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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Report of the Executive Secretary on progress
in the implementation of the rolling work
programme up to 2030****Progress in the implementation of the rolling work programme
up to 2030****Report of the Executive Secretary****Introduction**

1. In its decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) adopted the rolling work programme of the Platform for the period up to 2030, as set out in annex I to that decision. In the same decision, the Plenary decided to proceed with the implementation of the work programme in accordance with the approved budget set out in decision IPBES-7/4 and within available resources.
2. Pursuant to the request in paragraph 2 of section I of decision IPBES-7/1 to the Executive Secretary to provide a report on progress in the implementation of the work programme to the Plenary at its eighth session, the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau, has prepared for consideration by the Plenary the present report on the implementation of the rolling work programme up to 2030. The report provides information on the implementation of all aspects of the work programme and an update on the recruitment of staff members to the secretariat in the period from 2019 to 2021.

I. Progress in the implementation of the work programme

3. The *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (IPBES/7/10/Add.1) marked the culmination of the first work programme of IPBES. The landmark publication achieved unprecedented attention in both traditional and social media, and made a significant contribution to raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity worldwide for Governments and other stakeholders, including the private sector.
4. In approximately five years, IPBES built a knowledge base, comprising eight assessments, together analysing over 35,000 scientific publications and other forms of knowledge, including indigenous and local knowledge. Those assessments have been informing consideration of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in the broader context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The work of IPBES reflects the commitment of a vibrant community of scientists and other knowledge holders from all regions of the world, who have dedicated their time and ideas to ensure that IPBES benefits from the best and most policy-relevant science and knowledge to inform their decision-making.

* IPBES/8/1.

5. Through its work programme, adopted in decision IPBES-7/1, IPBES will continue to forge new paths to inform the necessary transformative change towards 2030. The unwavering commitment and enthusiasm of its members, experts and stakeholders have enabled IPBES to meet the requests made by its Plenary, despite the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with more than 20 major meetings held online since the seventh session of the Plenary.

A. Objective 1: Assessing knowledge

6. Progress achieved in the development of the three assessments, which started under the first work programme of IPBES, is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/3 and included the following:

(a) *Values assessment.* In its decision IPBES-6/1, the Plenary approved the undertaking of a methodological assessment regarding the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits, including biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, referred to as a values assessment. The IPBES rolling work programme up to 2030 confirmed that the assessment would be prepared for consideration by the Plenary at its ninth session. The first order draft of the chapters of the assessment was made available for review by experts (first external review) from 29 July to 22 September 2019. The comments were considered by the assessment expert group during the second author meeting, held in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, from 21 to 25 October 2019. The second order draft of the chapters of the assessment and the first order draft of the summary for policymakers were made available for review by Governments and experts (second external review) from 20 January to 19 March 2021. The third author meeting will be held online from 12 to 21 April 2021;

(b) *Assessment of the sustainable use of wild species.* In its decision IPBES-6/1, the Plenary approved the undertaking of a thematic assessment of the sustainable use of wild species. The IPBES rolling work programme confirmed that the assessment would be prepared for consideration by the Plenary at its ninth session. The first order draft of the chapters of the assessment was made available for review by experts (first external review) from 27 August to 20 October 2019. The comments were considered by the assessment expert group during the second author meeting, held in Nairobi from 18 to 22 November 2019. The second order draft of the chapters of the assessment and the first order draft of the summary for policymakers were made available for review by Governments and experts (second external review) from 15 April to 10 June 2021;

(c) *Assessment of invasive alien species.* In its decision IPBES-6/1, the Plenary approved the undertaking of a thematic assessment of invasive alien species, following the seventh session of the Plenary, for consideration by the Plenary at its tenth session. The first author meeting was held in Tsukuba, Japan, from 19 to 23 August 2019. The first order draft of the chapters of the assessment was available for review by experts (first external review) from 31 August to 18 October 2020. The comments were considered by the assessment expert group during the second author meeting, held online from 30 November to 7 December 2020.

