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**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy  
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Third session**

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Item 8 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**Communications and stakeholder engagement:  
stakeholder engagement strategy****Revised draft stakeholder engagement strategy (deliverable 4 (d))****Note by the secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. In decision IPBES/1/2, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services invited the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Council for Science (ICSU) to work with relevant stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities and the private sector, and with the secretariat, to prepare, in consultation with the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, a draft stakeholder engagement strategy for supporting the implementation of the work programme. After a broad consultative process that included a call for input, a physical workshop and an online review, all comments and suggestions were incorporated in the draft stakeholder engagement strategy that was submitted to the Plenary for consideration at its second session (IPBES/2/13).

2. At the second session of the Plenary, representatives expressed general support for the draft strategy, and, following the discussion, the Chair proposed that the secretariat develop a revised version for consideration by the Plenary at its third session (IPBES/2/17, sect. VII.B). In addition, at the third Bureau meeting, in March 2014, the Chair asked the secretariat to develop an initial implementation plan, to be presented together with the draft strategy to the Plenary at its third session.

3. In response to that request, the secretariat, working with Bureau members and in consultation with Panel members, prepared a revised version of the draft stakeholder engagement strategy and a draft implementation plan and invited comments from stakeholders. In total, the secretariat received 364 comments from stakeholders and took them into consideration in the preparation of the present note. In addition, the secretariat took into consideration suggestions from stakeholders that were discussed by the Platform's Pan-European Stakeholder Consultation at its second meeting, held in Basel, Switzerland, in September 2014. The revised version of the draft strategy (see sects. II to IX) and the initial implementation plan (see sect. X) are submitted to the Plenary for consideration at its third session.

**II. Context**

4. Stakeholder engagement has been identified as an important element for the relevance, effectiveness, credibility and overall success of the Platform. The stakeholder engagement strategy differs from the communications strategy in the following respects: while the stakeholder engagement

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\* IPBES/3/1.

strategy would need to focus on encouraging the participation of scientists and other knowledge holders in the Platform's work and on facilitating the use of the Platform's products, such as its policy support tools, the communications strategy would need to focus on promoting the work of the Platform among key audiences via publications, media relations, special events and other measures. The revised communications strategy is submitted as a separate document (IPBES/3/15). It is proposed that both strategies be considered as live documents that can be further developed as necessary.

### III. Proposed oversight

5. Two options for overseeing the development, operation and implementation of the stakeholder engagement were considered at the second session of the Plenary, based on the draft set out in the note by the secretariat (IPBES/2/13). A range of views were expressed on the two options, with some supporting the option of a secretariat-led process and others the establishment of an inclusive open-ended forum of stakeholders working in collaboration with the secretariat (IPBES/2/17, sect. VII.B):

(a) **Option 1.** The development and operation of the stakeholder engagement strategy is overseen by the secretariat, under the supervision of the Bureau, and the Plenary, and with support from the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and interested stakeholders;

(b) **Option 2.** The development and operationalization of the stakeholder engagement strategy is overseen by an inclusive, open-ended forum of stakeholders, representing the diversity of stakeholders, working on a virtual basis and in collaboration with the secretariat.

6. For option 1, eligibility criteria might need to be established for the participation of interested stakeholders so as to ensure balanced representation. If option 2 is selected, several issues need to be addressed, such as eligibility and selection criteria for the members of the open-ended forum, the nomination process, duration of term, gender and regional balance, the representation of different disciplines and knowledge, reporting lines and the potential budget for meetings.

### IV. Purpose and objectives

7. The purpose of the Platform is to strengthen the science-policy interface on issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem services through its four functions (assessments, knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building). The overall purpose of stakeholder engagement is to support the implementation of the Platform's work programme and its specific deliverables for the period 2014–2018 in a participatory, inclusive and transparent manner. The Platform will depend on expert individual contributions for its assessments. In addition, the other three functions of the Platform also require input from and participation by a diverse mix of stakeholders. Accordingly, the strategy for engaging with stakeholders is a key element of the efforts to mobilize support for the implementation of the Platform's work programme for the period 2014–2018.

