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**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy
Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
Fifth session**Bonn, Germany, 7–10 March 2017
Item 6 (c) of the provisional agenda***Work programme of the Platform: knowledge and data****Work on knowledge and data (deliverables 1 (d) and 4 (b))****Note by the secretariat****Introduction**

1. In section II of decision IPBES-2/5, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) established a task force on knowledge and data for the period 2014–2018. The terms of reference for the task force are set out in annex III to the decision. The primary purpose of the task force is the implementation of deliverables 1 (d) and 4 (b) of the first work programme.
2. In its decision IPBES-3/1, the Plenary approved the data and information management plan for 2015 prepared by the secretariat, working with the Bureau and the task force, which is set out in annex II to the decision, and requested the secretariat to submit to the Plenary, for information, data and information management plans for each ongoing assessment and to develop data and information management plans in the context of any scoping process or report. Activities to be undertaken under the data and information management plan in 2016 were set out in appendix II to the note by the secretariat on an update on the work of the task force on knowledge and data submitted to the Plenary at its fourth session (IPBES/4/INF/7).
3. In order to implement the data and information management plan in 2016 and to more effectively fulfil its mandate, the task force on knowledge and data established three task groups – subgroups of the task force consisting of members of the task force and resource persons – on (a) indicators and data for IPBES assessments, (b) web-based infrastructure in support of data and information management needs, and (c) knowledge generation catalysis. The task force held its third meeting in Bonn, Germany, from 13 to 16 June 2016, and also worked intersessionally, mainly through the three task groups.
4. Section I of the present note describes progress made by the three task groups in their work, while section II outlines suggested action for the Plenary. The proposed workplan for 2017 and 2018 is set out in the annex to the present note. Further information on this work and on other activities undertaken since the fourth session of the Plenary is contained in the information note by the secretariat providing an update on the work on knowledge and data (deliverables 1 (d) and 4 (b)) (IPBES/5/INF/5). A draft decision on knowledge and data is set out in the note by the secretariat on draft decisions for the fifth session of the Plenary (IPBES/5/1/Add.2).

* IPBES/5/1/Rev.1.

I. Progress to date and proposed workplan for 2017 and 2018

A. Indicators and data for IPBES assessments

5. In response to its mandate to advise on the indicators and metrics to be used in IPBES products and on the standards necessary for capturing and managing associated data, the task force on knowledge and data developed a list of core indicators, which assessment authors are urged to use as part of the regional assessments and the global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The list of core indicators was developed using a strict set of criteria and was approved by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel at its seventh meeting, held in Bonn in June 2016. Information on these criteria is set out in information note IPBES/5/INF/5 together with the list of approved core indicators. The use of these core indicators allows direct comparison among the four regional assessments and between the regional assessments and the global assessment, and ensures that the quantitative evidence included in the IPBES assessments has passed a careful review. In addition, a longer list of highlighted indicators, which are brought to the attention of assessment authors, was provided to assessment authors as an overview of the wide range of indicators available.

6. In 2016, the task group on indicators and data for IPBES assessments, supported by the technical support unit for the task force on knowledge and data, developed a website that provides assessment authors with resources such as factsheets, data, visuals and explanatory text for the core set of indicators, and in some cases for the highlighted set of indicators. This support to authors has been made possible by in-kind contributions by a number of organizations that have developed the indicators on the core and highlighted lists as described in the note by the secretariat on budget and expenditure for 2014–2018 (IPBES/5/10). Assessment authors were encouraged to contact the knowledge and data technical support unit for further specific support regarding the use of the core and highlighted indicators.

7. The assessment authors were also provided with a preliminary list of socioeconomic indicators for the three elements of the IPBES conceptual framework entitled “Nature’s benefits to people”, “Good quality of life” and “Institutions and governance systems and other indirect drivers”. This preliminary list supplements the list of core indicators for the regional assessments.

8. The task group and the technical support unit plan to continue providing support to the authors of the regional assessments (2017), and to provide increasing support to the global assessment (2017–2018). Furthermore, the task group and the technical support unit suggest continuing the work on the selection of appropriate additional socioeconomic indicators for use in the global assessment, the related development of storylines, and subsequently the provision of fact sheets, data and visual materials (2017–2018).

B. Web-based infrastructure in support of data and information management

9. In response to its mandate to support the secretariat in overseeing the management of the data, information and knowledge used in developing IPBES products so as to ensure their long-term availability and to identify opportunities for increasing access to existing data, information and knowledge so as to ensure their availability to support the work of IPBES, the task force on web-based infrastructure in support of data and information management needs, since the fourth session of the Plenary, has conceptualized and overseen the development of web-based infrastructure as part of the IPBES website. The infrastructure provides IPBES experts with key information pertaining to their work, including relevant official documentation, IPBES catalogues, finalized deliverables and other products, as well as the possibility of contacting relevant experts and stakeholders.

