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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

**Regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and
ecosystem services****Overview of the processes followed for the production of the
regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and
ecosystem services (deliverable 2 (b))****Note by the secretariat**

1. In paragraph 2 of section III of decision IPBES-3/1, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) approved the undertaking of four regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia (hereinafter called “regional assessments”), in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of the Platform’s deliverables set out in annex I to decision IPBES-3/3, the generic scoping report for the regional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services set out in annex III to decision IPBES-3/1, and the scoping reports for each of the four regional assessments (decision IPBES-3/1, annexes IV–VII).
2. In response to decision IPBES-3/1, a set of six chapters and their executive summaries (IPBES/6/INF/3–6) and a summary for policymakers (IPBES/6/4–7) were produced for each of the regional assessments by an expert group in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of the Platform’s deliverables.
3. The annex to the present note sets out a report on the processes followed for the production of the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The annex is presented without formal editing.

* IPBES/6/1.

Annex

Overview of the processes followed for the production of the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services (deliverable 2 (b))

I. Context

1. The overall scope of the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services (hereinafter referred to as “the regional assessments”) is to assess the status and trends regarding biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and their interlinkages, the impact of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and threats to them on good quality of life, and the effectiveness of responses, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals; and the national biodiversity strategies and action plans developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The assessments address terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services.
2. The overall objective of the regional assessments is to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services at the regional and subregional levels. The assessments analyse the state of knowledge on past, present and future interactions between people and nature, including by highlighting potential tipping points, feedback and trade-offs. The timeframe of analyses covers current status, trends (often going back in time several decades) and future projections with a focus on periods ranging from 2020 to 2050, which cover key target dates related to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the ongoing process of developing the post-2015 development agenda. The conceptual framework of the Platform guides these analyses of the social-ecological systems that operate at various scales in time and space.
3. The four regional assessments were carried out by teams of approximately 110 experts each, over a period of three years between 2015 and 2018. The summaries for policymakers of the four regional assessments are presented at the sixth session of the Plenary for approval (IPBES-6/4 – 7) and each set of six individual chapters, for acceptance (IPBES-6/3 – 6). The document composed of the summary for policymakers together with the six chapters is referred to as ‘the regional assessment report’.

II. The assessment teams

A. Dedicated Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau members

4. In accordance with the rules of procedure for the preparation of the Platform’s deliverables (decision IPBES-3/3, annex I), members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau relevant to each region oversaw the production of the regional assessment reports. Sub-sets of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau, from the relevant regions, served on the management committees of each of the four regional assessments. The management committees also included the co-chairs of each regional assessment; members of the IPBES secretariat, including members of the regional assessment’s technical support unit. Management committee meetings were held, usually remotely, at regular intervals.
5. In accordance with the procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables, the following Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau members were part of the following management committees:

For the regional assessment report for Africa:

- Fundisile Goodman Mketeni (Bureau member)
- Alfred Apau Oteng-Yeboah (Bureau member)
- Sebsebe Demissew Woodmatas (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)
- Jean Bruno Mikissa (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)

For the regional assessment report for the Americas:

- Diego Pacheco (Bureau member)

Spencer Thomas (Bureau member)
 Bob Watson (Bureau member)
 Brigitte Baptiste (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)
 Floyd Homer (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)
 Carlos Joly (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)
 Rodrigo Medellin (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)

For the regional assessment report for Asia and the Pacific:

Asghar Fazel (Bureau member)
 Youngbae Suh (Bureau member)
 Mark Lonsdale (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)
 Vinod Mathur (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)
 Yoshihisa Shirayama (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)

For the regional assessment report for Europe and Central Asia:

Senka Barudanovic (Bureau member)
 Bob Watson (Bureau member)
 Ruslan Novitsky (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)
 Marie Stenseke (Multidisciplinary Expert Panel member)

B. The expert groups of the regional assessments

6. Each regional assessment expert group was led by two to three co-chairs, who oversaw the preparation of the assessment report and ensured that it was completed to a high standard. Each chapter was coordinated by two to three coordinating lead authors, and produced by a group of lead authors who drafted its various parts. Each chapter had two review editors, who ensured that all substantive comments were afforded appropriate consideration and who advised lead authors on how to handle any controversial issues, if any. This team of experts was complemented by at least one fellow per chapter. Fellows were experts in the early stages of their careers, who collaborated with the coordinating lead authors and lead authors in developing sections of the chapters, under the guidance of one of the experts who acted as a mentor.

7. The co-chairs, and most of the coordinating lead authors and lead authors were selected in 2015 from the original pool of nominations for experts made by Governments and stakeholders (please see IPBES/4/INF/10). Additional coordinating lead authors and lead authors were selected using the procedure for filling gaps in the availability of experts (annex I to decision IPBES-4/3), in order to reach a satisfactory gender and geographical balance. This procedure was also used to select review editors, over the course of 2016, and to replace a small number of experts who were asked to resign by the co-chairs, on behalf of the management committees, because they were unable to make their contribution as planned. Fellows were selected through a separate application process.

