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Item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**Rules and procedures for the operations of the Platform:
nomination and selection of members of the
Multidisciplinary Expert Panel****Guidance document on the nomination and selection process for
members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and lessons
learned from the experience of the interim Panel****Note by the secretariat**

1. The present note provides information relating to the nomination and selection process for members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.
2. Annex I contains a guidance document prepared by the secretariat, based on the rules of procedure for the Plenary of the Platform, on the functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform and on relevant decisions taken at the second session of the Plenary. It is intended to provide further guidance on the process relating to the proposal by members of the Platform for nomination by regions and election by the Plenary of the members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. The first version was sent to members of the Platform on 27 June 2014, and the revised version (see annex I), which includes specific information regarding the time commitment required of Panel members and a revised section on the scientific and technical functions of the Panel and deletes the original text related to regional groupings, was sent to members of the Platform on 24 July 2014. Annex II contains a report by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel reflecting on the lessons learned with regard to the functioning of the Platform and how to improve it, as requested by the second session of the Plenary in its decision IPBES-2/2. The report was made available on the Platform website in May 2014. Both reports are reproduced without formal editing.

* IPBES/3/1.

Annex I

Guidance document on the nomination and selection process for members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel of the Platform

1. This guidance document has been produced by the Secretariat, based on the IPBES rules of procedure for the Plenary of the Platform, on the functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform, and on relevant decisions taken at the second session of the IPBES Plenary (IPBES-2). It is intended to provide further guidance on the process for the proposal by IPBES Members, nomination by regions, and selection by the Plenary of the members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP). It was sent to IPBES Members on 24 July 2014 and posted on the IPBES web site.
2. The institutional arrangements and rules of procedure of the Platform provide for a MEP that will carry out various scientific and technical functions (see Annex I to this document for the agreed functions). The process to be followed for the nomination, selection and election of the MEP members is set out in decision IPBES-2/1, which contains amendments to the rules of procedure for the Plenary with regard to rules governing the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.
3. The members of the MEP are, in accordance with rule 25 of the rules of procedure for the Plenary, elected for their personal expertise, and are not intended to represent any particular region.
4. Rule 26 of the procedures requires that candidates for the Panel are to be proposed by members of the Platform for nomination by the regions and election by the Plenary. In the event that a region cannot agree on its nomination, the Plenary will decide. Each region will nominate five candidates with disciplinary and gender diversity for membership of the Panel.
5. The following criteria could, according to the same rule, be taken into account in nominating and selecting members of the Panel:
 - (a) Scientific expertise in biodiversity and ecosystem services with regard to both natural and social sciences and traditional and local knowledge among the members of the Panel;
 - (b) Scientific, technical or policy expertise and knowledge of the main elements of the Platform's programme of work;
 - (c) Experience in communicating, promoting and incorporating science into policy development processes;
 - (d) Ability to work in international scientific and policy processes.

I. Nominations

6. The secretariat of the Platform, in accordance with rule 27 of the procedures, invited members of the Platform to submit nominations (with accompanying curricula vitae) of candidates for the Panel no less than four months before the scheduled election. The deadline for submissions of nominations to the secretariat was set to 15 August 2014. Nominations were made by filling out an online form and uploading curricula vitae.
7. Names and curricula vitae of all nominees together with the identity of the member state or observer state making the nomination are available in IPBES/INF/15. The Plenary can accept late nominations at its discretion.
8. The IPBES Plenary in decision IPBES-2/2 reiterates the need to ensure that the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel reflects regional, gender and disciplinary balance consistent with the rules of procedure, in particular rule 26. It also urges the regional groupings, in submitting nominations of Panel members, to take into account the need for gender balance and disciplinary diversity in order to attain an overall gender and disciplinary balance of the Panel. It emphasizes that the final choice of the nominees of each regional grouping is the responsibility of that grouping. In addition, the interim MEP, in their document on "Lessons learnt from the MEP" (see Annex 2 of this document) draws attention to the **necessity for MEP members to commit 20% of their time, which translates to roughly 10 weeks a year, with significant international travel.**

II. Consultations on selection

9. The Plenary in decision IPBES 2/2 also:

(a) Urges the regional groupings to begin consultations on possible nominees early and to engage with their respective Bureau members, as appropriate, to facilitate discussions within and across the regions in order to ensure a balanced Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;

(b) Encourages the regional groupings to solicit nominations for potential Panel candidates from the widest range of stakeholders;

(c) Encourages each regional grouping to consider nominating for a further term from one to three current Panel members to ensure continuity within the Panel.

