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**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy  
Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services****Fourth session**

Kuala Lumpur, 22–28 February 2016

Item 5 (i) of the provisional agenda\*

**Work programme of the Platform: work on policy  
support tools and methodologies****Work on policy support tools and methodologies (deliverable  
4 (c))****Note by the secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. As one of the four main functions outlined in its founding resolution, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services “supports policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies, such as those arising from assessments, to enable decision makers to gain access to those tools and methodologies and, where necessary, to promote and catalyse their further development” (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, annex I, appendix I, paragraph 1 (d)).
2. In decision IPBES-2/5, the Plenary requested that an online catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies be established to facilitate easy access by decision makers to such tools and methodologies, and that preliminary guidance be provided on how to promote and catalyse their further development.
3. In decision IPBES-3/1, the Plenary noted the progress made in developing the catalogue and the preliminary guidance and requested that they be submitted for review to Governments and stakeholders; that work be undertaken to establish the catalogue; and that the guidance be further developed for consideration by the Plenary at its fourth session.
4. In response to that decision, the proposed catalogue and guidance were made available for an open review by Governments and stakeholders from 26 February to 31 March 2015. The expert group, mandated to continue its work pursuant to decision IPBES-3/1, met once – in Budapest, from 8 to 11 June 2015 – to revise and begin to establish the proposed catalogue, based on the comments received, and to further develop the guidance document.
5. This document presents the work on policy support tools and methodologies for deliverable 4 (c), including:
  - (a) Guidance on how to develop the content of the catalogue in the context of ongoing work across the work programme (section II); and

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\* IPBES/4/1

(b) A presentation of the catalogue, progress to date and the proposed institutional arrangements for its further development (section III).

6. Additional information on the work of the expert group is available in the note by the secretariat on a progress report on the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies (IPBES/4/INF/14).

## II. Guidance for further work on policy support tools and methodologies

7. The work on policy support tools and methodologies is understood to cover the entire work programme, concerning several deliverables, as illustrated in the conceptual diagram presented in the figure, below, on a schematic representation of interrelations between various work programme deliverables in regard to policy support tools and methodologies (see IPBES/4/INF/14 for more information).

8. The online catalogue, as described in section III, corresponds to the web-based interface component of that work. Its content will be populated from the work on policy support tools and methodologies for other deliverables and, in particular, from the regional, global, thematic and methodological assessments undertaken by the Platform. Those assessments are the primary mechanisms for identifying and assessing effective policy responses or policy instruments, as well as the policy support tools and methodologies needed for the most rigorous and effective implementation of the instruments. They will serve to assess the effectiveness of a range of policy instruments in various contexts and sectors and against various scales, as well as the effectiveness, practicability and replicability of the current and emerging policy support tools and methodologies used in implementing the instruments. The assessments will also identify needs and gaps where policy support tools and methodologies require further development to improve policy formulation and implementation.

9. The online catalogue will include guidance of the kind developed for the use of policy support tools and methodologies for scenario analysis and modelling (deliverable 3 (c)) or regarding the diverse conceptualization of values (deliverable 3 (d)).

10. Contributions to the online catalogue will also be provided by the three task forces working on: (a) capacity-building in regard to policy support tools and methodologies; (b) aspects of indigenous and local knowledge; and (c) data and knowledge related to policy support tools and methodologies.

### (a) Capacity-building:

- (i) The strengthening of capacities for the development and use of policy support tools and methodologies has been recognized as a key priority for capacity-building (decision IPBES-3/1). Capacity-building work has to take into account the capacity-building needs related to the development and uptake of new policy support tools and methodologies, as well as to access to and the use of existing tools and methodologies that are particularly suitable for wider replication and/or upscaling. Ways and means need to be elaborated to identify and prioritize the capacity-building needs related to policy support tools and methodologies, as well as to provide and call for financial and other support to meet the highest priority needs;
- (ii) The aim of the catalogue on policy support tools and methodologies is to help to provide the relevant scientific and technical information, guidance and other material needed to build the required capacity; to present the policy instruments and policy support tools and methodologies in a user-friendly manner that supports capacity-building; and to allow for the creation, as necessary, of new content such as e-learning modules, as well as the moderated uploading of short videos, leaflets and presentations from users that supports self-learning and capacity-building through a network approach. By means of its interactive feedback mechanisms, the catalogue could also be instrumental in further indicating the capacity-building needs to be prioritized;