7. Progress in the scoping of the assessments included under objective 1 of the work programme includes the following:

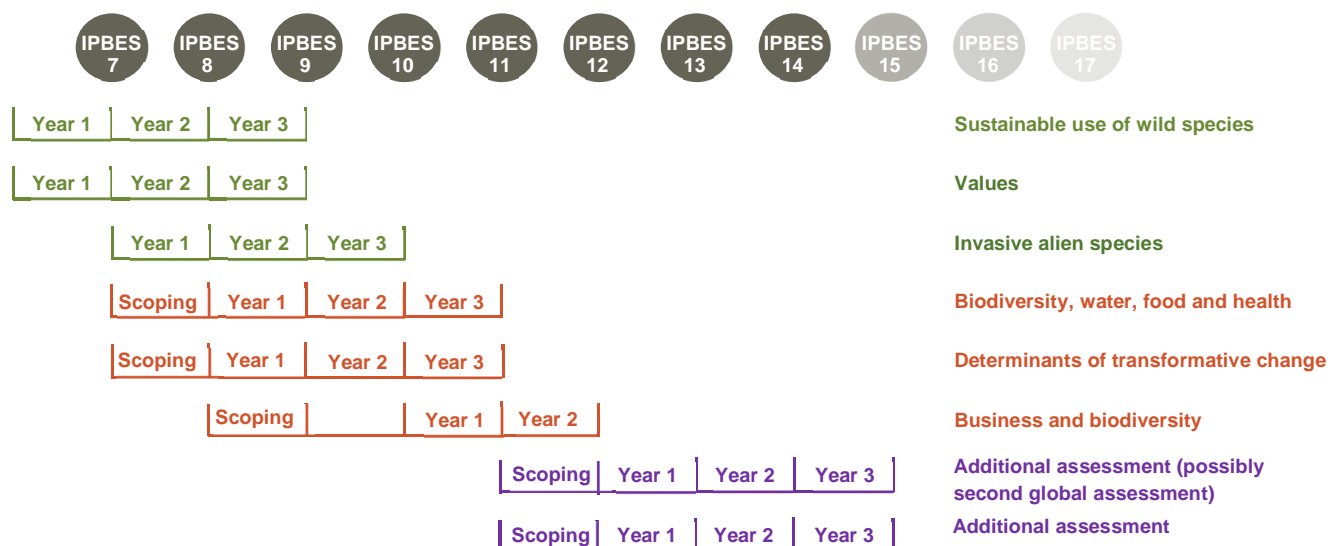
(a) *Thematic assessment of the interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food and health in the context of climate change (nexus assessment).* At its fourteenth meeting, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, in consultation with the Bureau, selected a group of 47 experts to assist with the scoping of the assessment from the pool of nominations received in response to a call for the nomination of experts. An online conference to seek early input into the nexus assessment scoping process was held from 30 September to 2 October 2019. The scoping meeting was held online from 23 March to 3 April 2020 and the draft scoping report was made available for external review from 5 June to 31 July 2020. In preparation for the eighth session of the Plenary, a second external review was held from 18 December 2020 to 5 February 2021. The final scoping report has been made available for consideration by the Plenary in document IPBES/8/3; information on the scoping process is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/4;

(b) *Thematic assessment of the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, determinants of transformative change and options for achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity (transformative change assessment).* At its fourteenth meeting, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, in consultation with the Bureau, selected a group of 41 experts to assist with the scoping of the assessment from the pool of nominations received in response to a call for the nomination of experts. An online conference to seek early input into the transformative change assessment scoping process was held from 9 to 11 October 2019. The scoping meeting was held online from 21 to 30 April 2020. The draft scoping report was made available for external review from 3 July to 28 August 2020 and from 18 December 2020 to 5 February 2021. The final scoping report has been made available for consideration by the Plenary at

its eighth session in document IPBES/8/4; information on the scoping process is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/6;

(c) *A methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people (business and biodiversity assessment)*. At its sixteenth meeting, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, in consultation with the Bureau, selected a group of 40 experts to assist with the scoping of the assessment from the pool of nominations received in response to a call for the nomination of experts. An online conference to seek early input into the scoping process was held on 25 and 26 March 2021. The scoping meeting was held online from 26 to 30 April 2021. Information on the scoping process is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/7.

