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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Report of the Executive Secretary on the implementation of
the work programme 2014–2018****Progress report on the implementation of the regional and
subregional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services
(deliverable 2 (b))****Note by the secretariat**

1. In decision IPBES-3/1, part III, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services approved the undertaking of four regional and subregional assessments for Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia, in accordance with the following:

- (a) Procedures for the preparation of deliverables (annex I to decision IPBES-3/3);
 - (b) Generic scoping report for regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services (annex III to decision IPBES-3/1), which provides a generic chapter outline, a timetable and a cost estimate for the four regional assessments;
 - (c) Scoping reports for each one of the four regional assessments (annexes IV to VII to decision IPBES-3/1), which provide additional information pertaining to each region, to complement the generic scoping report.
2. The overall scope of the regional and subregional assessments is to assess the status and trends regarding biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and their interlinkages, the impact of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and threats to them on good quality of life, and the effectiveness of responses, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the national biodiversity strategies and action plans developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The assessments will address terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services.
3. The objective of the regional and subregional assessment processes is to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services at the regional and subregional levels.
4. The annex to the present note provides a report on the expert groups performing the assessments and on progress made towards the production of the regional assessments, which will be submitted for consideration by the Plenary at its sixth session. The annex is presented without formal editing.

* IPBES/4/1

Annex

I. Composition of the expert groups performing the regional assessments

A. Dedicated Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau members

1. In accordance with the rules of procedure for preparing Platform reports, members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau relevant to each region are overseeing the reports, ensuring that they are prepared in accordance with agreed procedures.

B. Selection of experts

2. Co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors were selected for each of the four regional and subregional assessments according to the criteria set out in the procedures for the preparation of the Platform's deliverables in the annex to decision IPBES-2/3. The selection of Review Editors will be finalised early 2016.
3. A total of 746 nominations was received for the four regional assessments. Of those, 425 were selected as experts for the assessments: 103 for Africa, 90 for the Americas, 107 for Europe and Central Asia and 125 for the Asia and Pacific region. Within those, forty experts were selected as Lead Authors for the land degradation and restoration assessment. These same experts at the same time also participated as Lead Authors in the regional/subregional assessments, which means that 10 land degradation and restoration experts are "embedded" as Lead Authors within each of the four regional/subregional assessments. Within these 40 Lead Authors, a subset of 8 authors (2 per region) play a role of liaison experts. They are responsible for the coordination of land degradation and restoration information and content across chapters and across assessments. Out of the total of 425 experts, 33% are female and 67% male; 32% were nominated by organizations and 68% by governments.
4. The selection process was performed by members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, with advice from Bureau members, together reviewing all nominations that had been submitted, based on examination of nomination templates and curriculum vitae for each nominee. Selections were made on the basis of candidates' expertise with respect to relevant areas of the work programme. Once selected on merit, further selection was focused on balancing disciplinary, regional and gender diversity, as well as sectorial diversity. For the different regional and subregional assessments, certain gaps were assessed with regards to disciplinary, regional and gender balance. These gaps in authors were filled by the identification of potential suitable authors by the co-chairs of the assessments and MEP and Bureau members, and subsequent nomination of these experts by their respective governments or organizations.
5. The technical support unit on capacity-building launched its IPBES Fellow Pilot Programme earlier this year (IPBES/4/INF/5). This fellowship programme allows early career researchers and other professionals to take part in IPBES activities. For the regional and subregional assessments, a total of 309 nominations were received, and 26 selected. These fellows will contribute as authors in the assessments. Africa and Asia Pacific selected 7 fellows each, while the Americas, and Europe and Central Asia selected 6 fellows each.
6. The composition of the expert groups is presented in Annex I.

C. The technical support units

7. Prior to IPBES-3, the Chair requested governments and stakeholders to provide offers for in-kind contributions to support the implementation of the work programme with particular reference to the need for technical support for implementing the regional and subregional assessments. The Bureau, in consultation with the MEP, met several times by teleconference and selected host organisations, which had volunteered to host technical support units, in each of the four regions of the regional assessments. Institutional agreements have been signed and staff recruited in the following host institutions:

- for the regional and subregional assessment for the Americas: the Alexander von Humboldt Institute, Colombia;
- for the regional and subregional assessment for Asia and the Pacific: the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan;

- for the regional and subregional assessment for Africa: the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), South Africa;
- for the regional and subregional assessment for Europe and Central Asia: Institute of Plant Sciences, University of Bern, Switzerland.

