

## Second Global Author's Meeting, 22-26 May 2017, Bangkok, Thailand

The highly anticipated second global authors meeting of the Global Environment Outlook took place in Bangkok, Thailand from the 22-26 May 2017. The meeting was hosted at the United Nations Conference Centre facilities. The meeting covered a full five days, with opening ceremonies and planning meetings on the first day. Authors met to mainly address comments on their first-order drafts and to move them towards a second-order draft quality. They also discussed how to address overlap and duplication in these chapters and how to apply a consistent structure across the chapters to present a coherent analysis of the second order drafts. With the guidance of the Co-chairs, authors discussed how to incorporate cross-cutting issues in all the thematic chapters, including the new cross-cutting theme on cities and urbanization as well as developing approaches to new texts for the economic and equity dimensions of the sixth Global Environment.

In parallel, authors of the Policy Effectiveness chapters met to develop their annotated outline and portions of the text for these key chapters of the global assessment. Similarly, the Innovative Outlooks Group came together to expand their annotated outline and draft their work plan for the Outlooks chapters of the global assessment. They also conducted a ground-truthing and visioning workshop that included Outlooks authors, Global Environment Outlook co-chairs and vice-chairs, Policy Effectiveness authors, Data authors, UN Environment's Chief Scientist and invited stakeholders from the Asia-Pacific region.



*Participants of the second global authors meeting pose for a group photo at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand*

Decisions by the Global Environment Outlook Co-chairs and Vice Co-chairs about the content of the assessment focused on:

- the theme of Healthy Planet, Healthy People should be integrated into all chapters;
- the equity and economic dimensions should be integrated as a common thread across chapters;
- Authors were also asked to present 'what's new' since the fifth Global Environment Outlook and have the current policy response and governance surrounding each environmental theme presented in the global assessment.

To prepare for the simultaneous intergovernmental and expert review of these first nine chapters which will start from 3 July 2017 to 15 September 2017, authors agreed to specific timelines for the month of June. Second order drafts of the first nine chapters must be submitted to the Secretariat by 30 June 2017. Comments from the intergovernmental and expert review will be consolidated by the Secretariat comments and these comments will be filtered by chapter. Authors should address the majority of comments by 9-13 October 2017 meeting in Guangzhou, China. Review Editors will be present at the Guangzhou meeting to ensure appropriate treatment of all the comments in each chapter:





*Participants of the second global authors meeting during one of the sessions*

Global Environment Outlook Fellows attended all five days of the meeting and focused on providing research support for the Global Environment Outlook author teams. To provide guidance and leadership, the Global Environment Outlook co-chairs and vice-chairs circulated amongst the drafting groups to observe and provide thoughts on the overarching themes and focus areas of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook. Co-chairs and vice-chairs of the Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) were also present in the discussions of the drafting teams. The UN Environment Secretariat provided administrative and technical support. Selected UN Environment content experts also provided support to the author teams on data and literature issues.



*From Left: Prof. Joyeeta Gupta (Co-chair of the sixth Global Environment Assessment), Jian Liu (UN Environment Chief Scientist), Dr. Wijarn Simachaya (Official in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand), Ms. Dechen Tsering (UN Environment Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific), Prof. Paul Ekins (Co-chair of the sixth Global Environment Assessment) and Pierre Boileau (Global Assessment Unit Head, UN Environment)*

The meeting also featured a media and outreach event scheduled at the Foreign Correspondent's Club in downtown Bangkok. Representatives from the private sector, non-governmental organizations and educators, discussed how the profile of environmental issues could be best explained to decision makers.





Panel members at the media and outreach event at the Foreign Correspondent's Club in downtown Bangkok

The next author's meeting in Guangzhou, China (9-13 October 2017) could see a broad engagement with Chinese business. Media and outreach events could be organized in Guangzhou to once again raise the profile of the Global Environment Outlook with the messaging for these events likely focusing on the business community.

A second visioning workshop for the Outlooks group will likely be held at the October meeting to produce more results for the game changers methodology.

## First Stakeholder Workshop of the Innovative Outlooks Group

The sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook attempts to draw a coherent storyline from the current State and Trends of the environment, considering responses from the Policy and practice communities, through the effectiveness of those Policy responses, to pathways needed to achieve agreed environmental objectives included in international accords and agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals, with the ultimate aim of achieving a healthy planet with healthy people.

Towards this objective, the sixth Global Environment Outlook includes a chapter dedicated to the outlooks for the future.

