

## Decision IPBES-3/3: Procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables

### *The Plenary*

1. *Adopts* the procedures for the preparation of the Platform’s deliverables set out in annex I to the present decision;
2. *Also adopts* the conflict of interest policy and implementation procedures set out in annex II to the present decision.

### **Annex I**

#### **Procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables**

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## 1. Definitions

The definitions of terms used in this document are as follows:

### 1.1 Governance structures

“**Platform**” means the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

“**Plenary**” means the Platform’s decision-making body, comprising all the members of the Platform.

“**Bureau**” refers to the body of elected members of the Bureau of the session of the Plenary as set forth in the rules of procedure for the Plenary of the Platform.<sup>1</sup>

“**Multidisciplinary Expert Panel**” refers to the subsidiary body established by the Plenary that carries out the scientific and technical functions agreed upon by the Plenary, as articulated in the functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, annex I, appendix I).

“**Session of the Plenary**” means any ordinary or extraordinary session of the Platform’s Plenary.

### 1.2 Deliverables

“**Reports**” means the main deliverables of the Platform, including assessment reports and synthesis reports, their summaries for policymakers and technical summaries, technical papers and technical guidelines.

“**Assessment reports**” are published assessments of scientific, technical and socioeconomic issues that take into account different approaches, visions and knowledge systems, including global assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services, regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services with a defined geographical scope, and thematic or methodological assessments based on the standard or the fast-track approach. They are to be composed of two or more sections including a summary for policymakers, an optional technical summary and individual chapters and their executive summaries.

“**Synthesis reports**” synthesize and integrate materials drawing from assessment reports, are written in a non-technical style suitable for policymakers and address a broad range of policy-relevant questions. They are to be composed of two sections: a summary for policymakers, and a full report.

“**Summary for policymakers**” is a component of any report providing a policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive summary of that report.

“**Technical summary**” is a longer detailed and specialized version of the material contained in the summary for policymakers.

“**Technical papers**” are based on the material contained in the assessment reports and are prepared on topics deemed important by the Plenary.

“**Supporting material**” is material that has been prepared for the Platform and may include the following:

(a) Dialogue reports based on the material generated by discussions, which may include intercultural and inter-scientific dialogue, at the regional and subregional levels, among members of academic, indigenous peoples, local and civil society organizations and which take into account the different approaches, visions and knowledge systems that exist as well as the various views and approaches to sustainable development;

(b) Reports and proceedings of workshops and expert meetings that are either commissioned or supported by the Platform;

(c) Software or databases that facilitate the preparation or use of the Platform’s reports;

(d) Policy-relevant tools and methodologies that facilitate the preparation or use of the Platform’s reports;

(e) Guidance materials (guidance notes and guidance documents) that assist in the preparation of comprehensive and scientifically sound Platform reports and technical papers.

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<sup>1</sup> IPBES/1/12, annex I.

### 1.3 Clearance processes

“**Validation**” of the Platform’s reports is a process by which the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau provide their endorsement that the processes for the preparation of Platform reports have been duly followed.

“**Acceptance**” of the Platform’s reports at a session of the Plenary signifies that the material has not been subjected to section-by-section or line-by-line discussion and agreement by the Plenary but nevertheless presents a comprehensive and balanced view of the subject matter.

“**Adoption**” of the Platform’s reports is a process of section-by-section (and not line-by-line) endorsement, as described in section 3.9, at a session of the Plenary.

“**Approval**” of the Platform’s summaries for policymakers signifies that the material has been subject to detailed, line-by-line discussion and agreement by consensus at a session of the Plenary.

“**Preliminary acceptance, adoption and approval**” of regional reports will be undertaken by the relevant regional representatives at a session of the Plenary, and such reports will then be further reviewed and may be accepted, adopted and approved by the Plenary as a whole.

Acceptance, adoption and approval are done by consensus.

## 2. Overview of clearance processes for the Platform’s deliverables

The various deliverables as defined in section 1.2 are subject, as appropriate, to different levels of formal endorsement. These levels are described in terms of acceptance, adoption and approval, as defined in section 1, as follows:

(a) In general, Platform reports are accepted and their summaries for policymakers are approved by consensus by the Plenary. Technical summaries are accepted by the Plenary. Regional and subregional reports and their summaries for policymakers are preliminarily accepted and approved by the relevant regional representatives of the Plenary and subsequently accepted and approved by the Plenary. In the case of the synthesis report, the Plenary adopts the full report, section by section, and approves its summary for policymakers. The definition of the terms “acceptance”, “adoption” and “approval” will be included in the Platform’s published reports;

(b) Technical papers are not accepted, approved or adopted by the Plenary, but are finalized by the authors in consultation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, which performs the role of an editorial board;

(c) Supporting materials are not accepted, approved or adopted.

### Clearance processes for Platform deliverables

<i>Platform deliverables</i>	<i>Validation</i>	<i>Acceptance</i>	<i>Adoption</i>	<i>Approval</i>
<b>Assessments</b>				
• Thematic and methodological assessment reports (based on standard or fast-track approach)	MEP/Bureau	Plenary	N/A	N/A
• Thematic and methodological assessment SPMs (based on standard or fast-track approach)	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	Plenary
• Regional/subregional assessment reports	MEP/Bureau	Plenary	N/A	N/A
• Regional/subregional assessment SPMs	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	Plenary
• Global assessment reports	MEP/Bureau	Plenary	N/A	N/A
• Global assessment SPMs	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	Plenary
<b>Synthesis reports</b>	MEP/Bureau	N/A	Plenary	N/A
<b>Synthesis SPMs</b>	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	Plenary
<b>Technical summaries</b>	MEP/Bureau	Plenary	N/A	N/A
<b>Technical papers</b>	MEP/Bureau	Authors and MEP	N/A	N/A
<b>Supporting materials</b>	MEP/Bureau	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Abbreviations:* MEP, Multidisciplinary Expert Panel; N/A, not applicable; SPM, summary for policymakers.

## 3. Procedures for the preparation of the Platform’s deliverables

### 3.1 Standard approach for thematic or methodological assessments

(a) Consistent with decision IPBES/1/3 the requests, inputs and suggestions received by the secretariat will be considered and prioritized by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau,

in accordance with paragraphs 7 and 9 of decision IPBES/1/3; this process may include an initial scoping, including feasibility and estimated cost;

(b) The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau will prepare a report containing a prioritized list of requests, with an analysis of the scientific and policy relevance of the requests as referred to in paragraph 7 of decision IPBES/1/3, including the implications of the requests for the Platform's work programme and resource requirements;

(c) Should the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau conclude that additional scoping is required to complete the prioritization of certain requests, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will submit a proposal to that end to the Plenary for consideration and decision together with the list and analysis referred to in subparagraph (b) above;

(d) If the Plenary approves detailed scoping, it will then need to decide whether to request the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to submit a detailed scoping study for the Plenary's review and decision to proceed with an assessment or whether instead to request the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to proceed with an assessment, with an agreed budget and timetable, following the completion of the detailed scoping study;

(e) If the Plenary approves the issue for detailed scoping, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, through the secretariat, will request nominations from Governments and invite relevant stakeholders<sup>2</sup> to present names of experts to assist with the scoping. The secretariat will compile the lists of nominations, which will be made available to Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;

(f) The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will then select experts from the lists of nominations, of which experts selected from those presented by relevant stakeholders should not exceed twenty per cent, and then oversee the detailed scoping, including outline, costs and feasibility;

(g) If the Plenary has requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to proceed to an assessment, the detailed scoping report is sent to members of the Platform for review and comment over a four-week period and made available on the Platform website;

(h) Based on the results of the detailed scoping exercise and comments received from members of the Platform and other stakeholders, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau decide whether to proceed with the assessment, assuming that it can be conducted within the budget and timetable approved by the Plenary. If however, the Panel and the Bureau conclude that the assessment should not go forward, they will so inform the Plenary for its review and decision;

(i) If the decision is to proceed with the assessment, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel requests nominations from Governments and invites relevant stakeholders to present names of experts to contribute to the preparation of the report;

(j) The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel selects the report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors using the selection criteria (section 3.6.2) from the lists of nominations, of which experts selected from those presented by relevant stakeholders should not exceed twenty per cent;

(k) The report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors prepare the first draft of the report;

(l) The first draft of the report is peer reviewed by experts in an open and transparent process;

(m) The report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors prepare the second draft of the report and the first draft of the summary for policymakers under the guidance of the review editors and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;

(n) The second draft of the report and the first draft of the summary for policymakers are reviewed concurrently by both Governments and experts in an open and transparent process;

(o) The report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors prepare final drafts of the report and the summary for policymakers under the guidance of the review editors and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;

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<sup>2</sup> In the context of these procedures, relevant stakeholders are qualified national, regional and international scientific organizations, centres of excellence and institutions known for their work and expertise, including experts on indigenous and local knowledge on issues related to the Platform's functions and programme of work.