8. Considering the results of the scoping exercises for the nexus and transformative change assessment and bearing in mind various resource restrictions, the following updated assessment schedule is suggested:



B. Objective 2: Building capacity

9. In paragraph 1 of section III of its decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary extended the mandate of the task force on capacity-building for the implementation of objective 2 of the rolling work programme of IPBES up to 2030 in accordance with the revised terms of reference set out in sections I and II of annex II to that decision. In response to that decision, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel constituted the task force in accordance with the terms of reference as set out in the annex thereto.

10. The first meeting of the five IPBES task forces under the 2030 rolling work programme was organized as a joint meeting, with both joint and separate sessions, held in Bonn, Germany, from 11 to 14 November 2019. The second meeting of the task force on capacity-building was held online on 28 April 2020. Other smaller group meetings were held and email discussions organized throughout 2020 and 2021.

11. Progress achieved in the implementation of objective 2 is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/9 and involved the following activities:

(a) Progress under objective 2 (a), enhanced learning and engagement, included the implementation of the fellowship programme for the values assessment, the assessment of the sustainable use of wild species, the assessment of invasive alien species, the task force on scenarios and models, and dedicated training and familiarization activities for IPBES experts and others involved in the science-policy interface. It also encompassed the development and promotion of webinars and other online approaches, including a webinar on key messages relevant for indigenous communities and local communities from the *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, webinars related to work on scenarios and models, short learning video tutorials on the IPBES data management policy, and three webinars to strengthen stakeholder participation in ongoing assessment processes. Other progress included science-policy dialogue meetings with national focal points to develop capacity and increase governmental participation in the production and uptake of IPBES deliverables and processes, including virtual dialogue meetings to increase the policy

relevance of the nexus and transformative change assessments (from 6 to 10 July 2020), the values assessment (on 11 February 2021) and the sustainable use assessment (on 11 and 12 May 2021);

(b) Progress under objective 2 (b), facilitated access to expertise and information, included support for the uptake of approved assessments and other deliverables, in response to the call for such uptake events launched in May 2019; the promotion of communities of practice, including pilots based on social sciences, the humanities, and the scenarios and models community in IPBES; and the organization of a meeting of the capacity-building forum to facilitate engagement and to build and further enhance collaboration with and among organizations and institutions for the implementation of objective 2. The fourth meeting of the forum, held online on 7 and 8 December 2020, focused on the establishment of platforms and networks for IPBES;

(c) Progress under objective 2 (c), strengthened national and regional capacities, included encouragement for the establishment of science-policy platforms, networks and assessments for biodiversity and ecosystem services at the national, subregional and regional levels, in particular by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and expertise between key actors from existing science-policy platforms and those interested in establishing new platforms, on how to support the work of IPBES, and promotion and dissemination of examples of best practice, including the fourth meeting of the IPBES capacity-building forum and the development of an online space on the IPBES website with information and guidance for those establishing, maintaining and using platforms and networks.

C. Objective 3: Strengthening the knowledge foundations

1. Objective 3 (a): Advanced work on knowledge and data

12. In paragraph 1 of section IV of its decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary extended the mandate of the task force on knowledge and data for the implementation of objective 3 (a) of the rolling work programme of IPBES up to 2030 in accordance with the revised terms of reference set out in sections I and III of annex II to that decision. In response to that decision, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel constituted the task force in accordance with the terms of reference as set out in the annex thereto.

