



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

Bonn, Germany, 7–10 March 2017

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Report of the Executive Secretary on the implementation
of the work programme for the period 2014–2018****Implementation of the first work programme of the
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and
Ecosystem Services****Report of the Executive Secretary****Introduction**

1. At its second session, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) adopted decision IPBES-2/5, by which it approved an ambitious first work programme with a sequenced set of deliverables for the period 2014–2018. The work programme was approved on the understanding that work on specific deliverables would be initiated following active decisions by the Plenary in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of the deliverables of IPBES (decision IPBES-3/3, annex I). In decision IPBES-2/5, the Plenary also initiated and guided work on all but one of the work programme deliverables (deliverable 4 (e), review of the effectiveness of IPBES) with the intention of returning to the matter at its third session.

2. At its third and fourth sessions, the Plenary adopted decisions IPBES-3/1 and IPBES-4/1, respectively, in which it provided further guidance on the implementation of all the work programme deliverables. In decision IPBES-4/1, the Plenary approved the undertaking of a global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services to be performed over the period from 2016 to mid-2019, thus extending some of the activities of the first work programme beyond 2018, to mid-2019.

3. The present report has been prepared by the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, to facilitate the consideration by the Plenary of the progress achieved in the implementation of the work programme. As a basis for that consideration, the present note provides information on the following matters:

- (a) Progress made in 2016 in the implementation of the deliverables set out in the work programme for the period 2014–2018 initiated in decisions IPBES-2/5, IPBES-3/1 and IPBES-4/1;
- (b) Further lessons learned by the Bureau, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the secretariat over the course of 2016, the third year of implementation of the work programme, building on lessons learned in previous years.

* IPBES/5/1/Rev.1.

I. Progress in the implementation of decisions IPBES-2/5, IPBES-3/1 and IPBES-4/1 on the first work programme

4. In 2016, one assessment author group (global assessment), one scoping group (sustainable use of biodiversity) and two small groups of experts (values and scenarios) were established, and two assessment author groups (pollination and scenarios) and one larger expert group (values) were disbanded. Five assessment author groups (regional assessments, assessment of land degradation and restoration), established in 2015, three task forces (on capacity-building, knowledge and data, and indigenous and local knowledge) and two expert groups (on policy support and the guide on assessments), all established in 2014, continued their work in 2016. Altogether, these groups involved some 900 experts, bringing the total number of experts involved in IPBES since the start of the implementation of the first work programme to 1,300. A total of 22 meetings were held over that same period.¹ Four technical support units were established thanks to in-kind offers from Governments and organizations, and two technical support units finished their work, bringing the total number of technical support units to 12. More information on institutional arrangements is set out in document IPBES/5/INF/17.

5. The following paragraphs set out information on progress made under each objective of the first work programme of IPBES.

Objective 1

Strengthen the capacity and knowledge foundations of the science-policy interface to implement key functions of the Platform

6. Three task forces with technical support units were established in 2014 for the duration of the first work programme. In 2016, progress was achieved in the following areas:

(a) The task force on capacity-building (deliverables 1 (a) and (b)) addressed the priority capacity-building needs set out in decision IPBES-4/1, including by continuing the piloting of the draft programme on fellowship, exchange and training, as requested in the decision. The piloting of the fellowship programme, initiated in 2015, was expanded to the global assessment with the selection of 16 early career fellows from among 182 applicants. The fellowship programme now comprises 49 fellows from 37 countries and offers mentoring and training opportunities. In the context of the training component of the programme, a webinar series involving IPBES experts was held. During the webinar series, presentations were made on the assessment process, the conceptual framework, the pollination report and the preliminary guide on the conceptualization of values of biodiversity and nature's benefits to people. The task force on capacity-building assisted the Bureau and the secretariat in convening and facilitating the second capacity-building forum of IPBES with representatives of traditional donors and of potential new sources of funding. A report on the outcome of the forum is presented in document IPBES/5/3, as requested in decision IPBES-4/1. There has been a gradual shift in the focus on matchmaking – bringing together those who have capacity-building needs with those able to help meet those needs, whether technical or financial – from efforts to develop a prototype online matchmaking facility to the incremental development of matchmaking functions with web-based support structures on the IPBES website. This slight refocus is based on experience to date and feedback received, including from participants at the first and second capacity-building forums. In response to the request by the Plenary for further prioritization, programming, matchmaking and partnering, the task force developed a rolling plan for capacity-building. The plan is based on experience gained from the piloting of the draft programme on fellowship, exchange and training, and from efforts to develop a prototype matchmaking facility. Recommendations for further action are set out in document IPBES/5/3, which is supported by additional information, such as the report of the second capacity-building forum (see IPBES/5/INF/3);