### (b) Indigenous and local knowledge systems:

- (i) The Platform's principle of recognizing and respecting the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge is also to be reflected in its work on policy support tools and methodologies. The task force on indigenous and local knowledge systems will support the identification and assessment of the policy

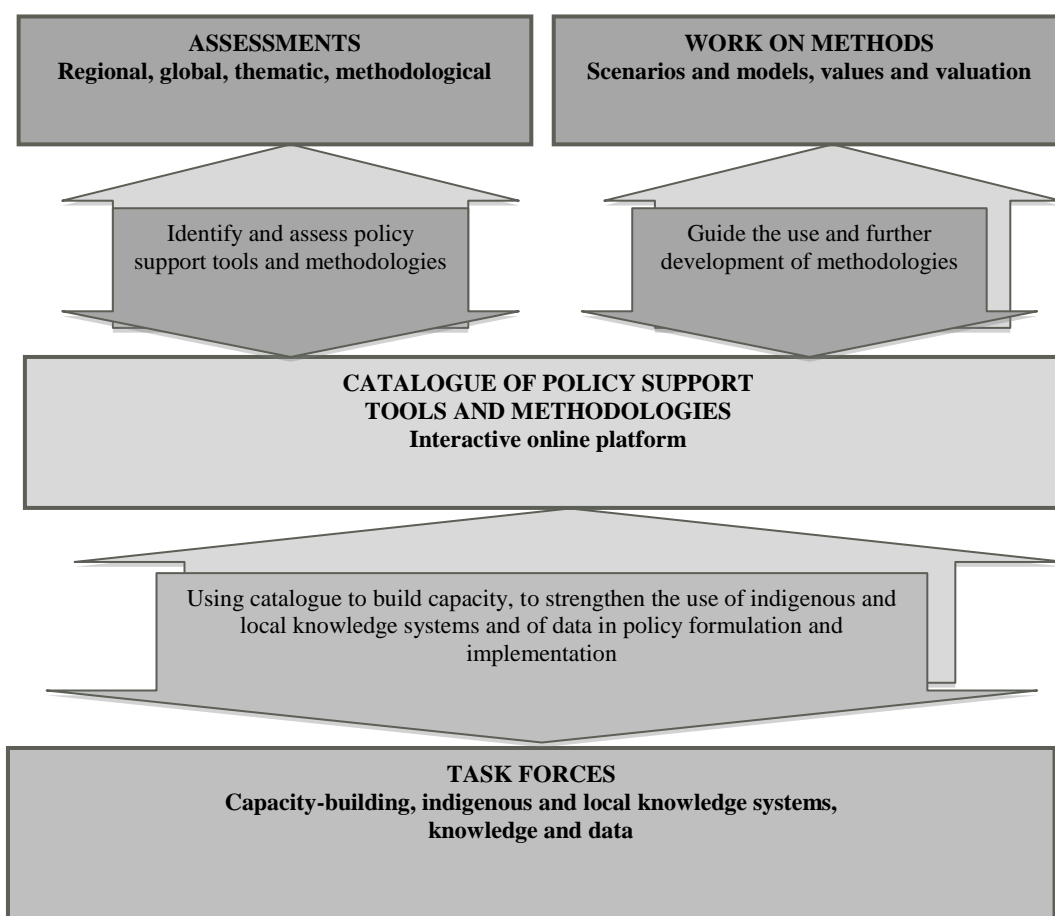
instruments and policy support tools and methodologies that exist in the context of such knowledge systems in order to further strengthen approaches aimed at engaging those systems in policy formulation and implementation;

