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**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy
Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
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Item 5 of the provisional agenda**

Initial work programme of the Platform

Considerations for the preparation of an initial work programme of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the institutional arrangements that may be required to support its implementation

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. At 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 from 16 to 21 April 2012, representatives exchanged views on the future work programme of the Platform based on two documents: a working document that identified possible elements of the work programme¹ and an information document that provided a possible scenario for the work programme.²

2. These documents were based on substantial input during the previous intersessional period, building on documents that had already been discussed during the first session of the plenary meeting, held in Nairobi from 3 to 7 October 2011.³

* Reissued for technical reasons on 7 November 2012.

** IPBES/1/1.

¹ See UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/2.

² See UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/INF/3.

³ See UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/7, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/3/Add.1, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/4/Add.1, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/5/Add.1, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/6/Add.1.



Although those documents have been superseded, they may still contain useful detail relating to potential work programme activities.

3. At the second session of the plenary meeting, representatives agreed on a programme of intersessional work to prepare for the first session of the Plenary of the Platform⁴ and to support further consideration of the Platform's work programme. As a result, the Plenary has before it a series of information documents relating to the work programme, and on potential procedures required for its implementation. These information documents are introduced in section II of the present document, for consideration in discussions during the first session of the Plenary and as guidance for further work that may be required to initiate the Platform's work programme.

4. It is anticipated that decisions might be taken during the first session of the Plenary on the next steps required to initiate the work programme. It is also anticipated that such steps may directly involve the oversight of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel at the request of the Plenary, which might review and further consider options relating to the work programme and make recommendations thereon for approval by the Plenary at its second session. Section III of the present document therefore presents possible options for the role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in overseeing the preparation of the initial work programme.

5. To prepare for the implementation of the work programme, possible arrangements or structures to support its implementation are addressed in section IV of the present document. Given that it is anticipated that decisions might be taken during the first session of the Plenary on the next steps in considering means for supporting the implementation of the work programme, section V presents possible options for an intersessional process on institutional arrangements to support implementation.

II. Outcome of the intersessional process relating to the work programme

6. At the second session of the plenary meeting, representatives agreed on a programme of intersessional work to prepare for the first session of the Plenary. The outputs from that programme of intersessional work relating to the work programme are addressed in the present section. Given that it is anticipated that decisions might be taken during the first session of the Plenary on the next steps required to initiate the work programme, the Plenary may wish to take account of the work undertaken during the programme of intersessional work in doing so.

A. Processes and procedures

7. **Process for receiving and prioritizing requests from Governments.** Working document IPBES/1/5 provides a draft process for receiving and prioritizing requests, based on the views submitted by Governments and other stakeholders during the intersessional period. Such a process will be required for the Plenary to determine a work programme based on requests made to the Platform by Governments, and

⁴ See UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9.

taking into account input and suggestions from other stakeholders. In addition, the Plenary may wish to take into account the outcome of discussions in other bodies that might put requests to the Platform, such as those contained in decisions XI/2, 3 and 13 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and resolution XI/6 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat.⁵

8. **Scoping process.** Information document IPBES/1/INF/6 provides a draft process for scoping potential assessments and other Platform activities, based on the views submitted by Governments and other stakeholders during the intersessional period. The Plenary may wish to consider this information document when determining the potential role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in the further preparation of the initial work programme.

9. **Procedures relating to reports and deliverables.** Information document IPBES/1/INF/3 provides draft procedures for the preparation of assessments and the review, acceptance, adoption, approval and publication of reports and other deliverables. The Plenary may wish to consider this information document when determining the potential role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in the further preparation of the initial work programme.

10. **Consideration of initial elements: recognizing indigenous and local knowledge and building synergies with science.** Recognizing the potential value of indigenous and local knowledge, information document IPBES/1/INF/5 provides an overview of initial elements that may need to be considered for recognizing indigenous and local knowledge and for building synergies with science. The Plenary may wish to consider this information document when determining the potential role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in the further preparation of the initial work programme.

B. Work programme content and related activities

11. **Review of assessments.** Information document IPBES/1/INF/8 provides a critical review of assessments and, in addition, the Catalogue of Assessments is available online (<http://catalogue.ipbes.net/>). The Catalogue of Assessments, which has been made available to all Governments and stakeholders for further input, includes relevant thematic and comprehensive assessments at the national, regional, subregional and global levels, and the critical review of assessments draws key lessons learned from these and other assessment processes. The Plenary may wish to consider this information document when determining the potential role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in the further preparation of the initial work programme, considering in particular, (a) the content of the Catalogue of Assessments, and suggestions made on the future operation and content of the catalogue; and (b) the lessons learned as expressed in the critical review of assessments, and how these lessons may help in the further development and implementation of the work programme.