13. The first meeting of the five IPBES task forces under the IPBES 2030 rolling work programme was organized as a joint meeting, with both joint and separate sessions, in Bonn, Germany, from 11 to 14 November 2019. The second meeting of the task force on knowledge and data was held online from 13 to 16 July 2020. Other smaller group meetings were held and email discussions organized throughout 2020 and 2021.

14. Progress in the area of advanced work on knowledge generation catalysis involved the development of a process to catalyse the generation of new knowledge, living guidelines and a template to support assessment authors in the identification of knowledge gaps, which were approved by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau at their fifteenth meetings; the provision of support to authors of ongoing assessments in the process of identifying knowledge gaps and in preparing a list of gaps as part of those assessments; the promotion of the uptake of identified knowledge gaps by external organizations; initiatives, including the development of an approach for dialogue workshops, which will be implemented in 2021, involving experts from completed IPBES assessments and representatives of relevant national or regional organizations and networks, who are major programmers and funders of new knowledge generation, to promote the uptake of knowledge gaps identified in completed IPBES assessments; and a plan for monitoring the impact of knowledge generation catalysis efforts and their ability to effectively fill identified gaps over time.

15. Progress in the area of advanced work on data management involved the development of the IPBES data management policy, which was approved by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau at their fourteenth meetings and is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/12, and work towards an IPBES long-term (up to 2030) vision on data management, handling and delivery; the provision of support to the values, sustainable use, invasive alien species, nexus and transformative change assessments on aspects relating to the data management policy and the generation, management, handling and delivery of IPBES products, including the development of an information package and technical guidelines on the implementation of the policy in collaboration with the technical support unit on capacity-building; the development of a set of technical guidelines for IPBES assessments in response to frequently asked questions on spatial data management, handling and delivery; three pilot studies on the application of artificial intelligence and natural language processing; and a review of the work on indicators during the first IPBES work programme.

2. **Objective 3 (b): Enhanced recognition of and work with indigenous and local knowledge systems**

16. In paragraph 2 of section IV of its decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary extended the mandate of the task force on indigenous and local knowledge systems for the implementation of objective 3 (b) of the rolling work programme of IPBES up to 2030 in accordance with the revised terms of reference set out in sections I and IV of annex II to that decision. In response to that decision, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel constituted the task force in accordance with the terms of reference as set out in the annex thereto.

17. The first meeting of the five IPBES task forces under the IPBES 2030 rolling work programme was organized as a joint meeting, with both joint and separate sessions, in Bonn, Germany, from 11 to 14 November 2019. The second meeting of the task force on indigenous and local knowledge systems was organized online from 11 June to 2 July 2020. Other smaller group meetings were held and email discussions organized throughout 2020 and 2021.

18. Progress in the implementation of objective 3 (b) is set out in detail in document IPBES/8/INF/10. Activities included work with the indigenous and local knowledge liaison groups for the ongoing assessments, including the provision of methodological support as needed; a call for contributions on indigenous and local knowledge (from 10 July to 15 September 2020) to further enhance the IPBES indigenous and local knowledge library and roster of experts for the three ongoing assessments; dialogue workshops with experts on indigenous and local knowledge and representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities for the scoping process for the nexus and transformative change assessments (on 16 July 2020) and the invasive alien species assessment (online from 29 October to 1 November 2020); peer review of the drafts of the nexus and transformative change scoping reports and the invasive alien species and values assessments; post-assessment communication and outreach, including the compilation of the presentation entitled “Key messages from the *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* of particular relevance to indigenous peoples and local communities”; and further development of the methodological guidance on the implementation of the approach to recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge in IPBES, including with regard to free, prior and informed consent scenarios and indigenous and local knowledge; local communities; and data management for indigenous and local knowledge.

D. **Objective 4: Supporting policy**

1. **Objective 4 (a): Advanced work on policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies**

19. In paragraph 1 of section V of its decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary established a task force on policy tools and methodologies for the implementation of objective 4 (a) of the rolling work programme up to 2030 in accordance with the terms of reference set out in sections I and VI of annex II to that decision. In response thereto, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel constituted the task force in line with the terms of reference as set out in the annex to the decision.

