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Services**

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

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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****Information on advanced work on policy instruments, policy
support tools and methodologies****Note by the secretariat**

1. One of the four functions of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) set out in its founding resolution is to support “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”.¹
2. In its decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary adopted the rolling work programme of the Platform for the period up to 2030, which included objective 4 (a), on advanced work on policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies. That objective focuses on supporting the use of policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies in the implementation of the programme of work relevant to biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use, as well as the provision of ecosystem functions and services in the conduct of the assessments, and in enabling the uptake of the findings of the assessments in decision-making. That objective further focuses on developing the IPBES policy support gateway and promoting and catalysing the further development of policy instruments and policy support tools to fill gaps identified in assessments and related capacity-building activities.
3. In section V of that decision, the Plenary established a task force on policy tools and methodologies for the implementation of objective 4 (a) of the rolling working programme up to 2030, in accordance with the terms of reference set out in annex II to the decision, and requested the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, through the IPBES secretariat, to constitute the task force in accordance with the terms of reference. The Plenary decided to review the mandate and terms of reference of the task force at its tenth session.
4. The terms of reference of the task force include:
 - (a) Overseeing the development of content for the IPBES policy support gateway and support for the use of the gateway by Governments and stakeholders, and ensuring that policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies identified in IPBES assessments are featured on the gateway and accessible to decision makers;
 - (b) Catalysing the further development of policy instruments, support tools and good practices to fill gaps identified in IPBES assessments;

* IPBES/8/1.

¹ UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, annex I, sect. I, para. 1 (d).

(c) Supporting the use of policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies in the implementation of the work programme relevant to biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use, as well as the provision of ecosystem functions and services in the conduct of the assessments, and in enabling the uptake of the findings of the assessments in decision-making.

5. In decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary also took note of the next steps for the task force for 2019 and 2020 and requested it to develop specific deliverables for each of the priority topics set out in paragraph 8 of the rolling work programme up to 2030, for consideration by the Plenary at its eighth session. The general terms of reference of the task forces, set out in annex II to decision IPBES-7/1, foresee that each task force will, among other activities, provide a regular progress report and, in consultation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau, develop and update a workplan that sets out clear milestones and deliverables with regard to the relevant topics and objectives of the rolling work programme up to 2030 for periodic consideration by the Plenary.

6. Information on draft deliverables, an interim work plan of objective 4 (a) for the intersessional period 2021–2022 and a draft work plan for the intersessional period 2022–2023 are presented in document IPBES/8/7. An overview of activities carried out by the task force since the seventh session of the Plenary is set out in the report of the Executive Secretary on progress in the implementation of the rolling work programme up to 2030 (IPBES/8/2).

7. Further information on the task force on policy tools and methodologies, the activities carried out by the task force in addressing its mandate, activities planned for the next intersessional period and an overview of possible activities related to the nexus and transformative change assessments are set out in the annex to the present note, which has not been formally edited.

Annex

Information on work related to policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies

I. Composition of the task force on policy tools and methodologies

1. On 17 May 2019, a notification (EM/2019/09) was issued in which Governments and relevant stakeholders were invited to nominate candidates for the five IPBES task forces. In total, 61 nominations were received for the task force on policy tools and methodologies. Of the nominations received, 30 candidates were female and 31 were male, 6 were from Africa, 20 from Asia-Pacific, 3 from Eastern Europe, 11 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 21 from Western Europe and other States.

2. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau, at their 13th meetings, selected the members of the task force in line with its terms of reference set out in annex II to decision IPBES-7/1. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau also selected liaison experts from each assessment as members or alternate members of the task force, to enhance connections between the work of the task force and the on-going assessments.

3. The final composition of the task force on policy tools and methodologies includes the following members:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Function</i>
Vinod Bihari Mathur	India	Task force co-chair, Bureau member
Mersudin Avdibegovic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Task force co-chair, Member of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel
Madhav Karki	Nepal	Member of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel
Luthando Dziba	South Africa	Co-chair of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (alternate member)
María Elena Zaccagnini	Argentina	Expert
Senka Barudanovic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Expert
Xu Jing	China	Expert
Juana Mariño	Colombia	Expert
Gemedo Dalle Tussie	Ethiopia	Expert
Ryo Kohsaka	Japan	Expert
Mialy Andriamahefazafy	Madagascar	Expert
Trine Setsaas	Norway	Expert
Jacob Malcom	United States of America	Expert
Marina Kosmus	Austria / Argentina	Liaison expert from the values assessment
Mi Sun Park	Republic of Korea	Liaison expert from the sustainable use assessment
Melodie McGeoch	Australia / South Africa	Liaison expert from the invasive alien species assessment (alternate member)

4. A representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) participated in the work of the task force as resource person.

5. The United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), which had provided technical support to the expert group on policy support during the first work programme of IPBES, was selected by the Bureau at its 13th meeting to also provide technical support to the task force under the 2030 rolling work programme until the tenth session of the Plenary.

II. Meetings of the task force on policy tools and methodologies

6. As decided by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau at their 13th meetings, the first meeting of the five IPBES task forces under the rolling work programme was organized as a joint meeting of the task forces, with shared and separate sessions, from 11 to 14 November 2019 in Bonn, Germany.

7. During the joint meeting, the task force on policy tools and methodologies reviewed key achievements, challenges and lessons learnt from work on policy support under the first work programme. The task force also identified activities, outputs and deliverables for the initial version of its work plan for 2020 and afterwards. This initial version was approved by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau at their 14th meetings.

8. The second meeting of the task force was organized as an online meeting held from 4 to 7 May 2020. The main objective of the meeting was to advance the implementation of objective 4 (a) of the IPBES rolling work programme, in particular, the activities identified in the initial version of the work plan of the task force.

9. During the meeting, sessions were held in plenary and two parallel breakout groups. The breakout groups focused on advancing some of the activities under the task force's workplan, such as a final refinement of the methodological guidance for assessment authors on how to assess policy instruments and facilitate the use of policy tools, review of welcome packs for assessment authors and development of options to improve the information received by authors in relation to policy support, and options to facilitate access to the content and improve policy relevance of IPBES assessments. Plenary sessions focused on the strategic vision for the policy support function of IPBES and on formulating proposals of possible activities that the task force could implement to support the achievement of this vision. The outcomes and outputs of the meeting are set out in the following sections.

III. Progress in the implementation of objective 4 (a): Advanced work on policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies

1. Promotion of and support to the use of findings of IPBES assessments in decision-making

10. Building on discussions on the strategic vision for the policy support function of IPBES, the task force identified the need to better understand how IPBES assessments are being used in decision-making, which led to two dimensions for future work: the first one, aimed at better understanding how completed assessments have been used to date, and the second one, to promote and support their further use. The activities described in paragraphs 17 and 18 aim to address these two dimensions.

11. The task force prepared, with support from the technical support unit, a survey on the use of IPBES assessments in policymaking at (sub)national levels. The survey was conducted between 20 November 2020 and 14 January 2021. A total of 191 responses were received. The analysis of the survey responses is available in appendix I.

12. As another means to understand and foster the use of IPBES assessments in policymaking, the task force intends to convene dialogue workshops, with actors at the science-policy interface, as set out as part of the proposed work plan in document IPBES/8/7. Building on some of the key findings of the analysis set out in appendix I, and in order to test a potential approach that would be useful to help promote the further use of IPBES assessments, a pilot online dialogue was convened on 18 March 2021. The dialogue had initially been planned for January 2021, focusing on the countries in the Southern African Development Community region but it was postponed to March 2021 and its scope broadened to cover the entire African region. Interpretation in French/English was provided. The event was attended by 58 participants, including IPBES national focal points and other government representatives, IPBES experts, members of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, and members of the task force on policy tools and methodologies. The pilot online dialogue provided participants with an informal space in which to share a variety of practical examples on how the IPBES assessments have positively influenced the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystem services in policymaking in the African region, as well as how the assessments could be improved to better fit their needs in the field.

The report of the meeting is available in appendix II. The full agenda, presentations and report of the event have also been made available at <https://www.ipbes.net/events/regional-pilot-workshop-enhance-uptake-completed-ipbes-assessments-decision-making>. It is expected that future dialogues, including those planned for the intersessional period 2021–2022 will draw on the lessons learned from the pilot dialogue but also keep flexibility to adjust to the specific needs and circumstances of different regions.

13. The task force is exploring ways to strengthen the IPBES impact tracking database “TRACK” (<https://ipbes.net/track>). Preliminary options explored to support the IPBES function on policy support include:

(a) Potential ways to better understand and track the impact of IPBES work within policymaking;

(b) Options on changes to the submission form for entries into “TRACK” to better capture the impact relating to policy;

(c) Possible ways to expand the examples in the database through links with other areas of work of the task force on policy tools and methodologies (e.g., inputs from dialogue workshops).

2. Increasing the policy relevance of IPBES assessments

14. During 2019 and 2021, members of the task force reviewed drafts of ongoing assessments, focussing on aspects related to policy-relevance, and provided feedback through the external review processes, in particular:

(a) The first order draft of the chapters of the invasive alien species assessment;

(b) The second order draft of the chapters and the first order draft of the summary for policymakers of the values assessment;

(c) The draft scoping reports for the nexus and transformative change assessments.

15. The task force started exploring further ways to strengthen the policy relevance of summaries for policymakers of IPBES assessments. Different options have been discussed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau, including working towards more concise and targeted key messages and use of infographics, among others. The matter will be further considered by a working group, consisting of a subset of interested members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau, drawing on the results of the survey and relevant insights from the pilot dialogue.

3. Provision of support to authors of policy chapters in IPBES assessments

16. As part of its work in 2020, the task force finalised the methodological guidance for assessing policy instruments and facilitating the use of policy tools and methodologies through IPBES assessments, which was approved by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau and made available to assessment experts. The guidance will be available at <https://www.ipbes.net/modules-assessment-guide>. It will be periodically reviewed and adapted, as required.

17. Furthermore, the task force reviewed the “welcome packs” and other information that assessments teams receive before and throughout the assessment process, which include relevant information about IPBES rules, procedures, processes and practices. As a result of this review, the task force developed suggestions to include more elements in the “welcome packs” that support assessment teams in increasing the policy relevance of their assessments.

4. Finalisation of the policy support gateway

18. Under the guidance of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau, the task force finalised the policy support gateway based on the features identified by the former expert group ahead of the seventh session of the Plenary and set out in the information note presented to the Plenary at that session. A completed version of the policy support gateway is available at <https://www.ipbes.net/policy-support>.

19. Following finalisation of the policy support gateway, the task force, with support of the technical support unit, identified options for the future of the gateway, which were considered by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau at their 15th meetings. Details on the work carried out are presented in the next section.

IV. Finalisation of IPBES policy support gateway, and suggestion for it to remain as a repository for IPBES products

1. Background

20. In decision IPBES-2/5, the Plenary requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau to develop an online catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies (later renamed as “policy support gateway”) to facilitate access by decision makers to policy support tools and methodologies, and to provide guidance on how to promote and catalyse their further development. The expert group on policy support tools and methodologies, which had been established for the period between the fourth and seventh session of the Plenary, guided the development of the policy support gateway with the support of collaborative supporters.

