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

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Item 6 (a) and (b) of the provisional agenda\*\*

**Rules and procedures for the operation of the  
Platform: regional structure of the Multidisciplinary  
Expert Panel; review of the administrative procedures  
for the selection of the members of the  
Multidisciplinary Expert Panel**

**Potential future regional structure and composition of the  
Multidisciplinary Expert Panel**

**Note by the Secretariat**

**I. Introduction**

1. In decision IPBES/1/2, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to work with the Bureau and make a recommendation for consideration by the Plenary at its second session on the regional structure and composition of the future Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, based on the views and comments received from Governments and other stakeholders on the information document on the regional structure and composition of the Panel (IPBES/1/INF/7). In addition, the Bureau was also requested to review the administrative procedure used in the selection of the interim Multidisciplinary Expert Panel with a particular focus on ensuring effective consultation to ensure overall balance with respect to the work programme, and to draft recommendations on the procedure for the selection process for the future membership of the Panel. The present note responds to those requests made by the Plenary at its first session.

\* Reissued for technical reasons on 29 November 2013.

\*\* IPBES/2/1.

## **II. Background and review of the administrative procedure used in the selection of the interim Multidisciplinary Expert Panel**

2. In line with rule 25 of the rules of procedure, the two-year interim composition of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel consists of five members per each of the five United Nations regions. In order to select the current interim membership of the Panel, a list of potential candidates from each region was provided at the first session of the Plenary, held in Bonn, Germany, based on nominations received from members of the Platform within each region. A one-day meeting was arranged prior to the session to provide the opportunity for regional consultations on the list of candidates as well as discussion between the regions on the overall composition of the Panel.
3. Although that process encouraged and facilitated discussion between the regions, the regional process was largely based on subregional interests and allocations (of five members per region). Coupled with the considerable disciplinary and gender imbalance in the original nominations received from Platform members, the requisite gender, thematic, intellectual and disciplinary balance was not achieved in most of the regional nominations at the first session. While the interim Panel includes considerable relevant expertise, the process for the selection of members resulted in a lack of balance in its overall composition as was noted in discussions by a number of Platform members at the first session of the Plenary.
4. In recognition of this situation, the Plenary, in paragraph 23 of decision IPBES/1/2, requested the Bureau to review the administrative procedure used in the selection of the interim Panel with a particular focus on ensuring effective consultation to ensure overall balance with respect to the work programme, and to draft recommendations on the procedure for the selection process for the future membership of the Panel. Based on this review and recommendation, the relevant section of the rules of procedure (rules 26–28 on the nomination and selection of the Panel) could be finalized.
5. In addition to the Bureau's review of the procedure for the selection of the Panel, the Plenary, in paragraph 20 of decision IPBES/1/2, requested the Panel to work with the Bureau to review the document on the regional structure and composition of the Panel (IPBES/1/INF/7) and to make a recommendation for consideration by the Plenary at its second session on the regional structure and composition of the future Panel. The Secretariat updated the document, which was made available to the first concurrent meeting of the Panel and the Bureau, outlining possible approaches to the Panel's regional composition and taking into account the comments received during the previous review process in the period between the second session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, held in Panama City in April 2012, and the first session of the Plenary of the Platform held in Bonn, Germany, in January 2013. A background paper was also made available outlining the various approaches in use for biogeographic regional classifications.

## **III. Recommendation from the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau on the regional structure and composition of the future Panel**

6. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau, in their discussions on the options for the regional structure and composition of the future Panel, recognized various challenges, including:
  - (a) There is no universally accepted definition or listing of biogeographic regional distribution, with different approaches in use in various forums based on different taxa and other parameters;
  - (b) There is no common understanding or agreement on the factors, such as biogeography, distribution of ecosystem services, economy, demography, area, number of countries in and capacity-building needs of different regions, that should be considered in deciding upon the regional structure and composition of the Panel;
  - (c) The overall challenges in ensuring disciplinary, gender and thematic balance in the Panel's membership (in addition to regional balance) are not addressed by moving away from the United Nations regional groupings, and a new regional structure may further complicate overall disciplinary and gender balance. Such issues are the focus of the Bureau recommendations on the administrative process for selection to achieve balance in the membership of the future Panel (see sect. IV);

(d) The implementation of the Platform's deliverables is likely to require work across regional boundaries however they might be constructed. Deliverables relating particularly to policy support and capacity-building are often most relevant to non-biogeographic regions, for example.