(p) The summary for policymakers is translated into the six official languages of the United Nations and prior to distribution is checked for accuracy by the experts involved in the assessments;

(q) The final drafts of the report and the summary for policymakers are sent to Governments for final review and made available on the Platform website;

(r) Governments are strongly encouraged to submit written comments to the secretariat at least two weeks prior to any session of the Plenary;

(s) The Plenary reviews and may accept the report and approve the summary for policymakers.

### 3.2 Fast-track approach for thematic and methodological assessments

(a) Consistent with decision IPBES/1/3 the requests, inputs and suggestions for assessments, including those specifically requested for fast-track treatment, received by the secretariat will be considered and prioritized by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau in accordance with paragraphs 7 and 9 of decision IPBES/1/3; this process may include an initial scoping, including feasibility and estimated cost;

(b) The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau will prepare a report containing a prioritized list of assessments to be developed using a fast-track approach, with an analysis of the scientific and policy relevance of the requests as referred to in paragraph 7 of decision IPBES/1/3, including the implications of the requests for the Platform's work programme and resource requirements;

(c) If the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau agree that the Plenary may deem an issue to be an important issue for fast-track assessment, the Panel, in conjunction with the Bureau, identifies a small team of experts to assist the Panel in scoping the proposed issue, including feasibility and cost;

(d) The Plenary reviews the scoping and decides whether to approve or reject the undertaking of the fast-track assessments. The Plenary based on the advice of the Panel may also decide that a fast-track approach involving a robust review procedure is appropriate for a topic given the level of complexity of the issue concerned. If the Plenary does not approve the fast tracking of an assessment it can be considered under the standard approach;

(e) If the Plenary approves an issue for fast-track assessment, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will request nominations from Governments and invite relevant stakeholders<sup>3</sup> to present names of experts to contribute to the preparation of the report based on the scope developed during the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel scoping exercise;

(f) The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will select the report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors using the selection criteria (section 3.6.2) from the lists of nominations, of which experts selected from those presented by relevant stakeholders should not exceed twenty per cent;

(g) The report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors prepare first drafts of the report and the summary for policymakers;

(h) The first drafts of the report and the summary for policymakers are reviewed by Governments and experts in an open and transparent process;

(i) The report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors revise the first drafts of the report and the summary for policymakers with the guidance of the review editors and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;

(j) The summary for policymakers is translated into the six official languages of the United Nations and prior to distribution is checked for accuracy by the experts involved in the assessments;

(k) The final drafts of the report and the summary for policymakers are sent to Governments for final review and made available on the Platform website;

(l) The Plenary reviews and may accept the report and approve the summary for policymakers.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

### 3.3 Approach for regional, subregional or global assessments

(a) Consistent with decision IPBES/1/3 the requests, inputs and suggestions received by the secretariat will be considered and prioritized by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau in accordance with paragraphs 7 and 9 of decision IPBES/1/3; this process may include an initial scoping, including feasibility and estimated cost;

(b) The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau will prepare a report containing a prioritized list of requests, with an analysis of the scientific and policy relevance of the requests as referred to in paragraph 7 of decision IPBES/1/3, including the implications of the requests for the Platform's work programme and resource requirements;

(c) Should the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau conclude that additional scoping is required to complete the prioritization of certain requests, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will submit a proposal to that end to the plenary for consideration and decision together with the list and analysis referred to in subparagraph (b) above;

(d) The Plenary reviews the initial scoping and decides to approve or reject the undertaking of a detailed scoping of one or more of the proposed assessments;

(e) If the Plenary approves an issue for a detailed scoping, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, through the secretariat, will request nominations from Governments and invite relevant stakeholders<sup>4</sup> to present names of experts to assist with the scoping. For regional and subregional assessments emphasis is placed on expertise from, as well as relevant to, the geographic region under consideration. The secretariat will compile the lists of nominations, which will be made available to the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;

(f) The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will then select experts from the lists of nominations, of which experts selected from those presented by relevant stakeholders should not exceed twenty per cent. For regional and subregional assessments, the Panel will, in particular, take into account the views of the Panel members from the relevant regions as well as those with experience with the geographic region under consideration;

(g) The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau oversee a detailed scoping, including outline, costs and feasibility;

(h) The detailed scoping report is sent to the secretariat for distribution to Governments and experts in an open and transparent process for consideration at the following session of the Plenary; if the Plenary decides, based on the detailed scoping report, to approve the preparation of the report, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will request nominations from Governments and invite relevant stakeholders to present names of experts to contribute to the preparation of the report;

(i) The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will select the report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors using the selection criteria (section 3.6.2) from the lists of nominations, of which experts selected from those presented by relevant stakeholders should not exceed twenty per cent. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will, in particular, take into account the views of the Panel members from the relevant region as well as those with experience with the geographic region under consideration;

(j) The report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors prepare the first draft of the report;

(k) The first draft of the report is peer reviewed by experts in an open and transparent process. The review of regional and subregional reports will emphasize the use of expertise from, as well as relevant to, the geographic regions under consideration;

(l) The report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors prepare the second draft of the report and the first draft of the summary for policymakers with the guidance of the review editors and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;

(m) The second draft of the report and the first draft of the summary for policymakers are reviewed concurrently by both Governments and experts in an open and transparent process;

(n) The report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors prepare the final drafts of the report and the summary for policymakers with the guidance of the review editors and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

- (o) The summary for policymakers is translated into the six official languages of the United Nations and prior to distribution is checked for accuracy by the experts involved in the assessments;
- (p) The final drafts of the report and the summary for policymakers are sent to Governments for final review and made available on the Platform website;
- (q) Governments are strongly encouraged to submit written comments on the final draft of the summary for policymakers at least two weeks prior to any session of the Plenary;
- (r) The Plenary reviews and may accept the report and approve the summary for policymakers.

