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**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy
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Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Initial work programme of the Platform: scoping
documents for regional assessments, land degradation
and restoration and the conceptualization of values****Report on the regional scoping process for a set of regional and
subregional assessments (deliverable 2 (b))****Note by the secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. At its second session, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau to undertake a regional scoping process for a set of regional and subregional assessments in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of the Platform's deliverables set out in the annex to decision IPBES-2/3. In implementing the request, the Panel and the Bureau noted that a regional scoping process was not provided for in the procedures, while a preliminary scoping process and a full scoping process were. A decision was made to respond to the Plenary's request in the form of a full scoping process in order to adhere to the schedule for the delivery of the work programme set out in annex I to decision IPBES-2/5. The schedule stipulates that the scoping for a set of regional and subregional assessments (deliverable 2 (b)) will take place in 2014 and that the assessment phase will start in 2015.

2. For a number of reasons, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau also wanted to facilitate the early initiation of the regional and subregional assessments by the Plenary. This set of assessments is seen as a key vehicle for the implementation of the functions of the Platform as they relate to capacity-building, knowledge generation and the development of policy support tools. Furthermore, such assessments are critical in furthering the operational principle of the Platform of ensuring full use of national, subregional and regional knowledge, as appropriate, including by ensuring a bottom-up approach. The set of regional and subregional assessments is a vital contribution to the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

3. On 30 May 2014, in response to the request by the Plenary, the Chair of the Platform called on Governments and stakeholders to nominate experts to scope a set of regional and subregional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services, implementing work programme deliverable 2 (b), for each of the five United Nations regional groupings: African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and the Caribbean States and Western European and other States. At the fourth meeting of the

* IPBES/3/1.

Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, held in Bonn, Germany, from 7 to 11 July 2014, the Panel and the Bureau selected from the nominations made by Governments and stakeholders 25 experts from each of the regional groupings, in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of the Platform's deliverables. The Panel and the Bureau also suggested that a set of key regional institutions be invited to fill some of the gaps in expertise identified among the nominations received. The list of participants is available on the Platform website (www.ipbes.net).

4. With a view to promoting integration across regions, a joint regional scoping meeting was held from 17 to 22 August 2014 at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris. The two main objectives of the meeting were:

(a) To develop options for a regional and subregional assessment structure and approach, based on social and ecological considerations;

(b) To develop the proposed scope of the assessments, including common generic issues across regions, as well as more specific issues for each region/subregion.

5. In preparation for the meeting, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel developed a guidance document in accordance with the scoping process set out in the annex to decision IPBES-2/3. A draft of the guidance document was submitted for review by Member States and observers in June 2014 as input for the joint regional scoping meeting, and the finalized document was distributed in mid-July 2014. All the objectives of the meeting were met (see sects. II and III below). The outcome of the joint regional scoping meeting, consisting of a draft report on the regional scoping process and five draft regional scoping reports, was submitted for review by member States, observers and scoping experts in September 2014. The review solicited further inputs to the regional scoping process, which are also taken into account below.

II. Options for a regional and subregional assessment structure and approach

6. The present section sets out the outcome of discussions on options for the selection of regions for the regional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which included three components: overall regional structure (paras. 7 to 9); polar ecosystems (para. 10); and marine ecosystems (para. 11).

7. The regional scoping meeting identified the following criteria for selecting a regional and subregional structure for the assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services:

- (a) Biogeographic characteristics;
- (b) Geographic proximity;
- (c) Ecological and climatic similarities and barriers;
- (d) Shared terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and ecological features, such as migrating species;
- (e) Interdependencies on ecosystem services, such as water catchments and food production;
- (f) Social, economic, political, cultural, historical and linguistic similarities, including existing regional mechanisms, institutions and processes.