8. The role of each technical support unit is to provide scientific, technical and organizational support toward the delivery of the assessment report. In addition, the technical support units liaise with the task forces and other experts groups, as necessary, and support work towards other deliverables (e.g. deliverable (2a) on Guide on production and integration of assessments from and across all scales, and deliverable (4a) on Catalogue of relevant assessments) in order to ensure that cross-cutting issues are properly addressed.

9. Additional information on institutional arrangements is provided in IPBES/4/INF/18.

II. Progress towards preparation of the regional assessment reports

A. Management committee meetings

10. In order to plan for the first author meetings, including preparation of an annotated chapter outline, and to finalize the selection of experts, a management committee meeting took place in each one of the four regions comprising the regional co-chairs, representatives of the relevant technical support unit, Bureau and MEP members of the respective region and a representative of the IPBES secretariat. The meetings were held in Tokyo (Japan), Bogota (Colombia), Pretoria (South Africa) and Edinburgh (UK), between mid-June and mid-July, 2015.

B. First author meetings

11. The first author meetings were held in Bogota (20 to 27 July 2015) for the regional and subregional assessment for the Americas, Tokyo (17 – 21 August 2015) for the regional and subregional assessment for Asia and the Pacific, Pretoria (3-7 August 2015) for the regional and subregional assessment for Africa, and Engelberg, Switzerland (31 Aug- 4 Sept 2015) for the regional and subregional assessment for Europe and Central Asia. They were organised by the respective TSUs with support from the IPBES Bonn Secretariat. A total of about 450 participants attended these meetings, including co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, fellows, Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau members, representatives of task forces/expert groups, and IPBES Secretariat. All four meetings produced a first version of the zero order draft, consisting of a detailed scope for each chapter, and agreed on responsibilities of each author, and detailed timeline of activities towards the production of the regional and subregional assessment report.

12. The first author meetings also served as an opportunity for discussions and information exchange between the regional experts and other experts from thematic assessments (land degradation), various task forces and experts groups, including: (i) scenarios and models, ii) valuation, iii) knowledge and data, iv) indigenous and local knowledge, and v) capacity-building. The first author meeting received information and/or discussed the following items:

- Organization, overall objectives and functions of IPBES
- IPBES clients and end-users
- The IPBES conceptual framework, key messages, and work programme and procedures
- The team: co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, fellows, contributing authors, and review editors
- The assessment timeline
- The relationships between the regional and subregional assessments and the thematic and global assessments
- Confidentiality, method to select literature, resources, and treatment of uncertainty

13. The detailed chapter outlines for each of the six chapters resulting from the first author meeting were later worked out in more detail for the zero order drafts, based on the initial scoping report outlined in annex V to decision IPBES-2/5.

14. The authors also worked on the initial content for the zero order draft during the first author meetings. The expert teams also agreed on a detailed timeline, as well as on a process for file sharing within each chapter.

C. Preparation of the Zero Order Draft

15. Following the first authors meetings during which the chapter outlines were further specified, experts started to prepare the Zero Order Draft for their assessment. The Zero Order Draft is based on the outline and initial content agreed at the first author meeting. Each regional assessment had a slightly different timeline in place for delivering it and a slightly different process for internal review. The preparation of the zero order draft started during the first author meetings and will continue until the start of 2016, after which the experts will prepare the first order drafts of the full report for the first external review by experts (30-May – 11 July, 2016).

16. In order to include indigenous and local knowledge into the regional and subregional assessments, the task force on indigenous and local knowledge is organizing sub-regional/regional indigenous and local knowledge resource workshops. The first one took place for the African regional and subregional assessment in Paris in September 2015, and the next one focuses on Europe and Central Asia region, and takes place in Paris, from 11 to 13 January 2016. The primary focus of the meeting is to facilitate dialogue and share knowledge between selected indigenous and local knowledge holders/experts and experts of the regional assessments, as described in IPBES/4/7 and IPBES/4/INF/6. This shared dialogue and knowledge are expected to reinforce the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge to the regional assessments.

17. In order to identify the capacity building needs in the four regions, the technical support units for the regional and subregional assessments also participated in the capacity building forum that took place in Dehradun India in October 2015. Additionally, the regional and subregional assessments have at least one fellow per chapter as part of their assessment, as described in IPBES/4/6 and IPBES/4/INF/5.