21. In decision IPBES-6/1, the Plenary requested the expert group to further develop the online gateway. It also requested the Executive Secretary, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, subject to the availability of resources, to refine the structure and functionality of the gateway, its visualization, access, and validation procedures, and to ensure that additional efforts are made to invite Governments and stakeholders to provide input to the gateway, and that the gateway is integrated into work relating to the other functions of IPBES. Lastly, it requested the Executive Secretary to ensure that relevant elements from the regional and land degradation and restoration assessments are included in the policy support gateway.

22. The Plenary, at its seventh session, had received information on the following elements: on options to refine the structure, functionality and visualization of the policy support gateway; on procedures for uploading and updating content; on validation procedures; and on options for the policy support gateway to be integrated into work relating to the other functions of IPBES. At their 12th meetings, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau further considered these elements in the context of lessons learned by the expert group during the first work programme of IPBES. Notes on each element were finalized by the expert group in line with written comments received from the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau.

23. A completed version of the policy support gateway is currently available on the IPBES website <https://www.ipbes.net/policy-support>. To date, the gateway has been an evolving online platform with two main goals:

(a) To enable decision makers to gain easy access to tailored information on policy support tools and methodologies to better inform and assist the different scales and phases of policymaking and implementation;

(b) To allow a range of users to provide input to the gateway and assess the usability of policy tools and methodologies in their specific contexts, including resources required and types of outputs that can be obtained, and thus help to identify gaps in tools and methodologies (IPBES/3/INF/8).

24. By April 2021, the policy support gateway had been visited a total of 29 764 times. Over half of the visits (50.87%) came from Western European and other States, followed by Asia-Pacific States (29.70%). Considerably less visits were registered from stakeholders in Latin American and Caribbean States (7.67%), African States (6.92%) and Eastern European States (4.66%). These figures could be instrumental to better understand the findings identified by the external review of the Platform, which are presented in paragraph 26 below.

2. Future of the policy support gateway

25. As part of the first work programme, the Plenary, in its decision IPBES-2/5, mandated a review of the effectiveness of the administrative and scientific functions of IPBES. In its decision IPBES-5/2, the Plenary approved the terms of reference for the review, including an internal and an external element. At its seventh session, the Plenary welcomed the report on the review of the Platform at the conclusion of its first work programme (decision IPBES-7/2).

26. Some of the key findings identified in the report of the external review panel relate to policy support, including with respect to the policy support gateway. In particular, the report states that “*The policy support mechanism of IPBES has been implemented primarily through the development of an extensive online catalogue of policy support tools. However, a range of sources suggest that the policy support function remains the least successfully pursued of its functions. Participation and inclusion of tools into the catalogue is voluntary and it is unclear how extensive the tools within the catalogue are. Interviews and survey results suggest that the online catalogue is not extensively used by governments.*”

However, the survey and interviews have shown a clear demand for IPBES to provide more actual support for policy development including with tools and methodologies. The challenge of providing appropriate and/or enough policy support is confirmed by the relatively low percentage (59%) of government respondents who consider IPBES to be meeting governments' need for policy-relevant knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The clear issue is that policy support is interpreted in different ways – often as support for policy generation, not a catalogue of tools that may or may not have utility. This is in line with the constant theme that the policy side of IPBES as a science-policy interface is weakly developed, and this should be a major focus in the next work programme” (IPBES/7/INF/18).

27. Based on the above, the review panel recommended that IPBES needed to review its policy support function and the modalities for delivering on it. In this regard, the review panel identified that IPBES should examine the effectiveness and need of the online policy support catalogue and determine whether future investment is worthwhile.

28. Acknowledging the recommendations of the review panel, the IPBES rolling work programme up to 2030 assigned the policy support function a more prominent role than it had in the first work programme. This is exemplified not only in the establishment of a task force on policy tools and methodologies but also in the scope of its work, to support the implementation and achievement of objective 4(a).

29. In addition, the Plenary requested the Bureau, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Executive Secretary to take the recommendations made by the review panel into account in the implementation of the rolling work programme of the Platform up to 2030, and to identify solutions and/or issues for the Plenary to consider at its eighth session. In response to this request, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau considered at their 15th meetings a range of options prepared by the task force and decided that the most cost-effective alternative would be not to develop the policy support gateway further following the eighth session of the Plenary. They further recommended that the policy support gateway be considered as a repository of policy instruments, policy support tools and case studies with a focus on resources from completed IPBES assessments. This recommendation is reflected in the work plans presented for consideration by the Plenary in IPBES/8/7.

30. If the Plenary approves the work plans in line with the recommendation by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau, the task force will have to put in place arrangements after the eighth session of the Plenary in order to proceed with archiving non-IPBES products in an open access repository.

31. Preliminary actions have already been taken by the task force on policy tools and methodologies to identify the steps required to transition the gateway to focus on IPBES products.² Initial actions identified, which would be implemented in collaboration with the task force on knowledge and data, include:

(a) Defining the scope of documentation and archiving, including determining criteria to identify which of the content currently included in the policy support gateway will be part of the open access repository, and determine whether the archived information will be updated in the future. As pertinent, URL redirects will be set to ensure availability of archived content in the open access repository after they are removed from the gateway;

(b) Developing guidance relating to communication to users on the future of the gateway, in collaboration with the communications teams at the secretariat and incorporating a disclaimer for the benefit of prospective users of the repository;

(c) Determining potential synergies between the work done on the platform and other IPBES initiatives and products.

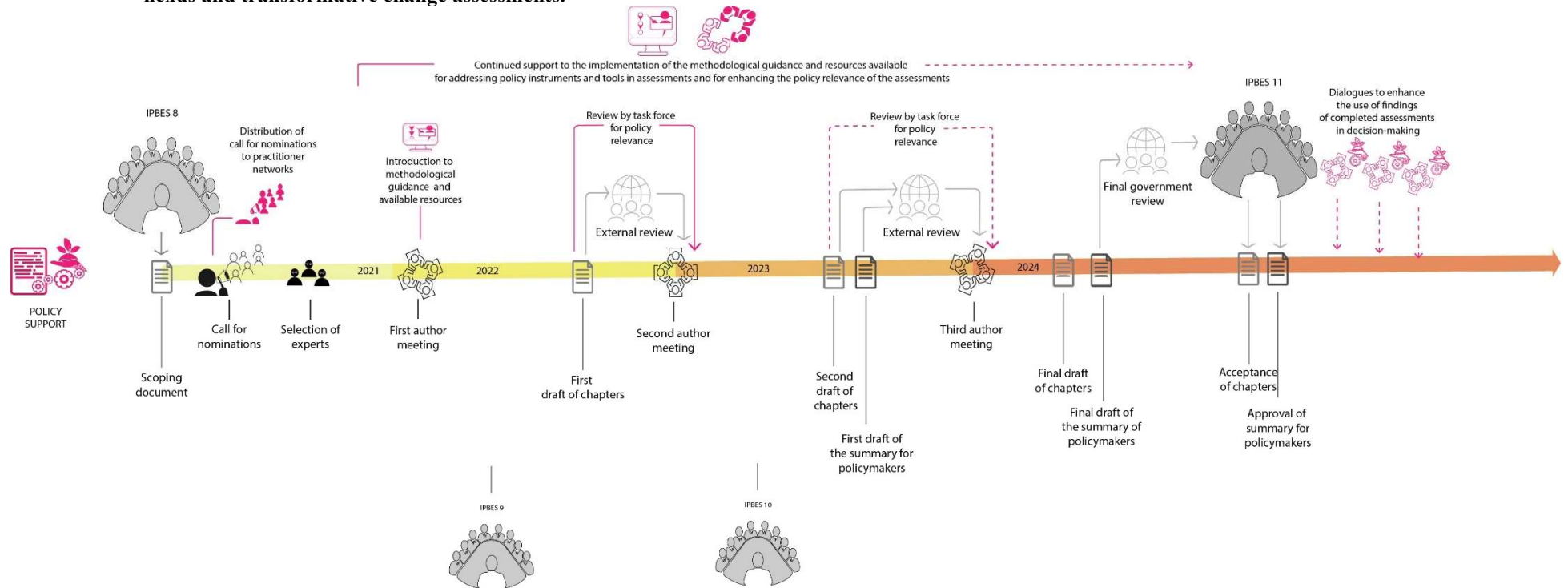
III. Overview of possible activities under objective 4(a), advanced work on policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies, related to the nexus and transformative change assessments

32. As reflected in the work plan set out in document IPBES/8/7, various activities to enhance the policy relevance of the nexus and transformative change assessments and to support their authors in addressing policy instruments and tools in the assessments are planned to be organized. If the task force

² IPBES (2020): IPBES Data Management Policy ver. 1.1. Task Force on Knowledge and Data, Krug, R.M., Omare, B., and Niamir, A. (eds.) IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.355107

was to continue its work following the review of its mandate at the tenth session of the Plenary, activities could include the continuation of these activities as well as the organization of dialogues to enhance the use of the approved assessments in decision-making. An overview of possible activities is set out in the figure below.

Figure: Overview of possible activities under objective 4 (a), advanced work on policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies related to the nexus and transformative change assessments.



Appendix I

USE OF IPBES ASSESSMENTS IN POLICYMAKING AT NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL LEVELS

An analysis of stakeholder survey responses

1 Introduction

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was established to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.³ Within this overarching objective, a key function of IPBES is to support policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies, enable decision-makers to gain access to them, and promote their further development.

At its seventh session, the IPBES Plenary adopted the rolling work programme for the period up to 2030, which included establishing a task force on policy tools and methodologies.⁴ The task force was mandated to oversee and take part in the implementation of objective 4(a) of the work programme, including by enabling the uptake of the findings of IPBES assessments in decision-making.⁵

To fulfil its mandate, the task force identified a list of deliverables and activities to be implemented ahead of IPBES 8.⁶ Among these, in the context of promoting the use of the findings of IPBES assessments in decision-making, it contained an action point for the task force to: “Identify how key messages of IPBES assessments flow into policy and how IPBES products are used by policymakers at a national level”. Specifically, this included improving understanding of:

- 1) How completed IPBES assessments have been used at the national and subnational levels, and
- 2) What evidence decision-makers need from IPBES to improve the situation in their country/context.

In response to this mandate, the task force, supported by the technical support unit (TSU), developed a survey to gather information on these questions from IPBES stakeholders. This report sets out the responses received, analyses the results and provides some options to explore how IPBES can strengthen support for the use of the key findings of the assessments in policymaking.

1.1 Survey objectives and design

IPBES members, observers and stakeholders were invited to participate in a ‘Survey on the use of IPBES assessments in policymaking at (sub)national levels’.⁷ Invited participants included more than 17,000 representatives of governments, organisations and networks, researchers, and members of indigenous peoples and local communities registered to the IPBES mailing list. The survey was open between 20 November 2020 and 14 January 2021. The full list of survey questions is presented in appendix I.