- (ii) The catalogue should provide access to policy support tools and methodologies that are relevant to indigenous and local knowledge systems and that help to integrate, synergize and complement policy-making processes. The task force on indigenous and local knowledge systems will guide and support efforts to attract and encourage knowledge holders and experts in indigenous and local knowledge systems to share and further enrich their experience in the use of instruments, tools and methodologies aimed at engaging such systems in policy formulation and implementation, as well as to promote and catalyse their application and further development within and beyond the scope of the Platform's work;
- (c) Data and knowledge:
  - (i) The use of policy support tools and methodologies is, in most cases, dependent on data, information and knowledge. The task force on knowledge and data will provide guidance on the use of various data, information and knowledge in the context of policy support tools and methodologies and, where available, help to provide links and access to the established data sets or relevant sources of information and knowledge needed to apply the policy support tools and methodologies promoted by the Platform through the catalogue;
  - (ii) The catalogue would thus serve as a gateway to established data sets or relevant sources of information and knowledge from a wide range of Governments, stakeholders and strategic partners. By means of its interactive feedback mechanisms, the catalogue could also be instrumental in further indicating the data, information or knowledge gaps in regard to the application of policy instruments and policy support tools.

11. Additional content is expected to be generated by the interactive use of the online catalogue and, hence, by the experts, practitioners and decision makers that are themselves presumably using the catalogue. The functioning of the catalogue is presented in the next section and, in more detail, in the note by the secretariat on a progress report on the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies (IPBES/4/INF/14).

Figure

**Schematic representation of interrelations between various work programme deliverables in regard to policy support tools and methodologies**



### III. Catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies

#### A. Presentation

12. The catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies is a dynamic, two-way, online platform designed around IPBES processes and functions and featuring a user-focused approach (see document IPBES/4/INF/14). It is the centrepiece of the policy support function and will make available – in an organized, interactive and user-friendly manner – content on policy support tools and methodologies as described in section II.

13. The catalogue is an innovative and evolving online platform with two main goals:

(a) To enable decision makers to gain easy access to customized information on the policy support tools and methodologies identified and gathered through other Platform deliverables, such as assessments, to better inform and assist them in the various phases of policy-making and implementation; and

(b) To allow a range of users to assess the usability of tools and methodologies in their specific contexts and to provide input to the catalogue, including on resources required, types of outputs that can be obtained and, hence, gaps that have been identified.

14. The catalogue is meant to serve as much more than a simple repository of high quality information on available policy support tools and methodologies. It will enable decision makers, practitioners and other social groups to identify, in a step-wise manner, the most relevant policy support tools and methodologies for their individual needs. It will also provide them with further information on – and, where available, links to – the resources, capacities or data and knowledge that they might need. In addition, it will provide examples to illustrate the use of various policy support tools and methodologies in specific contexts.

15. The aim is to develop a community of practice in which users would interact with, and learn from, each other through the online catalogue. The catalogue would link individuals or institutions experienced in the development or use of policy support tools and methodologies with potential users, allowing for interactions between them. Users would include a diverse range of actors, including decision makers, practitioners, researchers, scholars and groups such as indigenous and local communities.

## **B. Progress in implementation**

16. Following a revision of the proposed catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies, based on comments received from Governments and stakeholders, the expert group, in response to decision IPBES-3/1 and in close collaboration with the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) of the United Nations Development Programme, has begun to undertake the work of establishing the catalogue.

17. As a rule, the structure of the catalogue should reflect the conceptual framing of policy support tools and methodologies, as presented in annex I, and allow for user-friendly and demand-oriented access to the various policy instruments and policy support tools and methodologies. Initial steps have been taken to develop an offline prototype, hosted on the BES-Net web portal, which presents some of the basic features of the envisaged structure and functions of the catalogue working with preliminary examples prepared by the expert group for demonstration purposes.

18. The final structure and content will, however, be developed in response to the needs and inputs from other Platform work programme deliverables, as indicated in the guidance presented in section II and as they emerge from, for example, current work on scenario analysis and modelling (deliverable 3 (c)) and the diverse conceptualization of values (deliverable 3 (d)), as well as from the thematic assessment of pollination and pollinators associated with food production (deliverable 3 (a)). Subsequent steps in further developing the catalogue will focus on aligning the basic structures and functions, as outlined in the note by the secretariat on a progress report on the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies (IPBES/4/INF/14), with the actual needs and inputs of the other deliverables.

## **C. Institutional arrangements to operationalize the catalogue**

19. To operationalize the approaches outlined above it is necessary to put in place the following institutional arrangements:

- (a) A governance structure for the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies;
- (b) Expert and technical support to assist in the implementation of the work on policy support tools and methodologies.