(b) The task force on indigenous and local knowledge systems (deliverable 1 (c)) continued piloting indigenous and local knowledge dialogue workshops by organizing workshops for the Asia-Pacific and Americas regional assessments, and conducted an evaluation of that experience. That evaluation, which includes consideration of how best to address indigenous and local knowledge in the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, contributed to the development of an approach for working with indigenous and local knowledge in IPBES, presented in document IPBES/5/4, with additional information contained in document IPBES/5/INF/4, for consideration by the Plenary. The approach incorporates the further developed roster of experts and the participatory mechanism for working with various knowledge systems mandated in decision IPBES-2/5;

¹ These include the seventh and eighth meetings of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau, but exclude the fourth and fifth sessions of the Plenary.

(c) The task force on knowledge and data (deliverables 1 (d) and 4 (b)) continued to provide advice for ongoing assessments according to its data and management plan for 2016. Highlights of the progress achieved in the implementation include the provision of guidance on a core set of indicators and support to experts for use in IPBES assessments; the establishment of web-based infrastructure providing resources for experts performing assessments; and the preparation of a process to identify knowledge gaps and to catalyse the generation of new knowledge. The workplan of the task force on knowledge and data up to the end of the first work programme is set out in document IPBES/5/5 for endorsement by the Plenary. A full progress report is set out in document IPBES/5/INF/5.

Objective 2

Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services at and across subregional, regional and global levels

7. Progress achieved under objective 2 includes the following outputs:

(a) A revised version of the guide on the production of assessments developed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in consultation with the Bureau, with the support of a time-bound and task-specific expert group (deliverable 2 (a)). The revised guide was prepared following consultation with the assessment expert groups and is available on the IPBES website as a series of modules. During 2016 the guide was used as a basis for briefing first and second author meetings for the six ongoing assessments. The guide is a living document to which new modules will be added (IPBES/5/INF/6);

(b) First-order drafts of the four regional and subregional assessments, prepared by the assessment author groups and posted online for external peer review in mid-2016 (deliverable 2 (b)); and the convening of a joint second author meeting for those four assessments as well as for the land degradation and restoration assessment. In addition to the joint second author meeting, the Europe and Central Asia assessment held two self-funded meetings, including a full second author meeting, with all lead authors invited, in Zadar, Croatia, in September 2016, and a workshop to draft the summary of that assessment for policymakers, in Bern in January 2017. Two capacity-building workshops dedicated to drafting chapters of the respective assessments will be held in South Africa, for the African assessment, and in Turkey, for the Eastern European, Central European and Central Asian regions of the Europe and Central Asia assessment, both in early 2017, thanks to funding dedicated to capacity-building from the IPBES trust fund. A progress report on regional assessments is set out in document IPBES/5/INF/7;

(c) The selection of a group of experts for the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, which is to be finalized by May 2019 (deliverable 2 (c)); the convening of its first author meeting, and the establishment of its technical support unit at the IPBES secretariat in Bonn, with support received from Germany, the Netherlands and the United States of America. A progress report on the matter is set out in document IPBES/5/INF/8.