The survey was designed to facilitate understanding of how assessments are currently being used to support policymaking. Specific sections of the survey focused on identifying which assessment reports are being used most widely and for what purposes, the key benefits and challenges, and suggestions on how to increase their use. The survey sought to collect ideas on what other tools, methodologies and types of activities might further support the use of IPBES assessments at the national and subnational level - and thereby contribute to the advancement of the IPBES policy support function going forward.

³ See UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, available .

⁴ Decision IPBES-7/1

⁵ Ibid.

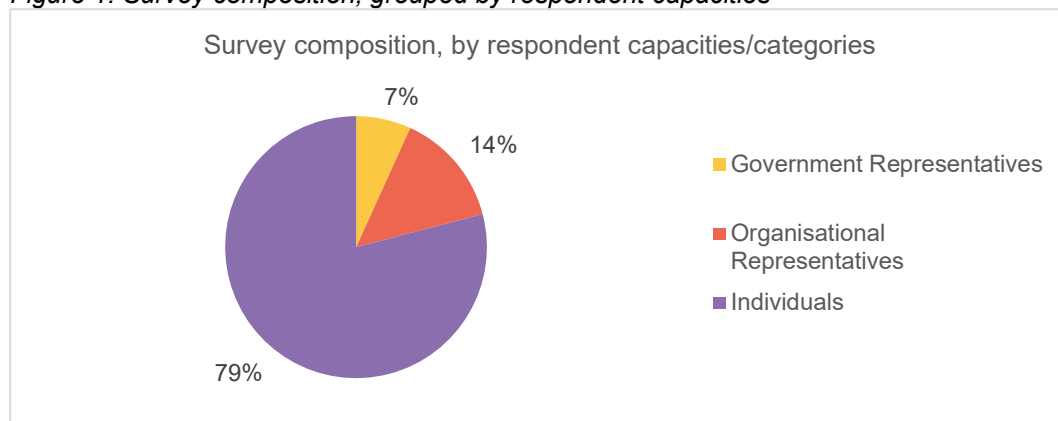
⁶ IPBES/8/INF/13

⁷ IPBES Notification Reference EM/2020/36 ‘Survey on the use of IPBES assessments in policymaking at (sub)national levels’. Full notification available here.

1.2 Overview of responses

A total of 191 stakeholders participated in the survey, responding in three different capacities: (1) on behalf of their governments (which included not only National Focal Points but also representatives from other government agencies), (2) on behalf of their organisation and, (3) as individual experts.⁸ Those responding on behalf of their organisation or as individual experts included, for example, representatives from universities, research institutions, intergovernmental organisations, international organisations and non-governmental organizations. An overview of the survey composition is shown at Figure 1 below.

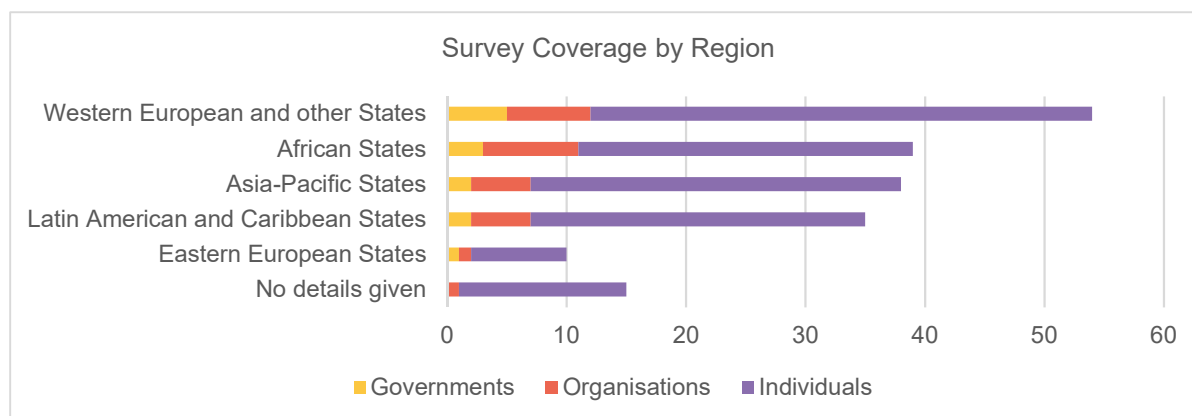
Figure 1. Survey composition, grouped by respondent capacities



1.3 Regional coverage

The geographical coverage of survey respondents was global, and included high levels of participation from stakeholders residing in each of the five UN regions (more than 35 responses in each region) with fewer from Eastern Europe.⁹ Within each of the respondent type groups, the geographical coverage follows broadly the same trend, with government and organisational representatives spanning all five regions – albeit with fewer based in the African, Asia-Pacific or Latin American & Caribbean regions. Figure 2 presents an overview of the survey coverage by region.

Figure 2. Geographical coverage of survey respondents, by UN Regional groups



In general, the highest number of responses were received from stakeholders based in the 'Western European and other States' regional group. The survey results may therefore have a slight bias towards

⁸ The survey questionnaire separated respondents into two groups: those responding on behalf of their governments/organisations, and those responding as individual experts. Those responding on behalf of governments were then separated out further based on their affiliation, where this was freely provided.

⁹ Countries grouped as per the UN Regional groups of Member States, available here: www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/regional-groups Note that the 'Western Europe and other States' regional group includes Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America

this region, though we note that a number of respondents opted out of providing locational information (8% in total) so it is not possible to determine this definitively.

2 Survey results and analysis

2.1 Which IPBES assessment reports are being used?

The results from the survey suggest a wide range of IPBES assessment reports are being used by stakeholders to support their work. A total of 84% of survey respondents stated that they had used IPBES assessments directly in their work, including 92% of those responding on behalf of governments.

“84% of survey respondents used IPBES assessments directly in their work.”

On average, survey respondents used between two and three different assessments to support their work. The most widely used assessments were the regional, global and thematic assessments (listed in Box 1 below).

Box 1. The most widely used IPBES assessments so far:

78% - Regional Assessments of Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services

68% - Global Assessment of Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services

50% - Thematic Assessment of Land Degradation & Restoration

36% - Thematic Assessment of Pollinators, Pollination & Food Production

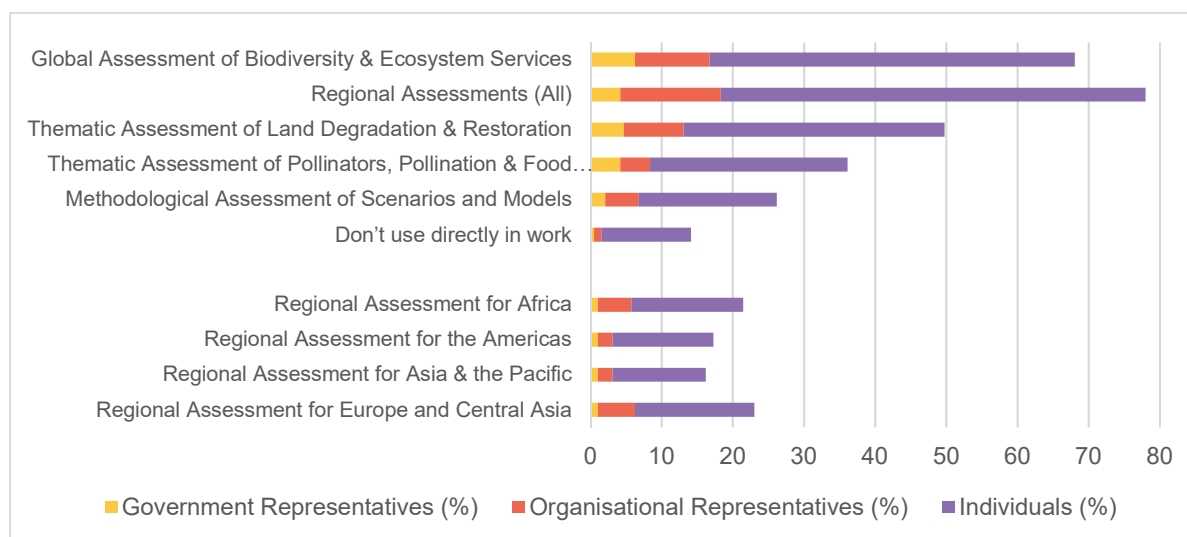
“On average, survey respondents used 2.5 different assessment reports to support their work.”

The Regional Assessments and Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services scored most highly, with 78% and 68% of survey respondents using these in their work, respectively. A further 50% used the Thematic Assessment of Land Degradation, and 36% of respondents stated that they used the Thematic Assessment of Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production in their work.

Government respondents marginally favoured the use of the Global Assessment, followed by the regional and thematic assessments, with fewer making use of the Methodological Assessment of Scenarios and Models. Whereas organisations and individuals clearly favoured the Regional Assessments, followed by the Global Assessment, and then the Thematic

Assessment of Land Degradation. A full breakdown of the types of assessments used by survey respondents is provided in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Percentage of respondents using each of the IPBES assessment reports to support their work¹⁰



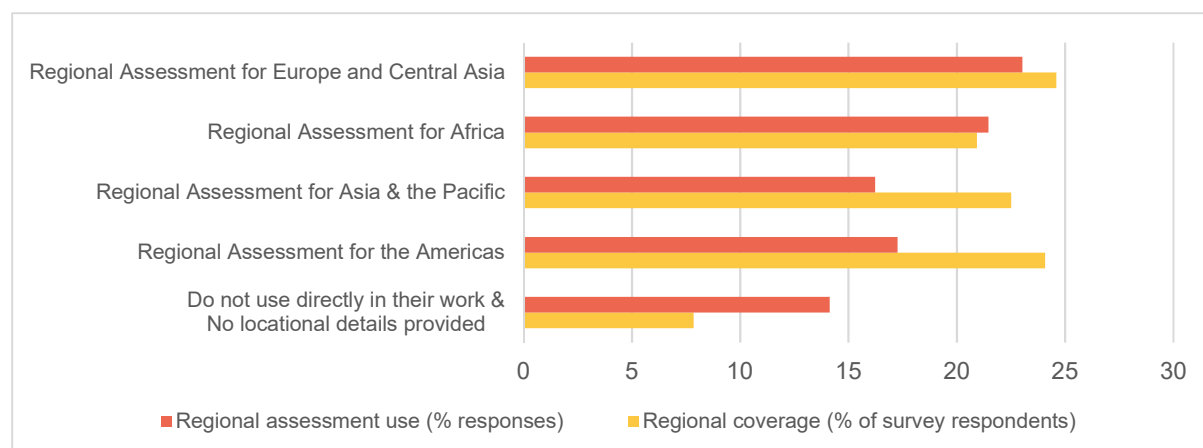
In terms of the four Regional Assessments of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, government and individual respondents appear to use these fairly consistently across all four regions. Respondents from organisations appear to favour the Regional Assessments for Africa, as well as for Europe & Central Asia –

¹⁰ Note that survey participants selected multiple options in answering this question. The percentages therefore indicate the proportion of participants selecting each specific option, and cannot be combined across multiple options.

though this could be due to the slight bias in the geographical locations of survey participants' organisations.