### 3.4 Scoping for Platform deliverables

Scoping is the process by which the Platform will define the scope and objective of a deliverable and the information and human and financial requirements to achieve the objective. There are three types of scoping process, of varying complexity:

- (a) Pre-scoping is the examination of preliminary scoping material, usually provided by the body making the original request for assessment;
- (b) Initial scoping is a scoping process carried out by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (for scientific issues) and the Bureau (for administrative issues); it is obligatory before any proposal may be considered by the Plenary;
- (c) Full scoping is a detailed scoping process, overseen by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, involving a scoping workshop with the experts selected by the Panel:
  - (i) The scoping process should include the following scientific and technical elements:
    - a. Main issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem services to be covered by the assessment or other activities in relation to the Platform functions and its conceptual framework;
    - b. Main policy questions and users that might be addressed through the assessment or other activities;
    - c. Rationale and timeliness of the activity and how it will contribute to other processes or decisions;
    - d. Possible constituent chapters for any assessment report and the scope of each chapter;
    - e. Any known significant limitations in the existing knowledge that will hinder undertaking the assessment;
    - f. Potential additional activities and outputs that could be derived from an assessment and undertaken to support other functions of the Platform (e.g., capacity-building, policy support, etc.);
    - g. Evidence of the integration of the four Platform functions, e.g., scoping an assessment should look not only at existing knowledge and knowledge gaps, but also at existing capacity and capacity-building gaps and potentially at policy support tools and methodologies as well;
    - h. Methodologies to be used;
    - i. Geographic boundaries of the assessment;
    - j. List of scientific disciplines, types of expertise and knowledge needed to carry out the assessment;
  - (ii) Procedural or administrative elements to be incorporated in the scoping process might include:
    - a. Overall activity schedule and milestones;
    - b. Operational structures that might be necessary, and the roles and responsibilities of the various entities to be involved, including the identification of strategic partners in delivering the activity, and the means by which the procedures for the implementation of the work programme

- will be carried out to ensure effective peer review, quality assurance and transparency;
- c. Estimated costs of the activity and potential sources of funding, including from the Platform trust fund and other sources, as appropriate;
- d. Capacity-building interventions that may be required to deliver the activity, which might be included as activities in the general report delivery plan;
- e. Communications and outreach activities that might be appropriate for the specific deliverable, including for the identification of gaps in knowledge and for policy support;
- f. Consideration of data and information management for assessments;

(d) The full scoping is presented to the Plenary for its consideration. The Plenary will then decide whether or not to proceed with the preparation of the report.

Each of the Platform's global, regional and subregional assessment reports, thematic and methodological assessment reports and synthesis reports, as defined in section 1 of these procedures, should, except for those assessments approved for the fast-track process, be preceded by a full scoping exercise approved by the Plenary to develop the report's draft outline, explanatory notes and means of implementation, as appropriate.

In some instances, a fast-track approach to scoping may be considered appropriate for thematic or methodological assessments where a demand for policy-relevant information is deemed appropriate by the Plenary. This would involve undertaking the assessment on the sole basis of an initial scoping exercise, based on prior approval of the scoping by the Plenary.

### **3.5 General procedures for preparing Platform reports**

In the case of assessment reports and synthesis reports, report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, reviewers and review editors of chapter teams are required to deliver technically and scientifically balanced assessments. Authors should use language that expresses the diversity of the scientific, technical and socioeconomic evidence, based on the strength of the evidence and the level of agreement on its interpretation and implications in the literature. Thus guidance on tackling uncertainties will be developed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. Assessments should be based on publicly available and peer-reviewed literature, as well as reports and other materials, including indigenous and local knowledge, which is not published in the peer-reviewed literature but is available to experts and reviewers.

The working language of assessment meetings will normally be English. Subregional and regional assessment reports may be produced in the most relevant of the six official languages of the United Nations. All summaries for policymakers presented to the Plenary will be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations and checked for accuracy prior to distribution by the experts involved in the assessments.

The review process for Platform reports will generally comprise three stages:

- (a) Review by experts in an open and transparent manner of Platform reports;
- (b) Review by Governments and experts in an open and transparent manner of Platform reports and summaries for policymakers;
- (c) Review by Governments of summaries for policymakers and/or synthesis reports.

The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau will ensure that the reports are scoped, prepared and peer reviewed in accordance with the present procedures.

The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau will assist the authors to ensure that the summary for policymakers includes the appropriate policy-relevant materials.

The report co-chairs and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will be responsible for ensuring that proper review of the material occurs in a timely manner as outlined in sections 3.1 and 3.3 for the standard approach to thematic and methodological assessments and regional, subregional or global assessments and section 3.2 for the fast-track approach to assessments.

Expert review should normally be allocated up to eight weeks, but not less than six weeks, except by decision of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. Government and expert reviews should not be allocated less than eight weeks, except by decision of the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel

(e.g., six weeks for a fast-track assessment). All written review comments by experts and Governments will be made available on the Platform website during the review process.

The following will be made available on the Platform's website as soon as possible after acceptance by the Plenary and the finalization of a report or technical paper:

- (a) Drafts of Platform reports and technical papers that have been submitted for formal expert and/or government review;
- (b) Government and expert review comments;
- (c) Author responses to those comments.

The Platform considers its draft reports, prior to their acceptance, adoption and approval by the Plenary, to be provided in confidence to reviewers and to be not for public distribution, quotation or citation.

### **3.6 Preparation of reports**

#### **3.6.1 Compilation of lists of potential report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, review editors and of government-designated national focal points**

The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, through the Platform secretariat, will request nominations from Governments and invite relevant stakeholders to present names of experts to act as potential coordinating lead authors, lead authors or review editors to participate in the preparation of reports.

The tasks and responsibilities of report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, review editors and government-designated national focal points are outlined in annex I to the present procedures. To facilitate the nomination of experts and later review of reports by Governments, Governments should designate Platform national focal points responsible for liaising with the secretariat.

#### **3.6.2 Selection of report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors**

Report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors are selected by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel from the lists of nominations, of which experts selected from those presented by relevant stakeholders should not exceed twenty per cent.

The composition of the group of coordinating lead authors and lead authors for a given chapter, report or summary should reflect the range of scientific, technical and socioeconomic views and expertise; geographical representation, with appropriate representation of experts from developing and developed countries and countries with economies in transition; the diversity of knowledge systems that exist; and gender balance. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will inform the Plenary on the selection process and the extent to which the above-mentioned considerations were achieved therein, and on the persons appointed to the positions of report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors for the various chapters. Every effort should be made to engage experts from the relevant regions on the author teams for chapters that deal with specific regions, but experts from other regions may be engaged when they can provide an important contribution to an assessment.

The coordinating lead authors and lead authors selected by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel may enlist other experts as contributing authors to assist with the work.

#### **3.6.3 Preparation of draft reports**

The preparation of the first draft of a report should be undertaken by report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors. The report co-chairs, through the secretariat, should make available information on the topics to be covered by the assessment and the time frame for contributing materials.

Experts who wish to contribute material for consideration in the first draft should submit it directly to the lead authors. Such contributions should be supported as far as possible with references from the peer-reviewed and internationally available literature as well as with copies of any unpublished material cited and outputs deriving from indigenous and local knowledge. Clear indications of how to access such material should be included in the contributions. For material available in electronic format only, the location where such material may be accessed and a soft copy of such material should be sent to the secretariat for archiving.

Lead authors will work on the basis of these contributions as well as the peer-reviewed and internationally available literature. Unpublished material, and outputs deriving from indigenous and local knowledge, may be used in assessments, provided that their inclusion is fully justified in the context of the Platform's assessment process and that their unpublished status is specified. Such

materials will need to be made available for the review process and their sources identified by the report co-chairs, who will ensure that appropriate knowledge and data safeguards are in place.

Procedures, approaches and participatory processes for working with indigenous and local knowledge systems will be developed by the Platform's Task Force on Indigenous and Local Knowledge for consideration by the Plenary at its fourth session. Preliminary guidelines were presented and reviewed at the third session of the Plenary in order to inform the various assessments and to incorporate the lessons learned in fulfilling deliverable 1 (c) of the work programme for 2014–2018. Detailed guidelines for the use of literature in Platform assessments will be developed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel for consideration by the Platform at its fourth session.

In preparing the first draft of a report and at subsequent stages of revision after review, lead authors should clearly identify disparate views for which there is significant scientific, technical or socioeconomic support, together with the relevant arguments. Sources of uncertainty should be clearly identified, listed and quantified where possible. The implications for decision-making of the findings, including knowledge gaps, contrasting evidence and minority opinions, should be explicitly discussed. Technical summaries will be prepared, if deemed necessary by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, under the leadership of the Panel.

#### **3.6.4 Review**

Three principles govern the review process: first, the Platform's reports should represent the best possible scientific, technical and socioeconomic advice and be as balanced and comprehensive as possible. Second, as many experts as possible should be involved in the review process, ensuring representation of independent experts (i.e., experts not involved in the preparation of the chapters they are to review) from all countries. Third, the review process should be balanced, open and transparent and record the response to each review comment.