## **D. Governance structure for the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies**

20. It is suggested that the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel should oversee the content of the catalogue, in terms of quality and balance between various instruments and tools. It will be supported by a group of experts in policy support tools and methodologies who will moderate specific sections of the catalogue. The Panel, supported by the experts, will report to the Plenary on a regular basis, with a view to improving the catalogue based on lessons learned.

21. It is further suggested that the catalogue should be further developed in close collaboration with the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) of the United Nations Development Programme, building on the initial work presented in paragraphs 15 and 16, above, as well as on institutional arrangements aimed at clarifying the scope and responsibilities of that collaboration. The Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will oversee that collaboration and ensure that the online catalogue is developed and maintained in accordance with the Platform's mandate and operating principles.

## **E. Expert and technical support to assist in the implementation of the work on policy support tools and methodologies**

22. It is proposed that the mandate of the expert group on policy support tools and methodologies be extended until the end of the first work programme in order to further develop the catalogue, to coordinate interaction with other deliverables for the development of its content, and to moderate interactions with users. This group of 20 experts would meet once a year, incurring estimated additional costs of \$67,500 per year over the remaining three years of the work programme.

23. Technical support would be provided by the secretariat, as foreseen for the implementation of deliverable 4 (c), in collaboration with BES-Net.

#### **IV. Suggested action**

24. The Plenary may wish to consider the following actions:

- (a) Take note of the guidance for further work on policy support and tools and provide additional guidance for that work;
- (b) Approve the suggested governance structure for the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies;
- (c) Approve the extension of the mandate of the expert group on policy support tools and methodologies until the end of the first work programme; and
- (d) Request the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to provide a report on progress on the online catalogue to the Plenary at its fifth session.