Figure 4 provides more details on the use of regional assessments, accounting for regional bias of survey respondents. Comparing the use of regional assessments relative to the geographical locations of survey respondents, uptake appears in line with regional coverage for both the Europe & Central Asia and Africa Assessments. Use of the Regional Assessments for Asia & the Pacific and the Americas is below levels expected given the proportion of respondents from these regions. This may indicate the need for greater support in using the findings of regional assessments within national contexts in these regions.

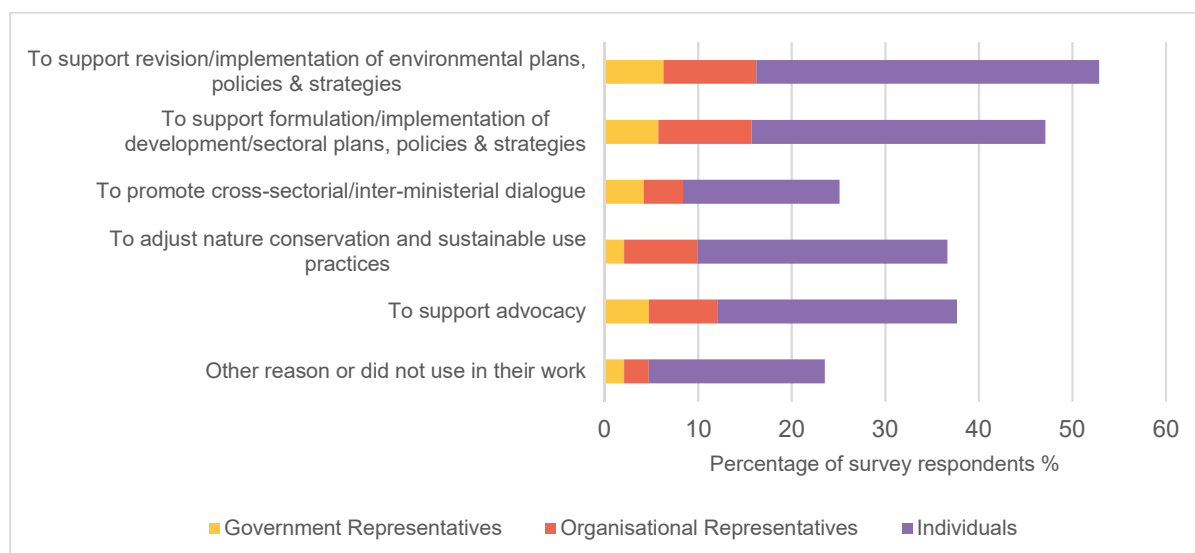
Figure 4. Use of regional assessments, relative to survey coverage



2.2 Why have respondents used assessments in their work?

The results from the survey suggest assessments are being used for a wide range of purposes. The most commonly cited were: To support the revision and implementation of environmental plans and policies (covering 53% of respondents), and to support the formulation or development of sectoral plans, policies and strategies (covering 47% of respondents). Assessments are also being used by government and non-government officials to support awareness raising efforts and advocacy (covering 38% of respondents).

While organisations follow a broadly similar pattern, favouring the use of assessments to formulate and revise policy, they also appear to be using assessments more directly to adjust their own nature conservation and sustainable use practices. An overview of the main reasons that respondents used IPBES assessments in their work is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Reasons respondents used IPBES assessments in their work¹¹

For each of the reasons identified in Figure 5 above, or where ‘other reason’ was selected, respondents provided further details and background information on how they were using assessments. A summary of the key points raised is provided below, with the full range of responses set out in appendix II (Table A1).

Use of assessments to formulate and revise plans and policies

- **Governments** provided examples of using assessments to design sector-specific policy at the national level (including the areas of conservation, biodiversity, forests, climate change and tourism), and to formulate development plans and policies.
- **Organisations and individuals** noted that assessments supported the design of review processes for national strategies and policies, including the design of national technical review sessions, the development of guidelines for the review process of national biodiversity strategies and action plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity and national conservation programmes. As part of review processes, they were also helpful in monitoring and evaluating national progress, aiding for example the development of national field guides for long term monitoring of ecosystems, designing management plans for national parks, or comparison on how sectors are implementing policy options set out in the regional and global assessment ‘summary for policymakers’ sections.

Use of assessments to support advocacy

- **Governments** provided examples of having used assessments to support wider advocacy at multilateral fora, with the scientific information in assessments supporting the preparation of strong national positions and providing a robust rationale for action. Assessments also aided inter-ministerial dialogue and were used by governments to create ‘one-health’ advocacy programmes.
- **Organisations and individuals** used assessments to lobby government and policymakers to address biodiversity loss, and in their advocacy work with the private sector.

Other uses of assessments

- **Governments** identified that they also used assessments to compare the status and trends of biodiversity at the global and subnational levels, as well as to guide the prioritisation of international aid programmes, and support wider communication with the public and awareness raising campaigns.

¹¹ Note that survey participants selected multiple options in answering this question. The percentages indicate the proportion of participants selecting each specific option, and therefore the percentages cannot be combined across multiple options.

- **Organisations and individuals** stated that they used assessments considerably in their research work (supporting research development, formulating their research agenda and fundraising), the production of research outputs (with the content of assessments used to inform technical publications), as well as in education and teaching programmes and to support capacity building.

2.3 What are the key benefits of using IPBES products?

As part of the survey, participants were asked what they thought the key benefits of IPBES assessments were in terms of supporting policymaking at the national and subnational levels. The question was open-ended (with no pre-defined categories) and survey participants could provide information which they felt was most relevant.

The responses received were wide ranging and so were broadly grouped into five thematic areas, recognising the value of assessments: (1) As a source of credible information, (2) in providing a clear message which is comprehensible to policymakers, (3) in presenting a strong rationale to incentivise and legitimise action, and supporting (4) national capacity building and (5) increased stakeholder engagement.

These thematic areas were identified as the most important aspects of IPBES assessments and should therefore be maintained and strengthened going forward. An overview of some of the key benefits presented by governments under each theme is provided below, with the full range of responses set out in appendix II (Table A2).

Source of credible information

- Governments, organisations and individuals valued assessments as a comprehensive and trusted source of the latest scientific information.

Clarity of message

- Governments noted assessments' clear and simple messaging is accessible for policymakers – providing useful background and context to facilitate policymakers' improved understanding of the key issues.

Rationale to support policy action

- Governments felt assessments provided them with the scientific justification and rationale which policymakers need to legitimise actions.
- Governments noted that the findings of assessments provided impetus for further improvements in policymaking at both national and subnational levels.
- Organisations and individuals stated that assessments helped to legitimise policy initiatives and increase public awareness and demand for conservation measures.

National capacity-building

- Governments noted that the involvement of national experts in the development of assessments led to an increase in national expertise, which countries then benefited from when experts became involved in national and subnational processes and policy development.

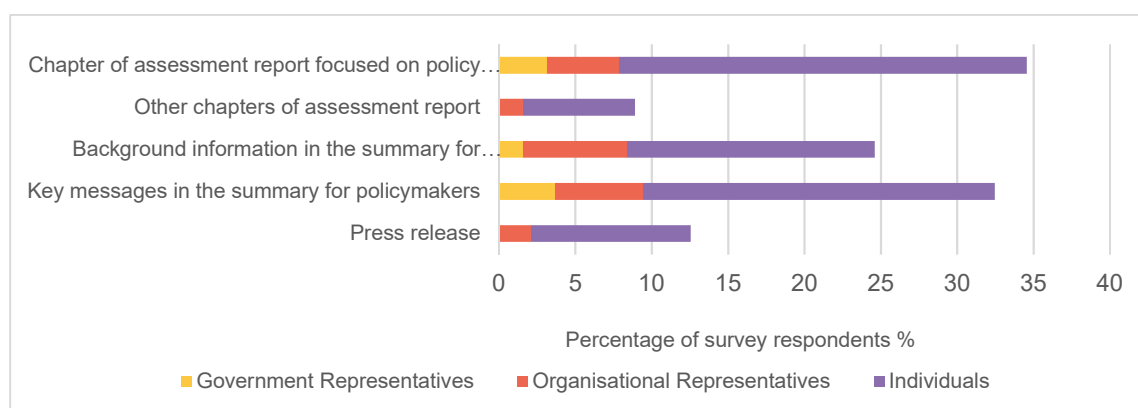
Stakeholder engagement

- Governments felt assessments played an important role in supporting collaboration at the science-policy interface, improving networking between scientists, policymakers and other stakeholders at national and international levels.

2.4 Suggestions for improving IPBES assessment outputs

As part of the survey, participants were asked which specific outputs of IPBES assessments, if any, they felt could be improved. The responses indicated that participants felt that the chapter of assessment reports focused on policy options/responses (accounting for 35% of survey respondents), and the key messages in the summary for policymakers (accounting for 33% of survey respondents) had the most potential to be improved. A total of 25% of survey participants, which included government officials, also recommended improvements to the background information in the summary for policymakers. The complete overview of output recommendations provided by survey participants is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Which specific IPBES assessment outputs could be improved?



For each of the outputs, respondents provided further details on recommended improvements/additions. An overview of the responses for each of the three outputs with the highest number of suggested modifications is provided below, with the full range of responses set out in appendix II (Table A3).

For the chapter of the assessment report focused on policy options, modifications suggested by government representatives included: increasing the visibility of policy options (separating them from broader contextual information), keeping key messaging on policy options succinct and producing a separate chapter specifically on policy options with implementable solutions. Organisations and individual experts also recommended that the solutions proposed could be made more applicable (shift from broad principles to actual policy initiatives) so they can be implemented at national and subnational levels, and could include analysis of options relating to non-environment policies (such as taxes, energy and transport).

For the key messages in the summary for policymakers, modifications suggested by government representatives included simplifying the language used and presenting more of the information visually/graphically. Organisation and individual experts also recommended that the key messages could be made more specific to improve policy relevance, that a short (2 page) 'summary of the summary' could be incorporated and the addition of a section communicating models and strategies for knowledge transfer could be useful.

For the background information in the summary for policymakers, governments suggested that adding more detail on sub-regions (extending the content beyond national level) would be useful. Other respondents suggested that the messaging of the output could be adjusted to address a wider range of stakeholders in addition to policymakers.

2.5 Key challenges in the use of IPBES assessments

An important aspect of the survey was to gain greater insight into some of the key challenges faced by participants when using IPBES assessments to support policymaking. Participants were asked to describe what they felt the key challenges were based on their own experience. The question was open-ended (with no pre-defined categories) and survey participants could provide information which they felt was most relevant.

The responses received were wide ranging and touched on broader issues associated with national capacity and financial limitations with regards to the implementation of policy recommendations.

Responses could be broadly grouped into five thematic areas, recognising key challenges in the areas of: (1) Translation, (2) accessibility for policymakers, (3) effective communication, (4) scalability and relevance at national and subnational levels, and (5) capacity/financial limitations. It is notable that despite 'accessibility for policymakers' being recognised as a key benefit to IPBES assessments, participants recognised the scope for further improvement and provided specific suggestions for development.