12. **Capacity-building.** Information document IPBES/1/INF/10 identifies the capacity-building needs and suggestions for activities to address those needs identified by Governments and other stakeholders during the intersessional period,

⁵ See www.ramsar.org/pdf/cop11/res06-e.pdf.

and also reviews the relevant capacity-building needs and activities identified in national reports under various multilateral environmental agreements. The Plenary may wish to consider this information document when determining the potential role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in the further preparation of the initial work programme, considering in particular, (a) the capacity-building needs identified; and (b) the means identified for addressing capacity-building needs, both directly and indirectly.

13. **Possible elements of the work programme of the Platform.** Information document IPBES/1/INF/14 provides an updated version of the possible elements for the Platform's work programme, which takes account of the views expressed during the second session of the plenary meeting and of further developments during the intersessional period. The Plenary may wish to consider this information document when determining the potential role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in the further preparation of the initial work programme, considering in particular, (a) the appropriateness of the identified possible activities; and (b) the possible scheduling of activities, and the relative priority implied by this scheduling.

C. Other issues

14. **Multidisciplinary Expert Panel regions.** Information document IPBES/1/INF/7 provides a review of the issues that may need to be considered in developing an appropriate regional structure for the Panel, and initial options for consideration. It has been made available online for review until the end of February 2013. The Plenary may wish to consider this information document when determining the potential role of the Panel in further deliberations on the Panel regions.

15. **Conceptual framework.** Information document IPBES/1/INF/9 identifies key issues and elements to consider in a possible conceptual framework for the Platform, building on lessons learned from other assessment processes at the national, regional and global levels, and identifies the steps that might be considered for its further elaboration. The Plenary may wish to consider this information document when determining the potential role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in the further preparation of the initial work programme, considering in particular, (a) the main issues and elements addressed in relation to a possible conceptual framework for the Platform; and (b) the proposed process for the development of the conceptual framework, and the ways in which different stakeholder groups might be involved.

III. Potential role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in overseeing further preparation of the initial work programme

16. The role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel is to facilitate the operations of the Platform by carrying out the scientific and technical functions identified in section B, paragraph 15, of appendix I to the resolution on the Platform.⁴ Key functions that are relevant to the potential role of the Panel in overseeing further preparation of the initial work programme include:

- (a) Providing advice to the Plenary on scientific and technical aspects of the Platform's programme of work;

...

(d) Engaging the scientific community and other knowledge holders with the work programme, taking into account the need for different disciplines and types of knowledge, gender balance and effective contribution and participation by experts from developing countries;

...

(e) Assuring scientific and technical coordination among structures set up under the Platform and facilitating coordination between the Platform and other related processes to build upon existing efforts;

...

(g) Exploring ways and means to bring different knowledge systems, including indigenous knowledge systems, into the science-policy interface.

17. It is envisaged that one physical (face-to-face) meeting of the Panel will be organized during 2013 to support the further preparation of the initial work programme, supplemented by e-mail and online communication. It is further envisaged that the Panel may wish to consider organizing itself according to the potential activities as outlined below, drawing on the relevant skills of Panel members required to perform these tasks, while recognizing the importance of the collective efforts of the Panel to oversee its functions.

18. To be in a position to take decisions on the initial work programme at its second session, the Plenary may wish to consider the role of the Panel during the next intersessional period in overseeing further preparations on the work programme. Potential activities of the Panel during this period might include:

(a) *Conceptual framework*: developing a draft conceptual framework for the Platform and making a recommendation to the Plenary for consideration at its second session, recognizing that such work might include convening and overseeing a multidisciplinary and regionally balanced expert meeting on the conceptual framework to bring a wide range of perspectives based on experiences of other assessment processes;

(b) *Scoping process*: reviewing submissions, developing a proposed process for scoping potential assessments and other Platform activities and making a recommendation to the Plenary for consideration at its second session;

(c) *Other processes and procedures*: further developing the draft procedures relating to reports and deliverables, developing procedures for the nomination and selection of authors, reviewers and review editors and recognizing indigenous and local knowledge, and making recommendations to the Plenary for consideration at its second session;

(d) *Multidisciplinary Expert Panel regions*: reviewing and agreeing on an appropriate regional structure for the Panel, taking into account the issues raised in the information document and the different options set out and feedback from review of the information document by Governments and other stakeholders, and making recommendations to the Plenary for consideration at its second session;

(e) *Work programme*: further developing the elements of an initial work programme, taking into account input by Governments and other stakeholders during the intersessional work, and making a recommendation to the Plenary for consideration at its second session.