10. In the nomination and selection process, governments may want to consider the report posted on the IPBES website prepared by the *interim* MEP in response to decision IPBES-2/2 on lessons learned from the IPBES interim MEP. The report points to the need for improved scientific discipline and gender balance of the MEP. It recommends that the next MEP should be aiming for at least three social scientists, three economists, and three marine specialists and for a 50/50 gender balance.

11. Governments may also want to have regard to the following operating principles:

(a) Recognize and respect the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems;

(b) Recognize the unique biodiversity and scientific knowledge thereof within and among regions and the need for the full and effective participation of developing countries and balanced regional representation and participation in its structure and work;

(c) Take an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach that incorporates all relevant disciplines, including social and natural sciences;

(d) Recognize the need for gender equity in all relevant aspects of its work;

(e) Address terrestrial, marine and inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interactions.

12. Regional groupings are invited to inform the Secretariat of their provisional candidates for MEP nomination no later than 30 September 2014. It will be useful to leave some flexibility in the nomination by each region of their final candidates based on a further consideration of the overall balance. We suggest that all regions may consider developing a shortlist of 5-10 candidates by end of September, which can be further reviewed during the regional consultations prior to the Plenary meeting. The Secretariat will prepare a working document for IPBES-3 with the full list of provisional candidates for MEP nomination (early October 2014).

13. Regions may want to finalize their inter-regional consultations in Bonn in January 2015 at the IPBES-3. Regions may also want to engage in intra-regional consultations to ensure continuity and on regional, gender and disciplinary balance of the MEP.

III. Election

14. The members of the Panel will in accordance with rule 28 of the procedures be elected by the Plenary by consensus, unless the Plenary decides otherwise. If the Plenary decides to elect members of the Panel by vote:

(a) The elections will be held during ordinary sessions of the Plenary;

(b) Each member of the Plenary has one vote in the elections;

(c) All elections will be decided by a majority of the members present and voting;

(d) All elections will be held by secret ballot, unless otherwise decided by the Plenary;

(e) After completion of the elections, the number of votes for each candidate and the number of abstentions will be recorded.

Appendix I

Extracts from the functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform relevant to the nomination and selection of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel

B. Administrative and scientific functions to facilitate the work of the Platform

13. One or more subsidiary bodies will be established by, and report to, the Plenary to support the smooth, effective and timely operation of the Platform. The subsidiary body or bodies will, as decided by the Plenary, provide administrative and scientific oversight and facilitate the operations of the Platform.

15. Such scientific and technical functions include:

(a) Providing advice to the Plenary on scientific and technical aspects of the Platform's programme of work;

(b) Providing advice and assistance on technical and/or scientific communication matters;

(c) Managing the Platform's peer-review process to ensure the highest levels of scientific quality, independence and credibility for all products delivered by the Platform at all stages of the process;

(d) Engaging the scientific community and other knowledge holders with the work programme, taking into account the need for different disciplines and types of knowledge, gender balance, and effective contribution and participation by experts from developing countries;

(e) Assuring scientific and technical coordination among structures set up under the Platform and facilitating coordination between the Platform and other related processes to build upon existing efforts;

(f) [Exploring approaches to facilitating the sharing and transfer of technology in the context of assessment, knowledge generation and capacity-building according to the work programme of the Platform;]

(g) Exploring ways and means to bring different knowledge systems, including indigenous knowledge systems, into the science-policy interface.

C. Subsidiary bodies of the Plenary

16. The following subsidiary bodies of the Plenary will be established:

(b) A Multidisciplinary Expert Panel that will carry out the scientific and technical functions listed above.