Taken together, the five themes provide an indication of useful avenues for strengthening assessments going forward. An outline of the specific challenges raised by government and non-government officials is provided below, with the full range of comments provided in appendix II (Table A4).

Translation

- A large number of comments were received from **both governments and non-government officials** noting challenges associated with language barriers at the national and subnational levels. They emphasised that the lack of availability of the assessments in their national language/s prevented the widespread adoption and use of the assessments, particularly at the subnational level.

Accessibility for policymakers

- **Governments** highlighted several challenges with regards to the implementation of policy options provided in assessments. They noted that it is difficult for policymakers to translate assessment findings to the national level, to understand the range of potential actions and determine possible immediate next steps which could be taken, and that it takes considerable time to extract the information needed to answer a policymaking query.

Effective communication

- **Governments** noted that the length and breadth of assessments, and the complexity of information can make it more challenging to determine the most relevant findings.
- **Organisations and individuals** also felt that assessments were still too technically complex (academic) and lengthy (sheer volume of information is difficult to take in) and noted that this can lead to a loss of clarity. For example, one respondent expressed confusion around the distinctions between 'levers', 'leverage points' and policy options in the Global Assessment, which they felt undermined clarity around possible policy actions.

Scalability and relevance at national and subnational levels

- **Governments** noted several challenges associated with the data provided at the national level in assessments, including that it was too generalised (and could be more detailed and specific), and there was not enough information on which policy options had worked well or not in different contexts (which would allow governments to understand the feasibility of these options nationally).
- **Organisations and individuals** reiterated these challenges, noting that recommendations are very high level and it remains difficult to translate these to national contexts, that the reports provide limited national data for policymakers, and there is a lack of consideration of policy options at the sub-national level (including a lack of localised or sub-regional case studies).

Capacity/financial limitations

- **Organisations** and individuals highlighted the need for greater support with processes surrounding the use of assessments and the implementation of recommendations. They noted capacity challenges in terms of policymakers' lack of awareness/understanding of the issues, a knowledge gap among sub-national institutions and reduced human resources at the subnational level.

Financial limitations include the lack of funds for implementing agencies to implement new policies at the local level.

2.6 How to increase the use of IPBES findings at national and subnational level?

In a follow-on question to the previous section, and in light of identified challenges, participants were asked for their opinion on what could be done to increase the use of assessment findings in policymaking at the national and subnational levels. Specifically, participants were asked whether they felt a need for other types of outputs or activities to increase the use of findings at the national level. The question was open-ended (with no pre-defined categories) and a varying level of detail was provided in the responses.

The responses can be divided into two main themes, with some participants suggesting improvements to assessments (with many of the responses overlapping with the key challenges identified in the previous section), and others suggesting new types of outputs and activities. In terms of improvements to assessments responses could be grouped into three areas: (1) Adjusting assessment content, (2) improving communication and outreach, and (3) greater stakeholder inclusion in the assessment process. New suggestions could be grouped into two areas: (1) The creation of institutional arrangements for knowledge transfer, and (2) the production of new outputs. A more detailed review of the recommendations made under each of these areas is provided below, with the full details and specific comments set out in Table 1.

Adjusting assessment content

- **Governments** suggested that assessments, and in particular the summary for policymakers, could place stronger emphasis on policy options. They noted that the chapters which contain policy options could be improved by highlighting the contexts where different policies have been shown to be effective (to aid translation to national and subnational contexts), as well as the inclusion of policy/strategy case studies focused at national and subnational levels.

Improving communication and outreach

- **Governments** proposed the publication of new materials in addition to assessments to make them more accessible. Suggestions included: developing specific outputs/guides which translate assessments to national level in collaboration with regional and national organisations, as well as condensing key outputs of assessments into a variety of formats/documents (and with information displayed more visually) to aid dissemination of messaging more widely (and particular at subnational levels).
- **Organisations** proposed that it would be helpful for national governments to develop their own information and communication strategy to communicate findings at national and subnational levels. They emphasised the need for specific support for local communities, for example through the development of promotional, training and education materials and the importance of local activities to share and engage local stakeholders.

Greater stakeholder inclusion

- **Organisations** suggested that the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders in assessment development process could improve policy uptake at national and subnational levels. They proposed inclusion of greater numbers of social scientists, practitioners and policymakers, officials/experts from national and subnational governments, as well as experts and practitioners from relevant international organisations.

Box 2. Translating assessments into national contexts: the value of policy briefs

The production of national policy briefs is an effective way to translate the key messages and policy options set out in assessments to national contexts.

However, on average, only 30% of survey participants were aware of existing policy briefs relating to completed IPBES assessments – including 38% of government representatives, 33% of organisational representatives and 29% of individual experts – suggesting they are not currently widely recognised or used.

Of the policy briefs shared through the survey, the most frequently translated assessments were the 'Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services – Summary for Policymakers', the 'Thematic Assessment of Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production' and the 'Regional Assessment for Europe & Central Asia'.

Creation of new institutional arrangements for knowledge transfer

- **Governments** suggested that establishing new national platforms or fora would provide a dedicated mechanism to facilitate the transfer of knowledge from the international to the national and subnational levels.
- **Organisations** agreed that a national platform would help bridge this policy gap, and added that the platforms should facilitate engagement processes where the findings and outcomes of assessments can be adopted at national and subnational levels. Organisations suggested IPBES national focus points should be involved, alongside the IPBES secretariat and national and regional officials.
- **Organisations** also proposed that tracking how national focal points currently communicate information to subnational officials and understanding existing national engagement processes could help identify gaps and inform the development of specific fora.

Producing new outputs

- **Governments** noted that the production of new types of outputs in addition to assessments could support uptake at national and subnational levels. The workshop report format for the recent 'Workshop Report on Biodiversity & Pandemics' was recommended as a model going forward as it had stimulated buy-in and discussion on actions/next steps at the national level. They also observed the need to translate assessment findings into languages used in national contexts, including by indigenous peoples and local communities.
- **Organisations** proposed new types of outputs, including the production of synthesis reports by regions and sectors (following the model of the IPCC) to enhance mainstreaming, and producing periodical updates (such as on the links between Covid-19 and biodiversity loss).

Table 1. Suggestions for increasing the use of IPBES assessment findings

Theme	Respondent capacity	Example suggestions
More effective communication & outreach	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct greater awareness raising activities around outputs • Develop specific outputs/guides which translate assessments to national level in collaboration with regional and national organisations • Publish more accessible outreach materials – condensing info in assessments to make accessible to public and new audiences – visual presentations important. • Enhance networking around IPBES findings
	Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare promotional, training and education materials for indigenous peoples and local communities. • Increase specific media outputs – to aid dissemination of messages locally • Develop information and comms strategy for national and subnational levels • Promote local activities to share and engage local stakeholders in taking up IPBES findings
Adjusting assessment content	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus needed more on policy options, especially in summaries for policymakers • Chapters focused on policy options could highlight the contexts where different policies have been shown to be effective (to aid translation into national & subnational contexts) • Include scenarios and models from the subnational level within IPBES assessments • Include more natural resource/biodiversity policy and strategy case studies at national and subnational level
	Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy options in the Regional Assessment for Europe and Central Asia easier to use than the Global Assessment • Avoid technical jargon, particularly in summaries for policymakers – so it can be readily translated to local languages. • Reduce time taken to extract necessary information – improve operability of policy option in the report
Stakeholder inclusion	Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More involvement of social scientists & policymakers during development of assessments • In assessments include lead/co-authors from subnational level and subnational government • Include experienced member(s) of the UN and World Bank Safeguards working groups or similar groups from national and subnational government
Creation of new institutions for knowledge transfer	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for creation of national platforms as mechanisms to facilitate this transfer
	Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of national platforms where the findings and outcomes of assessments can be adopted at national level – IPBES national focal points should also be involved in this. • Create forums where national and regional groups and IPBES secretariat can interact with subnational officials • Tracking how national focal points step down information to subnational officials (and use this to inform development of specific fora). • There is a translation need to adapt findings to national & subnational level – but this needs to be done within the country, in a national science-policy interface
Producing new outputs	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop Report on Biodiversity & Pandemics – could be used as model going forward – has stimulated buy-in and discussion on action and next steps • Findings translated to languages used in national contexts, including by indigenous peoples and local communities
	Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis reports by regions and sectors (like IPCC has done) could be useful to enhance mainstreaming • Providing periodical updates (such as on links between Covid-19 and biodiversity loss) useful

2.7 Further dialogue and knowledge exchange

A total of 90% of respondents reported that they were keen to engage in further dialogue and information-sharing on the topic of use of IPBES assessments at national and subnational levels.

The most popular mechanisms suggested for this engagement were case studies (44% of responses), knowledge exchange events such as a regional forum (38% of responses) and other alternatives (9% of responses). Alternative mechanisms included through the establishment of national platforms, running workshops/webinars and the coordinated sharing of useful materials. The full range of alternative mechanisms for information-sharing proposed is set out in Table 2 below.

“90% of survey participants were keen to engage in further dialogue and information-sharing.”

Table 2. Alternative mechanisms for knowledge exchange

Mechanisms	Respondent capacity	Specific suggestions
National information platform	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a national platform based on the experience of other countries and link to the Pan-European Network on IPBES (ECA network)
	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information platform and networking Build expert group on IPBES assessments
Workshops/webinars	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold workshops for policymakers Develop webinars
	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint workshop with institutions such as UNCTAD (BioTrade Initiative), IPCC, donors (bilateral and multi-lateral) Dialogues between IPBES, subnational officials and local communities Interactive webinars
Sharing useful material	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share documents and papers Develop infographics and videos to share Collate and provide hyperlinks to important online documents, with a brief note of context/summary
	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a list of other relevant national platforms, where one can go and see what others do and to find further information Develop short films A newsletter with best-practice examples (from different policy-making contexts) Produce a document (or sector-focused documents) with lessons learned with specific, action-oriented steps, that other subnational governments could take

3 Conclusion and recommendations

3.1 Summary of findings

The purpose of the survey was to gather further information on how IPBES assessments are currently being used at the national level, challenges or obstacles associated with uptake of assessment findings and suggested ways to address these going forward. A summary of the findings in relation to these three main areas is presented below.

In helping to reach these conclusions, the task force on policy tools and methodologies would like to thank all respondents who participated in the survey and shared their knowledge and suggestions.

How are IPBES assessments currently being used at the national level?

- A large majority of respondents (84%) indicated that they are currently using the IPBES assessments in their work.
- Government officials indicated that they primarily use assessments to formulate and revise their national plans and policies (relating to development or environmental issues).
- Governments emphasised the value of assessments internally, as an aid to greater inter-ministerial dialogue and cross-departmental collaboration which has led in some cases to the creation of unified, cross-cutting government programmes.
- Some governments stated that they had used assessments to review the status and trends of biodiversity at national and subnational levels (by making comparisons with global and regional assessments).
- Other uses included as an aid to the preparation of national positions and support for wider advocacy within multi-lateral forums and agreements related to biodiversity, as a guide for the prioritisation of international aid programmes, and to support communication with the public (such as through awareness raising campaigns).