The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel should normally select two review editors per chapter (including for the chapter's executive summary) and per technical summary of each report based on the lists of experts nominated as described in section 3.6.2.

Review editors should not be involved as authors or reviewers of material for which they will act as review editors. Review editors should be selected from among nominees from developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with a balanced representation of scientific, technical and socioeconomic expertise.

Report co-chairs should arrange a comprehensive review of reports in each review phase, seeking to ensure complete coverage of all content. Sections of a report that deal with issues similar to issues addressed in other reports should be cross-checked through the relevant authors and report co-chairs.

##### **3.6.4.1 First review (by experts)**

The first draft of a report should be circulated by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel through the secretariat for review.

Governments should be notified of the commencement of the first review process. The first draft of a report should be sent by the secretariat to government-designated national focal points for information purposes. A full list of reviewers should be made available on the Platform's website.

The secretariat should make available to reviewers on request during the review process any specific material referenced in the document being reviewed that is not available in the internationally published literature.

Expert reviewers should provide their comments to the appropriate lead authors through the secretariat.

##### **3.6.4.2 Second review (by Governments, experts, in an open and transparent manner)**

The second draft of the report and the first draft of the summary for policymakers should be distributed concurrently by the Platform secretariat to Governments through the government-designated national focal points, the Bureau of the Plenary, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors and expert reviewers.

Government focal points should be notified of the commencement of the second review process some six to eight weeks in advance. Governments should send one integrated set of comments for each report to the secretariat through their government-designated national focal points. Experts should send their comments for each report to the secretariat.

### **3.6.4.3 Preparation of a final draft of a report**

The preparation of a final draft of a report that reflects comments made by Governments and experts, for submission to the Plenary for acceptance, should be undertaken by report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors in consultation with the review editors. If necessary, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel working with authors, review editors and reviewers can try to resolve areas of major differences of opinion.

Reports should describe different, possibly controversial, scientific, technical and socioeconomic views on a given subject, particularly if they are relevant to the policy debate. The final draft of a report should credit all report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors, reviewers and review editors and other contributors, as appropriate, by name and affiliation, at the end of the report.

### **3.7 Acceptance of reports by the Plenary**

Reports presented for acceptance at sessions of the Plenary are the full scientific, technical and socioeconomic assessment reports. The subject matter of these reports shall conform to the terms of reference and to the workplan approved by the Plenary or the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel as requested. Reports to be accepted by the Plenary will have undergone review by Governments and experts. The purpose of these reviews is to ensure that the reports present a comprehensive and balanced view of the subjects they cover. While the large volume and technical detail of this material places practical limitations upon the extent to which changes to the reports may be made at sessions of the Plenary, “acceptance” signifies the view of the Plenary that this purpose has been achieved. The content of the chapters is the responsibility of the coordinating lead authors and is subject to Plenary acceptance. Other than grammatical or minor editorial changes, after acceptance by the Plenary only changes required to ensure consistency with the summary for policymakers shall be accepted. Such changes shall be identified by the lead author in writing and submitted to the Plenary at the time it is asked to approve the summary for policymakers.

Reports accepted by the Plenary should be formally and prominently described on the front and other introductory covers as a report accepted by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

### **3.8 Preparation and approval of summaries for policymakers**

Summaries for policymakers for global, regional, subregional and thematic and methodological assessments should be subject to simultaneous review by Governments and experts. Written comments by Governments on revised drafts should be submitted to the secretariat through the government-designated national focal points<sup>5</sup> before final approval by the Plenary. Regional summaries for policymakers should, as a preliminary step, be approved by their respective regional members of the Platform prior to further review and approval by the Plenary.

Responsibility for preparing first drafts and revised drafts of summaries for policymakers lies with the report co-chairs and an appropriate representation of coordinating lead authors and lead authors, overseen by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau. The summaries for policymakers should be prepared concurrently with the main reports.

The first review of a summary for policymakers will take place during the same period as the review of the second draft of a report by Governments and experts in an open and transparent manner.

The final draft of a summary for policymakers will be circulated for a final round of comments by Governments in preparation for the session of the Plenary at which it will be considered for approval.

Approval of a summary for policymakers signifies that it is consistent with the factual material contained in the full scientific, technical and socioeconomic assessment accepted by the Plenary.

Report co-chairs and coordinating lead authors should be present at sessions of the Plenary at which the relevant summary for policymakers is to be considered in order to ensure that changes made by the Plenary to the summary are consistent with the findings in the main report. The summaries for policymakers should be formally and prominently described as reports of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

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<sup>5</sup> Until such time as Governments have designated national focal points, the secretariat will send all communications to existing government contacts.

### **3.9 Preparation, approval and adoption of synthesis reports by the Plenary**

Synthesis reports that are approved and adopted by the Plenary provide a synthesis of assessment reports and other reports as decided by the Plenary.

Synthesis reports integrate materials contained in the assessment reports. They should be written in a non-technical style suitable for policymakers and address a broad range of policy-relevant questions as approved by the Plenary. A synthesis report comprises two sections: a summary for policymakers, and a full report.

The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will agree on the composition of the writing team, which could consist, as appropriate, of report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, and Panel and Bureau members. In selecting the writing team for a synthesis report, consideration should be given to the importance of the full range of scientific, technical and socioeconomic views and expertise; appropriate geographical representation; representation of the diversity of knowledge systems; and gender balance. Those Bureau and Panel members with appropriate knowledge who are not authors will act as review editors.

The Chair of the Plenary will provide information to the Plenary on the selection process, including the application of the selection criteria for participation and any other considerations. An approval and adoption procedure will allow the Plenary at its sessions to approve the summary for policymakers on a line-by-line basis and ensure that the summary for policymakers and the full report of the synthesis report are consistent and that the synthesis report is consistent with the underlying assessment reports from which the information has been synthesized and integrated.

Step 1: The full report (30–50 pages) and the summary for policymakers (5–10 pages) of the synthesis report are prepared by the writing team.

Step 2: The full report and the summary for policymakers of the synthesis report undergo simultaneous review by Governments and experts.

Step 3: The full report and the summary for policymakers of the synthesis report are revised by the report co-chairs and lead authors with the assistance of the review editors.

Step 4: The revised drafts of the full report and the summary for policymakers of the synthesis report are submitted to Governments and observer organizations eight weeks before a session of the Plenary.

Step 5: The full report and the summary for policymakers of the synthesis report are submitted for discussion by the Plenary:

(a) At its session, the Plenary will provisionally approve the summary for policymakers on a line-by-line basis;

(b) The Plenary will then review and adopt the full report of the synthesis report on a section-by-section basis in the following manner:

(i) When changes in the full report of the synthesis report are required, either for the purpose of conforming to the summary for policymakers or to ensure consistency with the underlying assessment reports, the Plenary and the authors will note where such changes are required to ensure consistency in tone and content;

(ii) The authors of the full report of the synthesis report will then make the required changes to the report, which will be presented for consideration by the Plenary for review and possible adoption of the revised sections on a section-by-section basis. If further inconsistencies are identified by the Plenary, the full report of the synthesis report will be further refined by its authors with the assistance of the review editors for subsequent review on a section-by-section basis and possible adoption by the Plenary;

(c) The Plenary will, as appropriate, adopt the final text of the full report of the synthesis report and approve the summary for policymakers.

The synthesis report consisting of the full report and the summary for policymakers should be formally and prominently described as a report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

### **3.10 Addressing possible errors**

The review processes described above should ensure that errors are eliminated well before the publication of Platform reports and technical papers. However, if a reader of an accepted Platform report, approved summary for policymakers or finalized technical paper finds a possible error (e.g., a

miscalculation or a factual inaccuracy) the issue should be brought to the attention of the secretariat, which will implement the following process for error correction.

