

IHDP Earth System Governance Project

Minutes of the Scientific Planning Group Meeting on 27 May
2007 in Amsterdam

Contact:

Frank Biermann and Ruben Zondervan

Department of Environmental Policy Analysis

Institute for Environmental Studies

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

The Netherlands

E-mail: frank.biermann@ivm.vu.nl; ruben.zondervan@ivm.vu.nl

Location and Time

IHDP Earth System Governance Scientific Planning Committee, First Meeting

Sunday, 27 May 2007, 10.00–17.00h.

Restaurant Café in de Waag, Klovenierskamer, Amsterdam

Participants:

1. **Prof Frank Biermann**, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Chair)
2. **Prof Michele Betsill**, Colorado State University, United States of America
3. **Prof Bharat Desai**, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
4. **Dr Louis Lebel**, Chiang Mai University, Thailand
5. **Dr Heike Schröder**, Oxford University, United Kingdom
6. **Prof Bernd Siebenhüner**, University of Oldenburg, Germany
7. **Prof Joyeeta Gupta**, GWSP, and UNESCO–IHE Institute for Water Education, The Netherlands
8. **Dr Andreas Rechkemmer**, IHDP executive director, IHDP HQ
9. **Agus Sari**, former IDGEC chair, EcoSecurities
10. **Falk Schmidt**, scientific officer, IHDP HQ
11. **Prof Oran Young**, IHDP SC chair, and University of California at Santa Barbara
12. **Ruben Zondervan**, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Minutes)

Not present members of the Scientific Planning Committee

1. **Prof Ken Conca**, GECHS, and University of Maryland, United States of America
2. **Prof Norichika Kanie**, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan
3. **Prof Diana Liverman**, GECAFS, and Oxford University, United Kingdom
4. **Prof Simon Tay**, Singapore Institute of International Affairs, Singapore

Previous Meetings

On Friday, 24 May, the group had convened for an informal working dinner in Amsterdam. At this dinner, also Ken Conca, Diana Liverman, and Norichika Kanie participated. The working dinner served as preparation for the workshop on 27 May, and many ideas evolved already at the dinner.

In addition, during the 2007 Amsterdam, four Roundtable Consultations were held; with participants from developing countries; with student participants; with participants from Central and Eastern Europe, and with keynote speakers at the conference. Separate minutes of these meetings are being prepared.

Opening, Purpose and Timeline of Science Plan

Frank Biermann welcomes all participants and opens the meeting of the Scientific Planning Committee of the Earth System Governance Project (SPC) of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP).

The meeting is to have an intensive discussion on the science plan for the Earth System Governance Project (ESGP), to define clear work packages and to assign these to writing teams.

There is no formal timeline for the science plan. However, the group targets a formal launch of the ESGP at the IHDP Open Science Meeting in New Delhi, India in October 2008. Before the project can be launched, the science plan needs to be approved by the IHDP Scientific Committee (IHDP-SC) and undergo peer-review.

Oran Young explains that the external review of the science plan will be done by about 4 colleagues from the science community and from the relevant policy community. To have sufficient time for the review process, there should be a solid draft science plan by March 2008. The review could then take place in April/May 2008 followed by adjusting and editing of the science plan based on the review.

Andreas Rechkemmer points out that the SPC has the mandate to draft the science plan. If the ESGP will be approved, its Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) will be appointed by the IHDP-SC per 1 January 2009.

The Science Plan

The Concept 'Earth System Governance'

Louis Lebel opens the discussion on the title of the project, Earth System Governance, and especially on the boundaries of this notion.

There is wide agreement on the notion of 'governance'.

The notion of 'earth system governance', however, is new, and was more intensively discussed.

Disadvantages of the concept are:

- It is new and not yet explored and might decrease attention for the project, as opposed to more traditional concepts;
- It might be seen as focussing on global aspects only;
- It might be seen as being overly influenced/dominated by natural sciences and in particular earth system modelling;
- It is unclear what is *not* earth system governance.

Advantages of the concept are:

- It can evolve into a new paradigm that better conceptualises politics in the era of earth system transformation, which can no longer be fully described as environmental policy;
- It has proven its attractiveness in the Amsterdam Conference under this title, which drew with over 400 abstracts more participants than any Berlin Conference before; likewise, the Summer School on Earth System Governance brought 250 applications;
- It can be seen as a emancipating social science vision/paradigm opposed to technocratic visions of earth system *management*; the term can be framed as a counter-term to natural science;
- It can help link the new project to the Earth System Science Partnership and its joint projects;
- It can be defined as including local activities too, especially through a subtitle such as—as proposed by Louis Lebel—‘People, Places, and the Planet’;
- Its broadness is not different from other broad terms such as sustainable development or environmental change.