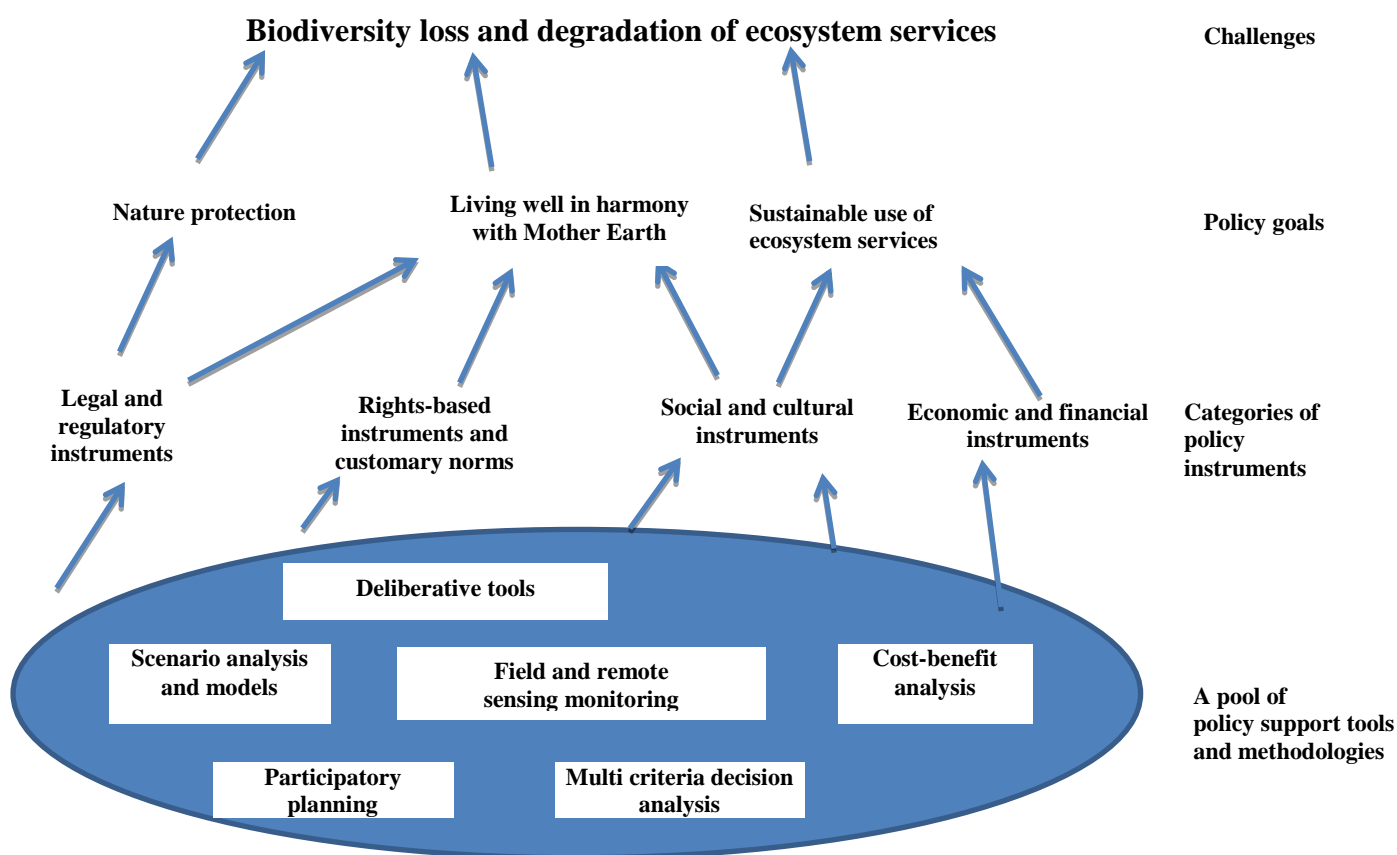
## Annex

### Framing policy support tools and methodologies in work undertaken by the Platform

1. For the purpose of the Platform's work, the term "policy support tools and methodologies" is understood to refer to "approaches and techniques based on science and other knowledge systems that can inform, assist and enhance relevant decisions, policy-making and implementation at local, national, regional and international levels to protect nature, so promoting nature's benefits to people and a good quality of life" (figure I). In addition, it is important to understand the context of policy support tools and methodologies in the light of differing social, cultural, economic and ecological challenges and opportunities, implying that the identification, design and implementation of policy tools and methodologies do not follow a "one size fits all" approach.

Figure I

**Schematic representation of the interrelationship between policy formulation, policy instruments and policy support tools and methodologies**



2. Policy support tools and methodologies can be broken down into seven main families. For a more detailed description and examples of the families of policy support tools and methodologies please see the note by the secretariat on a progress report on the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies (IPBES/4/INF/14):