Objective 3

Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services with regard to thematic and methodological issues

8. Progress achieved under objective 3 includes the following outputs:

(a) Revised versions of the chapters of the thematic assessment report on pollinators, pollination and food production (deliverable 3 (a)) reflecting changes made to the summary for policymakers by the Plenary at its fourth session (IPBES/4/INF/1/Rev.1); completion of the layout and printing of the entire assessment report and the summary for policymakers; and further work on the dissemination of that assessment as set out in document IPBES/5/INF/1;

(b) A first-order draft of the assessment of land degradation and restoration (deliverable 3 (b) (i)), prepared by the assessment author group and posted online for external peer review in mid-2016, and the convening of a joint second author meeting for that assessment, together with the four regional assessments. A progress report on the matter is set out in document IPBES/5/INF/9;

(c) A revised scoping report for a thematic assessment of the sustainable use of biodiversity (deliverable 3 (b) (iii)), prepared by an expert scoping group and involving a face-to-face scoping workshop and an open review by Governments and stakeholders, submitted to the Plenary for its approval in document IPBES/5/7. Information on the scoping process is set out in document IPBES/5/INF/11;

(d) A revised version of the chapters of the methodological assessment report on scenarios and models of biodiversity and ecosystem services (deliverable 3 (c)), reflecting changes made to the summary for policymakers by the Plenary at its fourth session (IPBES/4/INF/3/Rev.1); the completion of the layout and printing of the entire assessment report and of the summary for policymakers; further work on the dissemination of the assessment; the selection by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel of an expert group to provide support for work on scenarios and models in ongoing assessments and to catalyse the further development of models and scenarios, as described in annex V to decision IPBES-4/1; and the continued functioning of the technical support unit at PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency thanks to in-kind support from the Netherlands. A progress report is set out in document IPBES/5/INF/2;

(e) Selection by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel of a time-bound expert group on values (deliverable 3 (d)); the provision of support to the consideration of values in ongoing assessments and other deliverables of IPBES, in particular those related to indigenous and local knowledge and scenarios and models; initiation of the development of the preliminary guide on values as an online resource; and the establishment of a technical support unit at the Ecosystems and Sustainability Research Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, thanks to in-kind support from the National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity and the German Corporation for International Cooperation. The initiation of a methodological assessment of values, based on the scoping report on values approved by the Plenary at its fourth session, will be considered by the Plenary at its fifth session (IPBES/5/6 and IPBES/5/INF/12). A progress report on the matter is set out in document IPBES/5/INF/13.

Objective 4

Communicate and evaluate Platform activities, deliverables and findings

9. Progress achieved under objective 4 includes the following outputs:

(a) Updating and revision of the catalogue of assessments and integration into the new web-based architecture of the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies (deliverable 4 (a)), as set out in document IPBES/5/INF/14;

(b) Further development by the expert group on policy support tools and methodologies of the online catalogue on policy support tools and methodologies (deliverable 4 (c)), with a prototype made available to Governments and stakeholders for testing and review prior to the fifth session of the Plenary, and further development of options for the governance of the catalogue (IPBES/5/8); further development of the guidance on how to integrate work regarding policy support tools and methodologies across all relevant deliverables, in particular in IPBES assessments; and the establishment of a technical support unit at the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) thanks to in-kind support from UNEP-WCMC. A progress report on the matter is set out in document IPBES/5/INF/14;

(c) Activities in the context of the communication and outreach strategy and collaboration with open-ended networks of stakeholders with regard to the implementation of the stakeholder engagement strategy in accordance with decision IPBES-4/4 (deliverable 4 (d)) (IPBES/5/9, IPBES/5/INF/15, IPBES/5/INF/16); the establishment of institutional arrangements to operationalize technical support for several deliverables; the development of draft memorandums of cooperation with the secretariats of individual multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, in accordance with decision IPBES-4/4; and steps taken to enter into other strategic partnerships, to be reviewed by the Plenary (IPBES/5/9 and IPBES/5/INF/17);

(d) A further refined scope and terms of reference for the end-of-work-programme review of the effectiveness of the Platform (deliverable 4 (e)) by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, in consultation with the Bureau, integrating internal and external elements, based on input received from Governments and stakeholders, for consideration by the Plenary at its fifth session (IPBES/5/11).