The SPC agrees that ‘Earth system governance’ is a concept that can attract both natural and social sciences, but that can also lead to misunderstandings and problems. All depends, in the first place, on a proper definition and conceptualisation.

The SPC decides to continue for the time being with the title of the project. However, good branding and clear explanation of the definition of ESG in the ESGP science plan is necessary.

At the 2007 Amsterdam Conference, sometimes the plural ‘systems’ was used. The SPC decides to stay with the singular ‘system’.

A title for the Science Plan could be ‘Earth System Governance: People, Places, and the Planet’.

» Frank Biermann will write a short paper on the definition of ESG, building on his earlier writing.

Analytical Themes – General Discussion

Frank Biermann shortly describes the 5 analytical themes (the 5 A’s) as proposed in the ‘ESGP Planning Group Proposal’ and as used in the thematic design of the 2007 Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change. The 5 A’s are neither exclusive nor final and new A’s are welcome and existing A’s can be left out.

The Earth System Governance Project is the successor of IDGEC. The IDGEC analytical themes Fit, Interplay and Scale are to a large extent part of the new analytical theme ‘Architecture’, are reoccur also in the other four A’s. Oran Young remembers that the IDGEC analytical themes were ‘best bet’ at that time and that the ESGP science plan should emphasise new questions for the future. The science plan should keep focus on the most central, cutting edge, salient questions.

Agency

The topic 'Agency beyond the State' has been important to highlight that actors other than central states play important roles in earth system governance. However, it has also led at the Amsterdam Conference to the misperception that states are seen as irrelevant.

Therefore, the SPC decides that this A will be conceptualised simply as 'Agency'.

The SPC sees the state as an important agent that cannot be excluded. The current system is still state centric and the interactions between states, between states and other actors and between states through international bureaucracies are of high interest to research. The state however will not be considered to be homogenous but more as an institution of various agents not excluding that in some settings the state can still act as one actor.

Allocation & Access

There is agreement that the analytical theme 'Allocation' will be 'Allocation & Access'.

Possible guiding questions are: (all writing teams are encouraged to develop similar questions for their analytical theme):

To what extent are modes of allocation and systems of access at local through global levels attributable to principles, power, the politics of knowledge, and the politics of scale?

How do different modes of allocation and different systems of access affect the success of mechanisms of earth system governance? (= Allocation and access as independent variable)

What are the implications of different mechanisms of earth system governance for questions of allocation and access? (= Allocation and access as dependent variable)

How can mechanisms of earth system governance be re-directed to pursue social justice without reducing their effectiveness in addressing environmental change?

Accountability

This analytical theme covers Accountability, Legitimacy and Democracy. It is stressed that the definitions and understanding of these themes are dependent on the actors involved and the level/scale of analysis and that the literature is strongly influenced by the 'Northern perspective'.

Adaptiveness

For this analytical themes following questions are drafted:

Under what conditions can what kinds of governance systems (networks, beliefs and institutions by which societies share power) evolve fast enough to meet challenges of earth system governance?

What attributes of governance systems foster 'adaptation', that is, build adaptive capacity or resilience of social-ecological subsystems in the Earth system?

Crosscutting Themes

The discussions brought a preliminary consensus on four crosscutting themes that need to be analysed in each 'A': Power, Principles, Politics of Knowledge, and Politics of Scale.

However, there is also agreement that this is just an initial attempt in conceptualising the 'A's, and that more crosscutting themes could be added, or existing ones deleted.

Power

In most Round Table consultations and in the opening plenary of the ESGP at the 2007 Amsterdam Conference it has been emphasised that power must have a central role in the Earth System Governance project. Many SPC members agree. The question is raised on how to define power in such a way that it can be applied on various scales and in all relevant settings. Oran Young emphasises the need to define power in the science plan also because the lack of a clear definition in IDGEC had been criticised.

The SPC agrees to develop a clear definition of power, preferably in the first part of the science plan.

Authority/Power will be a crosscutting theme that will be addressed in a structural way in all analytical themes (A's).

» All SPC members will think about conceptualisations/definitions of power.

Principles

Bharat Desai proposed to base the science plan on some basic principles. Frank Biermann sees principles as important parts of all A's and proposes 'Principles' as cross cutting theme. It would be interesting to understand the overarching norms and principles. *Critique*: it is difficult to find the golden rules/principles and even international lawyers are not in agreement.