**Error correction.** The secretariat will in the first instance ask the report co-chairs to investigate and rectify the possible error in a timely manner, reporting back to the secretariat on the conclusion. If the report co-chairs find that an error has been made, the secretariat will notify the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel co-chairs, who will decide on the appropriate remedial action in consultation with the report co-chairs. Appropriate remedial action may include an assessment of the implications of the error and the publication of a provisional correction and an accompanying assessment of the impact of the error on the report and/or its summary for policymakers, to be made available on the Platform website. The correction would be subject to consideration and ratification by the Plenary at its next session. Any correction to the report that is required must be made without undue delay. If no remedial action is deemed necessary, a written justification from the report co-chairs (upon advice from the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel co-chairs and the secretariat) must be provided to the claimant and the Plenary.

#### 4. Clearance processes for technical papers

Technical papers are prepared on scientific, technical and socioeconomic issues that are deemed appropriate by the Plenary. Such papers are:

- (a) Based solely upon material referenced or contained in the accepted and approved assessment reports;
- (b) On topics agreed upon by the Plenary;
- (c) Prepared by a team of lead authors, including a report co-chair, selected by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in accordance with the provisions set out in appendix I to the present procedures, on the selection of report co-chairs, lead authors and coordinating lead authors;
- (d) Submitted in draft form for simultaneous review by Governments and experts at least six weeks before their comments are due;
- (e) Revised by the report co-chairs and lead authors on the basis of comments received from Governments and experts, with the assistance of at least two review editors per technical paper who are selected in accordance with the procedures for selecting review editors for assessment reports and synthesis reports set out in section 3.6.2 and carry out their roles as described in section 5 of appendix I to the present procedures;
- (f) Submitted in revised form to Governments and experts for their review at least four weeks before their comments are due;
- (g) Finalized by the report co-chairs and lead authors, in consultation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel functioning as an editorial board, based on the comments received.

If necessary, with guidance from the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, a technical paper may include in a footnote the differing views expressed in comments submitted by Governments during their final review of the document if these are not otherwise adequately reflected in the paper.

The following guidelines should be used in interpreting requirement (a) above. The scientific, technical and socioeconomic information in technical papers shall be derived from:

- (a) The text of Platform assessment reports and the portions of material in cited studies that such reports were based on;
- (b) Relevant scientific models and their assumptions and scenarios based on scientific, technical and socioeconomic assumptions as were used to provide information in the assessment reports.

Technical papers shall reflect the range of findings set out in the assessment reports and support and/or explain the conclusions drawn in the reports. Information in the technical papers should, as far as possible, include references to the relevant subsections of the relevant assessment reports and other related material.

Sources and consequences of uncertainty should be explicitly delineated, and quantified where possible. The implications of knowledge gaps and uncertainty for decision-making should be discussed.

Technical papers are publicly available and each should contain a prominent declaration that it is a technical paper of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem

Services and, as such, has undergone expert and government review but has not been considered by the Plenary for formal acceptance or approval.

## **5. Platform supporting material**

This section refers to supporting material as defined in section 1.2.

Procedures for the recognition of workshops are set out in sections 6.1 and 6.2. Arrangements for the publication and/or e-publication of supporting material should be agreed upon as part of the process of workshop recognition or such publication should be commissioned by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel for the preparation of specific supporting material.

Any supporting material as described in subparagraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) in section 1.2 under “supporting material” should contain a prominent declaration stating that it is supporting material for the Platform and, as such, has not been subjected to the formal Platform review processes.

Guidance material, as described in subparagraph (e) of section 1.2, is intended to assist authors in the preparation of comprehensive and scientifically consistent Platform reports. The preparation of guidance material is usually commissioned by the Plenary and overseen by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel for consideration by the Platform but is not subjected to the formal Platform review processes.

## **6. Workshops**

### **6.1 Platform workshops**

Platform workshops are defined as meetings that provide support for Plenary-approved activities. Such workshops can focus on:

- (a) A specific topic bringing together a limited number of relevant experts;
- (b) A cross-cutting or complex topic requiring input from a broad community of experts;
- (c) The provision of training and capacity-building.

Through the secretariat, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will request nominations of workshop participants by government-designated national focal points and other stakeholders. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel may also nominate experts and will select workshop participants. The Panel will function as a scientific steering committee to assist the secretariat in organizing such workshops.

The composition of workshop participants shall aim to reflect:

- (a) The relevant range of scientific, technical and socioeconomic views and expertise;
- (b) Appropriate geographical representation;
- (c) The existing diversity of knowledge systems;
- (d) Gender balance;
- (e) Appropriate stakeholder representation, for example, representatives from the scientific community, Governments, universities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

[The Platform will ensure that funding is made available for the participation in workshops of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition as well as indigenous and local knowledge holders, as appropriate.]

The list of participants invited to a workshop should be made available to government-designated national focal points and other stakeholders within two weeks of the selection having taken place, including a description of the application of the selection criteria and any other considerations for participation in that regard.

The proceedings of Platform workshops will be made available online and should:

- (a) Include a full list of participants, describing their affiliation;
- (b) Indicate when and by whom they were prepared;
- (c) Indicate whether and by whom they were reviewed prior to publication;
- (d) Acknowledge all sources of funding and other support;

(e) Indicate prominently at the beginning of the document that the activity was held pursuant to a decision of the Plenary but that such decision does not imply the Plenary's endorsement or approval of the proceedings or any recommendations or conclusions contained therein.

## 6.2 Co-sponsored workshops

Workshops may be co-sponsored by the Platform if the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel determine in advance that they are supportive of Plenary-approved activities. Co-sponsorship by the Platform of a workshop does not necessarily convey any obligation by the Platform to provide financial or other support. In considering whether to extend Platform co-sponsorship to a workshop, the following factors should be taken into account:

- (a) Implications for the reputation of the Platform;
- (b) Multidisciplinary Expert Panel involvement in the steering committee for the design and organization of, and selection of experts for, the workshop;
- (c) Level of funding for the activity available from sources other than the Platform;
- (d) Whether the activity will be open to government experts as well as experts from other stakeholder entities, including non-governmental organizations, and indigenous and local knowledge holders participating in the work of the Platform;
- (e) [Whether provision will be made for the participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition;]
- (f) Whether the proceedings will be published and made available to the Platform in a time frame that is relevant to its work;
- (g) Whether the proceedings will:
  - (i) Include a full list of participants and affiliation;
  - (ii) Indicate when and by whom they were prepared;
  - (iii) Indicate whether and by whom they were reviewed prior to publication;
  - (iv) Specify all sources of funding and other support;
  - (v) Prominently display a disclaimer stating that Platform co-sponsorship does not imply Platform endorsement or approval of the proceedings or any recommendations or conclusions contained therein, and that neither the papers presented at the workshop nor the report of its proceedings have been subjected to Platform review.

## 7. Nomination and selection process for task forces

The secretariat will request nominations from Governments and invite relevant stakeholders<sup>6</sup> to present names of experts to participate in task forces. The secretariat will compile lists of such nominations, which will be made available to the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau.

The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau will then select experts from the lists of nominations.

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<sup>6</sup> In the context of these procedures, relevant stakeholders are qualified national, regional and international scientific organizations, centres of excellence and institutions known for their work and expertise, including experts on indigenous and local knowledge on issues related to the Platform's functions and programme of work.

## Appendix I

### Tasks and responsibilities of report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors, review editors and expert reviewers of Platform reports and other deliverables and of government-designated national focal points

#### 1. Report co-chairs

*Function:*

To assume responsibility for overseeing the preparation of an assessment report or synthesis report.

*Comment:*

Report co-chairs are responsible for ensuring that a report is completed to the highest scientific standard. The names of all report co-chairs will be acknowledged prominently in the reports that they are involved in preparing.

Report co-chairs are nominated and selected as described in sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2 of the procedures.