II. Lessons learned and challenges during the third year of implementation

10. Lessons learned from the implementation of deliverables and specific challenges relate, in particular, to the following efforts:

(a) *Engagement of Governments.* The secretariat has been requested by the Plenary to seek comments from Governments on a number of occasions, but has generally received very limited input from them. For example, only eight and five Governments respectively offered written comments on the summaries for policymakers of the pollination assessment and of the assessment of scenarios and

models, while one Government on its own behalf and a second Government on behalf of the European Union and its member States submitted comments in response to the call for comments on the terms of reference for the end-of-work-programme review of IPBES. The Bureau would like to stress the importance of Governments' involvement in IPBES during the period between sessions of the Plenary as a prerequisite for a strong science-policy interface, and would like to urge Governments to respond to the Plenary's requests for comments on assessments and other important documents and processes;

(b) *Filling gaps in expertise.* The nominations received in 2016 for experts to work on the development of the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services continued to be affected by the gaps mentioned in the 2015 report of the Executive Secretary on the implementation of the first work programme (IPBES/4/2). It proved necessary, therefore, to seek additional nominations from Governments and stakeholders, using the gap-filling procedure approved by the Plenary at its fourth session, for 53 out of a total of 119 experts in order to ensure an adequate geographic, disciplinary and gender balance among experts,² particularly with regard to the selection of experts from the African, Asia-Pacific and Eastern European regions, of experts in marine sciences and social sciences (anthropology and economics), of experts in and holders of indigenous and local knowledge, and of policy practitioners. The Bureau would like to urge Governments and stakeholders to address the imbalances mentioned above in their future nominations;

(c) *Support to developed-country experts.* Experts from developed countries continued to voice reservations in 2016 about being nominated to take part in IPBES work in view of the lack of provision of travel support to them, in particular experts from North America, Southern Europe and those Eastern European countries not supported by the IPBES trust fund. The Bureau wishes to draw the attention of the Plenary to this critical situation and to invite the Plenary to encourage developed-country members to provide travel support for experts from their countries, and all institutions to support experts who are taking part in the work of the Platform;

(d) *Support to members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel from developed countries.* Several Panel members from developed countries have been unable to attend the two annual meetings of the Panel owing to a lack of financial support. The Bureau, supported by the Panel, would like to urge Governments from developed countries to select candidates for whom they can provide support or candidates who are self-supported. Alternatively, the Bureau would like to request the Plenary to consider providing support to Panel members from developed countries.

III. Update regarding the recruitment of staff members to the secretariat in 2016

11. The recruitment of staff members to the secretariat in Bonn continued between January and August 2016. Since August 2016, the team has been complete, with its 12 positions filled, as summarized in the following table. Seven staff members were recruited in 2016, with three of them replacing staff members who had left. The secretariat functioned with very reduced capacity during the first quarter of 2016.

12. The Bureau recommends that one half-time consultant at the G-6 level be recruited, to support and back up the associate knowledge management officer (P-2) in performing the increasing amount of tasks related to the further development and maintenance of the data management system that forms the foundation of an effective and efficient implementation of the work programme.

² In total, 1302 experts were selected in response to calls in 2014, 2015 and 2016 to perform work for the Platform, distributed as follows: African States, 16 per cent; Asia-Pacific States, 20 per cent; Latin American and Caribbean States, 17 per cent; Eastern European States, 10 per cent; and Western European and other States, 36 per cent. In terms of gender balance, 22 per cent of government nominees were women.

**Staffing of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy
Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in 2016**

<i>Position</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Head of secretariat (D-1)	In place since February 2014
Programme Officer (P-4) ^a	In place since March 2015
Communications Officer (P-4)	In place since July 2016
Programme Officer (P-3)	In place since April 2015
Administrative Officer (P-3)	In place since January 2016
Associate Knowledge Management Officer (P-2)	In place since May 2016
Associate Programme Officer (P-2) ^b	In place since February 2016
Administrative support staff (G-6)	In place since May 2016
Administrative support staff (G-6) ^b	In place since August 2016
Administrative support staff (G-5)	In place since July 2016
Administrative support staff (G-5)	In place since July 2013
Administrative support staff (G-5) ^b	In place since August 2015

^a Indicates in-kind position received from UNEP.

^b Indicates the positions agreed by the Plenary at its third session.