The SPC decides to explore 'Principles' as a crosscutting theme.

Politics of Knowledge

Louis Lebel brings up the issue of science and knowledge as theme underrepresented in the 5 A's. In the programme of the Amsterdam Conference, knowledge has been addressed in the Analysis & Assessment stream; the SPC thus takes into consideration to make Analysis & Assessment a crosscutting theme. There is a difference between knowledge/science as 'how we do research'—that is, the (special?) methods of studying earth system governance—and as an analytical theme by itself (that is, the role of knowledge or of science in earth system governance).

It is emphasised that 'science' is not broad enough (especially when researching developing countries/local policies) and should be 'knowledge'.

The SPC decides to have (1) Analysis & Assessment as a separate and special kind of A (in addition to the other A's) that focuses on the (particular?) methods for studying earth system governance; and (2) to have the Politics of Knowledge as a crosscutting theme.

Politics of Scale

Since earth system governance occurs at all scales, from local to global, the SPS decides to include the (Politics of) Scale as a crosscutting theme.

The A5/P4 Matrix

With Power, Principles, (Politics of) Scale and Politics of Knowledge, there are 4 crosscutting themes for the 5 analytical themes. A separate analytical theme is Analysis & Assessment. The 4 P's are neither final nor exclusive.

The crosscutting themes should be addressed in a similar structured way in all A's. The 5 A's and the 4 P's constitute a matrix. Research can zoom in on specific cells of this A5/P4 matrix, and certain cells can be prioritised.

The SPC decides to form writing teams and 'captains' according to this matrix.

- There will be five writing teams on the A's.
- There will be one writing team on Analysis and Assessment.
- There will be four writing teams on the crosscutting themes, the four P's.
- The links between each A with the other A's should be included in the text.

The SPC decides that the science plan and the project should be open for issues beyond the matrix.

4P's 5A's	Politics of Knowledge	Power	Principles	(Politics of) Scale
Architecture				
Allocation & Access				
Agency				
Adaptiveness				
Accountability				
Analysis & Assessment				

Writing Teams—Assigned Tasks

The A-Teams

Architecture: Frank Biermann, Bharat Desai, Norichika Kanie, Heike Schröder

Agency: Michele Betsill, Heike Schröder

Adaptiveness: Louis Lebel, Bernd Siebenhüner

Accountability and Legitimacy: Bharat Desai

Allocation & Access: Joyeeta Gupta, Louis Lebel; Frank Biermann (global allocation)

Analysis & Assessment: Norichika Kanie and Frank Biermann, links to modeling etc.; Louis Lebel and Bernd Siebenhüner, participatory approaches and social learning

» Frank Biermann will ask Ken Conca and Simon Tay about their preferred A.

Crosscutting Themes

Crosscutting theme **Politics of Knowledge:** Louis Lebel

Crosscutting theme **Principles:** Bharat Desai and Frank Biermann

Crosscutting theme **Power:** Louis Lebel, Frank Biermann (and all SPC)

Crosscutting theme **Policy of Scale:** Louis Lebel, Joyeeta Gupta

Thematic Foci and Connections with Other Projects

The thematic foci (e.g. water, carbon, etc) could have their own chapters in the science plan that will run through all A's in case studies.

There could be two levels of interaction with the various projects within IHDP and ESSP:

(1) Some projects could formally and intensively serve as 'case studies' for the Earth System Governance project. For example, all five A's could be analysed with a view to the global water system.

(2) In addition, the Earth System Governance project community, as well as its science plan, could serve as a guide to, and profit from a more loosely collaboration with, the other projects.

Three projects are already represented by members of the SPC that serve on SSC's of other projects: GECHS, GWSP, GECAFS.

The question is raised on how to limit/select the thematic foci and the projects the ESGP will collaborate with. Options mentioned:

- See how the science plan develops.
- Base the selection on personal connections from SPC members with other programs and foci.
- Focus less on projects and more on problems.
- Base the selection on articulated interest of other projects.
- Bottom up selection; which projects need 'governance'.

The SPC agrees that participation of other projects in one form or another should be open and is important. A strong majority of the SPC favours a clear and early decision on the number and selection of thematic foci as well as an early involvement of experts on these foci from other projects. For the science plan, a decision can be made in the next SPC

meeting in December 2007 and the ESGP can include or exclude projects and thematic foci over its intended 10-year lifespan.