#### 2. Coordinating lead authors

*Function:*

To assume overall responsibility for coordinating major sections and/or chapters of an assessment report.

*Comment:*

Coordinating lead authors are lead authors who have the added responsibility of ensuring that major sections and/or chapters of a report are completed to a high standard and are completed and delivered to the report co-chairs in a timely manner and conform to any overall standards of style set for the document.

Coordinating lead authors play a leading role in ensuring that any cross-cutting scientific, technical or socioeconomic issues of significance to more than one section of a report are addressed in a complete and coherent manner and reflect the latest information available. The skills and resources required of coordinating lead authors are similar to those required of lead authors together with the additional organizational skills needed to coordinate a section, or sections, of a report. All coordinating lead authors will be acknowledged in the reports.

#### 3. Lead authors

*Function:*

To assume responsibility for the production of designated sections or parts of chapters that respond to the work programme of the Platform on the basis of the best scientific, technical and socioeconomic information available.

*Comment:*

Lead authors typically work in small groups that are responsible for ensuring that the various components of their sections are put together on time, are of a uniformly high quality and conform to any overall standards of style set for the document.

The role of lead authors is a demanding one and, in recognition of this, lead authors will be acknowledged in final reports. During the final stages of report preparation, when the workload is often particularly heavy and when lead authors are heavily dependent upon each other to read and edit material, and to agree to changes promptly, it is essential that their work should be accorded the highest priority.

The essence of the lead authors' role is to synthesize material drawn from the available literature or other fully-justified unpublished sources as defined in section 3.6.3 of the procedures.

Lead authors must have a proven ability to develop text that is scientifically, technically and socioeconomically sound and that faithfully represents, to the greatest extent possible, contributions made by a wide variety of experts and adheres to the overall standards of style set for a document. When revising text, lead authors and review editors are required to take account of the comments made during reviews by Governments and experts. The ability to work to deadlines is a necessary practical requirement.

Lead authors are required to record in the report views that cannot be reconciled with a consensus view<sup>7</sup> but are, nonetheless, scientifically, technically or socioeconomically valid.

Lead authors are encouraged to work with contributing authors, using electronic means as appropriate, in the preparation of their sections or to discuss expert or government comments.

#### 4. **Contributing authors**

*Function:*

To prepare technical information in the form of text, graphs or data for inclusion by the lead authors in the relevant section or part of a chapter.

*Comment:*

Input from a wide range of contributors is key to the success of Platform assessments. The names of all contributors will therefore be acknowledged in the Platform's reports. Contributions are sometimes solicited by lead authors but unsolicited contributions are also encouraged. Contributions should be supported, as far as possible, with references from the peer-reviewed and internationally available literature and with copies of any unpublished material cited along with clear indications of how to access the latter. For material available in electronic format only, the location where such material may be accessed should be cited. Contributed material may be edited, merged and, if necessary, amended in the course of developing the overall draft text.

#### 5. **Review editors**

*Function:*

To assist the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in identifying reviewers for the expert review process, ensure that all substantive expert and government review comments are afforded appropriate consideration, advise lead authors on how to handle contentious or controversial issues and ensure that genuine controversies are adequately reflected in the text of the report concerned.

*Comment:*

In general, there will be two review editors per chapter, including its executive summary. In order to carry out the tasks allocated to them, review editors will need to have a broad understanding of the wider scientific, technical and socioeconomic issues being addressed.

The workload for review editors will be particularly heavy during the final stages of report preparation, including attending meetings at which writing teams consider the results of the review rounds.

Review editors are not actively engaged in drafting reports and may not serve as reviewers for text that they have been involved in writing. Review editors may be drawn from among members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, the Bureau or other experts as agreed by the Panel. Although responsibility for the final text of a report remains with the relevant coordinating lead authors and lead authors, review editors will need to ensure that where significant differences of opinion on scientific issues remain, such differences are described in an annex to the report.

Review editors must submit written reports to the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and, where appropriate, will be requested to attend meetings convened by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to communicate their findings from the review process and to assist in finalizing summaries for policymakers and, as necessary, synthesis reports. The names of all review editors will be acknowledged in the reports.

#### 6. **Expert reviewers**

*Function:*

To comment on the accuracy and completeness of the scientific, technical and socioeconomic content and the overall balance between the scientific, technical and socioeconomic aspects of the drafts.

*Comment:*

Expert reviewers comment on text according to their knowledge and experience. The names of all expert reviewers will be acknowledged in the reports.

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<sup>7</sup> Consensus does not imply a single view, but can incorporate a range of views based on the evidence.

## 7. **Government and observer organization focal points**

### *Function:*

To prepare and update the list of national experts required to assist in the implementation of the Platform's work programme, and to arrange for the provision of integrated comments on the accuracy and completeness of the scientific, technical and/or socioeconomic content and the overall balance between scientific, technical and/or socioeconomic aspects of the drafts.

### *Comment:*

Government review will typically be carried out among a number of departments and ministries. For administrative convenience, each Government and observer organization should designate one focal point for all Platform activities, providing full contact information for the focal point to the secretariat and notifying the secretariat of any changes in the information. Focal points should liaise with the secretariat regarding the logistics of the review processes.

## **Appendix II**

### **Procedure on the use of literature in the reports of the Platform**

The present appendix is provided to ensure that the Platform's process for the use of literature is open and transparent. In the assessment process, emphasis is to be placed on the assurance of the quality of all cited literature. Priority should be given to peer-reviewed and publicly available scientific, technical and socioeconomic literature, including assessment reports such as those produced for the Platform. The procedure for the recognition and incorporation of indigenous and local knowledge is discussed in appendix III to the procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables.

It is recognized that, besides this peer-reviewed and publicly available literature, other diverse sources<sup>8</sup> provide crucial information for Platform reports. These sources may include reports by Governments, industry and research institutions, international and other organizations, or on conference proceedings. In addition, valuable information will be sourced from the "supporting material" prepared for the consideration of the Platform (annex I, sect. 1.2). The use of such diverse sources, however, brings with it an extra responsibility for the author teams in ensuring the quality and validity of cited sources and information. In general, newspapers and magazines, blogs, social networking sites and broadcast media are not acceptable sources of information for Platform reports. Personal communications providing scientific results are also not acceptable sources.

The following additional procedures are specified:

#### **1. Responsibilities of coordinating, lead and contributing authors**

The coordinating lead authors will ensure that all sources are selected and used in accordance with the procedures set out in the present appendix.

The author team is required to critically assess information from any source considered for inclusion in a report. Each author team should review the quality and validity of each source before incorporating information from that source into a Platform report. Authors who wish to include information that is not publicly available are required to send the full reference for and a copy of the information, preferably electronically, to the relevant technical support unit and the Platform secretariat. With regard to materials available in electronic format only, the location where such material may be accessed and a soft copy of such material should be sent to the technical support unit, and to the secretariat for archiving. In the case of a source written in a language other than English, an executive summary or abstract in English facilitated by the relevant technical support unit is required.

These procedures also apply to papers undergoing the publication process in peer-reviewed journals at the time of Government or expert review. Such papers must have been accepted for publication by the journal prior to the final distribution to Governments of the report and the summary for policymakers for which they have been used. If that is not the case, the material and any arguments reliant on it must be withdrawn from the report, as well as from its technical summary and its summary for policymakers.

All sources will be included in the reference section of the relevant Platform report.

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<sup>8</sup> Historically termed "grey literature".

## 2. Responsibilities of the review editors

The review editors will provide support and guidance to the author team in ensuring the consistent application of the procedures set out in the present appendix.

## 3. Responsibilities of the technical support unit

For sources that are not publicly available, the technical support unit responsible for the coordination of the report, in consultation with the report co-chairs, will make these sources available to reviewers who request them during the review process and send the material to the Platform secretariat for archiving.

