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

Ninth session

Bonn, Germany, 3–9 July 2022

Item 7 (c) of the provisional agenda[[1]](#footnote-2)\*

Assessing knowledge: scoping report for a methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people

Scoping report for a methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people and proposals for streamlining future scoping processes under the Platform

Note by the secretariat

Introduction

1. In paragraph 4 of section II of decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary approved the scoping process for a methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people (hereafter referred to as “the business and biodiversity assessment”), in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables, set out in annex I to decision IPBES-3/3 and based on the initial scoping report for the assessment, set out in section IV of appendix II to document IPBES/7/6, and decided to consider conducting the assessment over a period of two years, following a fast-track approach.
2. In paragraph 6 of section II of decision IPBES-8/1, the Plenary requested the Bureau, in consultation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, to review scoping processes in other bodies, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, with a view to making proposals for streamlining future scoping processes under IPBES.
3. The Plenary will be invited to take note of the proposals for streamlining future scoping processes under IPBES, set out in section I below, consider the scoping report set out in the annex to the present note and decide on the start of the undertaking of the assessment.

I. Proposals for streamlining future scoping processes under IPBES

1. In response to the request by the Plenary, the Bureau, in consultation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, compared the form and structure of the scoping reports of the thematic assessment of the interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food and health (the nexus assessment) and the thematic assessment of the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, determinants of transformative change and options for achieving the 2050 vision for biodiversity (the transformative change assessment) and earlier IPBES assessments with the chapter outlines of the contributions by Working Groups I and II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (referred to hereafter as “the chapter outlines”), which serve as scoping reports.
2. The following main differences were identified:
3. The chapter outlines indicate that they are to be considered by the authors as indicative. IPBES scoping documents do not include such a note;
4. The chapter outlines are very brief and in the form of a list of bullet points, which provide topics for each chapter and section, in no particular order. The chapter outlines of the contributions of Working Groups I and II comprised approximately 1,200 and 2,000 words respectively. In comparison, the IPBES nexus and transformative change assessment scoping reports contained approximately 6,200 words each;
5. The chapter outline for the contribution of Working Group II sets out page limits for each of the sections of the Working Group II contribution. Scoping reports of IPBES have to date not provided such information;
6. The chapter outlines contain suggested annexes, including an annex containing the list of authors and reviewers of the assessment. IPBES scoping reports have to date not included such information.
7. The scoping report for the *Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (see decision IPBES-4/1, annex I) was, at approximately 6,000 words, of a length comparable to those of the nexus and transformative change assessments. The initial scoping reports which the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel prepared for the *Assessment of Pollination, Pollinators and Food Production* and for the *Assessment of Scenarios and Models of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* were more concise, at approximately 1,700 words apiece. They included sections on scope, rationale, assumptions, utility (in the case of the Pollination Assessment) and a chapter outline, including a brief paragraph on the content of each chapter. They did not include sections with overarching questions (first included in the scoping report for the Global Assessment) or on the methodological approach (first included in the scoping report for the assessment of the sustainable use of wild species).
8. Based on the information set out in the preceding paragraphs, the Bureau, in consultation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, recommends that future scoping reports:
9. Be shorter (a maximum of approximately 3,000 words, for example) and thus include fewer and shorter sections;
10. Include indicative limits on the length of the summary for policymakers and the chapters, which would vary, depending on the nature of the assessment.
11. Shorter scoping reports would allow authors more flexibility in the development of an assessment in line with the latest available science while also reducing the time required for their review and approval by the Plenary.
12. The above recommendations have already been applied to the draft scoping report for the business and biodiversity assessment (see the annex to the present document).

II. Scoping a methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people

1. In response to paragraph 4 of section II of decision IPBES-7/1, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, assisted by a group of experts, prepared the scoping report for the business and biodiversity assessment, which is set out in the annex to the present note. An overview of the process followed for the production of the scoping report is set out in document IPBES/9/INF/10.
2. As was already noted in document IPBES/8/INF/7 on progress in scoping the methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people, it has been suggested that the start of the business and biodiversity assessment be delayed until the tenth session of the Plenary. A potential schedule of assessments until 2030 is set out in document IPBES/9/12.