The SPC agrees to separate the consultation process with other projects from the selection of thematic foci in the ESGP and decides that consultation should not necessarily mean membership in the SPC but can be also bottom up and informal, based on personal connections.

All agree that neither should the ESGP science plan be 'dictated' by other projects nor will the ESGP be (merely) a clearing house/facilitator for governance issues of other projects.

» The SPC will seek active consultation and coordination with the three already represented projects (GECHS, GWSP, GECAFS) and the two projects that explicitly stated their interest (LOICZ and ESSP/GCP).

» The SPC will send out a call for interest out to all other projects.

The Structure of the ESGP

Secretarial Support

Andreas Rechkemmer explains the role of the IHDP Secretariat.

In the first phase of the ESGP (until the formal launch of the project in October 2008), the secretarial support for the SPC will be provided by the Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM) in Amsterdam. Falk Schmidt will function as liaison between the SPC and the IHDP Secretariat. The Secretariat will support the SPC in public relations, networking and fund-raising and it will also serve as an interface with the ESSP and other IHDP/ESSP projects.

Furthermore the secretariat will host the website and make the necessary programmes and templates available for the secretarial support in Amsterdam where the content of the website will be developed and maintained.

The IHDP secretariat offers to dedicate a side-event at the UNFCCC COP 13 in Bali, Indonesia (3-14 December 2007) to the ESGP and facilitate a SPC meeting there. The IHDP secretariat has applied for specific funding and has a modest budget available.

In the second phase of the ESGP (the actual project period after official launch) the International Project Office with a Executive Officer will be at the IHDP Secretariat in Bonn, Germany. This location is in line with the demand from the donor community to concentrate offices in Bonn. The location can emphasize the cross cutting character of the ESGP.

To ensure additional resources,

» Frank Biermann and Andreas Rechkemmer will write funding proposal for the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and the Humboldt Foundation.

In general there is a strong opinion in the SPC that the Executive Officer should be a full-time position and be fully autonomous in the IHDP structures and daily work, and should be under the guidance/supervision of the SPC. Andreas Rechkemmer clearly supports this.

In case of insufficient funding, the search for alternative financial resources can result in an International Project Office outside from Bonn. Agus Sari, based on his experiences as

former IDGEC chair, argues for an office close to the location of the SSC chair of the project because the Executive Officer has more coordination issues with the chair than with the IHDP.

Additional fundraising opportunities should be explored not only to back up the international project office but also for the implementation aspects of a future science plan. A far future option could also be to broaden the office staff with thematic officers.

Louis Lebel suggest as alternative to have a more network structure and assign office functions to the SPC members without a central executive officer. Frank Biermann opposes this idea with the arguments that an executive officer is important to have a form of institutional memory and the importance of a clear outside representation and central contact point.

The SPC agrees that both concepts are not mutually exclusive and a central office as well as an engaged network and active SSC are important.

Modern communication technology is useful (although not optimal) for communication and participation and should be used.

» Louis Lebel and Ruben Zondervan will explore the options for some form of online platform for communication, documents sharing etc.

Fund Raising

The 20.000 USD available for the ESGP will be used to a large extent by the SPC meeting back to back with COP 13 in Bali, Indonesia. Funding for the meeting back to back with the ISA in San Francisco in March 2008 needs to be secured from other sources. The ISA has grants for author groups and some others.

» Heike Schröder, Michele Betsill, Ken Conca and Frank Biermann will develop a proposal for the ISA before August 15.

Time Line of the Earth System Governance Scientific Planning Committee

15 June 2007: a first draft of the guides for the crosscutting themes will be distributed for internal review and to assist in the writing of the analytical themes.

15 October 2007: the draft sections on the Analytical themes will be circulated for internal review and editing.

3–14 December 2007 (exact dates to be fixed): The next SPC meeting will be back to back with the UNFCCC COP 13 in Bali, Indonesia that will take place from 3–14 December 2007. There is a strong preference to have the meeting in the beginning of the 2nd week. The draft chapters of the science plan should be ready by then.

» Agus Sari will explore the options for the SPC meeting in Bali and reserve hotel rooms and organise a meeting venue.

» Andreas Rechkemmer will look into the COP 13 programme to see if this is the best time slot. 3 SPC members will be in Bali on other than ESGP funding.

Optionally there can be an SPC meeting back to back with the 2008 Berlin Conference in February 2008.

Spring 2008: Another meeting of the SPC will be in the framework of the Annual Convention of the ISA in spring 2008 in San Francisco, USA.

