

BIOMOT mid-term conference report

Brussels, 24-25 March 2014

On 24 and 25 March 2014, the BIOMOT consortium in collaboration with the BIOGOV unit of Université Catholique de Louvain organized an international conference entitled “Beyond economic valuation. Alternative ways to express the value of biodiversity in science and policy” (Natural Science Museum, Brussels).



The event focused on recent research on building and sustaining motivation to act for biodiversity. The program of the conference entails combined high level scientific and policy presentations with science-society panel sessions and with stakeholder consultation through parallel working groups.. Preliminary results from the analysis of BIOMOT data (case study data from 7 EU countries collected through semi-structured interviews, life story interviews and Q-sort) were also discussed. The

aim was to show the relevance of these results in the broader context of research on biodiversity and motivations, and their role in helping to improve environmental policy-making at local, regional, national and EU levels.

Due to the actuality and policy relevance of the topics under discussion, as well as to the prestigious keynote speakers, the event attracted the interest of people from academia and research, NGOs and media. The conference included presentations from Birgit de Boissezon (Head of Unit I3 - Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission), Joachim Spangenberg (Sustainable Europe Research Institute SERI Germany), Linda Steg (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, the Netherlands), Arild Vatn (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), Annica Sandström (Luleå University of Technology, Sweden) and Dolly Jørgensen (Umeå University, Sweden). In addition, the BIOMOT scientific committee and Rob Bugter (Alterra / Wageningen University), the coordinator of BESAFE project, gave presentations.



The first conference day also included a science-policy lunch with DG Research officials and keynote speakers, with a focus on transdisciplinarity in sustainability sciences. Several topics were brought up, such as the need for long-term research support, for specific transdisciplinary review panels, different time-frames, pre-funding and post-funding instruments (particularly in creating citizen-science networks), specific transdisciplinary fellowships and calls for proposals, as well as the role of social trust and social involvement of scientists in developing evidence-based policy recommendations.

The speeches and subsequent discussions focused on topics such as the nature and role of transdisciplinary research in addressing motivations for biodiversity, the way institutions affect motivations and behavioral change, the contribution of social psychology and social network analysis to recent research on environmental motivations or the role of cultural memory in facilitating environmental conservation. The event also included a science-society panel that brought together



researchers, practitioners and social actors active in nature protection. The panel focused on one of the BIOMOT policy briefs (“After value: why putting a price tag on biodiversity doesn’t work and the need for alternatives”) and developed into a lively discussion with the public.

On the second day of the conference, discussions were more centred on preliminary results from BIOMOT data analysis, particularly on motivational tools and mechanisms in governance. Participants split into working groups organized around the core topics of the BIOMOT case studies: agro-cultural diversity and identity actions; protection of iconic animals; multi-level policy design and implementation; multi-actor landscape innovation actions; trading nature; agri-environmental schemes; private sector actors for biodiversity.

By and large, the mid-term conference contributed to:

- making the activities and results of BIOMOT more visible at the level of academia, practitioners and policy-makers,
- encouraging public involvement and debate on the key topics of BIOMOT, in a transdisciplinary approach, and
- highlighting the potential of BIOMOT and other similar projects to contribute to institutional and policy developments at EU, national and local levels.

Additional information, including the full conference agenda, is available [here](#).