8. The following tables provide information on the number of experts selected for each region. Lists of all experts are provided on the IPBES website:

Table 1. Number of experts involved in the regional and subregional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa

Co-chairs: Emma Archer (South Africa), Luthando Dziba (South Africa) and Jo Mulongoy (Democratic Republic of Congo)

Co-chairs	CLAs	LAs	Review editors	Fellows	Experts nominated using the gap filling procedure	Experts who resigned	Total number of experts including fellows
3	16	73	12	7	23	9	111

Table 2. Number of experts involved in the regional and subregional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for the Americas

Co-chairs: Jake Rice (Canada), Cristiana Seixas (Brazil) and Maria Elena Zaccagnini (Argentina)

Co-chairs	CLAs	LAs	Review editors	Fellows	Experts nominated using the gap filling procedure	Experts who resigned	Total number of experts including fellows
3	18	67	10 (including 2 who worked on 2 chapters)	6	19	14	104

Table 3. Number of experts involved in the regional and subregional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Asia and the Pacific

Co-chairs: Madhav Karki (Nepal) and Sonali Senaratna Sellamuttu (Sri Lanka)

Co-chairs	CLAs	LAs	Review editors	Fellows	Experts nominated using the gap filling procedure	Experts who resigned	Total number of experts including fellows
2	20	80	12	7	15	17	121

Table 4. Number of experts involved in the regional and subregional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Europe and Central Asia

Co-chairs: Markus Fisher (Switzerland) and Mark Rounsevell (UK) (Co-chairs).

Co-chairs	CLAs	LAs	Review editors	Fellows	Experts nominated using the gap filling procedure	Experts who resigned	Total number of experts including fellows
2	12	85	13	6	49	23	118

C. The technical support units

9. Each of the four regional assessments was coordinated by a technical support unit, hosted by institutions in the specific region.

- The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research based in Pretoria, South Africa, hosted the technical support unit for **the regional assessment for Africa**, consisting of technical officers Anicia Maoela and Michele Walters.
- The Alexander von Humboldt Institute based in Bogotá, Colombia, hosted the technical support unit for **the regional assessment for the Americas**, consisting of head of the technical support unit Mauricio Bedoya and technical officer Natalia Valderrama
- The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies based in Tokyo, Japan, hosted the TSU for **the regional assessment for Asia and the Pacific**, consisting of head of technical support unit Wataru Suzuki, technical officer Sana Okayasu, and administrative officer Miho Takahashi.
- The University of Bern based in Bern, Switzerland, hosted the technical support unit for **the regional assessment for Europe and Central Asia**, consisting of science officers Amor Torre-Marín and Andre Mader.

III. Key steps toward the production of the assessment

10. Each of the four regional assessments produced a summary for policymakers (IPBES/6/4-7), which is provided for approval by the Plenary; and six individual chapters and their executive summaries, which are provided for acceptance by the Plenary (IPBES/6/INF/3-6).

11. A description of key steps towards the production of this assessment, undertaken after the fifth session of the Plenary is provided below. A detailed description of the steps taken before the fifth session can be found in IPBES/4/INF/10 and IPBES/5/INF/7.

A. Second review (by governments and experts)

12. The second external review of the assessment reports by Governments and experts was conducted from 1 May to 26 June 2017 for the regional assessment reports for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia. The second external review for the regional assessment report for the Americas took place from 29 May to 24 July 2017. External reviewer comments were collated by the respective technical support units and shared with the authors and review editors before the third and final author meetings that took place in each of the respective regions.

13. The regional assessment for Africa received 2526 comments from 55 external reviewers, of which four were governments. The regional assessment for the Americas received 4020 comments from 106 reviewers, of which 12 were Governments. The regional assessment for Asia and the Pacific received 2394 comments from 60 reviewers, of which eight were governments. The regional assessment for Europe and Central Asia received 4999 comments from 92 reviewers, of which 11 were Governments.

14. During the second external review, it was pointed out that the Europe and Central Asia regional assessment report did not sufficiently address the valuation of nature's contributions to people. In response, the experts of chapter 2 drafted new sub-sections on market-based monetary values; non-market monetary values; and on integrating values into policy, as well as two appendices as supplementary material. These new sections were posted online, with a cover note by the Executive Secretary, on 4 September with an invitation for reviewers to respond by 2 October. All experts that registered between 1 May and 26 June 2017 as 'external reviewer' for the second external review of the Europe and Central Asia assessment, as well as all National Focal Points, were invited to participate in this review. The values expert group members were also invited to provide comments on the additional text. In total 80 comments were received from 13 reviewers, of which two were Governments.

15. While there were several incomplete sections of text of all four regional assessment reports for the second external review, these were considered to not have any impact on the content of the summaries for policymakers and therefore to not necessitate a review.