April/May 2008: the external review of the science plan is planned.

October 2008: It is planned that, if the review is positive, at the IHDP open science meeting in October 2008 in New Delhi, India the Earth System Governance Project will be officially launched.

At the same time, the Earth System Governance Scientific Planning Committee will be dissolved, and the IHDP SC will appoint, if all reviews are positive, a Scientific Steering Committee for the project.

Table of Content of the Science Plan

The science plan will be about 80 – 100 pages tentatively and roughly divided in the following sections:

- Table of Content
- Executive Summary
- Introduction (including link with IDGEC and the policy relevance)
- Conceptual Part (including definitions of governance, earth system etc.)
- Crosscutting Problems (the 4P's)
- Analytical Problems (the 5A's)
- Analysis & Assessment
- Collaborating Activities (links to other projects)
- Implementation
- References

The Analytical Problems (approx. 10 pages each) have the highest priority in the writing process. There was no agreement on how exactly the sections of the Analytical Problems sections should be structured. Points to be covered are:

- Introduction
- Problem definition (justification/positioning/definitions)
- Research questions
- Relevance of the 4P's
- Interlinkages with other A's

- Focus & Limits
- Theory/Design/Methods
- Other aspects
- Policy relevance

The ESGP Network

There is unanimity to create a strong and extensive network around the ESGP. The discussion concerns how to organise and structure such a network and how to ensure active participation. Frank Biermann suggests including other institutions in this network similar to the co-host concept used at the 2007 Amsterdam Conference. Others agree based on other experiences.

The SPC develops 7 categories of affiliation ('titles' are preliminary):

1. Associate Faculty Members (Senior Researchers)
2. Research Fellows (Junior Researchers)
3. Policy Communities (UN, Governments, NGO's, UNFCCC, etc.)
4. Partner organisations (of which their senior staff could also be in category 1)
5. SPC Members (current group with limited number of additional members)
6. Liaison IHDP SC member (ex officio 1 person)
7. ESSP liaisons (members of IHDP/ESSP Core and Joint Project bodies)

Other SPC Members

Other SPC/SSC members

The IHDP SC has the authority to appoint the members of the ESGP SSC, but the SPC will have an extensive right to advise the IHDP SC and to suggest names.

The SPC and the IHDP SC attach high value to a balanced representation of all continents among the members of the SPC/SSC. Currently Africa and Latin America are underrepresented in the SPC. Oran Young mentions that the IHDP SC considers scientists from developing countries working in the 'North' not as representatives of the 'South'.

Suggestions (no decisions):

- Chuckwumerije Okereke
- Leila da Costa Ferreira » Frank Biermann will ask her for details of her publications and research.
- Udesch Pillay » Frank Biermann will contact him.
- Jesse Ribot. » Louis Lebel will contact him.

In case the scientists suggested above will not be in the final selection, they are excellent candidates for an affiliation as Associate Faculty Member.

Associate Faculty Members

Suggestions (no decisions) include Xuemei Bai, Antonio Contreras, Xu Jiancu, John Dryzek, Elena Nikitina, James Meadowcroft, Sebastian Oberthür, Peter Haas, Jouba Skona, Marco Janssen (esp. as modeller), Paulo Salles (esp. as modeller), Loraine Elliot, Myanna Lahsen and Larry (Swatug?).

Regarding African candidates (also for category 5) Joyeeta Gupta suggests to contact Waternet, Southern Centre of Energy Environment Africa and ENDA.

In general the SPC will use established personal networks and contacts to make contact with the mentioned and potential other candidates.

Research Fellows

The circa 40 participants of the Marie Curie Summer School on Earth System Governance, which followed the Amsterdam Conference, will be invited to stay in touch as Research Fellows.

The best students of START courses can be approached.

Liaison with IHDP Scientific Committee

Based on a proposal of Oran Young and Frank Biermann the SPC agrees to invite Roberto P. Guimaraes as liaison to the IHDP SC.

Liaison with other ESSP and IHDP projects

This can be done by a call by the IHDP Secretariat. Annan Patwardhan is mentioned as a first strong and qualified candidate. » Louis Lebel will contact him about this possible affiliation.

Closing of the Meeting

Due to the increased 'background noise' at the location of the meeting and with respect to the many hours of fruitful constructive discussion, Frank Biermann encourages all participants to think about further candidates for all categories of affiliation (and especially for the categories 5-7).

Then he thanks all participants and closes the meeting.