Annex II

Lessons learned from the interim Multidisciplinary Expert Panel

March 2013 – March 2014

Background

The Plenary (In Annex 2 of IPBES Decision 2/2) requested that the interim Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) prepare a report by June 2014, reflecting on “the lessons learned with regards to its functioning and how to improve it”. The interim MEP was selected at the first IPBES Plenary meeting in January 2013. Its first official meeting took place in Bergen, Norway from the 1st-6th June 2013, its second meeting from the 26th -31st August 2013, in Cape Town, South Africa, and its third meeting 8-10 March 2014, Bonn, Germany. In addition, it convened an international expert workshop prior to its second meeting in Cape Town to finalise the Conceptual Framework requested by the plenary in decision IPBES/1/2.

At these meetings, the MEP quickly formed as an effective team, building productive and professional relationships among themselves. Working in tandem with the Bureau, it rapidly developed a coherent and strategic work program that was welcomed and approved by the Plenary at its second meeting in Turkey in December 2013. After this first, intense year of operation, however, it is possible to draw out some key messages that will assist in improving the MEP’s effectiveness still further in the future.

Nine Lessons Learned

1. Selection of Committee Members must be improved

It is clear that the selection process needs to do a much better job in terms of scientific discipline and gender balance of the MEP. We do not have sufficient social scientists and economists, nor marine specialists. There is a general need to build multidisciplinary in full meetings of the MEP, but there is also a practical need in that much of the work at MEP meetings is conducted in breakout groups (often 3 – 6 are running at a time at our meetings) and we do not have enough of these disciplines to go around. Furthermore, we have only six women out of 25 scientists. The next MEP should be aiming for at least three social scientists, three economists, and three marine specialists and an approach to 50/50 gender balance overall.

Lastly, it has proved useful in the interim MEP to have research management skills to call on, so 2-3 MEP members with experience in successfully leading university or government departments/institutions, or multidisciplinary teams, would be helpful.

Given that it is hard for regions to achieve discipline and gender balance in isolation, we support the proposal to have interim discussions between regions, after regional shortlists have been completed, in order to better balance the final global selection of the MEP, while emphasizing that the final choice of the nominees of each regional grouping is the responsibility of that grouping (as stated in Annex 2 - IPBES Decision – 2/2).

2. Candidates for the MEP must be aware of the time commitment and travel costs

It is important to make sure that candidates are well aware of the minimum of 20% time commitment to the MEP. This translates to roughly 10 weeks a year, with significant international travel. Furthermore, members from developed countries are also required to find funding (ideally from the Government that nominates them) for their own travel to meetings of the MEP - perhaps 3-6 per year, as the program develops. Candidates for the MEP should indicate in their application that they have already discussed these commitments with their employers and have received a commitment to that end. Apart from the direct work commitment required to deliver the IPBES products, they may need to spend some time on outreach and coordination within their own region (not just country of origin), as well as on scientific activities (conferences, project evaluations, reviews).

3. Having co-chairs is a good idea

The co-chairing arrangement has worked well, with two co-chairs, one from a developed and one from a developing country, to demonstrate and model collegiality, and to share the arduous task of chairing 3 to 5 day meetings. This arrangement should continue. The approach of having the MEP chair chosen by its members worked well. We devised a system of having each UN regional group on the MEP nominate a MEP Regional Vice-Chair (RVC) – giving five RVCs in all. These RVCs then nominated from amongst themselves two individuals as Co-Chairs of the MEP, after which the MEP as a whole endorsed the two nominations. There was no necessity to go to voting, although we could have used that, if there were more than two nominees from among the five. We suggest something similar be used next time. On the other hand, we have not used the MEP Vice-Chairs substantively (except at Regional meetings) during our year of existence – by and large MEP has worked as a single large team, breaking up into project groups that cut across regional lines. Nevertheless, we recommend the position of Regional MEP Vice-chair be retained to coordinate regional caucusing, if necessary, on complex issues.

4. MEP members should serve full three year terms

It is strongly recommended that there be no shared positions on the MEP. Members should serve no less than three year terms, with the possibility of one renewal – a maximum of six years in all. The presence of some individuals in shared positions for just a few months on the interim MEP was particularly problematic, with the MEP having only just having learned how to work together, before it was time for these members to move on. Even on the full MEP, breaking those 3 year terms into two, to allow two people to share them, will lead to a loss of continuity and momentum, and will compromise individuals' accountabilities in MEP decision-making.