B. Third author meetings

16. The third and final author meetings of the four regional assessments took place in July and August 2017. Their objectives were for the experts to address the external review comments; and to finalize the development of the regional assessments. Co-chairs and coordinating lead authors also dedicated time to the development of the summaries for policymakers, with support from attending members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau.

17. The third author meeting for the regional assessment for Africa took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 7 to 11 August 2017; for the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia, from 5 to 9 August 2017; for Asia and the Pacific in Tokyo, Japan, from 24 to 28 July 2017; and for Europe and Central Asia in Prague, Czech Republic, from 24 to 28 July 2017.

C. Regional dialogue meetings

18. To facilitate more direct interaction between the assessment teams and National Focal Points and to encourage inputs from Governments on the regional assessment reports, two-day regional dialogue meetings were organized in all four regions between National Focal Points, and representatives from the assessment author teams (co-chairs and coordinating lead authors) and members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau prior to the third author meetings. The key aims of the meeting were for Governments: to better understand the process to produce the regional assessments and their structure; to prepare for the presentation of the regional assessments at IPBES-6; and to prepare for the use of the regional assessments, pending their acceptance and the approval of their summaries for policymakers. The meetings, furthermore, provided an opportunity for the regional assessment experts to understand how assessments are perceived and received by Governments.

19. Based on the outcomes of an evaluation undertaken with the attendees of the regional dialogue meetings (IPBES/6/INF/12), the meetings were in general seen as useful for bringing everyone to the same level of understanding of the IPBES processes. The timing was, however, not optimal since the deadline for comments from Governments had passed. An important point for the future is to ensure that such dialogue meetings are planned well in advance so that they can be convened before or during, and not after, external reviews of assessments.

20. At the Africa and Americas dialogue meetings, Government representatives requested that part of the discussions be conducted in French and Spanish, respectively, to facilitate understanding and to enable better engagement. Language barriers have been frequently mentioned by Governments as a challenge to engaging in the review of IPBES assessments, as well as in meetings.

D. Production of the final draft assessment reports

21. The chapters of the regional assessments underwent two external reviews (by peers, and by peers and Governments), while the summary for policymakers was reviewed once by Governments and peers. For the Africa assessment, a total of 3739 comments were received during both review periods, from 86 individuals from 35 countries. For the Americas regional assessment, a total of 5666 comments from 148 individuals from 24 countries were received. For the Asia-Pacific regional assessment, a total of 3454 comments from 94 individuals from 20 countries were received. Finally, for the Europe and Central Asia regional assessment, a total of 7799 comments from 168 individuals from 30 countries were received. The number of Governments having provided comments for the second external review period is indicated in para 13 above.

22. These comments were taken into account by the authors of the regional assessment when producing the final draft. The entire process was supported by the review editors, who helped the authors with interpreting review comments and ensured that all comments were addressed appropriately by the authors. Responses to comments from both the first and second review phases will be published on the IPBES website after the approval of the summary for policymakers and the acceptance of the individual chapters and their executive summaries by the Plenary.

IV. Links with other deliverables

23. The expert groups of the regional assessments (deliverable (2(b))), worked closely with the expert groups, task forces and technical support units of other IPBES deliverables. There were several experts common to both regional assessments and the land degradation and restoration assessment.

24. A selection of experts from the regional assessments participated in the scoping of deliverable 3(b)(ii): thematic assessment on invasive alien species and their control and deliverable 3(b)(iii): thematic assessment on sustainable use of wild species.

25. The expert groups worked with deliverable 2(a), on the guide on assessments, by providing comments to the guide and using it in their work.

26. The expert groups interacted with the task force and technical support unit for deliverable 1(c), on indigenous and local knowledge systems, and a selection of the experts participated in dialogue workshops on indigenous and local knowledge, convened by the task force.

27. The expert groups collaborated with the task force and technical support unit on deliverable 4(b), on data and knowledge, who provided, towards the end of the assessment process, a set of core indicators and related data and visuals.

28. The expert groups received assistance through deliverable 3(d), from the expert group on values and its technical support unit. The expert group on values assisted in reviewing the regional assessment reports and the technical support unit organized several workshops to assist experts in developing content on that topic.

29. The expert group and technical support unit for deliverable 3(c), on scenarios and models, supported the four assessments by reviewing drafts of chapters 5 of the regional assessments. Several workshops were also organized with chapter 5 experts of the different assessments to determine common scenarios archetypes for the regional assessments (see IPBES/6/INF/15).

30. The expert group of deliverable 4(c), on policy support tools and methodologies, assisted experts of chapters 6 with the framing of institutions and options as well as the use of confidence terminology.

31. The task force and technical support unit for capacity building, under deliverable 1(b) assisted the regional assessments through the organization of the fellowship programme and the organization of writing workshops to develop the summaries for policymakers, as well as the regional dialogue meetings.