8. On the basis of those criteria, the regional scoping meeting considered two options for a regional and subregional assessment structure as set out in the guidance document prepared for the meeting:

(a) An approach based on United Nations regional groupings: Africa (North Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa and Western Indian Ocean); Asia-Pacific (South Pacific, North-East Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia, Western Asia); Eastern Europe (Central Europe and Eastern Europe); Latin America and the Caribbean (Caribbean, Mesoamerica and South America); Western Europe and others (Australasia, North America and Western Europe);

(b) A geographical approach encompassing countries and territories and coastal areas within national jurisdiction with the following regions and subregions: Africa (North Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and adjacent islands, West Africa and Southern Africa); the Americas (Caribbean, Mesoamerica, South America and North America); Asia and the Pacific (Oceania, North-East Asia, South-East Asia,

South Asia, Western Asia; and Europe and Central Asia (Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Central and Western Europe).

9. Following a comprehensive discussion of the options for a regional and subregional assessment structure and approach, the scoping meeting recommended that the option of a geographical approach as defined in paragraph 8 (b) be selected for the proposed regional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The resulting country groupings are set out in the annex.

10. The meeting then considered how biodiversity and ecosystem services in the polar regions could be assessed. It recommended: (a) including the Arctic regions in the geographic regions of the Americas and Europe and Central Asia. This would involve liaising with the Arctic Council and taking its ongoing work into account; and (b) exploring with relevant Antarctic Treaty¹ bodies an assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Antarctica.

11. The meeting also considered options for assessing biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment. The option proposed by the scoping workshop was to include coastal areas within national jurisdiction in the geographic regions of Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia. That option would also entail establishing a fifth region for the open oceans with a focus on areas beyond territorial or exclusive economic zones, such as the North Atlantic, the South Atlantic, the North Pacific, the South Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the “open ocean deep sea”. This ocean region would also include the Arctic Ocean, the Southern Ocean and inland seas (such as the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Caspian Sea) bordered by several regions so that they could be assessed as an entity. The assessment would be conducted in collaboration with those regions. With respect to the marine environment, the regional assessments will build on, complement and contribute to outputs from the Regular Process for the Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects and, in particular, World Ocean Assessment I.

12. Based on the outcome of the joint regional meeting, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau propose that a total of five regions be assessed as part of the regional assessment: the four terrestrially based regions defined in para 8 (b) above and one open ocean region. The four terrestrially based regions would include coastal areas within national jurisdiction and the Arctic. The regional assessments would reflect subregional commonalities, differences and specificities, as well as cross-boundary, cross-subregional and cross-regional considerations.

13. Following a review of the outcome of the joint regional meeting by Governments and stakeholders in September 2014, some Governments proposed that further consideration be given to the subregional approach within a region, including the question as to whether a subregion could be taken out and separated from a regional assessment. It is anticipated that the geographic boundary of any additional separate subregional assessment will be determined by the Plenary if that subregional assessment is to be part of the work programme (deliverable 2 (b)).

III. Proposed scope of the regional and subregional assessments

14. The joint regional scoping meeting also developed draft scoping reports for the five regional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The scoping reports include common generic issues across regions, as well as more specific issues for each region.

15. The scoping reports introduce the regional assessments in the context of the work programme. According to the work programme schedule, the regional assessments would be performed during the biennium 2015–2016 and would be presented to the Plenary at its fifth session (IPBES-2/5, annex I, fig. II). However, the Bureau, the Panel and the scoping expert group recommend allowing for a three- rather than a two-year process, with regional assessments being finalized in 2017 and presented to the Plenary at its sixth session. This would give more time for the nomination and selection of chairs, authors and review editors, the establishment of technical support units, the integration of capacity-building efforts and the establishment of the necessary data and indigenous and local knowledge support. It would also allow more time for the preparation of drafts and for peer reviews and consideration of the assessment reports and summaries for policymakers. It is envisaged that the inputs and findings from the regional assessments

¹ The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, a committee of the International Council for Science, is of relevance in this respect.

would provide critical input for the global assessment (deliverable 2 (c)). A two-year overlap of regional and global assessments would enhance opportunities for stronger coherence and interactions between them.