IV. Possible institutional arrangements for implementing the initial work programme

19. Based on experiences with other processes, there are a number of different ways in which support might be provided to the implementation of the Platform's work programme, in addition to the oversight by the Plenary and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. Various options are set out below. The Plenary may wish to consider the issues raised in the present section, and any further options identified, in relation to planning for the initial work programme, although it is anticipated that decisions relating to institutional arrangements for the work programme will not take place until the second session of the Plenary, following more substantive intersessional review of the options (see section V) and agreement at the second session of the Plenary on the work programme itself.

A. Working groups or other structures by which the work programme may be implemented

20. Appendix I to the resolution by which the Platform was established⁴ includes two bracketed paragraphs (17 and 18) in section D, on working groups, as follows:

[D. Working groups]

17. In addition to the above subsidiary bodies, and depending on the decisions related to their establishment, the Plenary might establish working groups or other structures to implement the Platform's work programme. The functions to be performed by such groups or structures could include:

(a) Identifying and prioritizing key scientific information needed for policymakers and catalysing efforts to generate new knowledge (without undertaking new research);

(b) Performing regular and timely assessments of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services [and functions] and their interlinkages, which might include comprehensive global, regional and, as necessary, subregional assessments, thematic issues at appropriate scales and new topics identified by science;

(c) Identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies, such as those arising from assessments, enabling decision makers to gain access to those tools and methodologies and, where necessary, promoting and catalysing their further development;

(d) Prioritizing capacity-building needs to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels and then providing and calling for financial and other support for the highest-priority needs related directly to its activities, as decided by the Plenary, and catalysing financing for such capacity-building activities by providing a forum with conventional and potential sources of funding.

18. While recognizing that any agreement to establish working groups would take place only after more detailed discussion of the work programme, preliminary options for the establishment of working groups or other structures to deliver the Platform's work programme might include:

(a) Option 1: Two working groups are established, one to undertake assessments, generate knowledge and support policy, and the other to oversee the capacity-building work on the Platform in relation to knowledge generation, assessment and policy support. Both working groups are established with geographic, disciplinary and gender balance;

(b) Option 2: Two working groups are established, one to undertake assessments and the other to oversee the work on knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building. Both working groups are established with geographic, disciplinary and gender balance;

(c) Option 3: Regional structures are established (whether working groups or centres), to oversee the full programme of work (knowledge generation, assessment, policy support and capacity-building) at the regional level. Regional working groups would comprise regional experts with gender, disciplinary and within-region geographic balance. In addition, ad hoc and time-bound working groups might be formed to undertake global and/or thematic assessments. Such global and/or thematic groups would be formed with geographic, disciplinary and gender balance.]

21. The Plenary may wish to also consider the following issues in relation to how the work programme might be implemented:

(a) *Temporary or permanent nature of working groups or other structures.* Working groups or other structures might be established for specific periods of time in order to address components of an agreed work programme, or alternatively could be established as permanent structures for the implementation of one or more work programme elements;

(b) *Regional and/or global working groups.* Working groups might be global in their coverage, and/or established as a series of regional working groups periodically meeting together to ensure coherence;

(c) *Global treatment of key cross-cutting issues.* Global working groups might be established to address well-defined possible elements of the assessment approach, for example, on assessments of status and trends, assessments of response options and assessments/development of scenarios;

(d) *Thematic working groups.* Working groups/task forces might be established to undertake assessments of thematic issues identified by the Plenary;

(e) *Terms of reference.* Working groups might be provided with clearly defined terms of reference agreed by the Plenary, and against which the working group would periodically report;

(f) *Organization.* Each working group might have a Chair or Co-Chairs to organize the work of the working group, working in collaboration with the secretariat and any other supporting arrangements established by the Plenary. The Plenary may wish to task Multidisciplinary Expert Panel members to chair or co-chair the working groups;

(g) *Membership.* The Plenary might establish a process through which membership of working groups is agreed, taking full account of the need for balanced participation in terms of geography, discipline and gender, and ensuring the participation of all sectors and stakeholders relevant to the issue being addressed.