20. The first meeting of the five IPBES task forces under the 2030 rolling work programme was organized as a joint meeting, with both joint and separate sessions, in Bonn, Germany, from 11 to 14 November 2019. The second meeting of the task force on policy support tools and methodologies was held online from 4 to 7 May 2020. Other smaller group meetings were held and email discussions organized throughout 2020 and 2021.

21. Progress in the implementation of objective 4 (a) is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/13 and involved the promotion of and support for the use of the findings of IPBES assessments in decision-making, including a survey on the use of IPBES assessments in decision-making (conducted between 20 November 2020 and 14 January 2021), the development of a concept for online dialogues to understand and foster such use, and its piloting for the African region on 18 March 2021; activities to increase the policy relevance of IPBES assessments, including review by the task force of the draft scoping reports and assessments; consideration of the results of the survey to develop recommendations regarding the format of future IPBES assessments; provision of support to authors of policy chapters in ongoing assessments, including review of the “welcome packs” for assessment teams; and finalization of the report entitled “Methodological guidance for assessing policy instruments and facilitating the use of policy support tools and methodologies through IPBES assessments”, subsequently approved by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau.

22. With regard to the future of the policy support gateway, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau recommends to the Plenary that following its eighth session, the gateway should not be developed further, but should instead be maintained as a repository for IPBES products only.

2. **Objective 4 (b): Advanced work scenarios and models of biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services**

23. In paragraph 2 of section V of its decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary established a task force on scenarios and models for the implementation of objective 4 (b) of the rolling work programme of the Platform up to 2030 in accordance with the terms of reference set out in sections I and V of annex II to that decision. In response to that decision, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel constituted the task force in accordance with the terms of reference as set out in the annex thereto.

24. The first meeting of the five IPBES task forces under the 2030 rolling work programme was organized as a joint meeting, with both joint and separate sessions, in Bonn, Germany, from 11 to 14 November 2019. The second meeting of the task force on scenarios and models was held online from 6 to 8 May 2020. Other smaller group meetings were held and email discussions organized throughout 2020 and 2021.

25. Progress in the implementation of objective 4 (b) is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/14 and involved the provision of support on scenarios and models to IPBES assessments, including a review of draft scoping reports and assessments; preparation of publications to inform forthcoming assessments and engage the broader scientific community; and the catalysis of the further development of scenarios and models for future IPBES assessments, including development of the Nature Futures Framework as a tool to catalyse the further development of scenarios and models on biodiversity and ecosystem services for consideration by the Plenary at its ninth session. A workshop entitled “New Narratives for Nature: operationalizing the IPBES Nature Futures scenarios”, was held in Hayama, Japan, from 24 to 28 February 2020 to advance the development of illustrative narratives of Nature Futures, and a workshop on modelling Nature Futures scenarios was held online from 12 to 15 January 2021 to catalyse the development of scenarios and models for IPBES by communities that develop and apply models of different types, scales and domains relevant to biodiversity and ecosystem services.

E. **Objective 5: Communicating and engaging**

1. **Objective 5 (a): Strengthened communication**

26. Progress achieved in the implementation of objective 5 (a) is set out in detail in document IPBES/8/INF/15; highlights of that progress are set out in the present section.

(a) **Traditional media**

27. From 1 May 2019 to 31 December 2020, IPBES tracked more than 54,750 individual online media articles relating to IPBES. Those articles, which exclude print and broadcast reporting, appeared in 188 countries and in 59 languages, bolstered by the success of the launch of the *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* and that of the IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics. In comparison, total online media article mentions of IPBES tracked in 2018 were 6,553 articles in 37 languages across 126 countries.