10. It is proposed that a survey be conducted among the users of the web-based infrastructure to identify their needs, priorities and expectations, facilitating further refinement of the functionalities of the infrastructure in 2017. The infrastructure would be updated on a regular basis in order to allow for the inclusion of IPBES deliverables and other products as they become available. The infrastructure is to be developed further as a repository of key information for completed IPBES assessments and other deliverables during the period 2017–2018.

C. Knowledge generation catalysis

11. In response to its mandates to support the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in reviewing the knowledge needs and gaps identified through Platform scoping processes and assessments and to catalyse the generation of new knowledge and data and to support the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in convening dialogues with scientific organizations, policymakers and funding organizations and in undertaking other activities to address those needs identified in the work programme, and under the guidance of the Bureau and the Panel, the task force on knowledge

and data has, since the fourth session of the Plenary, developed a process for catalysing the generation of new knowledge.

12. The following three-step process is proposed for catalysing the development of new knowledge: (a) the identification of gaps in knowledge, information and data in the IPBES work programme, and in completed assessments; (b) consultation on these gaps and the formulation of priority areas for knowledge generation with the scientific community; (c) the tailoring of these priority research areas to potential research-funding institutions and their communication to these funding organizations, mainly by means of bilateral meetings. Knowledge gaps are understood in this context to include information and major data gaps pertaining to global biodiversity.

13. As part of the first step, the task force developed an online questionnaire. In a first round of consultation, the questionnaire was sent to the co-chairs and coordinating lead authors of completed and ongoing assessments on 10 October 2016. The questionnaire resulted in a set of suggestions for priority research areas based on the findings of the thematic assessment on pollinators, pollination and food production. The replies received also indicated that it was still too early in the assessment process to identify priority research areas from the regional, land degradation and restoration and global assessments.

14. The intention is therefore to send out the questionnaire again, providing further guidance from the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and with technical support from the secretariat, in mid-2017, during the completion of the second-order drafts of the regional and land degradation and restoration assessments and the preparation of the first-order draft of the global assessment. To ensure that suggested priority research areas consider all relevant IPBES deliverables, experts, when identifying gaps in knowledge, information and data, will be reminded to consider the extent of the availability of relevant indigenous and local knowledge; relevant methodologies on values and valuation, scenarios and models; and policy support tools and methodologies for the evaluation of their effectiveness. For scenarios and models, the Plenary, in decision IPBES-4/1 (section V and annex V), mandated the expert group to catalyse the development of scenarios and associated models by the broader scientific community for the future work of IPBES, and work on this is under way (see IPBES/5/INF/2).

15. It is planned to solicit feedback from the scientific community on the suggested priority areas for knowledge generation arising from the first two rounds of surveying in the second half of 2017, before targeted engagement with specific potential research funding organizations, such as the members of the Belmont Forum, in late 2017 and early 2018. This first round of consultations will be used to pilot the process for catalysing the generation of new knowledge.

16. The process would be repeated after the finalization of the regional assessments and the land degradation and restoration assessment, during the preparation of the second-order draft of the global assessment in 2018 and 2019.

II. Suggested actions

17. The Plenary may wish to consider, for approval, the proposed workplan for the task force on knowledge and data for 2017 and 2018 contained in the annex. The Plenary is also invited to provide any comments and guidance on the implementation of the workplan and, in that regard, on the information contained in section I above.

Annex

Proposed workplan for 2017 and 2018

<i>Activity</i>	<i>2nd quarter 2017</i>	<i>3rd quarter 2017</i>	<i>4th quarter 2017</i>	<i>1st quarter 2018</i>	<i>2nd quarter 2018</i>	<i>3rd quarter 2018</i>	<i>4th quarter 2018</i>	<i>1st quarter 2019</i>
Support to experts working on assessments regarding the selection and use of indicators, metrics and related data	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Survey regarding the utility of the web-based infrastructure and its further refinement	x	x	x					
Update of the web-based infrastructure with finalized IPBES products	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Development of the web-based infrastructure into a repository of key resources pertaining to IPBES deliverables		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Identification of research gaps emerging in the context of ongoing and completed assessments	x				x			
Consultation on suggested priority areas for knowledge generation	x	x				x		
Engagement with potential research funding organizations on priority areas for knowledge generation			x	x			x	x
Other activities related to knowledge and data in support of IPBES assessment experts	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x