16. The draft generic scoping report for regional and subregional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES/3/6/Add.1) sets out the following elements for all regions: the scope, geographic boundary, rationale, utility and assumptions; a chapter outline; key data sets; strategic partnership and initiatives; operational structure; the process and timetable; a cost estimate; communication and outreach; and capacity-building

17. The joint regional meeting gave thorough consideration to the development of a generic chapter outline to be reflected in the draft scoping reports. It was felt that the regional and subregional assessments should not necessarily attempt to cover all issues but rather focus on the contribution of biodiversity to human well-being and sustainable development. For this reason, it was recommended that the analysis focus on key ecosystem services in the regions and subregions. Reflecting on the conceptual framework of the Platform, the analysis would start with the boxes on “good quality of life” and “nature’s benefits to people” and work its way counterclockwise through “nature” and “drivers” to an integrated analysis of responses.

18. Based on this approach, the regional assessments will assess the following through the lens of nature’s benefits to people:

(a) The values of nature’s benefits to people, including the interrelationship between biodiversity and ecosystem functions and their benefits to societies, as well as the status, trends and future dynamics of ecosystem goods and services or nature’s gifts, using this analysis to determine the focus of subsequent chapters;

(b) The status and trends (past, present and future) of biodiversity and ecosystem services, including the structural and functional diversity of ecosystems, and genetic diversity;

(c) The status and trends of indirect and direct drivers, and the interrelations of such drivers;

(d) Future risks related to indirect drivers, direct drivers, nature (biodiversity and ecosystems), nature’s benefits to people (ecosystem services) and good quality of life (human well-being) given plausible socioeconomic futures;

(e) The effectiveness of existing responses and alternative policy and management interventions, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the national biodiversity strategies and action plans developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

19. In addition, the joint regional meeting recommended that the regional and subregional assessment process be closely linked to the following deliverables of the work programme:

(a) The regional and subregional assessments will build on the guide on production and integration of assessments from and across all scales (deliverable 2 (a)). The overarching guide on assessments (see IPBES/3/INF/4) sets out key aspects, such as dealing with scale and indicators, using uncertainty terms, key methodologies (scenario analysis, consideration of value) and policy support tools and methodologies, identifying capacity needs, gaps in knowledge and data and protocols regarding the integration of diverse knowledge systems;

(b) The regional and subregional assessments will build on key methodologies and concepts developed by different expert groups and task forces, such as the conceptualization of values (deliverable 3 (d)), scenarios (deliverable 3 (c)), working with indigenous and local knowledge (deliverable 1 (c)) and policy support tools and methodologies (deliverable 4 (c)). These will be set out in the respective guides (see IPBES/3/INF/7, IPBES/3/INF/6, IPBES/3/INF/2 and IPBES/3/5), with summaries included in the guide to assessments

(c) The regional assessments process will be supported by and interact with the task forces on capacity-building, indigenous and local knowledge systems, and knowledge and data. They will draw on financial and in-kind contributions facilitated under deliverable 1 (a), capacity-building activities under deliverable 1 (b) and contributions from indigenous, local and other types of knowledge provided under deliverables 1 (c) and (d).

20. It was recognized that, in order to carry out a regional/subregional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services, the author teams would need to be interdisciplinary (for example, they would need to include natural scientists, economists, other social science experts and lawyers/policy experts). These author teams should also include genuine indigenous and local knowledge holders, as well as scientists with experience and good practice of working with such knowledge systems. The nomination and selection of the author teams for the regional and subregional assessments will take place in accordance with decision IPBES-2/3. It should be noted that the assessments offer an opportunity to build future capacity by including young professionals.