(b) **Social media**

28. IPBES achieved unprecedented levels of social media reach in 2019 across all measurement metrics. From 1 May to 31 December 2019, that included a total audience growth of 73 per cent, with the largest growth on LinkedIn (112 per cent) and Instagram (87 per cent), followed by Facebook (71 per cent), Twitter (54 per cent) and YouTube (42 per cent). The highest number of impressions during that period was generated on Twitter (over 23 million), followed by Facebook (over 1 million).

29. In 2020, IPBES social media followers in English grew by approximately 63 per cent, representing growth of 120 per cent on LinkedIn, 57 per cent on Instagram, 56 per cent on YouTube, 50 per cent on Twitter and 32 per cent on Facebook. The social media campaign for the launch of the IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics generated more than 4 million impressions in a single week.

30. In June 2020, IPBES launched Facebook and Twitter channels in French and Spanish to further improve its social media presence and outreach. In the first seven months, the French and Spanish social media communities grew to 4,200 and 4,300 followers respectively, exceeding all their targets for the first year within their first nine months of activity.

(c) **Impact tracking**

31. To help the IPBES community to present compelling examples of the specific impact of the work of the Platform, the secretariat continued in 2019 and 2020 to update and expand the IPBES impact tracking database (TRACK). With more than 400 separate “impacts” already tracked, the tool remains open for public submissions and is available at www.ipbes.net/impact-tracking-view.

(d) Nature Insight podcast

32. In July 2020, IPBES successfully launched a professionally produced, distributed and marketed pilot season of six podcast episodes, with the objective of elevating lesser-heard but important voices from within the wider IPBES community. A key factor in its success was the use of the podcast medium to reach out to wider priority audiences and to help make the work of IPBES more understandable and relatable to both new and existing stakeholders. The *Nature Insight* podcast series was well received by the IPBES community, with more than 12,900 downloads from listeners in more than 100 countries.

2. Objective 5 (b): Strengthened engagement of Governments

33. The engagement of Governments in the processes of IPBES was significantly strengthened, including through dialogue meetings with national focal points, two external review periods for the scoping reports for the nexus and transformative change assessments, and online conferences to seek early input into the scoping processes.

3. Objective 5 (c): Strengthened engagement of stakeholders

34. Progress achieved in the implementation of objective 5 (c) is set out in detail in document IPBES/8/INF/16; highlights of that progress are set out in the present section.

35. A limited number of in-person stakeholder events were facilitated, with opportunities for increased engagement with the Platform, including the joint Eastern Europe uptake and outreach event and national focal point dialogue meeting, held in Baku on 5 and 6 December 2019, although such events were severely curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

36. A major focus for stakeholder engagement in 2020 was the design, implementation and external expert analysis of a second quantitative stakeholder engagement survey, following the first iteration undertaken in 2016, to better map and assess the engagement of the IPBES stakeholder community with the work of the Platform. With in-kind support from the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and with the assistance of professional statistical consultants, the survey was launched on 4 May 2020 in all six official languages of the United Nations. A total of 1,024 completed surveys were received. An analysis of the 2020 survey is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/16. The focus for stakeholder engagement in the latter half of 2020 was on follow-up action to the survey (specifically data preparation and management in line with the IPBES data management policy), the sixth IPBES pan-European stakeholder consultation, held online on 5 and 6 October 2020, and initial discussions regarding the options and modalities for “stakeholder days” in advance of the eighth session of the IPBES Plenary.

37. Two IPBES webinars were broadcast on 14 July and 16 July 2020 for IPBES stakeholders to examine issues related to indigenous peoples and local communities, as part of the review process for the scoping reports for the nexus and transformative change assessments (see para. 11 (a) above).

38. A new initiative, the *Stakeholder Spotlight* video series, was launched to highlight the diverse range of engaged IPBES stakeholders and groups within the broader IPBES community. Between May 2019 and December 2020, interviews were conducted with a broad range of stakeholders, representing non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, indigenous and local knowledge holders, youth voices, advocacy groups, local and regional governments and IPBES experts. Five *Stakeholder Spotlight* videos have been released.