When identified, what were the key challenges or obstacles to use?

Language barriers: A large number of comments were received from both government and non-government officials noting challenges associated with language barriers at the national and subnational levels. Respondents emphasised that the lack of availability of assessments in national languages prevented their widespread adoption and use, particularly at the subnational level.

Accessibility to policymakers: Some government representatives highlighted several challenges with regards to the implementation of policy options provided in assessments. Some officials pointed out that, at present, it can be difficult for policymakers to translate assessment findings to the national level, to understand the range of specific policy actions available to them, and to identify immediate next steps which could be taken. Overall, it can take considerable time to extract the information needed to answer a policy-making query.

Difficulty downscaling to national circumstances: Some representatives from both government and organizations stated that the recommendations provided in assessments remain high level and a challenge to downscale to national contexts. More specifically, they found that assessments provided only a limited amount of national-level data, which was generalised or high level, and policy options did not indicate the specific contexts where they had been successful (which would allow governments to understand the feasibility of these options nationally). They also noted the lack of consideration of policy options at the subnational level (for example, in the form of localised or sub-regional case studies).

How can IPBES strengthen support for the use of the key findings of assessments in policymaking?

Enhancing assessment outputs: Some government and non-government officials suggested that additions to the content of assessments may further enhance uptake. In particular, they recommended that the key messages section of the summaries for policymakers as well as the chapter focused on policy options could include more specific content on a range of implementable solutions, including details of which policy options have been successful in specific contexts. Government officials also proposed the publication of new materials to make assessments more accessible, such as developing specific outputs/guides which translate assessments to the national level, as well as condensing key outputs of assessments into a variety of formats/documents to aid dissemination (particularly at the subnational level).

Enhancing assessment processes: A number of respondents suggested that the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders in the assessment development process could improve policy uptake at national and subnational levels. They proposed inclusion of greater numbers of officials and experts (policymakers and social scientists) from national and subnational governments, who would then be in a position to engage in communication and outreach to facilitate wider adoption of findings. Similarly, it was proposed that national governments could develop their own communication strategy, recognising national circumstances and guided by national experts involved in the assessments, setting out outreach activities and plans to support and engage local stakeholders.

Establishing new institutional arrangements: Some representatives of both governments and non-governmental organizations recommended the creation of national platforms to help transfer knowledge from international to national level. It was suggested that this could be based on the ways in which national focal points are currently operating. It is noted that national platforms could also facilitate the above recommendation of 'enhancing assessment processes', acting as a mechanism for enabling greater stakeholder participation and enhancing communication and outreach at national and subnational levels.

Producing new outputs: Many stakeholders noted the need for more targeted and specific material in order to reach certain audiences/sectors. Citing the recent example of the 'Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics', they recommended the publication of similar outputs focusing on specific topics, sectors and regions.

3.2 Potential action areas for the task force on policy tools and methodologies

In light of the above conclusions, the following potential action areas have been identified for the task force, working in collaboration with other task forces and MEP and Bureau as appropriate:

- The value of adopting a targeted approach in the production of assessment outputs was consistently recognized throughout the survey. There is an identified gap around ensuring that assessment messaging is relevant to specific sectors/communities, including developing appropriate actions for those audiences. This aligns with some of the areas identified by the task force in its workplan, including to encourage partners of identified sectors to produce sector-specific summary products based on completed assessments.
- It was widely acknowledged that it would be beneficial to engage in the assessment process, in addition to academic experts, practitioners familiar with policy processes. One option to address this gap could be for the task force on policy tools and methodologies to develop options for IPBES to reach out to different practitioners for their involvement in the assessment process.
- The survey responses noted that it remains a significant challenge to downscale assessment findings to the national level, and that there is a need for a mechanism to co-ordinate knowledge transfer between these two scales. A national platform could provide the institutional mechanisms

to address these gaps. The task force on policy tools and methodologies, working with the task force on capacity-building, could continue to support the platform development process, share relevant findings from the survey, and support subsequent engagement on the ways in which national platforms can facilitate enhanced stakeholder dialogue (including with subnational officials and other experts) and knowledge transfer at national and subnational levels.

- The survey emphasized the value of experts who are nominated by their countries to engage in the development of IPBES assessments and pointed out that they represent a key national resource after completion of the assessments. There is an identified gap in terms of providing support to those experts to better engage with national focal points, government agencies, officials and others on the work of IPBES and the use of completed assessments. In follow up to this survey, possible approaches for providing support could be explored by convening further dialogues with national focal points, other government representatives and IPBES experts for a specific topic or (sub)region. A total of 90% of respondents reported that they were keen to engage in further dialogue and information-sharing. The task force could facilitate this through hosting knowledge exchange events around a particular topic and in a particular region. Acknowledging the IPBES rolling plan on capacity-building and the mandate of the task force on capacity-building, these findings could inform the promotion and design of national and regional platforms (as a key institutional mechanism for ensuring continuity of support to experts over the longer term).

Appendix I: Survey questions

1. Have you used IPBES assessments in your work?

- ☐ Yes [if yes, the following appears:]

Which of the following IPBES assessments have you used? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
- ☐ Thematic Assessment of Land Degradation and Restoration
- ☐ Thematic Assessment of Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production
- ☐ Methodological Assessment of Scenarios and Models of Biodiversity and Ecosystem services
- ☐ Regional Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Africa
- ☐ Regional Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for the Americas
- ☐ Regional Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Asia and the Pacific
- ☐ Regional Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Europe and Central Asia

- ☐ No [if no, the following appears:]

- ☐ If you have not used an IPBES assessment to support policymaking at (sub)national level, please briefly describe the reasons why: [text field]

2. For what purpose have you used an IPBES assessment? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ To support revision and/or implementation of environmental plans, policies, or strategies, including national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), for example by using data, other information or some of the policy responses from the assessment
- ☐ To support formulation and/or implementation of development/sectorial plans, policies, or strategies, for example by using data from the assessment, or developing recommendations / identifying policy alternatives on the basis of the assessment
- ☐ To promote cross-sectorial/inter-ministerial dialogue
- ☐ To adjust nature conservation and sustainable use practices
- ☐ To support advocacy
- ☐ Other – Please specify:

[if any box above is ticked:]

Please briefly describe how you used the assessments and their findings to support the relevant policy processes. You can share the link to or upload supporting documents: [text field][URL/upload field]

3. Which of the output(s) of the IPBES assessments have you used to support policy processes and why? Please select all that apply:

- ☐ The summary for policymakers:
 - ☐ Key messages on status and trends of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people
 - ☐ Key messages on direct and indirect drivers
 - ☐ Key messages on future trajectories and achieving societal goals (e.g. Aichi biodiversity targets and Sustainable Development Goals)
 - ☐ Key messages on policy options/responses
 - ☐ Other key messages
 - ☐ Background information in the summary for policymakers
 - ☐ Tables and figures
 - ☐ Knowledge gaps
 - ☐ Other materials from the summary for policymakers
- ☐ The chapters of the assessment and their executive summaries:
 - ☐ on status and trends of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people
 - ☐ on direct and indirect drivers
 - ☐ on future trajectories and achieving societal goals (e.g. Aichi biodiversity targets and Sustainable Development Goals)
 - ☐ on policy options/responses
 - ☐ Case studies
 - ☐ Other materials from chapters
 - ☐ Specific terms and concepts used in the assessment
 - ☐ Press release
 - ☐ Other [text field]

[If any of the above are ticked:] Please briefly indicate the reasons why you used the outputs indicated above: [text field]

4. In your opinion, which of the following IPBES assessment outputs, if any, would need to be modified to improve the use of IPBES assessments in policymaking? Please select all that apply:

- ☐ Chapter of assessment report focused on policy options/responses
- ☐ Other chapters of assessment report
- ☐ Background information in the summary for policymakers
- ☐ Key messages in the summary for policymakers
- ☐ Press release

[If any of the above are ticked:] Please indicate how the IPBES assessment output(s) indicated above could be improved in your opinion: [text field]

5. Please indicate key benefit(s) of IPBES assessments for supporting policymaking at the (sub)national level: [text field]

6. Please list key challenges one may face in using IPBES assessments for supporting policymaking at the (sub)national level: [text field]

7. Have you prepared or are you aware of policy briefs translating the key messages and policy options set out in IPBES assessments into national contexts? If possible, please share the policy brief(s) (if available). [URL/upload field]

8. In your opinion, what needs to be done to maximise the use of findings of IPBES assessments in policymaking at (sub)national level? Do you think there is a need for other types of outputs or activities to increase the use of findings of IPBES assessments at national level? Please describe. [text field]

9. Finally, would you be interested to hear about what other countries have done to use IPBES assessments at (sub)national level?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please share your ideas on possible ways that would be helpful to learn from the experiences in other countries:

- ☐ Knowledge exchange events such as Regional Forum
- ☐ Case studies
- ☐ Other – please specify: [text field]

10. Please include your contact details: [please make the fields non-mandatory]

- Full name:
- Name of the organisation, Position/Function:
- Country:
- E-mail:
- Are you submitting your responses to this questionnaire:
 - ☐ On behalf of your Government / organisation
 - ☐ In your individual capacity

Appendix II: Examples of survey responses

This annex contains further details of the specific comments and suggestions received from survey participants. Each of the tables below presents the responses for an individual survey question. For brevity and to minimise duplication, not every comment is listed (the example comments cover the full breadth of comments received).