The information contained in IPBES/1/INF/3 might also be taken into account in this regard.

B. Possible institutional arrangements to support implementation

22. **Secretariat.** The role of the secretariat with regard to the work programme and its implementation is already identified in section E of appendix I to the resolution,⁴ as follows, identifying in paragraph 20 of that section the possible task of the secretariat in providing technical support functions:

19. The secretariat will have the following indicative administrative functions, acting under the direction of the Plenary:

(a) Organizing meetings and providing administrative support for meetings, including the preparation of documents and reports to the Plenary and its subsidiary bodies as needed;

(b) Assisting the members of the Plenary, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to undertake their respective functions as decided by the Plenary, including facilitating communication between the various stakeholders of the Platform;

(c) Facilitating communication among any working groups that might be established by the Plenary;

(d) Disseminating public information and assisting in outreach activities and in the production of relevant communication materials;

(e) Preparing the Platform's draft budget for submission to the Plenary, managing the trust fund and preparing any necessary financial reports;

(f) Assisting in the mobilization of financial resources;

(g) Assisting in the facilitation of monitoring and evaluation of the Platform's work.

20. Furthermore, the secretariat may be tasked by the Plenary with undertaking technical support functions, such as providing relevant assistance to ensure that the Platform implements its work programme. Such potential functions need to be developed following discussion of the work programme and would be implemented under the direction of the Plenary.

23. **Regional and/or global technical support structures.**⁶ With regard to potentially supporting the regional implementation of the work programme, consideration might be given to whether some form of regional and/or global technical support structures are needed, and whether these would be needed for addressing all elements of the work programme or only some of them. Consideration should be given particularly to the extent to which regional and/or global working groups will need dedicated support, noting that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment had one or two dedicated staff per working group (located in partner organizations) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has technical support units of approximately four to eight staff for each working group

⁶ "Regional hubs" and regional "centres of excellence" have both been referred to during formal Platform meetings.

(provided by and based in the country of one of the Co-Chairs) plus additional support from visiting scientists and students. If the decision is taken that regional and/or global support structures are needed then:

(a) *Regional support structures.* The provision of support to the delivery of the work programme at the regional level might be integrated through a single regional structure within each region, overseen and supported as necessary by the central secretariat;

(b) *Global technical support.* Consideration might be given as to whether secretariat staff providing technical support are located with the central secretariat, or located within other organizations that have appropriate experience and can potentially provide additional support, under the oversight of the central secretariat;

(c) *Deciding among candidates.* A process might be determined by the Plenary through which the hosting arrangements for each regional support structure would be decided by the Platform members in that region, and through which appropriately qualified organizations might bid to host any global support structures;

(d) *Terms of reference.* Regional and/or global technical support structures might be provided with clearly defined terms of reference agreed by the Plenary, and against which the structure would periodically report, and might be asked to sign an appropriate agreement with the Platform's secretariat;

(e) *Resourcing.* Core Platform resources might be used to carry out the Platform's work programme on a global scale, and in all or some regions, including support for regional support staff costs where support from the host Government or organization is insufficient to cover these costs;

(f) *Coherence across regions.* For any elements of the work programme implemented at the regional level, common approaches might be defined for appropriate use by all the regional technical support structures to ensure a coherent and synergistic approach and facilitate integration towards global outputs of the platform. Such a process of ensuring coherence in support between regions might be overseen by the central secretariat;

(g) *Review of progress.* Progress in the work of the regional and/or global technical support structures in implementing the work programme and achieving the identified goals might be monitored by the secretariat on behalf of the Plenary, with any regional and/or global structures providing regular narrative and financial reports.

V. Potential intersessional process on institutional arrangements to support implementation

24. Following an exchange of views by the Plenary on possible institutional arrangements to support implementation, the Plenary may wish to ask the secretariat:

(a) To prepare a draft document on potential institutional arrangements to support the implementation of the work programme, with input from the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, including draft terms of reference, where

appropriate, taking account of the views expressed by the Plenary in response to the suggestions made above;

(b) To make the draft document available for review through an open process by members of the Plenary and other key stakeholders, including those with experience of other assessment processes, and redraft the document on the basis of comments received;

(c) To provide the revised document as a working document together with any necessary supporting information documents to support substantive discussion of the issue at the second session of the Plenary.

25. Furthermore, the Plenary may wish to request the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, with the support of the secretariat, to undertake those activities identified in paragraph 18 of the present document.