F. Objective 6: Improving the effectiveness of the Platform

39. Progress achieved in the implementation of objective 6 is set out in detail in document IPBES/8/8; highlights of that progress are set out in the present section.

1. Objective 6 (a): Periodic review of the effectiveness of IPBES

40. A notification will be issued following the eighth session of the Plenary, seeking the views of IPBES members and stakeholders on the review of IPBES at the end of its first work programme. Based on the responses received, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau will prepare the terms of reference for a midterm review for consideration by the Plenary at its ninth session.

2. Objective 6 (b): Review of the IPBES conceptual framework

41. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau have commenced a study on the use and impact of the conceptual framework. As part of the study, two online surveys were conducted from 6 April to 29 May 2020, one targeting experts in ongoing and completed IPBES assessments and one targeting national focal points and stakeholders. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau have also conducted a literature review to assess the use and impact of the conceptual framework.

A draft of the study will be made available for external review from 1 June to 31 July 2021. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau will take into account comments received when finalizing the study for consideration by the Plenary at its ninth session.

3. Objective 6 (c): Improving the effectiveness of the assessment process

42. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau reviewed feedback on and insights into the IPBES assessment process and decided to recommend to the Plenary that an additional round of review by Governments be piloted in July and August 2021 for the summary for policymakers of the values assessment. Such an additional round of review could enhance the policy relevance of the summary for policymakers and facilitate the consideration of its final version by the Plenary.

43. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau also supported the piloting of new and innovative methods and tools in ongoing IPBES assessments. Related efforts are being led by the task force on knowledge and data. The progress made in such efforts, including in pilot studies on the application of artificial intelligence and natural language processing for IPBES products, is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/11.

II. Recruitment of staff members to the secretariat in the period from 2019 to 2021

44. In its decision IPBES-6/4, adopted at its sixth session, the Plenary approved funding to reclassify two secretariat staff positions from the P-2 to the P-3 level. The recruitment for the positions of Information Management Officer (P-3) and Programme Management Officer (P-3) was finalized in September 2019.

45. In its decision IPBES-7/4, adopted at its seventh session, the Plenary approved funding for three new positions in the secretariat, two of which were filled in 2020. An Administrative Assistant (GS-5) to focus on procurement and travel was recruited in June 2020 and the position of Administrative Officer, Head of Operations (P-4) to oversee the administrative tasks of the secretariat, including human resources, procurement and budget implementation was filled in June 2020. Recruitment for the post of Head of Development (P-3), corresponding to the post funded at present by the Government of France to implement the fundraising strategy, has been frozen, as the in-kind support from France for the post has been extended until August 2022.

46. In its decision IPBES-7/4, the Plenary also approved funding for the expansion of the 50 per cent post of Information Systems Assistant (GS-5) to a full staff position at the GS-6 level. The full-time position was filled in May 2020 to support the further development and maintenance of the data management system that supports the implementation of the IPBES work programme.

47. Furthermore, at its seventh session, the Plenary approved the reclassification of the position of Head of Secretariat from the D-1 to the D-2 level to acknowledge the level of responsibility, commitment and skills required. Recruitment for the position is ongoing.

48. Three staff members left in 2019. Recruitment for the three positions has been finalized. The position of Administrative Assistant, Assistant to the Head of Secretariat (GS-6), vacant since January 2019, was filled in October 2019, the position of Programme Management Officer, Head of Work Programme (P-4), vacant since September 2019, was filled in September 2020 and a new Finance and Budget Assistant (GS-6) was recruited in August 2020 to fill the position, which had been vacant since December 2019.

49. One staff member moved internally in September 2020, leaving a position for Programme Management Officer (P-3) vacant. Recruitment for that position, as well as for the Programme Management Officer (P-3) position that had been vacant since 2018, will be completed before the eighth session of the Plenary.

50. Information on the institutional arrangements established to operationalize technical support for the implementation of the work programme is set out in document IPBES/8/INF/2.