8. Setting clear objectives that are aligned with the purpose of stakeholder engagement will help the strategy to maintain its focus. Key objectives of the Platform's stakeholder engagement include:

(a) Reaching out to a diversity of potential users and providers of information to increase the relevance and use of the Platform;

(b) Bringing diverse perspectives together to facilitate creativity and innovation;

(c) Attracting scientists, such as assessment experts, and other knowledge holders from citizen science initiatives and indigenous and local communities to contribute to the Platform's deliverables;

(d) Strengthening support for the Platform's deliverables from different regions and scientific disciplines;

(e) Endeavouring to reach equity and balance in the contribution of knowledge across regions, sectors, genders and knowledge types;

(f) Delivering high-quality products in the context of science and knowledge to decision-makers who are the end users of the Platform's deliverables;

(g) Mobilizing resources for capacity-building, in order to contribute to the development of assessments and policy support tools and facilitate the use of policy support tools;

(h) Mobilizing in-kind support from stakeholders to promote the implementation and use of the Platform.

## V. Definitions of stakeholders

9. In the context of the work programme, stakeholders will act as both contributors and end users of the Platform and will be individual scientists or knowledge holders, and also institutions, organizations or groups working in the field of biodiversity, that could:

- (a) Contribute to the activities of the work programme through their experience, expertise, knowledge, data, information and capacity-building experience;
- (b) Use or benefit from the outcomes of the work programme;
- (c) Encourage and support the participation of scientists and knowledge holders in the work of the Platform.

10. The Platform aims to strengthen the interface between science and policymaking on issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem services. For the sake of brevity, two categories of stakeholders (contributors and end users) have been identified. The list below is not exhaustive but gives an indication of the types of stakeholders with whom the Platform could engage:

- (a) *Contributors: scientists, knowledge holders and practitioners.* These terms are intended to include a broad range of knowledge holders, knowledge producers, and knowledge managers. The terms also include holders of indigenous and local knowledge, applied researchers working for non-governmental organizations, scientific and knowledge networks, citizens involved with monitoring and citizen science, policy think tanks, universities, academics and students from research institutions in both natural and social sciences from across the world, members of non-governmental and community-based organizations, businesses, extractive industries, land owners, intergovernmental organizations and a multitude of other organizations and individuals involved in the delivery of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- (b) *End users: policymakers.* This term includes government officials from the Platform's member States at different levels and their advisors. It further includes officials in United Nations specialized agencies and multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, development banks, local governments and local policymakers.

## VI. Scope

11. Stakeholder engagement will be essential to efforts to advance the four functions of the Platform (assessment, knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building). One aspect of the Platform's stakeholder engagement will be the need to mobilize stakeholders who could act as contributors to its four functions, while another aspect will be efforts to facilitate use of the Platform's products, such as the catalogue of relevant assessments or the catalogue of policy support tools, by end users. A third aspect will be an endeavour to facilitate the participation of observer organizations at Plenary meetings and to invite comments from stakeholders on documents that will be submitted to the Plenary.

12. Operationalization of the stakeholder engagement could be facilitated through the secretariat, which could provide clear information regarding opportunities for stakeholder engagement and seek feedback from stakeholders, with a view to making suggestions to improve the process and foster two-way communication.

13. In some cases, the Plenary has already clearly defined rules and processes for stakeholder engagement. For example, under its first function (assessments), the nomination and selection process of experts, including opportunities for peer review, are clearly outlined in decision IPBES-2/3. Stakeholder engagement in these areas has already begun.

14. There are, however, other areas of the work programme which might offer opportunities for stakeholder engagement and for which no rules or processes of engagement have yet been considered. Engagement with the three task forces might offer opportunities for stakeholder engagement, as their work will heavily rely on collaboration with various partners in the field of capacity-building, indigenous and local knowledge, and knowledge and data. It is suggested that the secretariat work with the task forces to provide options on stakeholder engagement in the work of task forces.