Table A1. Further details on how assessments are being used (including comments provided under 'other' reason)

Category	Respondent capacity	Example comments
Further details given	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional assessment used to formulate state forest policy Formulate development plans & policies Development of national policies (tourism, conservation, biodiversity) To define biodiversity targets in climate strategy Basis for information in preparation of national positions for multi-lateral forums and agreements related to biodiversity. Used to create inter-ministerial one health advocacy programme
	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of national strategy Development of national field guides for long term monitoring of ecosystems Design national technical sessions Supported the development of guidelines for the review process of NBSAPs and national conservation programmes Monitoring progress - analysis on how sectors are implementing the various policy options given in the tables of the summaries for policymakers of the Regional Assessment for Europe and Central Asia and Global Assessment To lobby government to develop comprehensive strategy to address biodiversity loss Advocacy with private sector National park management planning
Other reasons	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To compare the state and trends of biodiversity at the global and subnational levels (by using comparison to IPBES assessments at global and regional level). Inform national policy positions (using assessment to determine government positions for negotiation). Communication/awareness raising campaigns with the public Guides government international aid programmes – supports technical staff and policymakers in directing funds appropriately
	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop organisational position statement Communications/awareness raising Research development (formulating research agenda, priorities, defining funding strategies) Research outputs (inform technical publications) Education and teaching Dialogue & capacity building To support requests for additional funds from government

Table A2. Key benefits of using IPBES products

Themes	Respondent capacity	Example comments
Source of credible information	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive and trusted science (reputable source of latest information)
	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific credibility – global consensus, peer-reviewed evidence Trustworthy key scientists behind assessments Reports validated by government, so have political leverage Aligned with multilateral environmental agreements
Clarity of message	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and simple communication of scientific message valued by policymakers – useful background & context to help policymakers understand the key issues
Rationale to incentivise and legitimise policy action	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out clear scientific justification and rationale – which policymakers need to take action Findings incentivise improved policymaking at all government levels
	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve intra-institutional linkages/ cross-sectoral synergies Focus on scenario building and policy options provides actionable steps (solutions-oriented knowledge) Help to legitimise policy initiatives which would otherwise be unpopular Credibility of analysis suspends continued debate as reason to delay action Increase public awareness & societal demand for conservation measures Understanding of what is happening globally, supports taking greater action locally
National capacity building	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers involved in development of assessments gain expertise and international context which they bring back to advise own countries in national & sub-national reports.
Stakeholder engagement	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves networking at science-policy interface (between scientists/policymakers/other stakeholders at national & international levels) Aids international negotiation processes

Table A3. Responses received for the outputs with the highest number of recommended modifications

Assessment outputs	Suggestions from government representatives	Suggestions from organisational representatives
Chapter of assessment report focused on policy options/responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase visibility of policy response options (not embedded in contextual information) Key messages on policy options kept succinct to aid clarity and comparison. A separate chapter explicitly on policy options, with implementable solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solutions proposed not very applicable – broad principles rather than actual policy options Include analysis on indirect negative impacts of many "non-environment" policies, (such as tax, energy, transportation) Greater clarity on how table of policy options is backed up by rest of chapter Policy options in Global Assessment are too general for policymakers at national & subnational levels Include options outside of tropics/sub-tropics – policymakers need to start at home
Key messages in the summary for policymakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language simplified Facts/figures presented visually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key messages too broad and lack policy relevance A short (2-page) summary of the summary Communicate models and strategies relating to knowledge transfer (complex, non-linear) in the summary
Background information in the summary for policymakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional details on sub-regions could be provided, not just national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address messaging to range of stakeholders, not just policymakers

Table A4. Key challenges faced by respondents when using IPBES assessments in their work

Themes	Respondent capacity	Example comments
Language barriers	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report being written in English is a barrier Government ministries have had to translate the Summary for Policymakers so its accessible for sub-national officials Text not available in national language prevents more widespread adoption and use
Accessibility for policymakers	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The summary for policy makers could benefit from outlining more tangible steps or actions that could be taken to address the issues to help policymakers understand what could be considered as next steps. Takes time to extract information to answer policy-making query. Improve operability of policy options in the report may aid this. Develop sector-specific recommendations (to enhance mainstreaming of findings in other sectors) Effort needed to translate findings to national policy context
Effective communication	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complexity of information - could be further simplified, and use of infographics Length and breadth of assessments can make it hard to determine the most relevant findings
	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still perceived as too lengthy - sheer volume of information, time-consuming to take in Technical complexity, too academic No easily accessible materials (visuals, graphics, briefs) to share In the global assessment the linkages between levers, leverage points and policy options is unclear Policy actions unclear To give up scenario approaches that are based on irrelevant hypotheses for social sciences. To develop approaches based on inventories of best practices and context-based interventions.
Scalability and relevance at national and subnational levels	Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data provided at the national level should be more detailed and less generalised Challenging to apply international research to the national context, limited scalability Not enough attention to assessing which policy options have worked or not worked well in different contexts
	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy options too general to apply at national level Lack of localised or sub-regional case studies Lacks consideration of policy options at sub-national level, and national/subnational policy harmonisation Lack of national data which is important for policymakers to understand national situation. The recommendations issued are high level and it remains difficult to translate the key messages/recommendations to the national level. More specific recommendations are welcome.
Capacity/financial limitations	Organisations & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge gap among sub-national institutions Reduced human resources at subnational level Weak legal frameworks to support policy formulation Lack of knowledge by policymakers Lack of funds to implement policies by implementing organisations

Appendix II

Pilot online dialogue on the use of IPBES assessments in policymaking in Africa

Online – 18 March 2021

Summary of key discussions and lesson learnt

1. Background

Objective 4 (a) of the IPBES rolling work programme up to 2030, “advanced work on policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies”, includes a focus on enabling the uptake of the findings of IPBES assessments in decision-making. To address this, the task force on policy tools and methodologies has identified the promotion and support in the use of findings of IPBES assessments in policy and decision-making as one of the deliverables in its interim workplan.

As part of this work, the task force identified the need to provide a space where relevant stakeholders could share their experiences on how the findings of IPBES assessments are being used in decision-making. One of the key activities under this deliverable is to convene a series of dialogues with actors at the science-policy interface in different sectors, engaging with existing platforms and networks and to the extent possible, organized as part of or back to back with an existing regional or subregional meeting.

For that purpose, the task force proposed piloting one event for the African region to test possible approaches that could be useful for the implementation of this activity for other regions/subregions, using an online or face-to-face modality depending on the circumstances at the time and the availability of resources.

A brief summary of discussions and key lessons learnt identified as a result of the pilot online dialogue is presented below. The full agenda of the event is available at the end of this document. The presentations delivered are available on the IPBES website at: <https://www.ipbes.net/events/regional-pilot-workshop-enhance-uptake-completed-ipbes-assessments-decision-making>.

2. Summary of key discussions

2.1 Opening remarks and setting the scene

The meeting was facilitated by Dr. Luthando Dziba, Co-chair of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. It gathered 58 participants, including IPBES national focal points and other government representatives, IPBES experts, members of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, and members of the task force.

Dr. Anne Larigauderie, Executive Secretary of IPBES, provided **opening remarks**. She outlined the strong knowledge base for decision making that IPBES has developed. She noted that the IPBES reports were prepared in response to requests from governments and with their close involvement, and therefore sit at the interface between science and policy. Increasingly, IPBES assessments were being used, starting to generate impacts, and strengthening awareness about the importance of considering biodiversity in policymaking.

Dr. Larigauderie emphasized the interest of IPBES in hearing how the assessments had been received in the African region and in specific countries and institutions, if the assessments had informed policymaking, and if they could be improved at any level. Finally, she highlighted the importance of the dialogue as it would serve the ultimate goal of continuously improving IPBES.

While the discussion was open to cover any of the IPBES assessments that had been completed at the time of the meeting, the scene was set to focus on assessments reports that were key for the region: the **Regional Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Africa**, and the **Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration**. Prof. Emma Archer (co-chair Regional Assessment for Africa) and Prof. Robert Scholes (co-chair Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment) presented selected findings of relevance to the region.

Prof. Emma Archer stressed the uniqueness and richness of Africa’s natural assets and pointed out how they were traditionally under-accounted in policy and decision-making. She explained how Africa’s biodiversity was under pressure by direct and indirect drivers that were projected to increase in the future. She also highlighted a series of

options available for protecting biodiversity in some areas, including some measures that had already been successful (e.g., expansion of protected areas, control of invasive species, and restoration of ecosystems).

Prof. Robert Scholes presented some of the key findings of the assessment report on land degradation and restoration, through an African lens. He started by clarifying that the land degradation assessment was a global thematic assessment as opposed to a comprehensive regional assessment. One of the findings of the assessment was that land degradation was not a problem of Africa exclusively, but actually a problem that could be found in every ecosystem everywhere in the world. He mentioned that Africa was quite early in its process of land transformation and thus was in a position to make choices about its future. Prof. Scholes explained that the main driver behind land degradation in Africa was consumption growth on and outside of the continent, which created an increased demand for products such as timber or crops from Africa. He concluded by saying that a third of the global population (close to 3 billion people) was negatively affected by land degradation, making it the single most important issue in the world today. He added that, in that sense, degradation avoidance was more cost effective than allowing degradation and subsequently conducting restoration efforts; while addressing degradation once it had occurred was still cost effective compared to inaction.

Follow up questions from the audience addressed the following issues:

- Level of awareness of African countries with regard to IPBES and the findings of its assessments;
- Examples of policies (e.g., National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and climate change adaptation strategies) from African countries that had been informed by the IPBES assessments;
- Successes and difficulties in incentivizing communities at the local level and the private sector to carry out land restoration actions; and
- Africa's options for development, and how the IPBES assessments could help development plans in the region.

2.2 National experiences using IPBES assessments for policymaking

To kick off the moderated discussion, representatives of four countries¹² had the opportunity to share their experiences of using IPBES assessments.

First, Dr. Francois Hiol Hiol presented on the **experience of Cameroon** concerning the development of their national ecosystem assessment. The assessment, developed adapting the IPBES assessment process and conceptual framework to national circumstances, had supported policy processes at the regional and national levels. At the regional level, the assessment team participated in capacity-building activities organized by the Commission of Central African Forests (COMIFAC) for the Central Africa subregion. At the national level, the assessment's platform had contributed to and benefitted from a range of areas and activities of policy relevance, including:

- Development of Cameroon's sixth national report to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- The organization of the national day on biodiversity in 2019;
- Strengthening capacities of authors and stakeholders;
- Consideration of elements from a range of ongoing policy processes such as the national development vision and the national decentralization reform, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and
- Identifying ways to address COVID-19 making use of traditional knowledge.

Then, Mr. Hyacinthe Tié shared the **experience of Cote d'Ivoire**. In particular, the presentation focused on the work through the West African Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (WABES), which had resulted in a number of capacity-building workshops on the various IPBES assessments, targeted to national focal points of countries in West Africa. He also mentioned some of the activities carried out by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable

¹² Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi and Morocco.

Development, including regularly sharing information within the organization and with stakeholders to inform them of progress made in IPBES work, and encouraging experts in the country to take part in IPBES assessments.

Some examples of the use of IPBES assessments in policymaking included the development of a bill on biological diversity, initiatives to promote the use of payment for ecosystem services, and the revision of the environment code. Some challenges were also highlighted, including the Ministry of Health, Environment and Sustainable Development's lack of means to perform their functions, the language in which IPBES documents were made available, and issues around confidentiality of draft documents that created challenges when trying to request for feedback and inputs from others within the administration. These made it difficult to raise the attention of decision-makers at the local level.

Prof. Taleb Mohammed Sghir shared **Morocco's experience**, including the following specific examples:

- As a result of the invitation from IPBES for countries to develop their national assessments, Morocco had recently launched the development of their own, adapting the IPBES conceptual framework to the national circumstances. The national assessment would include a process for internal and external review, and it is expected that it would, once finalized, be validated and approved by different governmental agencies;
- Development of the fourth national communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with a particular focus on involvement of local communities and the integration of traditional knowledge to tackle climate change;
- Work relating to the conservation of pollinators in the face of climate change. Morocco had carried out studies to build the capacities of researchers;
- Other activities supported by the use of IPBES assessments included: integration of biodiversity in territorial planning, establishment of a national scientific committee for IPBES, and strengthening communication and sensibilization of IPBES work.

With regards to **Malawi's experience**, Ms. Lilian Chimphepo indicated that, in its efforts to enhance the implementation of ecosystem restoration efforts, the assessments had helped the country to better understand the drivers of land degradation. In this context, she mentioned that the assessments were useful in informing planning and monitoring actions.

