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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda**

Initial work programme of the Platform: Procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Platform

Procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Platform

Note by the secretariat

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, it was decided to invite Governments, multilateral environmental agreements and other stakeholders to submit their views on how requests to the Plenary of the Platform might be received and prioritized by the Platform.¹ Subsequently, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) circulated a letter dated 29 May 2012 to Governments and other meeting participants, requesting them, as part of the agreed intersessional process, to submit their views on this matter to the interim secretariat of the Platform by 16 August 2012, on the basis of which the secretariat was requested to prepare a draft procedure for consideration by the Plenary of the Platform at its first session. The draft procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Platform presented in the present note was prepared on the basis of inputs received from Governments and other relevant stakeholders.

The draft procedure also takes into account one of the functions of the platform, outlined in paragraph 1 of appendix I to annex I to the report of the Panama meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9) as follows:

* Reissued for technical reasons on 15 October 2012.

** IPBES/1/1.

¹ See UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, annex II, para. 10.



“Focusing on Government needs and based on priorities established by the Plenary, the Platform responds to requests from Governments, including those conveyed to it by multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services as determined by their respective governing bodies. The Plenary welcomes inputs and suggestions from, and the participation of, United Nations bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services as determined by their respective governing bodies. The Plenary also encourages and takes into account, as appropriate, inputs and suggestions made by relevant stakeholders, such as other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment trust funds, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities and the private sector. To facilitate this, and to ensure that the work programme of the Platform is focused and efficient, a process to receive and prioritize requests, inputs and suggestions will be established by the Plenary.”

The draft procedure also takes into account the Decision Framework for Special Reports, Methodology Reports and Technical Papers adopted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at its twentieth session, held in Paris in February 2003, as amended at its twenty-eighth session, held in Budapest in April 2008, and its twenty-ninth session, held in Geneva in August and September 2008. It also takes into account paragraph 11 of decision IX/29 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which provides guidance for submitting proposals for emerging issues, and paragraph 12 of that decision, which specifies the criteria for identifying new and emerging issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Draft procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Platform

1. This procedure is intended to guide the process for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Platform, and is to be applied in accordance with other rules and procedure of the Platform. This procedure is not intended to prescribe future decisions by the Platform regarding its work programme.

A. Receiving requests put to the Platform

2. Governments and multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services should send requests to the Platform on scientific and technical matters that require the Platform’s attention and action.

3. Inputs and suggestions from United Nations bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, as determined by their respective governing bodies, are also welcomed by the Platform. Inputs and suggestions made by relevant stakeholders, such as other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment trust funds, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities and the private sector, will also be encouraged and taken into account, as appropriate.

4. In order to streamline requests sent to the Platform, the submission of requests by Governments conveyed by multilateral environmental agreements related to

biodiversity and ecosystem services through their governing bodies or scientific subsidiary bodies is encouraged. The joint submission of requests by multiple multilateral environmental agreements through their coordination processes, for example the Biodiversity Liaison Group or the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of the Biodiversity-related Conventions are also encouraged.

5. Joint submissions of requests by multiple Governments, including through regional groups, are also encouraged.

6. Joint submissions of inputs and suggestions by United Nations bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment trust funds, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities and the private sector are also encouraged.

7. Requests, inputs and suggestions that are submitted to the Platform should, where possible, be accompanied by information on:

(a) Relevance to the objective, function and work programme of the Platform;

(b) Urgency of action by the Platform in the light of the imminence of the risks caused by the issues to be addressed by such action;

(c) Relevance of the requested action in addressing specific policies or processes;

(d) Geographic scope of the requested action, as well as issues to be covered by such action;

(e) Anticipated level of complexity of the issues to be addressed by the requested action;

(f) Previous work and existing initiatives of a similar nature and evidence of remaining gaps, such as the absence or limited availability of information and tools to address the issues, and reasons why the Platform is best suited to take action;

(g) Availability of scientific literature and expertise for the Platform to undertake the requested action;

(h) Scale of the potential impacts, and potential beneficiaries of the requested action;

(i) Requirements for financial and human resources, and potential duration of the requested action.

8. Requests from Governments, as well as inputs and suggestions from other relevant stakeholders, containing information on the elements listed above, should be submitted to the Platform's secretariat in accordance with the format and the timetable specified in the notifications to be circulated by the Platform's secretariat, but no later than 18 weeks prior to the session of the Plenary at which those submissions will be considered.

9. The Platform's secretariat will compile requests, inputs and suggestions and forward them to the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau for their review, at least 16 weeks prior to the Plenary meeting at which those submissions will be

considered. The compiled requests, inputs and suggestions will also be made available on the IPBES website at that time.

B. Prioritizing requests put to the Platform

10. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau will consider and prioritize the submitted requests, inputs and suggestions in accordance with the considerations outlined in paragraph 7 above.

11. Consideration of requests submitted by multiple Governments, such as those conveyed to it by multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services through their governing bodies or scientific subsidiary bodies, or joint submissions of Governments through regional groups, will be accorded high priority.

12. Consideration of joint submissions of inputs and suggestions by United Nations bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment trust funds, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities and the private sector will be accorded priority.

13. Should the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau consider that additional scoping is required to complete the prioritization of certain requests, they will propose to the Plenary the initiation of such scoping processes.

14. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau should also identify, and propose to the Plenary, ways and means to address the requests, including how they should be incorporated in the Platform's work programme. On the basis of that recommendation, the Plenary may wish to consider inviting extrabudgetary financial contributions for responding to requests, as appropriate.

15. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau will prepare a report containing a prioritized list of requests, with analysis by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau on the scientific and policy relevance of the requests, the need for additional scoping and the implications of the requests for the Platform's work programme and resource requirements, 12 weeks prior to the Plenary meeting at which those requests will be considered. In accordance with the rules of procedure of the Plenary of the Platform, the secretariat will process the report and make it available to the Plenary for consideration and decision.