## **VII. Incentives and disincentives**

15. In implementing the stakeholder engagement strategy, it would be useful for the Platform to be aware of potential incentives and disincentives for engagement. Some useful insights can be drawn from the preliminary review of the motivation for participating in Platform assessments. The United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) prepared a paper reviewing the motivation for the participation of experts in Platform assessments, (see IPBES/1/INF/15).

16. Possible incentives for experts to participate in the work of the Platform, identified in the paper by WCMC, included: prestige and opportunities to engage in a project of scientific excellence; making a difference; relevance to their research interests; networking opportunities; working on something that they consider important; being part of an influential organization; and recognition for grants, scholarships and fellowships. Possible disincentives included: engaging in a process with regard to which they have not been involved in developing the questions; heavy time commitments; lack of clarity on how to participate; uncertainty as to how funding incentives are to be established; and lack of recognition by institutions for the contributions made by their scientists.

17. Another survey conducted by ICSU and IUCN identified the following factors as potential incentives for organizations to engage as stakeholders in the work of the Platform: the alignment of their priorities with those of the Platform; the opportunity to influence the Platform's work; the opportunity to contribute to useful outcomes; the potential to develop partnerships; the opportunity to gain recognition; and the potential to be compensated for their time.

18. Although the results do not represent the views of all future stakeholders of the Platform, they provide some insights into what needs to be done to enhance stakeholder engagement.

## **VIII. Risks**

19. As part of the Platform's stakeholder engagement planning, it would be important to identify and prepare for risks associated with engagement and ways of confronting them. The following are among the most common risks of stakeholder engagement: first, conflict of interest or dissent among stakeholders; second, inability to engage owing to lack of funding; third, participation fatigue; fourth, unmet expectations; and, fifth, unequal level of engagement among stakeholders. In order to address potential risks, the secretariat could seek feedback from stakeholders during special events and draft a policy for identifying and addressing risks, under the guidance of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.

## **IX. Evaluation**

20. For quality stakeholder engagement, evaluation needs to be planned from the outset by setting objectives and indicators of performance, which would enable the Platform to measure and evaluate progress towards achieving quality stakeholder engagement and identify areas for improvement. The following draft indicators are classified in groups depending on the nature of the information that they are providing:

<i>Indicators for successful stakeholder engagement</i>	<i>Description</i>
Commitment to stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a strategy and an implementation plan</li> <li>• Evidence of consultations with stakeholders</li> <li>• Evidence of clear and accurate policies and processes explaining how stakeholders can get involved and in which areas</li> </ul>
Capacity to address challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• References to obstacles to stakeholder engagement and the steps planned to surmount them (e.g., hard-to-reach stakeholders, language or cultural barriers, diverse agendas or interests, etc.)</li> </ul>
Extent of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metrics assessing engagement (e.g., number of nominations, peer review comments, participants, fellowships, etc.)</li> </ul>
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metrics assessing representation of stakeholders from different countries, regions, disciplines, etc.</li> </ul>
Evidence of outputs and impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of the relation between the purpose of the engagement and the expected outcomes</li> <li>• Evidence of the achieved impacts</li> </ul>
Opportunities for two-way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calls for input on issues related to stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Surveys to provide feedback on the engagement</li> <li>• Evidence of stakeholder issues and concerns being addressed</li> </ul>

21. One tool for evaluation could be the use of annual surveys, which would provide opportunities for feedback on the process and outcomes of the engagement. As mentioned earlier, the secretariat could undertake an annual survey to gauge stakeholder views and perceptions. Monitoring will be conducted continuously, by taking into account the comments and feedback during various stakeholder events.

22. In addition, as decided by the Plenary, the effectiveness of the stakeholder engagement should be independently reviewed and evaluated as part of the Platform's efficiency and effectiveness (deliverable 4 (e)).