For the sixth Global Environment Outlook it has been decided to put the above innovative attributes into practice by including the following elements:

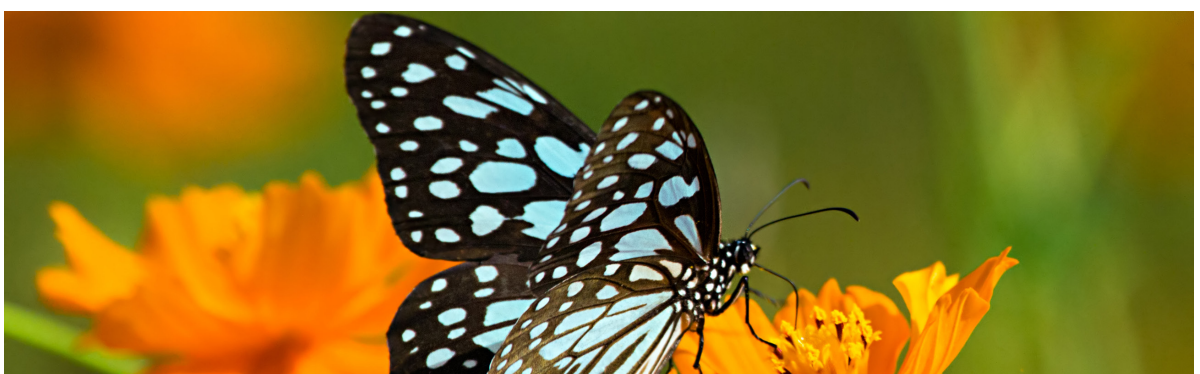
- Provide an **assessment of scenarios and pathways** being used in environmental assessments. Building on the GEO-6 regional assessments outlooks and the many ongoing assessments (e.g. Global Sustainable Development Report, Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Global Land Outlook, Global Waste Outlook, The World in 2050) that specifically focus on achieving the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals and other environmental agreements (2030), with an outlook for long-term sustainability (2050 / 2100) and a specific focus on synergies and trade-offs between achieving the different targets / issues;
- Develop an **overview of possible seeds of change**, i.e. projects/trends that may scale up to become influential in meeting these targets;
- Organize **regional stakeholder workshops** to refine the first two elements further;
- Develop plans for more **innovative approaches for communication** of the outlooks findings.



Participants at the stakeholder workshop

The Innovative Outlooks Group had its first stakeholder workshop on May 25, 2017, in Bangkok, Thailand. This workshop was the first in a planned series of workshops to be held on different continents. The purpose of this workshop was:

- To get feedback on the proposed dimensions of an Innovative Outlook and the elements proposed for the sixth Global Environment Outlook;
- To discuss environmental challenges for Sustainable Development Goal achievement in the region;
- To elicit innovative 'seeds of change' from the region that stakeholders believe could help achieve the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.



## Review update

After a successful first order draft review of the sixth Global Environment Outlook, authors met in Bangkok, Thailand with the primary objective of addressing review comments so as to improve the quality of the assessment to a second order draft. This second order draft will now move to a governmental review as well as a technical review at the same time. The secretariat has already contacted government for them to nominate experts for this important process. Also, all the larger review team (a group of experts nominated earlier and identified for this process) will be contacted in the next few days with instructions on when and how to run this second review of the draft. The second order draft review is expected to start early July and run for a full month to allow sufficient time for governments and all other expert reviewers to interact with the draft and give their feedback.

The areas of expertise considered for the reviewers are:

- General knowledge about environmental assessment and the global context around the environmental challenges that we face,
- Understanding of the drivers of environmental change. Subject areas like economic growth and development, population and demographics, technology diffusion and climate change.
- The state of environmental data and information is also a field that would benefit the drafts; here we focus on what we know and what we do not know about the state of the environment.
- Knowledge about areas of the economy and society that affect and are affected by the environment. For example, food production, energy output and consumption, resource use, gender, human health, economic development, equity, urbanization, environmental disasters, chemicals, waste, culture, education and society and finally polar regions.
- Knowledge of the state of the environment for Air. For example, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, ozone depletion, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and toxins.
- Knowledge of the state of the environment for Freshwater. For example, water quantity, quality, infrastructure and ecosystems.
- Knowledge of the state of the environment for Oceans. For example, fish production, ocean acidification, and waste in the ocean.
- Knowledge of the state of the environment for Land. For example, land degradation, agricultural production, land use patterns, desertification.
- Knowledge of the state of the environment for Biodiversity. For example, species richness, alien invasive species, genetic diversity.

The second review covers only the first nine chapters of the assessment. Several more chapters from the sections of the report on policy effectiveness and outlooks will be reviewed in 2018. Request for experts for these chapters will, therefore, be sent at that time.