Annex

Scoping report for a methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business and biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people

I. Scope, rationale, timeline and geographical coverage, and methodological approach

A. Scope

1. The objective of this methodological assessment is to strengthen the knowledge base to support efforts by business to achieve the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity and the Sustainable Development Goals and to inform biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, processes and efforts. The assessment will categorize the dependencies and impact of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people, which include ecosystem services and other analogous concepts; assess criteria and indicators for measuring such dependencies and impacts; and assess options for action by businesses and by others, including Governments, the financial sector and civil society, that interact with business.

B. Rationale

1. Engaging businesses and the financial sector in efforts to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and related nature’s contributions to people is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other biodiversity-related commitments. Different business sectors depend on and benefit from biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people in different ways and to varying extents and have a range of positive and negative impacts on both biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people.
2. Improved understanding and awareness of the dependencies and impacts of businesses on biodiversity and improved concepts and methodologies, including tools for measuring and communicating such dependencies and impacts, are important for enabling businesses to understand the risks (physical, transitional and systemic) and opportunities, and to assess and monitor their performance. Improved understanding and systematic reporting are important for promoting public accountability and transparency, improving consumer knowledge of dependencies and impacts, developing an enabling policy environment, informing regulatory agencies and guiding financing decisions and investments. Initiatives have emerged to support such efforts, but there are conflicting approaches, numerous gaps and no agreed standards for addressing dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, cumulative impact and indirect impact through supply chains, trade or substitution effects.
3. Consistency in reporting dependencies and impacts that accounts for region-specific and business-specific factors provides a basis for making comparisons of business performance against biodiversity-related goals and targets over time, as well as for comparisons between various actors and activities. Validated, standardized and business-specific metrics and indicators are important for efficient, transparent and robust environmental governance.

C. Timeline and geographical coverage

1. The assessment will be global in scope and will address issues related to all major sectors and business types. Regional adaptations and applications, including examples drawn from both past and present, will also be considered.
2. The assessment will be carried out over a two-year period.

D. Methodological approach

1. The assessment report will consist of a summary for policymakers and six chapters, each with an executive summary of the key findings most relevant to both public and private sector decision‑makers. The assessment will also include key gaps in knowledge, methodologies and reporting standards.
2. The assessment will draw on scientific literature, indigenous and local knowledge and grey literature, in line with the procedures for the preparation of IPBES deliverables,[[2]](#footnote-3) including IPBES assessments and relevant reports or other materials prepared by existing reporting initiatives and by public and private entities. The assessment will present relevant case studies at various scales, as appropriate.
3. The assessment will be consistent with the IPBES conceptual framework.[[3]](#footnote-4)
4. The work will be carried out by a highly interdisciplinary team of experts, including practitioners with expertise in the dependencies and impacts on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people in different business sectors (both formal and informal), such as forestry, agriculture and food systems, marine and freshwater fisheries and other uses of wild species, water, tourism, pharmaceuticals, energy, infrastructure and mining. The expert team will draw from a diversity of backgrounds, for example, academia, business and industry, government and civil society, and a wide variety of disciplines, for example, accounting, climatology, ecology, economics, finance, gender studies, hydrology, law, management science, material design and engineering, public health and risk assessment. The interdisciplinary team will in turn draw from a diversity of knowledge sources, for example, business and financial knowledge, governmental policy and regulatory knowledge, indigenous and local knowledge, and natural and social science knowledge and expertise.
5. The task force on knowledge and data will support the experts in their work on data and information and in their identification of knowledge gaps and, following the approval of the assessment, promote knowledge generation to address the gaps identified.[[4]](#footnote-5)
6. Addressing and working with indigenous and local knowledge in the assessment will be in line with the IPBES approach to recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge[[5]](#footnote-6) and relevant guidance regarding its implementation provided by the task force on indigenous and local knowledge.[[6]](#footnote-7)
7. The task force on capacity-building will support the development and uptake of the assessment in accordance with objective 2 on building capacity of the IPBES work programme up to 2030 and the capacity-building rolling plan.[[7]](#footnote-8)
8. The task force on policy tools and methodologies will assist in identifying and assessing relevant policy tools and frameworks and will work to increase the policy and business relevance of the assessment and its use in decision-making, once approved.[[8]](#footnote-9)
9. The task force on scenarios and models will support the use of models and scenarios in assessing the impact of business on biodiversity, and of transformative pathways in improving biodiversity and business outcomes.
10. Coordination and facilitation between this assessment, the nexus assessment and the transformative change assessment will be ensured to enable synergies and complementarity and to avoid duplication of scope and work.
11. The summary for policymakers, which will address both public and private sector decision‑makers, will be available in all six official languages of the United Nations and will be printed on demand, resources permitting.
12. The length of the summary for policymakers should remain within a word limit[[9]](#footnote-10) of approximately 8,500 words (indicative). Indicative word limits are also provided for each chapter in section II below.
13. Communication and outreach will be undertaken from the outset and during the development of the assessment to build engagement with the wider knowledge community and the end users of the assessment.
14. Technical support will be provided by a technical support unit, which will work in close collaboration with the groups of experts producing other IPBES assessments and with the IPBES task forces and their respective technical support units.

