders (scientists, governments, NGOs). Each goal might require a technical support unit run by university or research institutes to coordinate and manage scientific knowledge. Interlinked assessments are coordinated through a steering committee in alignment with the annual theme of the HLPF or the subset of goals chosen for the annual thematic review.	The composition of the Task Forces and the annual reviews are aligned with the annual theme of the HLPF or the subset of goals chosen for the annual thematic review. They are coordinated by a permanent (inter-agency) steering body and supported by a secretariat either based in UNDESA or outside the UN.	UNDESA coordinates the drafting of the thematic reporting, drawing on input from UN agencies and programmes, other intergovernmental bodies and forums, the scientific community and other stakeholders. The annual GSDR's focus will be aligned with the annual theme of the HLPF or the subset of goals chosen for the annual thematic review	The model could either involve independent, non-governmental outside organizations (e.g., international science organizations) in nominating experts under the auspices of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), or alternatively, it could assign the nomination of experts to national focal points in the respective governments (IPCC approach).	The major global science organizations and research funding agencies will lead the planning of the conference in coordination with the HLPF and relevant scientific UN bodies such as the agency's science commissions and chief scientists.
Appointment by whom?	Governments nominate experts from academia through national focal points. Governments could also nominate national stakeholders in case the model includes multi-stakeholders in the panel to ensure greater legitimacy. Such stakeholders may include policy makers and experts related to the different SDGs – from the private sector and NGOs.	Two different options are possible: an inter-governmental model, where the experts are assigned through government involvement, or a bottom-up model, led by the global scientific organizations, where experts are chosen through open calls.	A coordinating body or clearing house mechanism should be located in the future HLPF secretariat to ensure political oversight and close linkages to the GSDR development. It could be assisted by a permanent Scientific Advisory Board that would provide oversight and includes the chief scientists from each agency, representatives from science organizations and stakeholders.	Two different options are possible: a bottom-up approach, where a common steering committee of global scientific organizations initiate the working groups or a UN lead model, where for example an inter-agency steering body would keep the rosters and establish the working groups.	Organized by science organizations, integration into policy process through involvement of HLPF and other representatives in Steering Group
Output/ Deliverables	Own assessments feed into the annual GSDR. A comprehensive quadrennial report will inform the HLPF under the UNGA.	Own annual assessments inform the GSDR/ HLPF.	Orchestration of thematic reporting and additional overarching review (assessment of assessments) in form of the GSDR.	Own assessments can feed in the GSDR or in irregular reports focusing on specific thematic issues. Research could be co-designed and the output delivered relatively quickly.	A summary report on emerging issues could feed into the GSDR and inform the working programmes of science organizations.
Vertical linkages	Direct link through national government involvement.	The Task Forces could form around relevant goals or cross-cutting issues on the (sub-)national and regional levels as well. A central role in this model could therefore be assigned to regional forums to organize regional efforts and to report to the global level.	The global report should be informed by regional reports to make it more relevant for regional and national policy makers and stakeholders. The UN regional commission could take the lead in compiling the regional reports, thereby also drawing from and encouraging national reporting.	Similar rosters could be created at the regional and national levels where the respective assessment bodies (e.g., the regional commissions or governments) would involve the respective science organizations (e.g., regional chapters of science organizations or national academies of science).	The conference can be complemented with similar regional events focusing on localized issues, perhaps held before the global conference to provide input.

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Earth System Governance — a global research alliance, is the largest social science research network in the area of governance and global environmental change. The Earth System Governance research alliance takes up the challenge of exploring political solutions and novel, more effective governance mechanisms to cope with the current transitions in the biogeochemical systems of the planet. The normative context of this research is sustainable development; earth system governance is not only a question of institutional effectiveness, but also of political legitimacy and social justice. www.earthsystemgovernance.org

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