## Role of the Scientific Advisory Panel



*Members of the Scientific Assessment Panel (SAP) with representatives from the regional Global Environment Outlook assessments*

The **Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP)** was established to guide the assessment process and to ensure scientific credibility and overall quality and integrity of the sixth Global Environment Outlook. The Panel was selected through the nomination and engagement process and comprises experts from each UN Environment region and up to six global experts. The Scientific Advisory Panel is supported by UN Environment's Chief Scientist Office.

- In the most recent meetings of the Scientific Advisory Panel, more detailed guidance has been approved concerning how it will perform its functions throughout the whole Global Environment Outlook process.

The Panel has also developed guidance on the appropriate interaction between the Global Environment Outlook advisory bodies and the authors of the assessment. This guidance will help ensure the independence of the author teams as they perform their work.

Most recently the Panel has developed a draft procedure for developing the Summary for Policy Makers, based on the procedures that are used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the those of the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. This procedure is now being reviewed and adapted by the High-level Group, which is responsible for the leadership for the Summary for Policy Makers. Once all consultations are complete the agreed procedure for developing the Summary for Policy Makers will be implemented throughout the 2018 period.



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The Scientific Advisory Panel combines both expertise in different environmental fields with expertise in assessment processes. The Panel must offer its guidance and advice as a group and therefore must take into account the views of members present at its decision-making meetings. The Panel provides an important function by providing views on the scientific integrity of how the Secretariat and other participants in the process are performing their functions. This advice dramatically improves the whole Global Environment Outlook process.

### Know an Expert: Global Environment Outlook Author Profile



Dr. Ania Grobicki is a Coordinating Lead Author for the Freshwater chapter of the sixth Global Environment Outlook. She has degrees in Chemical Engineering from the University of Cape Town and in Economics from the University of South Africa, together with a Ph.D. in Biotechnology from Imperial College, London.

Her experience and knowledge of water issues include work on the water needs of cities, industry, agriculture and energy, and policy development and practice related to water supply and reuse; water quality; water and health; effluent treatment technologies; and river basin management. She contributed the chapters on “Water and Industry” and “Water and Energy” to the 2nd World Water Development Report, as lead author, and has written widely on the water-food-energy nexus, and integrated water resources management.

In March 2015 Dr. Ania took up the position of Deputy Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, where she advised on global policy, developmental, technical and scientific issues, and oversaw the regional implementation of the Convention, and fulfilled the role of Acting Secretary General of the Convention for ten months. Ania advocates for integrated systems thinking and the application of natural solutions where possible to restoring and rebalancing the biosphere, building resilience and social adaptability.

### Global Environment Outlook: Regional Assessment for Asia and the Pacific

The sixth edition of the [Global Environment Outlook regional assessment report for Asia and the Pacific](#) provided the first integrative baseline in light of global and regional mega trends supported by open access to data and information. This was a great success not only of science informing policy but of nations at the regional level acting together through science to achieve an authentic assessment of the state, trends and outlook of their regional environment.

Worsening air pollution, water scarcity and waste generation and threaten human and environmental health have been led by increasing unsustainable consumption patterns in the Asia-Pacific region. Due to growing demand for fossil fuels and natural resources - extensive agriculture, palm oil and rubber plantations, aquaculture and the illegal trade in wildlife the region is environmentally degrading and losing its biodiversity. The situation has exacerbated by adverse climate change effects and an increasing number of natural disasters, which are causing devastating human and financial losses in the region.

The area's population size is rapidly increasing, rapid economic growth and intensified industrialization which has led to a sharp increase in natural resource use, the region is also experiencing the world's fastest urbanization rate. Lifestyle is also changing; the main driver for accelerating domestic material consumption being the expanding middle class. Food production is projected to continue to rise. Changing dietary patterns, mostly from cereals to meat, have led to an increase in meat production.

Amidst all this, the region has made significant commitments to mitigate climate change. Almost all the countries submitted their Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) targets to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change before the Paris Conference. In fact, there is optimism that larger economies will go further than their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, taking additional transformative measures to lower greenhouse gas emissions and develop resource-efficient. Countries are taking action towards a green growth path, with increased investments for example in renewable energy, along with enhanced environmental awareness of emerging middle class. This assessment report for the Asia and the Pacific region looked at the state of play in the major areas, highlighted drivers of environmental impacts and proposed ways to address them. It was launched together with the five other regional assessments during the second UNEA last year. These Key findings now form one of the six pillars on which the sixth Global Environment Outlook assessment will draw from.

It will be interesting to see how these key findings from the [Asia Pacific Global Environment Outlook assessment](#) will feed into the global narrative of the states and trends of our environment. The ultimate goal is to achieve a scientifically credible assessment and help effect best policies globally and regionally to achieve a healthy planet for healthy people.