II. Chapter outline

1. **Chapter 1: Setting the scene.** (*Indicative length ~10,200 words*)Chapter 1 will describe the purpose of the assessment and the intended audience. It will introduce the issues to be assessed in the following chapters and discuss the links between this assessment and other relevant IPBES assessments, and the ways in which this assessment links to the IPBES conceptual framework and to the achievement of the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity and the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Chapter 1 will also present a typology of the different business sectors, including both formal and informal economic sectors, that will be used throughout the assessment, referencing existing typologies. It will frame the relationship of the dependencies and impacts of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people, but will leave it until later chapters to fully develop typologies of dependency (chapter 2) and impact (chapter 3). It will highlight key issues and provide definitions of important terms within the context of their use in the assessment, for example, the term “direct and indirect dependencies”.
3. **Chapter 2: How does business depend on biodiversity?** (*Indicative length ~12,750 words*) Chapter 2 will describe the various ways in which businesses depend on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people, while also noting potential synergies and trade-offs with other societal goals. It will set out concrete examples of both qualitative and quantitative dependencies and describe the ways in which conserving and sustainably using biodiversity can provide benefits and opportunities for long-term business, societal and environmental sustainability, and how losing biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people generates risks for business, finance and society. It will also provide a typology of the dependencies of businesses of different types and sizes on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people. The chapter will describe various existing methods and approaches that can be or have been used to identify business dependencies and interdependencies on biodiversity and nature’s contribution to people and will identify common features of those approaches, important differences in framing and definitions, data requirements and common datasets, their uptake to date and implications for decision-making by businesses, investors, consumers, Governments and civil society.
4. Chapter 2 will also set out issues that arise when characterizing dependencies, such as characterizing direct and indirect dependencies, dependencies arising along the length of a supply chain, the way in which dependencies are influenced or created by policies and regulations, consumer behaviour, spatial and temporal scales of dependencies, potential conflicts between dependencies on nature’s contributions to people, biodiversity conservation and restoration, and ways to address environmental justice, equality and equity issues created by dependencies.
5. **Chapter 3: How does business impact biodiversity?**(*Indicative length ~12,750 words*) Chapter 3 will consider the ways in which businesses impact on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people, accounting for direct and indirect drivers through which such impact occurs. It will address definitions, concepts and the nature of impact, creating a typology of impact. It will define the ways in which impact links to dependence, risk and opportunity and how it intersects with indigenous peoples and local communities. It will outline the implications of business impact for biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people and demonstrate the need for reliable impact assessment methodologies and other tools.
6. Chapter 3 will describe the methods and approaches for assessing the impacts of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people, including quantitative, qualitative, proxy-based and spatially explicit approaches and scenarios. It will identify the common features of such methodologies and the ways in which they differ, and will consider the implications of these differences for decision-making. The chapter will describe the pathways of impact on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people through both direct and indirect drivers, and the best estimates of the impacts of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people.
7. Chapter 3 will also discuss matter that arise when characterizing impact, which could include setting references or targets against which various types of impact are assessed; potential for tipping points; boundaries of impact assessment; unsustainable exploitation of natural resources; cumulative or joint impact; positive, negative, direct and indirect or induced impact; and impact attribution. Data requirements, the need for common data sets and sensitivity analysis will also be considered. The chapter will also assess the utility of approaches currently being used by businesses to identify impact.
8. **Chapter 4:** **Frameworks,** **metrics and indicators to measure business dependence and impact on biodiversity.** (*Indicative length ~15,300 words*) Chapter 4 will build on chapters 2 and 3 by assessing the status of frameworks, metrics and indicators relevant to describing the dependencies and impacts of business on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people. The chapter will present an inventory of frameworks, metrics and indicators for biodiversity dependencies and impacts, including an assessment of their scientific robustness. It will also discuss important gaps in applicable frameworks, metrics and indicators, will develop a typology of such frameworks, metrics and indicators, including relevant definitions, and present tools for assessing them.
