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

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Item 6 (h) of the provisional agenda\*

**Work programme of the Platform: communication,  
stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships****Communication, stakeholder engagement and strategic  
partnerships (deliverable 4 (d))****Note by the secretariat****Introduction**

1. The present note is premised, in part, on the mandates contained in the approved communication and outreach strategy for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which is set out in annex I to decision IPBES-3/4 and of which the Plenary took note in that decision, as well as the revised draft stakeholder engagement strategy, welcomed by the Plenary in the same decision (annex II). The note also takes into account the note by the secretariat on communication and stakeholder engagement strategies (IPBES/4/INF/15), which provided an update on the implementation of the draft communication and outreach strategy, the note by the secretariat entitled “Stakeholder network of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: update on progress made in the organization and structuring of an inclusive open-ended network of stakeholders” (IPBES/4/INF/16) and decision IPBES-4/4, in which the Plenary took note of the progress made in the establishment of an open-ended network of stakeholders since the third session of the Plenary.

2. In addition to providing an overview of completed and planned communication, outreach and stakeholder engagement activities, the present note provides information to the Plenary on relevant decisions of, and guidance issued by, the Bureau at its eighth meeting.

3. In terms of strategic partnerships, the Plenary, in decision IPBES-4/4, section III, requested the Executive Secretary to finalize memorandums of cooperation between the secretariats of the individual multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services and the secretariat of IPBES and to report to the Plenary at its fifth session on outreach to and collaboration with other relevant international bodies. General guidance on the development of strategic partnerships and other collaborative arrangements is contained in annex III to decision IPBES-3/4.

**I. Communication and outreach strategy****A. Day-to-day communication**

4. *Needs analysis.* With in-kind support from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the secretariat has completed a detailed stakeholder needs analysis survey, the results of which, including implications for both communication and stakeholder engagement, are summarized in document IPBES/5/INF/16.

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\* IPBES/5/1/Rev.1.

5. *Brand strategy.* Building on the results of the stakeholder needs analysis survey, which comprises elements of a brand audit, and with the support of a professional branding agency, the secretariat will propose to the Bureau, before the end of 2017, a draft IPBES brand strategy.
6. *Website.* A full audit of the IPBES website will be undertaken before the end of 2017 to review its structure and functionality and to determine the scope of work required in the next phase of website development.
7. *Logo use policy.* The Bureau clarified the IPBES logo use policy and decided that only the IPBES logo is to appear on the front covers of all future substantive publications of IPBES, with the logos of the four collaborative United Nations partners appearing on the back covers, accompanied by text describing the institutional link between IPBES and those partners. In addition, the scope of the policy was extended to include requests for authorization of the use of the IPBES acronym by third parties in their names. Each instance of such use must be approved by the secretariat in writing, and permission will be declined in cases in which IPBES would have limited or no control over specific uses of the logo and the contexts in which it will appear.
8. *IPBES acronym.* The Bureau has agreed, on the basis of a proposal by the secretariat for the purposes of brand unity and brand recognition, to adopt a common pronunciation of the IPBES acronym. In keeping with widespread linguistic convention, the acronym will be officially pronounced as “ip-bes” – “ip” as in “hip” and “bes” as in “best”.
9. *Visual style guide.* An IPBES visual style guide has been created and approved by the Bureau (see IPBES/5/INF/15).
10. *Marketing collateral.* Informed by the IPBES style guide, a range of new organizational and marketing collateral will be designed professionally and produced by the secretariat in 2017. This will include, for example, presentation templates, factsheet and media release templates, a unique e-learning look for IPBES, information brochures, and event materials and branded display units.
11. *Videos.* A series of IPBES outreach videos, each 5 to 7 minutes in length, will be professionally conceptualized, scripted and produced before the end of 2017 for use on the IPBES website, across social media platforms and at major global and regional events, as well as for stakeholder outreach and resource mobilization purposes.
12. *Social media.* IPBES social media outreach in 2017 will focus primarily on Twitter and will include paid Twitter services; significantly increased audio and video elements; expanded social media partnerships; greater use of strategic Twitter lists management; and a professional management account. Although the IPBES Facebook page will continue to be updated on a weekly basis, it will not be a major social media priority, with the focus in 2017 shifting to also include a significant IPBES presence on LinkedIn (to extend stakeholder outreach, especially among communities of experts and professionals); YouTube (to host IPBES video material); SoundCloud (to host IPBES audio material); and Medium (to host IPBES articles and other written material). A social media audit will be conducted to inform the creation and implementation of a 12-month integrated digital communication and outreach plan in order to harmonize the communication and stakeholder engagement activities with the planned resource mobilization strategy.
13. *Traditional media.* All existing IPBES media contacts will be consolidated, maintained and expanded by mid-2017 into a central cloud-based media database. Collaboration will be extended with the communication units of a range of IPBES partner entities including, among others, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Common Information Unit of the United Nations in Bonn, the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels, IUCN, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The goals are to expand the IPBES media network and forge reciprocal agreements for the cross-posting of key media releases and announcements. A 12-month media outreach plan will be developed and implemented, integrating elements from the brand strategy, the social media action plan and the communication and stakeholder engagement strategies in order to improve the impact of IPBES communication, especially on “top tier” media outlets and opinion shapers in the science-policy field. Daily, weekly and “breaking news” media monitoring services will be procured to provide baseline and ongoing data on IPBES media “hits”, mentions and impact, as well as to alert the secretariat to significant developments making news that relate to the IPBES work programme.