Ms. Chimphepo also expressed that the key messages of the summaries for policymakers had contributed to improving policymakers' knowledge and understanding of the causes of biodiversity loss and degradation and facilitated the sharing of that information with the general public. She pointed out that the assessments had influenced various interventions on restoring degraded ecosystems, addressing issues of invasive alien species, and implementing nature-based solutions to face emerging challenges such as climate change.

Finally, Ms. Chimphepo mentioned that the assessments were, at the time of the meeting, informing the 2020 Human Development Report and helping mainstream biodiversity into social impact assessments. She outlined that the IPBES methodology and reports would be used as part of the development of their national ecosystem assessment that was starting.

2.3 Moderated discussion

Building on the experiences shared by the four countries, the moderated discussion was structured around the following areas:

- Other examples of how IPBES assessments have been used in different countries;
- Challenges faced in using IPBES assessments in policymaking; and
- Ideas on how IPBES can help overcome those challenges, and what can be done to improve IPBES assessments to support policymaking.

The following are some of the key inputs of the discussion (a summary is included in Table 1):

2.3.1. Other examples of how IPBES assessments have been used in different countries

Participants agreed that the IPBES assessments had led to the identification of knowledge gaps and, in some occasions, to the decision to develop national ecosystem assessments. This had been the case for countries such as South Africa and Cameroon. In other countries of the region, like Cote d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the IPBES assessments had led to the development of other types of analysis to inform policymaking. Participants also indicated that the IPBES assessments had served as a basis to create and strengthen institutional arrangements with competences in the biodiversity field. For instance, it was mentioned that Morocco had recently created a new inter-ministerial committee to deal with climate change and biodiversity. Also, it was mentioned that IPBES assessments had been successful in informing biodiversity-related policies and programmes, such as South Africa's white paper on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and Cote d'Ivoire's national programme on agricultural investment. Finally, participants highlighted the special role that the assessments had in raising awareness and strengthening the capacities of decision-makers and the general public (including local communities), which seemed to have had some degree of impact on resource mobilization.

2.3.2. Challenges faced in using IPBES assessments in policymaking

On this topic, some participants perceived that the IPBES assessments could further incorporate information produced at the regional and national levels. It was stated that, despite the efforts of organizations such as the COMIFAC and national experts to produce tailored data on the state of biodiversity and ecosystem services, these data did not seem to be sufficiently taken into consideration in IPBES assessments. Participants pointed out that the problem might be that, although the data exist, it might not be visible or accessible to IPBES experts.

2.3.3. Ideas on how IPBES can help overcome those challenges, and what can be done to improve IPBES assessments to support policymaking

For the IPBES assessments to consider information being produced at the regional and national levels, some participants suggested that the development of national platforms could offer a space in which different actors could share their work and promote exchange of views and experiences. The platforms proposed would help compiling existing data, making it easier for IPBES to access it.

Finally, participants also indicated that further support was required to develop assessments at the local level.

Table 1. Summary of inputs

Examples of how IPBES assessments have been used		Challenges faced in using IPBES assessments	Ideas to help overcome identified challenges
Identification of knowledge gaps	Awareness raising	Information produced at regional/national levels not incorporated into assessments	Development of national platforms
Development of national ecosystem assessments	Capacity development		Provision of support to develop assessments at local level
Creation of new institutional arrangements	Resource mobilization		
Provision of information for national policies and programmes			

3. Key lessons learnt identified through the pilot online dialogue

Further to promoting the exchange of experiences among national focal points and experts from the region, the pilot online dialogue was aimed at gathering key lessons learned that would inform future activities of the task force on policy tools and methodologies.

Below are some of the key lessons that resulted from the planning phase as well as running of the meeting:

- (a) **Importance of guidance and inputs from members of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel of the relevant region since the start of the planning process.** This helps to identify the most effective ways to reach out to the experts and national focal points as well as to identify potential case studies/examples of relevance to the specific region;
- (b) **Need to explore new ways of engaging national focal points and other government officials.** Representatives from the 54 countries in the Africa region were invited. From those, 18 national focal points and 6 representatives from other government agencies attended. Higher participation of national focal points and other government officials in future dialogues would ensure a wider representation of each region and, therefore, a better understanding of the use of IPBES assessments and more precise findings to inform them. The TSU is proactively looking for alternative ways to encourage the participation of these stakeholders in the upcoming dialogues;
- (c) **Importance of including regional organizations from the relevant region.** Some of the experiences shared during the online pilot dialogue show that regional organizations in the African region are playing an important role in supporting countries to respond to their needs related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, and in monitoring the implementation of actions taken. Inviting regional organizations to future dialogues could provide a more robust view of the challenges faced by every region and promote coordinated responses to address them;
- (d) **Value of the space provided to a dialogue between national focal points and other government representatives and experts of IPBES assessments in the region.** The pilot online dialogue provided national focal points, other government representatives, and IPBES experts with a unique space to freely exchange their diverse perspectives on the utility of IPBES assessments for policymaking in the African region. Further, the dialogue resulted in concrete examples of the impacts led by the assessments and specific limitations encountered at national and subnational levels. Following a similar format, future dialogues will aim at providing a flexible and friendly environment that encourages participants to express their views, needs and propose solutions;
- (e) **Importance of offering simultaneous interpretation into other languages.** The pilot online dialogue offered simultaneous interpretation English<>French, which seem to have encouraged wider and more active participation. In view of this, future dialogues should continue to offer, within the scope of available resources, simultaneous interpretation into the relevant United Nations languages depending on the specific region(s) being targeted;
- (f) **Utilization of additional virtual tools to promote attendees' participation.** Several attendees to the pilot online dialogue chose to take the floor to share their experiences and suggest ways of moving forward, while others preferred to use the chat. However, it is acknowledged that many participants would rather share their ideas using alternative tools such as, for example, online whiteboards. In order to promote further interaction, the technical support unit is exploring the benefits of utilizing these kinds of complementary tools for future dialogues;
- (g) **For online meetings, finding a stable internet connection helps to make the dialogue more interactive and participatory.** This is also essential for the provision of interpretation when this is provided. During the dialogue, some of the participants, including speakers, experienced some internet disruptions, which caused them to drop off the meeting in occasions. While in many occasions this is outside of the control of individuals, it is important to recognize this limitation and try to identify ways to mitigate it. For example, by requiring attendees to test their internet speed before the event starts and proposing ideas on measures that could potentially improve their connections (e.g., relocating, switching cameras off);

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- (h) **Speakers and participants of future online dialogues will be offered a brief training on the platform used to host the event.** Several people had trouble understanding how to use the different features of the platform utilized to host the event (Zoom), particularly with the interpretation audio channels. As a result, some audio difficulties were experienced by those that chose to use the interpretation service. In order to minimize these problems in the coming dialogues, quick training sessions for speakers and participants will be organized and offered prior to the online event;
- (i) **Consider inclusion of a presentation of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) in the agenda for the dialogues.** Based on the interventions of various participants, it seems that not all available resources that can help implement the findings of the IPBES assessments are widely known. In that sense, the agenda can incorporate a 5-minute presentation on the BES-Net and how countries could access its services.

Pilot online dialogue to promote the use of findings of IPBES assessments in policymaking in Africa

Provisional agenda

Connection details

1. The dialogue will be held using the platform Zoom. Connection details will be shared with registered participants by email.
2. French⇌English interpretation will be provided. To ensure that the best possible interpretation service is provided, participants are encouraged to take the following into consideration:
 - Check your internet connection in advance of the meeting (try joining 15 minutes before the start). The internet connection tends to be stronger when using an ethernet cable or a dedicated Wi-Fi connection.
 - Use headsets with a microphone if possible
 - Please check you have the latest version of zoom downloaded: *Version: 5.5.4* and check for any Zoom software updates. Further information can be found [here](#).

Objective of the meeting

3. To promote and support the use of findings of IPBES assessments in policymaking. This work contributes to objective 4(a) of the IPBES rolling work programme up to 2030, entitled: “advanced work on policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies”.
4. For this purpose, the dialogue will promote an exchange of views between different stakeholders from the African region in order to better understand the current use of IPBES products in the development and implementation of their national and regional policies, plans and initiatives, in order to increase their effective use in the future.

Tentative schedule

Time (CET)	Session
12:45-13:00	Join meeting (connection details will be sent by email)
13:00-13:15	Opening of the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luthando Dziba, Co-chair of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel • Anne Larigauderie, IPBES Executive Secretary
13:15-13:35	Brief overview of the Regional Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Africa and the Assessment of land degradation and restoration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emma Archer – Co-chair, Regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa • Bob Scholes – Co-chair, Assessment report on land degradation and restoration
13:35-13:45	Q&A
13:45-14:10	Examples of how the IPBES assessments have been used to support policymaking processes at national level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malawi: Lilian Chimphepo – IPBES national focal point • Cote d’Ivoire: Hyacinthe Tié – IPBES national focal point • Morocco: Prof Taleb Mohammed Sghir – MEP member • Cameroon: Dr. Francois Hiol Hiol – Co-chair of national ecosystem assessment (<i>to be confirmed</i>)

Time (CET)	Session
14:10-15:10	<p>Moderated discussion:</p> <p>a) Identify further examples of how IPBES assessments have been used in policymaking at the national level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have IPBES assessments been used in your country or at the regional level to support policymaking? If so, which ones and how? • At which levels (national, subnational or local) are IPBES assessments being used the most? Why do you think that is the case? • Which specific parts of the IPBES assessments have you used to support policy processes and why? (e.g., summaries for policymakers, chapters (any chapter in particular?)) • Have the IPBES assessments been used only by environment agencies or also by governmental agencies in other sectors? Which ones? • For what purpose have you used the IPBES assessments? (e.g., to formulate policy and technical measures, elaborate technical reports, promote capacity-building and awareness raising) <p>b) Discuss challenges and opportunities for increasing the use of ongoing and future IPBES assessments in policymaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key challenges that you and your colleagues have faced in using IPBES assessments for policymaking? • What are the key benefits that you have experienced of using IPBES assessments to support policy processes? <p>c) Identify how IPBES can help overcome some of the challenges mentioned and engage a wider range of national agencies in using those findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could be done to further promote and facilitate the use of IPBES assessments in supporting policymaking? • How can the challenges identified earlier be most effectively addressed, and by whom? • How can IPBES build on and further promote sharing of experiences of countries in using IPBES assessments most effectively?
15:10 – 15:20	Final wrap up and closing remarks

Key information resources

- [The regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa \(full report\)](#)
- [The regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa \(summary for policymakers\)](#)
- [Assessment report on land degradation and restoration \(full report\)](#)
- [Assessment report on land degradation and restoration \(summary for policymakers\)](#)
- [Assessment report on pollinators, pollination and food production \(full report\)](#)
- [Assessment report on pollinators, pollination and food production \(summary for policymakers\)](#)
- [IPBES Regional Assessments \(video\)](#)
- [IPBES Regional Assessment of Africa \(video\)](#)
- [IPBES Assessment of Land Degradation and Restoration \(video\)](#)
- [The Critical Importance of Pollinators \(video\)](#)