9. Chapter 4 will also assess how various frameworks, metrics and indicators characterize issues such as direct and indirect drivers, cumulative impact, spatial and temporal scales (short and long term), single metric versus collections of metrics and indicators, applicable scale (site, landscape, corporate, portfolio, product, supply chain and value chain), objective and audience (management versus disclosure, and internal versus external) and different methods of valuation (including from indigenous peoples and local community methodologies), referencing work from the IPBES values assessment. Recognizing that measuring biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people at different spatial and temporal scales is challenging, and that there is no “one size fits all” single framework, metric or indicator which fits all contexts, the chapter will identify criteria for determining preferred or appropriate, practical and science-based frameworks, metrics and indicators for different contexts.
10. The chapter will also provide guidance on the appropriate use of frameworks, metrics and indicators by businesses, decision-makers, the financial sector and others, for measuring business performance in managing biodiversity dependencies and impacts. The chapter will present examples of ways in which frameworks, metrics and indicators have been applied, highlighting challenges associated with their use, including cumulative impact and tipping points, costs of measurement, data accessibility and data and knowledge gaps.
11. Chapter 4 will also illustrate how different frameworks, metrics and indicators map against the IPBES conceptual framework and will demonstrate the ways in which different frameworks, metrics and tools are used to assess the contribution of business sectors to the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
12. **Chapter 5: Businesses as key actors of change: options for action by business.** (*Indicative length ~20,400 words*) Chapter 5 will address the role and responsibility of businesses in transformative change for a sustainable future. It will describe both challenges and opportunities for action by businesses in various sectors, using the typology of sectors from Chapter 1. It will include discussion of key barriers, such as gaps in knowledge and data, and ways to overcome them through adoption of best practices, collaboration, capacity-building, financing and information-sharing. It will discuss the influence of metrics and indicators addressed in chapter 4 on sustainable outcomes for biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people.
13. Chapter 5 will also examine the role and efficacy of various approaches to promoting change, including certification schemes, standards for compliance, the mitigation hierarchy, sectoral guidelines, best management practices, innovative environmental or biodiversity accounting systems, new business models and new technologies. The chapter will also consider synergies between approaches and evidence of whether the holistic effects of combinations of approaches are effective in achieving transformative change. The chapter will provide examples of collaboration in industry associations, across supply chains, with indigenous peoples and local communities, and between businesses within and across sectors that promote biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people. It will also investigate how sustainability approaches (such as the circular green economy and sustainable trade and innovation) and actions by businesses influence social norms, consumption and production patterns and public policy, and what effect that influence has, both positive and negative, on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people.
14. Chapter 5 will highlight key opportunities for businesses (by sector) to improve their performance, including the role of accountability and reporting, and to better align with international sustainable development and biodiversity commitments.
15. Chapter 6: Creating an enabling environment for business: options for action by Governments, the financial sector and civil society. (*Indicative length ~20,400 words*) Chapter 6 will assess what Governments, the financial sector and civil society, including consumers, can do to enable and catalyse a meaningful change in the business sector to conserve biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people. Businesses operate within a larger societal and legal context and can influence and be influenced by government policies, institutional processes, cultural norms, financial policies and incentives, and social licences to operate.
16. Chapter 6 will also highlight the ways in which national Governments and international organizations can reform current policies or enact new policies to provide positive incentives to enhance biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people and reduce negative incentives. It will also discuss the role that Governments can play in infrastructure design, in regulation, in monitoring and in procurement to enhance biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people.
17. Chapter 6 will explore the influence of the financial sector on business and of various types of financial institutions through the operation of capital markets, the influence of lenders and investors (whether directly or through markets for ownership), the influence of the insurance industry, the influence of financial analysts and whether the financial sector includes biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people in its operations. The chapter will also assess a number of existing approaches aimed at reducing negative impact and promoting positive impact on biodiversity, such as environmental social governance ratings, impact and engagement funds, and exclusionary screening.
18. Chapter 6 will describe the role of non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities and consumers in monitoring government and corporate behaviour and in raising awareness of business dependency, impact and risks associated with biodiversity loss. It will also identify examples of multi-stakeholder partnerships (Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and academia) that promote business action which supports biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people.