14. *Opinion pieces.* The Bureau has approved a proposal for the secretariat, assisted by IPBES experts, to identify key global issues and discussions to which IPBES can make valuable contributions by way of targeted opinion pieces to raise the profile and credibility of IPBES, as well as to expand the reach and impact of its work programme outputs. Such articles will be crafted in the name of the IPBES Chair, the Executive Secretary, Bureau members and selected IPBES experts.

15. *Volunteers.* Volunteer IPBES regional communication and outreach partners will be identified and mentored to expand the penetration of IPBES communication to a wider spread of regions, subregions and languages. This initiative has already begun with Spanish outreach in the Latin American region.

## **B. Preparations for the launch of assessments in 2018 and 2019**

16. With the four regional assessments and the assessment of land degradation and restoration due to be finalized by the Plenary at its sixth session, in 2018, as well as the expected finalization of the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services at the seventh session, in 2019, the secretariat is aware of the communication lessons learned from the launch of the first two assessments in 2016 – specifically the importance of early planning and preparations for maximizing the impact of media and stakeholder outreach.

17. Targeted outreach will be undertaken regarding all six assessments to sensitize key media outlets, “top-tier” journalists and IPBES social media contacts to the importance of these outputs through process briefings, updates emanating from author meetings and media capacitation workshops.

18. It is also planned that the co-chairs of the completed assessments, members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau and selected contributing experts, as well as the volunteer IPBES regional communication and outreach partners, will contribute to a series of post-Plenary session launches and “talking tours” at the regional level, and to side events at major global summits and conferences of the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements.

19. Specialist media and public relations services will be contracted by the secretariat, starting in 2017 with the planning phase and continuing into 2018 and 2019, to ensure maximum reach and impact for communication pertaining to the launch of the six assessments.

20. The secretariat will also collaborate with its partner organizations and entities to devise communication strategies for launches of similar or related reports during the period 2017–2019.

## **II. Phased implementation of the stakeholder engagement strategy**

21. The first phase of the implementation of the stakeholder engagement strategy, now completed, entailed the identification and mapping of existing IPBES stakeholders to better understand their expertise, priorities and needs and to identify significant gaps in the IPBES stakeholder registry. The results of this mapping exercise are set out in document IPBES/5/INF/16.

22. The second phase of implementation has included the disaggregation and in-depth analysis of responses to the IPBES stakeholder needs analysis survey, initial follow-up by the secretariat on the key elements of the responses received – especially regarding expressions of interest in contributing more directly to the work of IPBES – and prioritization of unrepresented and significantly underrepresented stakeholder categories, globally and in each of the five United Nations regions, to inform the communication and outreach work of the secretariat in 2017. The prioritization exercise is presented in document IPBES/5/INF/16.

23. The roll-out of the third phase of implementation, in 2017, will entail specific outreach campaigns focusing on the priority unrepresented and underrepresented stakeholder categories and combining electronic and traditional communication with “roadshow” elements for members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau and selected experts, supported by the technical support units, voluntary IPBES regional communication partners and the IPBES stakeholder networks in each of the five regions, subject to the availability of resources. The third phase will also include the preparation, distribution and promotion of how-to guides and translations, as well as other targeted outreach material. A follow-up survey will be conducted in October 2017.

### **III. Multi-year communication and stakeholder engagement campaigns**

24. The Bureau has approved a proposal for the secretariat to conceptualize and investigate the feasibility of one or more broader, multi-year communication campaigns being undertaken to draw together the IPBES thematic, methodological and organizational messaging into a more coherent whole. Such campaigns would be designed to leverage the messaging and outreach for all the IPBES assessments, and to directly link progress on the deliverables of the IPBES work programme to wider global processes, goals, priorities and events.

### **IV. Strategic partnerships**

25. In its decision IPBES-3/4, the Plenary invited the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services to work with the Bureau as appropriate to develop strategic partnerships modelled on the existing strategic partnership arrangement with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In response to that decision, a draft memorandum of cooperation between members of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions and the IPBES secretariat was presented to the Plenary at its fourth session for its consideration (IPBES/4/18, annex I). When the Plenary considered the matter at that session, it became evident that instead of one memorandum of cooperation with the members of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, individual agreements with each of the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services would be necessary. As a result of the discussions at the fourth session, in decision IPBES-4/4 the Plenary requested the Executive Secretary to finalize such memorandums of cooperation.

26. Memorandums of cooperation will have been concluded between the secretariat of IPBES and the secretariats of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora prior to the fifth session of the Plenary. The secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) has expressed great interest in collaborating with the IPBES secretariat and it is expected that a memorandum of cooperation in that regard can be finalized in 2017.

27. As for collaboration with other strategic partners, a memorandum of understanding has been finalized with Future Earth, a research initiative on global environmental change and global sustainability. Standardized agreements are to be developed, with the guidance of the Bureau, in support of specific IPBES task forces, with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network, the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research and the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability.

28. Discussions have continued regarding collaboration with UNDP, in particular with regard to the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) initiative, where progress has been made in further clarifying the interface between BES-Net and IPBES regarding the BES-Net web portal and regarding capacity-building activities. Discussions are also under way between the secretariat and UNDP to explore wider collaboration with other initiatives and projects of UNDP, especially the “Equator Initiative”, which has the potential to support IPBES work on indigenous and local knowledge.

### **V. Suggested actions**

29. The Plenary may wish to take note of the progress achieved to date, guidance offered by the Bureau and further implementation plans for communication, stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships. The Plenary is also invited to provide comments and guidance on these matters.

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