7. Based on these considerations, the Panel and the Bureau recommend maintaining the United Nations regional groupings for the selection of the incoming membership of the Panel, and giving further consideration to the issue of the Panel's regional structure in the light of the experiences gained from the implementation of the initial work programme 2014–2018. Furthermore, the Panel and the Bureau consider that working with, and across, as appropriate, the United Nations regional groupings would ensure intellectually and biogeographically coherent regional and subregional assessment and facilitate other activities in the implementation of the work programme. For example, a regional assessment undertaken in Africa or Latin America and the Caribbean may comprise 3–6 subregional and eco-regional assessments within the region, whereas a regional or subregional assessment focusing on South-East Asia and Oceania could include Australia and New Zealand, although they would form part of the group of Western Europe and other States for Panel selection purposes. Likewise, regional assessments and other activities in Europe might bring together Eastern and Western Europe for the implementation of work programme activities, despite their distinct representation on the Panel.

#### **IV. Recommendation from the Bureau on the procedure for the selection process for the future membership of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel**

8. The goal of the selection process for the membership of the Panel should be to ensure overall balance in relation to geographic, gender, intellectual and disciplinary representation (e.g., natural and social sciences, economics, indigenous and local knowledge), and multidisciplinary and experience-related (i.e., across the four functions of the Platform) considerations. The following recommendations aim to achieve that goal and are in coherence with the recommendation of the Bureau and the Panel that the existing regional composition of the Panel should be maintained (5 members per United Nations region, totalling 25 members) in recognition of the considerable challenges in, and lack of a strong scientific or programmatic justification for, restructuring the composition of the Panel.

9. In order to ensure a balanced membership of the future Panel, it is proposed that the Bureau members would represent each of the United Nations regions in selecting a balanced list of potential Panel members for consideration and final selection by the Plenary. Members of and observers to the Platform should submit their respective regional lists of nominations of potential Panel members within a time frame that would allow for adequate consideration by the Bureau members.

10. As an initial step, each region would nominate eight potential members of the Panel with an appropriate balance in terms of intellectual, disciplinary and thematic considerations, knowledge systems and gender. The nominations from the five regions would provide an overall shortlist of 40 potential members. Each region would identify their favoured three candidates from the list of eight. These three candidates would automatically be included in the final proposed list of candidates on a no-objection basis assuming that the nominations contribute to the above-mentioned balance and that each candidate meets the criteria set out in the rules of procedure for Panel members, including the criteria on understanding science-policy processes. While each region could determine its own process for shortlisting candidates, such a process could include reaching out to stakeholders for suggested nominations and could be completed in a one-day regional consultation held immediately prior to a session of the Plenary.

11. The Bureau would then evaluate, seeking advice as needed from members of the existing Panel, the overall balance of the 15 candidates (comprising the top three candidates from each of the five United Nations regional groupings), assessing their strengths and weaknesses as well as the overall balance within the proposed group. The Bureau would assess the additional expertise and other relevant considerations required to ensure the appropriate intellectual and disciplinary, gender, thematic and experience-related balance, and decide which of the remaining regional candidates should be recommended to the Plenary for membership of the Panel in order best to meet its needs. In the event that the nominations clearly do not fulfil the requirement for balance in the Panel's membership, the Bureau may request members and observers to identify candidates with the specific expertise required.

12. Once the Bureau agrees on an appropriately balanced list of candidates drawn from among the regional nominees, a final list would be submitted to the Plenary for its consideration along with a short report by the Bureau on the selection process. The Bureau's selection process for the final list of candidates would be expected to take place during the first three days of a Plenary session, allowing for a new membership of the Panel to be selected prior to the end of the session.

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