21. The draft generic scoping report set out in the annex to the note by the secretariat on the draft generic scoping report for the regional/subregional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystems (IPBES/3/6/Add.1) reflects the assessment of the regional and subregional aspects of the Platform's priority themes of land degradation and restoration, invasive alien species and sustainable use of biodiversity. In the report of the Executive Secretary on the implementation of the work programme for 2014–2018 (IPBES/3/2), the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau provide several options for implementation of the work programme, which propose that some or all of the themes be fully integrated into and assumed by the regional/subregional and global assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services, rather than performed separately as thematic assessments.

22. Furthermore, as noted in the report of the Executive Secretary (IPBES/3/2) and the note by the secretariat on the initial scoping for a global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES/3/9), the global assessment will build on the regional and subregional assessments and, to this end, a number of steps will be taken to promote coherence, including on the harmonization of indicators, concepts and terminology (see IPBES/3/6/Add.1). It is proposed, for example, that the expert group selected to scope the global assessment include the co-chairs of each regional assessment.

23. During the review of the draft regional scoping documents by member States and observers, it was suggested that subregions might be interested in carrying out their own assessments. The generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments mentioned above could enable subregions to prepare their own scoping documents, if that were agreed by the Plenary. The generic report could also be a useful guide for other assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services at other scales, including at national levels.

24. The outcomes of the joint regional scoping meeting and the review process are presented in the addenda to this note as follows:

- (a) Draft generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystems (common to all regional/subregional assessments) (IPBES/3/6/Add.1)
- (b) Draft complementary scoping report for the regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa (IPBES/3/6/Add.2);
- (c) Draft complementary scoping report for the regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the Americas (IPBES/3/6/Add.3);
- (d) Draft complementary scoping report for the regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Asia-Pacific (IPBES/3/6/Add.4);
- (e) Draft complementary scoping report for the regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Europe and Central Asia (IPBES/3/6/Add.5);
- (f) Draft complementary scoping report for the regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the Open Ocean (IPBES/3/6/Add.6).

25. The Plenary may wish first to consider the generic scoping report for regional/subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES/3/6/Add.1) and the draft complementary scoping report for the regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the Open Ocean region (IPBES/3/6/Add.6). It may then wish to invite the regions to consider, in regional discussions, their respective regional draft complementary scoping reports (IPBES/3/6/Add.2–5) and to advise the Plenary on those regional matters.

IV. Suggested action

26. The Plenary may wish to approve the scoping reports and initiate the preparation of the proposed five regional assessments for biodiversity and ecosystem services in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and the Open Ocean region, in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of the Platform's deliverables for consideration by the Plenary at its sixth session.

Annex

Regional and subregional assessment approach for the four regions recommended by the joint scoping meeting

Regional/subregional approach as recommended by the joint scoping meeting

<i>Region</i>	<i>Subregions</i>	<i>Countries/territories</i>
Africa	East Africa and adjacent islands	Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, ^a Reunion, ^a Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania
	Southern Africa	Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe
	Central Africa	Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe
	North Africa	Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Western Sahara
	West Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo
The Americas	North America	Canada and United States of America
	Mesoamerica	Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama
	Caribbean	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, ^b Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. May include British, French, American and Dutch overseas territories in the Caribbean (islands)
	South America	Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). May include French Guyana ^a
Asia and the Pacific	Oceania	Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Pacific Island territories of Cook Islands, New Caledonia, American Samoa, ^a Tokelau, ^a French Polynesia, ^a Niue, ^a Guam, ^a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Pitcairn Island and Wallis and Futuna. Oceanic and sub-Antarctic islands in the Pacific region (or Pacific and Indian Ocean regions)
	South-East Asia	Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam
	North-East Asia	China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia and Republic of Korea
	South Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
	West Asia	Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen (Arabian Peninsula); Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine and Syrian Arab Republic (Mashriq))
Europe and Central Asia	Central and Western Europe	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey (Central Europe) Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Western Europe)
	Eastern Europe	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine
	Central Asia	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

^a Overseas territory.

^b On socioeconomic, cultural and historical grounds, the Dominican Republic could be considered part of Mesoamerica, and Guyana part of the Caribbean.