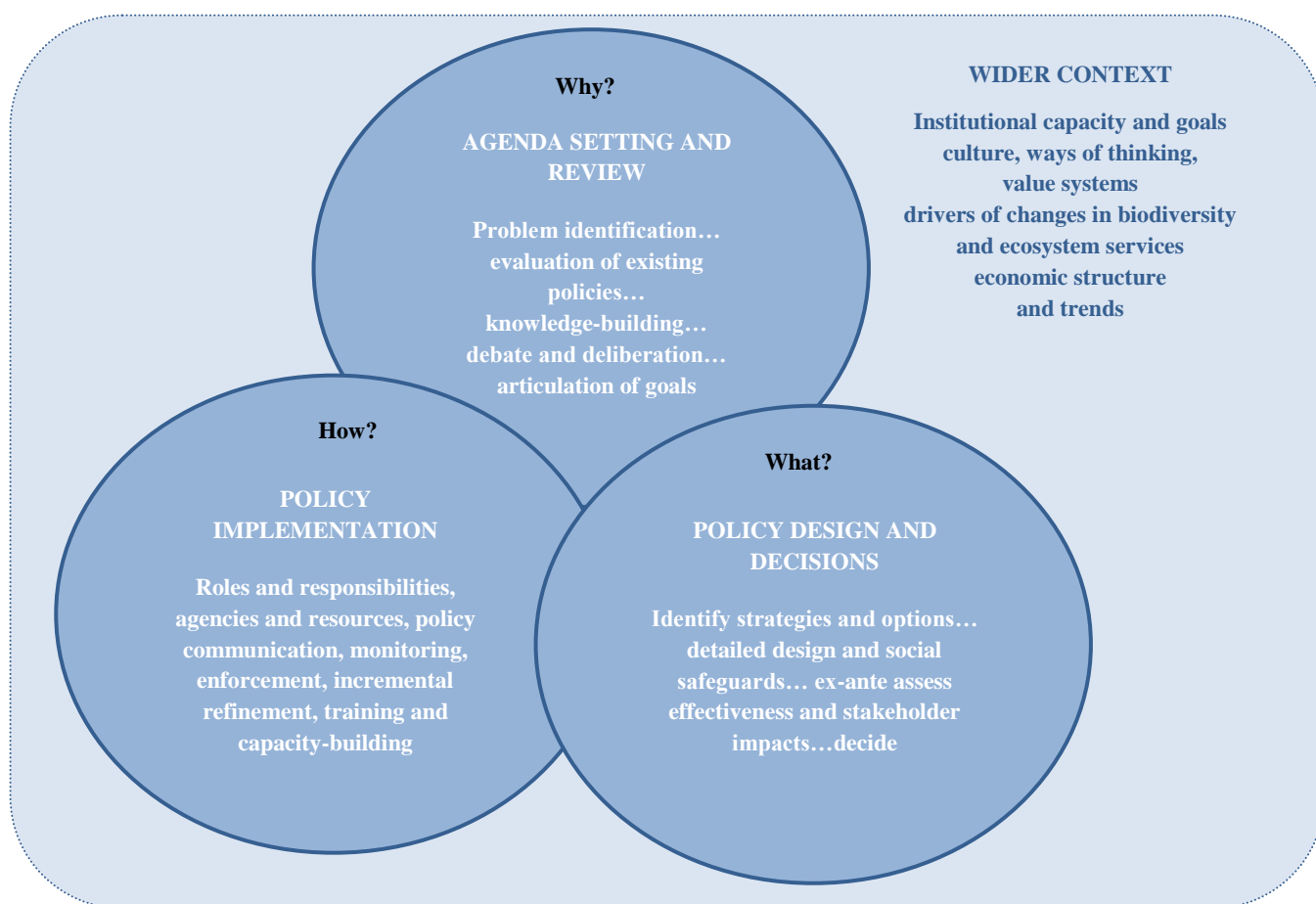
- (a) Assembling data and knowledge (including monitoring);
- (b) Assessment and evaluation;
- (c) Public discussion, involvement and participatory process;
- (d) Selection and design of policy instruments;
- (e) Implementation, outreach and enforcement;
- (f) Training and capacity-building;
- (g) Social learning, innovation and adaptive governance.

3. Policy support tools and methodologies are often fundamental parts of policy instruments. Policy instruments can be viewed according to various contexts and world-views. The IPBES conceptual framework highlights the central role of institutions and governance, as they influence all aspects of relationships between people and nature and, hence, the differing focus and types of values that people assign to nature, nature's benefits to people and a good quality of life. Both formal and informal institutions determine the types and levels of values and how the responsibilities, costs and benefits of biodiversity conservation are distributed across society. Examples of formal institutions include laws and policies, such as macroeconomic, fiscal, monetary or agricultural policies, markets and legal property rights; these are typically based on various legal instruments, treaties and customary laws. Informal institutions, in turn, include social norms and rules, such as those related to collective action. Lastly, organizations are also a form of institution.
4. Policy instruments can be broken down into four main categories:
  - (a) Legal and regulatory instruments;
  - (b) Rights-based instruments and customary norms;
  - (c) Economic and financial instruments;
  - (d) Social and cultural instruments.
5. These categories need to be considered independently or within a policy mix context, reflecting differing circumstances and priorities across various levels of governance, such as the subnational, national and international levels. They are applied in accordance with people's world views and sociocultural contexts. The choice of policy instruments often entails changes in the distribution of responsibilities, costs and benefits from the conservation and use of biodiversity. Any policy instrument can only be effective if the supporting formal and informal institutions are in place.
6. Any comprehensive guide to policy support tools and methodologies needs to articulate a view of the policy development process. A practical characterization of the process includes three distinct but overlapping elements: agenda-setting and review; policy design and decisions; and policy implementation (see figure II).



Figure II

**Three key elements of the policy cycle and examples of activities associated with them, in their wider context**



7. The dynamics and operation of the three key elements may vary depending on the restrictions and opportunities determined by the wider context. In other words, the conditions specific to a given geographical setting and scale may restrict or ease a suite of policies according to, among other things, institutional capacity, culture, ways of thinking and value systems, historical experience and cultural history. Policymaking and decision-making are seen as processes for addressing perceived societal challenges and are rarely confined to a single location or scale. The flow of value-related information should be facilitated between the local, national and global levels.