III. Timetable

1. The table below presents the overall timeline of the assessment.

| *Date* | *Actions* |
| --- | --- |
| **2022** | |
| Third quarter | The Plenary, at its ninth session, to be held from 3 to 9 July 2022, will be invited to approve the undertaking of the business and biodiversity assessment and request the secretariat to establish the institutional arrangements necessary to establish the technical support required for the assessment to commence following its tenth session (planned for April or May 2023) |
| Third quarter | The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, through the secretariat, requests nominations of experts, including practitioners from business and the financial sector, by Governments and other stakeholders |
| Third and fourth quarters | The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel selects the assessment co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors, in line with the procedures for the preparation of IPBES deliverables, including by implementing the procedure for filling gaps in expertise |
| End of fourth quarter | The selection decision is communicated to nominees |
| **2023** | |
| Second quarter | Meeting of the management committee (co-chairs, members of the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel assigned by these bodies to the assessment) to plan first author meeting and online preparatory meetings for the expert group to prepare for the start of the assessment |
| Third quarter | First author meeting with co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, review editors and members of the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel who are part of the management committee of the assessment |
| **2024** | |
| First to third quarters | Preparation of the first drafts of the chapters and outline of the summary for policymakers |
| Late first quarter | Writing workshop to advance the preparation of the summary for policymakers with co‑chairs, coordinating lead authors and members of the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel who are part of the management committee of the assessment |
| Second quarter | First external review (8 weeks) – drafts of the chapters and of the summary for policymakers are made available for review by Governments and experts |
| Third quarter  Third quarter | Second author meeting with co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, review editors and members of the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel who are part of the management committee of the assessment  Back-to-back with the second author meeting, a meeting will be held to advance the preparation of the summary for policymakers with co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and members of the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel who are part of the management committee of the assessment |
| **2025** | |
| Early first quarter | External review of summary for policymakers |
| Second quarter | Online writing workshop to advance the preparation of the summary for policymakers with co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and members of the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel who are part of the management committee of the assessment |
| Third quarter | Authors finalize draft chapters and the draft summary for policymakers |
| Third quarter | Final review (6 weeks) – final drafts of the chapters and of the summary for policymakers are made available for review by Governments |
| Early fourth quarter | Consideration by the Plenary, at its twelfth session, of the summary for policymakers for approval and of the chapters for acceptance |
| Fourth quarter | Communication activities in relation to the assessment |

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1. \* IPBES/9/1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See decisions [IPBES-3/3](https://ipbes.net/document-library-catalogue/decision-ipbes-33) and [IPBES-4/3](https://ipbes.net/document-library-catalogue/decision-ipbes-43). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. See decision [IPBES-2/4](https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/Decision%20IPBES_2_4.pdf), annex, and decision [IPBES-5/1](https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/decision_ipbes_5_1_en.pdf), section III, para. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Mandates of the task forces may be subject to change at the tenth session of the Plenary. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Set out in decision [IPBES-5/1](https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/decision_ipbes_5_1_en.pdf), annex II. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Mandates of the task forces may be subject to change at the tenth session of the Plenary. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Mandates of the task forces may be subject to change at the tenth session of the Plenary. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Mandates of the task forces may be subject to change at the tenth session of the Plenary. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. The indicative limits to the length of the summary for policymakers and the chapters of the assessment are expressed as a number of words. They exclude literature cited, figures and tables. For reference, a laid-out page with two columns of text contains approximately 850 words. The limits indicated for the summary for policymakers and the chapters would thus correspond to the following number of laid-out pages: summary for policymakers: 10 pages; chapter 1: 12 pages; chapter 2: 15 pages; chapter 3: 15 pages; chapter 4: 24 pages; chapter 5: 18 pages; and chapter 6: 24 pages. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)