## 4. Responsibilities of the Platform secretariat

The Platform secretariat will store sources that are not publicly available. The secretariat should archive the location where material available in electronic format only may be accessed and a soft copy of such material. It should provide access to these materials on request. Storage procedures will comply with protocols and guidelines to be agreed under the Platform's data and information management plan (decision IPBES-3/1, annex II).

## [Appendix III

**Procedure for the recognition and incorporation of indigenous and local knowledge (to be developed)]**

### Annex II

## Conflict of interest policy and implementation procedures

### I. Conflict of interest policy

#### A. Purpose of the policy

1. The objective of the Platform as stated in paragraph 1 of the "Functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform"<sup>9</sup> is to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. According to the operating principles of the Platform, in carrying out its work the Platform must be scientifically independent and ensure credibility, relevance and legitimacy through peer review of its work and transparency in its decision-making processes and use clear, transparent and scientifically credible processes for the exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies from all relevant sources, including non-peer-reviewed literature, as appropriate.

2. The role of the Platform requires that it pay special attention to issues of independence and bias in order to maintain the integrity of, and public confidence in, its products and processes. It is essential that the work of the Platform not be compromised by any conflict of interest on the part of those who execute it.

3. The overall purpose of this policy is to protect the legitimacy, integrity and credibility of the Platform and its deliverables as well as confidence in its activities and in individuals who are directly involved in the preparation of its reports and other deliverables. The policy is based on principles and does not provide an exhaustive list of criteria for the identification of conflicts of interest. The Platform recognizes the commitment and dedication of those who participate in its activities and the need to maintain a balance between minimizing the reporting burden and ensuring the integrity of the Platform and its deliverables while continuing to build and maintain public trust.

4. The conflict of interest policy is designed to ensure that potential conflicts of interest (see sect. C below) are identified, communicated to the Committee on Conflicts of Interest and managed in order to avoid any adverse impact on the Platform's independence, deliverables and processes, thereby protecting the person or persons concerned, the Platform and the public interest. Any duly reasoned request relating to a potential conflict of interest may be sent to the Bureau<sup>10</sup> of the Platform.

<sup>9</sup> UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, annex I, appendix I.

<sup>10</sup> bureau@ipbes.net.

5. It is essential to avoid a situation in which a reasonable person could question, discount or dismiss the work of the Platform owing to the perception of a conflict of interest. It is recognized that the privacy and professional reputation of individuals must be respected. Identifying a potential conflict of interest does not automatically mean that a conflict of interest exists. The policy is intended to enable individuals to provide the information necessary for the evaluation of a given situation.

6. At its first session, held in Bonn, Germany, in January 2013, the Plenary of the Platform requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to develop its own code of practice for the performance of its scientific and technical functions. This code of practice was duly developed and at the first joint meeting of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau, held in Bergen, Norway, in June 2013, the Bureau reviewed and revised the code of practice with a view to adopting it.

## **B. Scope of the policy**

7. This policy applies to the senior leadership of the Platform, namely, members of the Bureau, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and any other subsidiary bodies contributing to the development of deliverables, authors with responsibility for report content (including report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors), review editors and the professional staff to be hired to work in a technical support unit established by the Platform.

8. The professional staff members of the secretariat are employees of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and are subject to the Programme's disclosure and ethics policies, which include conflicts of interest. Likewise, the professional staff of any technical support unit who are employees of a United Nations entity are subject to the conflict of interest policy of that entity. Technical support units that are not hosted by the United Nations are expected to comply with the Platform's policy.

9. The policy applies to the development of any and all deliverables of the Platform.

10. The application of the conflict of interest policy to persons elected to or selected for positions in the Platform should reflect their specific responsibilities.

## **C. Definition of "conflict of interest" and "bias"**

11. For the purposes of this policy, any circumstances that could lead a reasonable person to question either an individual's objectivity, or whether an unfair advantage has been created, constitute a potential conflict of interest. A "conflict of interest" refers to any current interest of an individual that could:

(a) Significantly impair the individual's objectivity in carrying out his or her duties and responsibilities for the Platform;

(b) Create an unfair advantage for any person or organization.

12. A distinction is made between "conflict of interest" and "bias". "Bias" refers to a point of view or perspective that is strongly held regarding a particular issue or set of issues. In the case of author and review teams, bias can and should be managed through the selection of authors and reviewers with a balance of perspectives. It is expected that the Platform's author teams will include individuals with different perspectives and affiliations. Individuals or teams of individuals involved in selecting authors should strive for an author team composition that reflects a balance of expertise and perspectives to ensure that the Platform's products are comprehensive and objective and remain neutral with respect to policy. In selecting these individuals, care must be taken to ensure that biases can be balanced, where they exist. In contrast, a "conflict of interest" refers to a situation as described in paragraph 11. Holding a view that one believes to be correct, but that one does not stand to gain from personally, does not necessarily constitute a conflict of interest but may be a bias.

13. The conflict of interest requirements in this policy are not designed to include an assessment of an individual's behaviour or character or his or her ability to act objectively despite the conflict of interest.

14. This policy applies only to current conflicts of interest and does not apply to past interests that have expired. Professional and other non-financial interests need only be disclosed on the conflict of interest form if they are significant and relevant. If in doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, individuals are encouraged to contact the secretariat, which, in turn, will seek advice from the Committee on Conflicts of Interest. Significant and relevant interests may include, but are not limited to, membership of advisory committees associated with private sector organizations and of the boards of non-profit or advocacy groups. Such associations do not necessarily constitute a conflict of interest, however.

15. Financial interests need only be disclosed on the conflict of interest form if they are significant and relevant. Such interests may include, but are not limited to, employment relationships, consulting relationships, financial investments, intellectual property interests, commercial interests and sources of research support. Individuals should also disclose the significant and relevant financial interests of any person with whom the individual has a substantial business or relevant shared interest, such as a close family member. If in doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, individuals are encouraged to contact the secretariat, which, in turn, will seek advice from the Committee on Conflicts of Interest.

16. In order to prevent situations in which a conflict of interest may arise, individuals directly involved in or leading the preparation of deliverables of the Platform should avoid being in a position in which they are required to approve, adopt or accept on behalf of any Government the text that he or she was directly involved in drafting.

## **II. Implementation procedures**

### **Rule 1**

These implementation procedures are designed to ensure that relevant interests are identified and then disclosed to the Committee on Conflicts of Interest, which will identify potential and real conflicts of interest and manage them in order to avoid any adverse impact on the Platform and its deliverables while protecting the person or persons concerned and the public interest.

### **Rule 2**

1. These implementation procedures apply to all conflicts of interest as defined in section C of the conflict of interest policy and apply to the individuals listed in section B on the scope of the policy.

2. Compliance with the conflict of interest policy and implementation procedures is mandatory. An individual will not be permitted to participate in the work of the Platform if he or she has not complied with the policy and procedures. If a conflict of interest is identified, a person may only proceed to participate in the activities of the Platform if action is taken that resolves the conflict.

### **Members of the Bureau of the Platform and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel: review process prior to appointment**

#### **Rule 3**

1. The conflict of interest disclosure form contained in the appendix to the present procedures will be submitted to the secretariat in respect of each nominee for election to the Bureau of the Platform and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.

2. A Committee on Conflicts of Interest (see rule 10) will review the conflict of interest forms and may request additional information and advice as appropriate. If the Committee determines that a nominee for membership on the Bureau or the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel has a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved, the nominee will not be eligible for election to the Bureau or the Panel. The nominee may request a review, however (see rule 8).

3. The process described in this rule will also apply to candidates for election to the Bureau of the Platform who are nominated during the course of the Platform session at which the relevant election is due to be held. In such cases, candidates will be required to complete the form, which will be reviewed by the Committee prior to the election.

### **Members of the Bureau of the Platform and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel: review process after appointment**

#### **Rule 4**

1. All members of the Bureau of the Platform and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will inform the secretariat of any changes in the information provided in their previously submitted conflict of interest disclosure forms as they arise.