## **X. Initial implementation plan**

23. The implementation plan includes the actions that could be taken by the secretariat to ensure that stakeholders receive sufficient and clear information on how to engage with the Platform. The secretariat will also seek input from stakeholders, with a view to improving stakeholder engagement and fostering two-way communication. In 2015, the secretariat could undertake the following activities together with stakeholders:

- (a) Identification of stakeholders;
- (b) Needs analysis;
- (c) Preparation of how-to guides and translations;
- (d) Preparation of fact sheets and translations regarding knowledge generation and capacity-building;
- (e) Collaboration with task forces to engage with hard-to-reach stakeholders;
- (f) Collaboration with existing networks and hubs;
- (g) Use of social media and electronic mail lists;
- (h) Use of information and communications technology tools;
- (i) Stakeholder events;
- (j) Annual surveys.

24. Details regarding the above-mentioned activities, together with a timeline and an indicative budget, are presented in the annex to the present note.

25. From 2016 onwards, additional activities could be undertaken by the secretariat to enhance stakeholder engagement. Products related to media relations, outreach, dissemination and promotion of the Platform's products will be covered by the budget allocated to communication as part of the Plenary-approved budget for the work programme.

## Annex

### Activities, timelines and indicative budget of the initial implementation plan

1. In 2015, the secretariat could undertake the following activities together with stakeholders.

#### Identification of stakeholders

2. Identification of the Platform's stakeholders is a complex task, as a great diversity of individuals, institutions, organizations or groups working across and within different sectors and scales (local, national, subregional, regional and global) need to be considered. Other parameters include the different disciplines (natural, social and economic sciences), types of knowledge (traditional, local and indigenous, citizen science) and sectors (industry, health, food, energy). Cultural differences, language barriers, differing stakeholder interests and different mandates and governance arrangements represent additional factors that must be taken into consideration.

3. In the process of identifying stakeholders, care should be taken to avoid the risks of including individuals or organizations that are not relevant or qualified to contribute to the Platform's work programme; and engaging with too many organizations, making the process very difficult to manage. It would, therefore, be important to set some eligibility criteria for inclusion.

4. The secretariat could develop a method for systematically identifying stakeholder groups, seeking guidance from the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, and then publish an open registry of stakeholders. One such method could be to include in the open registry all observer organizations that have already been admitted to Plenary meetings.

5. As a next step, a call for interested organizations that would like to be included in the registry could be launched by the secretariat. If there are doubts about their eligibility, guidance could be sought from the Bureau and the Panel, which could apply the same eligibility criteria as those included in the policy for admission of observers. In such cases, organizations could be asked to provide documents describing the mandate, scope and governing structure of the organization and any other information that supports the competence and interest of the organization in matters related to the Platform. Platform member States could also play a helpful role in the identification of stakeholders by providing guidance and advice. The secretariat could maintain a database of stakeholders, with their contact details and preferred method of communication.

6. A detailed categorization of stakeholders is provided in the note by the secretariat on additional information on the stakeholder engagement strategy (IPBES/3/INF/10). This categorization of potential stakeholders was originally initiated by the interim Platform secretariat (provided by the United Nations Environment Programme) in the gap analysis that it conducted for facilitating the discussions on how to improve and strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services (see UNEP/IPBES/2/INF/1). This categorization has been updated and new organizations have been included following suggestions and comments that were received by stakeholders for the revised draft communications strategy.

#### Needs analysis

7. Apart from the identification exercise, the secretariat would also conduct a needs analysis of stakeholder groups (both contributors and end users) to identify willingness to participate, incentives and disincentives for participating, interest in specific outputs of the Platform, preferred methods of engagement and issues of concern. This analysis would be conducted by using a quantitative survey that could be translated into different languages. Existing networks would be asked to forward the survey to their members. This type of survey provides comparable and quantifiable results and can reach a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

8. The needs analysis will help the Platform identify stakeholder expectations and better understand the nature and degree of engagement envisaged by contributors and end users and the engagement methods (e.g. website, direct interaction, hubs, print materials, audiovisual materials, collaborative projects or any mixture of these) best suited to different groups of stakeholders. The results of this survey could help the secretariat improve its approaches to reaching stakeholders as of 2016. A possible questionnaire to stakeholders is included in the note by the secretariat on additional information on the stakeholder engagement strategy (IPBES/3/INF/10).