D. Second author meetings

18. The second authors meeting will be held jointly by the regional and subregional assessments and the land degradation and restoration assessment in Bonn from 22-26 August 2016. The co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and review editors will attend the meeting, together with dedicated members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, Bureau, task forces and Secretariat. The second authors meeting will address the following issues:

- Developing key messages and Executive Summaries
- Reducing redundancy of cross-cutting issues across chapters
- Standardizing the quality of scientific evidence across chapters
- Harmonizing the tone and comprehensiveness across chapters
- Discussions on incorporation of indigenous and local knowledge into the report chapters
- Discussions on the incorporation of values, scenarios and data and knowledge into the report chapters
- Prioritizing and handling the comments from the expert review
- Ensuring collaboration between the regional and subregional assessments and the land degradation and restoration assessment

E. Timeline

19. An updated annotated timeline per region is provided in Annex II.

III. Progress in work plan and next steps

20. The preparation of the first order drafts of the regional assessments will take place from the end of 2015 until April 2016. The internal review of the first order draft will take place from mid-March until mid-April 2016, with the external review taking place from mid-April 2016 until the end of May 2016 (with slight differentiation in the exact dates possible between the different regional assessments). Governments will be notified of the commencement of the first review process. The results of this review

will be summarized by the review editors, and authors will respond to all review comments and record their annotations on the comment forms. The handling of comments will be left to the discretion of the coordinating lead authors along with advice and guidance from the review editors. The second author meeting will give an opportunity for coordinating lead authors and review editors from all regions to align the overall structure of the assessment reports as well as to discuss the comments for the technical report.

21. A full list of expert reviewers per regional assessment has been made available on the Platform's website.

Annex I

List of experts for the regional and subregional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services

Abbreviations: CLA (Coordinating Lead Author), LA (Lead Author), LA 3bi (Land degradation and restoration assessment expert working as thematic expert within the regional assessment), LA 3bii (invasive alien species assessment expert working as thematic expert within the regional assessment), LA 3biii (sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity assessment expert working as thematic expert within the regional assessment), and Fellow (Young Fellow).

Author list for the Asia Pacific regional and subregional assessment			
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Author list for the Asia Pacific regional and subregional assessment			
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Author list for the Asia Pacific regional and subregional assessment			
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Annex II

Timeline for the regional and subregional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services

<i>Date</i>	<i>Actions and institutional arrangements</i>
2015	
First quarter	Plenary at its third session approves the conduct of regional and subregional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The Chair, through the secretariat, requests nominations from Governments and other stakeholders of experts to prepare the assessment report.
Second quarter	Secretariat compiles lists of nominations. The MEP selects the assessment co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors, using the approved selection criteria set out in decision IPBES-2/3. List gets fine-tuned by assessments co-chairs. The Panel
Third quarter	The Management Meetings for the regional Assessments take place as well as their First Author Meetings. Start of the drafting of the Zero Order Draft.
Fourth quarter	Preparation of Zero Order Draft.
2016	
First / early second quarter (Jan – May)	Preparation of First Order Draft and an internal review
Second quarter 30 May-11 Jul	Parallel <i>First Order Draft review by experts</i> of all four regional/subregional assessments and the land degradation and restoration assessment
Third quarter 22-26 Aug	Joint second author meeting between the experts of the regional assessments and the land degradation and restoration assessment (including co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, liaison experts, and review editors)
Third / fourth quarter	Second drafts of chapters and first draft of summary for policymakers to be prepared
2017	
First quarter	Continued preparation of Second Order Draft and internal review
Second quarter 1 May – 19 Jun	Parallel <i>Second review by Governments and experts</i> (Second Order Draft and first draft of summary for policymakers) of all four regional/subregional assessments and the land degradation and restoration assessment
Third quarter	Third author meeting (co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, liaison experts, review editors)
Fourth quarter	Final text changes to the assessment and the summary for policymakers
2018	
First quarter 15 Dec 2017 – 26 Jan	Translation of the summary for policymakers into the six official languages of the United Nations
Jan - Mar 19-24 Mar	Submission of the assessment, including the translated summary for policymakers, to Governments for final review prior to Plenary session IPBES-6 Presentation of the summary for policymakers to Plenary
Second quarter	Outreach and communication