2. The Committee on Conflicts of Interest will review the updated information and determine whether the relevant individual has a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved, in which case the individual will no longer be eligible to be a member of the Bureau or the Panel.

**Task force and expert group members, report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, review editors and technical support units: review process prior to appointment**

**Rule 5**

Before an individual is appointed as a task force or expert group member, report co-chair, coordinating lead author, lead author or review editor, the secretariat will request the individual to complete a conflict of interest form for submission to the secretariat. The Committee on Conflicts of Interest will then evaluate the form to determine whether the individual may be affected by a potential conflict of interest that cannot be resolved. If the Committee determines that the individual has a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved, the individual will not be eligible to participate in the preparation of the deliverable. The individual may, however, request a review (see rule 8).

**Rule 6**

Candidates applying for professional posts in any technical support unit established by the Platform in an organization outside the United Nations system should, prior to their appointment, submit a conflict of interest form to the secretariat for evaluation within five working days by the Committee on Conflicts of Interest in accordance with rule 8.

**Task force and expert group members, report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors, review editors and technical support units: review process after appointment**

**Rule 7**

All task force and expert group members, report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors will inform the secretariat of any changes in relevant information as they arise. The professional staff of any technical support unit established by the Platform in an organization outside the United Nations system will inform the secretariat of any changes in relevant information as they arise. The Committee on Conflicts of Interest will evaluate the revised information in accordance with the procedure for reviewing conflict of interest issues prior to appointment.

**Principles for considering conflict of interest issues**

**Rule 8**

1. The bodies involved in advising and deciding on conflict of interest issues in respect of individuals under the conflict of interest policy (the Committee on Conflicts of Interest and the Bureau) will consult the individual affected if it has concerns about a potential conflict of interest and/or requires clarification of any matter arising out of a conflict of interest disclosure form. They will ensure that the individual affected and, as appropriate, the Platform member who nominated the individual, are afforded the opportunity to discuss any concerns about a potential conflict of interest.
2. If the Committee on Conflicts of Interest determines that an individual has a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved, the relevant individual may request a review by the Bureau of the Platform of the Committee's determination. The individual concerned will be bound by the determination of the Committee pending the outcome of the review. The Bureau will review the determination at its next meeting and its decision will be binding.
3. When considering whether an individual has a conflict of interest, the relevant body will, in consultation with the individual, explore options for resolving the conflict.<sup>11</sup>
4. If it is determined that an individual has a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved the individual will no longer be able to participate in the preparation of the Platform deliverable.
5. Members of bodies that are involved in considering conflict of interest issues may not consider cases involving themselves and will recuse themselves in the event that the relevant body considers a potential conflict of interest that concerns them.

**Processing and storage of information**

**Rule 9**

1. All conflict of interest forms will be submitted to the secretariat, which will securely archive such forms, together with any records of the deliberations and/or decisions of the Committee on

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<sup>11</sup> Individuals might, for example, resolve a conflict of interest by divesting themselves of the particular financial or other interest that gave rise to the potential conflict or by recusing themselves from discussions or decision-making processes in respect of which they have a conflict.

Conflicts of Interest, and retain them for a period of five years after the end of the individual's participation in the role that required the review, after which such information will be destroyed.

2. Subject to the requirement to notify the existence of a conflict of interest to others under rule 8, the forms referred to in this rule will be considered confidential and will not be disclosed or used for any purpose other than the consideration of conflict of interest issues under these implementation procedures without the express consent of the individual providing the information and a decision of the Bureau.

### **Committee on Conflicts of Interest**

#### **Rule 10**

1. A Committee on Conflicts of Interest ("the Committee") will be established for the purpose of implementing these rules and determining conflict of interest cases referred to it by the Bureau of the Platform.
2. The Committee on Conflicts of Interest will meet by teleconference as necessary. If a physical meeting is needed, it will be held before or after regular Bureau meetings.
3. The Committee will comprise three elected members from the Bureau, including one of the Bureau vice-chairs as chair, and five members, one per United Nations region, selected by the Bureau following a call for nominees from member countries of the Platform, together with one additional member with appropriate legal expertise from, and appointed by, the organization hosting the secretariat.
4. The members of the Committee are expected to reach consensus on conflict of interest issues. If consensus cannot be reached, exceptionally, on matters of particular urgency, the chair of the Committee may take a final decision with due regard to the weight of opinion expressed in the Committee. The Committee will decide upon its method of working.
5. The Committee will submit a report on its activities to the Plenary of the Platform at least four weeks prior to each session of the Plenary. Issues of confidentiality will be addressed by the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

## **Appendix Conflict of interest disclosure form**

### **Confidential**

#### **Conflict of interest disclosure**

Please sign and date the last page of this form and return it to the Executive Secretary of the Platform. Kindly retain a copy for your records.

#### **Disclosure of relevant interests form**

**Note:** You have been invited to serve on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services because of your professional standing and expertise. As outlined in the Platform's conflict of interest policy, the role of the Platform demands that it pay special attention to issues of conflict of interest and bias in order to maintain the integrity of, and public confidence in, its deliverables and processes. It is essential that the work of the Platform not be compromised by any conflict of interest affecting individuals who execute it. Disclosure of certain matters is necessary, therefore, to ensure that the work of the Platform is not compromised by conflicts of interest. We are reliant on your professionalism, common sense and honesty in filling out this form.

The Platform does not require comprehensive lists of activities under each heading set out below. You should disclose interests that are significant and relevant and relate or have the appearance of relating to your duties within the Platform and that could:

- (i) Significantly impair your objectivity in carrying out your duties and responsibilities for the Platform;
- (ii) Create an unfair advantage for you or any person or organization and which could result in you securing a direct and material gain through outcomes in a Platform product.

For the purposes of this policy, circumstances that could lead a reasonable person to question your objectivity, or whether an unfair advantage has been created, constitute a potential conflict of interest and should be disclosed on this form. Disclosure of an interest on this form does not automatically mean that a conflict exists or that you will be unable to perform your designated role in the Platform. If you are in any doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, you are encouraged to disclose such interest.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_

ROLE IN PLATFORM: \_\_\_\_\_

**(1) Are you involved in any significant and relevant professional activities that might be considered as constituting a conflict of interest?**

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No (if yes, please give details below).

Please list significant and relevant professional and other non-financial interests that relate or may have the appearance of relating to your duties for the Platform and could be interpreted as:

- (i) Significantly impairing your objectivity in carrying out your duties and responsibilities for the Platform;
- (ii) Creating an unfair advantage for you or any person or organization. This might include, but is not limited to, membership on the boards of advocacy groups.

**(2) Do you have any significant and relevant financial interests in the subject matter of the work in which you will be involved that might be considered as constituting a conflict of interest?**

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No (if yes, please give details below).

Please list significant and relevant financial interests that relate or may have the appearance of relating to your duties for the Platform and could be interpreted as:

- (i) Significantly impairing your objectivity in carrying out your duties and responsibilities for the Platform;
- (ii) Creating an unfair advantage for you or any person or organization. These may include employment relationships, consulting relationships, financial investments, intellectual property interests and commercial interests and sources of private-sector research support.

**(3) Is there any other interest that could affect your objectivity or independence in the work in which you will be involved?**

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No (if yes, please give details below).

I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that the disclosed information is complete and correct. I undertake to inform the secretariat of the Platform immediately of any change in my circumstances during the course of the work assigned to me.

I understand that information about my interests will be held by the Platform for a period of five years after the end of the activity to which I contributed, after which the information will be destroyed. Subject to the requirement to notify the existence of a conflict of interest to others under rule 8 of the implementation procedures, I understand that these forms will be considered confidential and will be reviewed in accordance with the conflict of interest implementation procedures.

I hereby declare that I will comply with the Platform’s conflict of interest policy and implementation procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Further details (if answered “yes” to any of the questions 1–3 above):**

\_\_\_\_\_