## Engagement with stakeholders

9. *How-to guides.* The Plenary has adopted clear rules for the Platform's assessments, explaining at which stages the participation and input of stakeholders are sought. The policy and procedure for the admission of observers' organizations to the Plenary are also being developed. The secretariat could create simple and clear how-to guides explaining these processes. These how-to guides could be translated into all United Nations official languages and posted on the Platform's website, while fact sheets could be created for wider distribution to existing networks.

10. *Task-forces.* Another aspect of stakeholder engagement would be identifying how to strengthen collaboration with stakeholders around specific activities of the Platform's work programme, such as the need to fill gaps in knowledge or data, conduct or receive training programmes and participate in the matchmaking facility. The task force on capacity-building recently held a meeting in Brazil, at which it discussed how to communicate and engage with various stakeholders in the context of the proposed Platform matchmaking facility. The secretariat could work closely with this and other task forces to provide clear information about how stakeholders can participate in these areas.

11. *Outreach.* One of the challenges faced by the Platform in pursuing stakeholder engagement would be how to give a voice to developing countries, indigenous communities and traditional and local knowledge holders, citizen science organizations, and also community-based conservation organizations, given the possible language barriers and other constraints such as limited funding or internet access. The secretariat could work closely with the Platform's focal points, the task forces and others, as appropriate, to address these gaps.

12. *Networks and hubs.* Existing networks and regional or local hubs could help by mobilizing their stakeholders, tailoring messages, participating in outreach efforts and potentially also translating key documents. Apart from existing networks on biodiversity and natural resources management, some countries have developed their own Platform coordination units to mobilize their scientific communities. These hubs and coordination units could perhaps help set up similar units in other countries and encourage Platform member States to establish their own networks at national and subnational scales.

13. *Social media.* The use of social media would allow the secretariat rapidly to inform diverse groups of stakeholders. Via Facebook and Twitter, the secretariat could disseminate calls for input and recent developments and receive feedback, harnessing a two-way communication model.

14. *Information and communications technology.* The secretariat has procured information and communications technology tools to enable its expert groups, task forces and authors to share files and collaborate online and conduct video conferences. The videoconferencing tools use cutting-edge technology that provides a stable connection even in regions where there are connectivity problems.

15. *Stakeholder events.* The secretariat will organize each year, before the Plenary session, stakeholder days to encourage stakeholders to interact. In addition, several awareness-raising events or targeted expert workshops are expected to be initiated by groups of stakeholders and regional networks that might consider including slots for the Platform's consultations. The secretariat could support these events by assigning a staff member to them, to inform stakeholders about progress in the Platform's deliverables and to listen to their suggestions. Such participation shall of course be subject to the secretariat's budget and workload.

16. *Annual survey.* The secretariat could conduct a stakeholder needs analysis to better assess the needs of stakeholders. This annual survey would aim to gauge perceptions and views of stakeholders so as to improve stakeholder engagement.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Indicative budget</i>
Identification of stakeholders	March–May 2015	N/A
Needs analysis	June–July 2015	N/A
How-to guides and translations	March–June 2015	\$35,000 for 2015
Fact sheets and translations regarding knowledge generation and capacity-building	May–July 2015	\$70,000 for 2015
Hard-to-reach stakeholders	Ongoing	Part of the budget for deliverable 1 (c)
Networks and hubs	Ongoing	N/A
Social media	Ongoing	N/A
Information and communications technology tools (online file sharing and video conferencing tools)	Jan 2015–Dec 2018	Online file sharing and video conferencing for 500 users: \$130,000 for four years
Stakeholder events	One or two days prior to each Plenary	Estimated cost of venue per day: \$38,000
Annual survey	November each year	N/A