At the end of every three year period, we recommend that roughly half of the membership of the MEP be turned over. This will allow a healthy compromise between renewal of ideas and the retention of corporate knowledge and momentum. This should also apply to the two co-chairs, with one of the pair turning over at each 3 year period to allow for renewal, combined with retention of corporate knowledge.

We also recommend that MEP members with relevant skills and knowledge relating to individual IPBES deliverables should be allowed to remain as experts such as lead authors etc. for those deliverables, after their term as MEP member ends, but no former MEP member should be engaged in more than one such task.

5. The relationship between the MEP and the Bureau has been very positive and productive

The Co-Chairs have been scrupulous in ensuring that projects intended by the Plenary to be MEP-led have been so led. On the other hand, during MEP discussions, individual members of the two bodies have worked collaboratively to carry out our tasks. We believe the collaboration has led to better-considered and better-integrated outputs. It is recommended that, in future, it continue to be an expectation that Bureau members attend MEP meetings as observers unless, exceptionally, there is a demonstrable need by the MEP to meet separately. In practice, it is not expected that this capacity would be exercised frequently. In addition, we feel that Bureau members should be expected to contribute to scientific discussions with the MEP and so should be selected for their potential scientific contribution, as well as for their political and governance experience. MEP meetings should obviously, nevertheless, remain as a science forum, while Bureau meetings (with MEP co-chairs in attendance, as happens currently) should continue as a governance, management and business forum.

6. External observers are valuable but should be handled with care

Interaction with key stakeholders, from time to time, will be invaluable in developing the work programme. MEP Co-Chairs should therefore be given discretion (after consultation with MEP members) to allow observers from a range of stakeholders - not just certain agencies named by the Plenary – to attend the MEP. Co-Chairs should also, however, have the discretion to limit attendance by observers of any kind to particular sessions of the MEP meetings, in order to allow the MEP the option of some observer-free time. Decision-making in the MEP is by consensus, and the MEP members need to be able to air their views and ask questions without inhibition, in order for a true consensus to be reached. The presence of substantial numbers of external observers can inhibit open dialogue and, in the informal scientific discourse of the

MEP, can potentially influence the discussion in a way that is not necessarily in keeping with the need for the MEP to be held accountable for its decisions.

7. There are some things that can only be achieved in face-to-face meetings

We are aware of the desire of the Plenary to minimize the amount of travel carried out by the MEP in conducting its business. We support this, but we also believe that the early stages of the formation of a team can only be done face-to-face. Consequently, we obtained funding (from Australia) for a preliminary MEP/Bureau meeting in Cambridge prior to the first official interim MEP meeting in 2013, in order to begin the team-formation process and ensure the first official MEP meeting would go well. The hosts of the various MEP/Bureau meetings included informal social activities that were invaluable in building trust and esprit de corps among members. This has allowed a high level of productivity to be rapidly achieved. Similarly, certain types of complex discussions, such as the selection of authors for the deliverables process from hundreds of nominations, are impossible to carry out remotely.

As trust builds between team members, as tasks become better formulated and clarified, and as the experience with IPBES grows, the possibility of successfully working remotely should increase. The fact that many MEP members are funding their own travel to the MEP and deliverables meetings should reassure the Plenary that the number of face-to-face meetings is being kept to a minimum.

8. The MEP must be aware of its Code of Practice and regularly update it as experience grows

The MEP will undoubtedly face many difficult decisions, and challenges to its judgement, down the years. The MEP/Bureau has developed a code of practice that should help the future MEP to build a reputation for excellent research conduct. All future MEP members should be aware of the code. It should be made available to future co-chairs to adapt it and develop it as experience grows.

9. Support from the Secretariat has been essential to the effective functioning of the MEP

A key element of the success of the program so far has been the support of the Secretariat which has been unfailingly professional, gracious and knowledgeable. It is our observation that the Secretariat, while continuing to do excellent work, is now significantly over-worked, and we recommend that the required staff complement be appointed as quickly as possible. It will also be important to ensure that the Executive Secretary can call upon well-developed project management skills among her team members to assist her in managing the intersecting timelines and contingencies involved in delivering the IPBES deliverables.
