



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

Bonn, Germany, 7–10 March 2017
Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

**Institutional arrangements: United Nations collaborative
partnership arrangements for the work of the Platform
and its secretariat****Progress report on the United Nations collaborative partnership
arrangements****Note by the secretariat**

1. In its decision IPBES-2/8, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) approved the collaborative partnership arrangement to establish an institutional link between the Plenary of IPBES and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as set out in the annex to the decision.
2. In the same decision, the Plenary invited UNEP, UNESCO, FAO and UNDP to approve the collaborative partnership arrangement. In response to the invitation from the Plenary, approval processes were undertaken by each of the four United Nations entities (see IPBES/3/INF/14).
3. The annex to the present note sets out a progress report on the support provided by the four entities to the work of the Platform and its secretariat since the fourth session of the Plenary. The annex is presented without formal editing.

* IPBES/5/1/Rev.1.

Annex

Progress report on the United Nations collaborative partnership arrangements for the work of the Platform and its secretariat

I. Context

1. The collaborative partnership arrangements set out in the Annex to decision IPBES-2/8 acknowledge the role of UN Environment, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in the development and establishment of the Platform, and the relevance of their respective mandates and programmes of work to the functions of the Platform. The aim of the institutional link created between the Platform and these United Nations entities was to provide a collaborative framework whereby:

- (a) the partners coordinate relevant activities and cooperate in areas related to the functions of the Platform;
- (b) dedicated capacity and secondments or otherwise assigned staff are made available by the organizations to support the secretariat of the Platform;
- (c) technical and programmatic support is provided by the organizations to support implementation of the work programme of the Platform;
- (d) joint fundraising is undertaken to enable the activities of the Platform to be implemented; and
- (e) the communications activities of the Platform are supported by the communications capacity of the organizations.

II. Direct support for the secretariat of the Platform

Secretariat staff and secondments

2. Consistent with Plenary decision IPBES-1/4, UN Environment continues to provide the Platform's secretariat, which is solely accountable to the IPBES Plenary on policy and programmatic matters. In addition, UN Environment has provided since 2014 a dedicated professional programme officer (P4) as an in-kind contribution to the IPBES Secretariat, and, with financial support from China, provided a dedicated consultant seconded to the IPBES secretariat in Bonn for part of the year. On request, UN Environment has also provided the support of other staff during meetings of the Plenary, in particular to advise on legal issues.

Technical support units and other recognized institutional arrangements

3. Deliverable 1(c): UNESCO continues in its role as the technical support unit for the IPBES task force on indigenous and local knowledge systems. As part of this UNESCO continues to provide staff time (P5, P3 and G staff) as its agreed contribution (50%) towards the staffing of the technical support unit. Related activities are also described in the following section.

4. Deliverable 2(a): The UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) continues to provide technical and administrative support relating to development of the guide on production and integration of assessments from and across all scales, and to support capacity-building activities relating to the guide. This support is directly funded by the Government of Norway. Related activities are also described in the following section.

5. Deliverable 4(a) and Deliverable 4(c): Following an offer accepted by the IPBES Bureau at its meeting in October 2016, UNEP-WCMC is now providing the technical support unit for the expert group working on policy support tools and methodologies. This support is funded in part from the trust fund, and in part from other resources accessed by UNEP-WCMC. As part of this, UNEP-WCMC is also supporting the catalogue of relevant assessments. Related activities are also described in the following section.

Other administrative issues

6. Consistent with Plenary decision IPBES-2/7, UN Environment manages a trust fund for the Platform, which has been operational since 2014, and, consistent with Plenary decision IPBES-1/4, UN Environment continues to address other administrative issues as necessary in close liaison with the

Executive Secretary. UN Environment receives programme support cost from the trust fund for its administrative services.

III. Support for implementation of the work programme

7. In addition to the technical support described above, the four UN entities have continued to support the implementation of the IPBES work programme as is described in the following paragraphs. For the convenience of the Plenary, the report on this work is organized by work programme objective and deliverable. Beyond the activities described here in direct support of the work programme of the Platform, many other activities carried out by the four UN entities are consistent with and supportive of the objective and activities of the Platform. Some of these are described in a subsequent section.

Objective 1: Strengthen the capacity and knowledge foundations of the science-policy interface to implement key functions of the Platform

8. Deliverable 1(a/b): UNEP-WCMC has continued to provide support to the technical support unit for the task force on capacity-building established by the Government of Norway at the Norwegian Environment Agency. During 2016-7 this has included supporting development of the IPBES capacity-building rolling plan, supporting development of the webinar series, input into the planning of a training session for the IPBES fellows, facilitation of the writing workshop for authors of the African Assessment, and supporting the Capacity-building Forum. Also, at the invitation of the task force co-chairs, both UNDP and UNEP-WCMC are providing resource persons to support the task force on work relating to capacity-building.

9. The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net), channels UNDP's support to the capacity-building function of IPBES, consistent with decisions taken at previous meetings of the IPBES Plenary. BES-Net is a capacity sharing "network of networks" that promotes dialogue among science, policy and practice for more effective management of biodiversity and ecosystems, contributing to long-term human well-being and sustainable development. The Network is supported by face-to-face capacity-building activities (the BES-Net Trialogues), matchmaking activities, and a web portal - with all components mutually reinforcing. BES-Net facilitates and promotes dialogue on themes echoing IPBES thematic assessments, and in key areas of UNDP's work on biodiversity and ecosystems management. BES-Net is currently implemented through partnerships with the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and SwedBio at the Stockholm Resilience Centre. In implementing its mandate, BES-Net follows an inclusive approach, supporting IPBES as well as its other 84 partners including relevant multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, scientific organizations, networks of knowledge holders and practitioners. BES-Net provides support to IPBES as an-kind contribution, and information document IPBES/5/INF/26 provides more detail on BES-Net and its implementation.

10. Over the period 2016-2020, the Government of Germany is supporting a project to assist in the development of capacity to address science-policy questions through IPBES, working with BES-Net and the UNEP-WCMC hosted Sub-Global Assessment (SGA) Network (a community of practice amongst ecosystem assessment practitioners). As part of this project, UNDP will work to enhance capacity at the national and regional levels to apply the findings of the IPBES thematic assessments (achieved through the UNDP-managed BES-Net Trialogues, which bring together scientists, policy-makers and practitioners to address pressing development questions). The role of UNEP-WCMC is to provide technical and capacity-building support to specific countries to conduct national assessments of scientific evidence on policy issues (and thereby directly addressing one of the capacity-building priorities identified by the Plenary). UNDP and UNEP-WCMC are both seeking additional resources to extend this support to include other countries interested in hosting BES-Net Trialogues and/or initiating national ecosystem assessments.

11. At the request of the IPBES Chair, UNDP and UN Environment co-hosted the second meeting of the IPBES Capacity-building Forum, and the UN Environment Deputy Executive Director co-chaired the high-level segment of the meeting together with the Senior Technical Advisor on Ecosystems and Biodiversity at UNDP. The meeting took place at UNDP's premises in New York in Sept 2016.

12. Deliverable 1(c): The technical support unit for the task force on indigenous and local knowledge systems, hosted by UNESCO, organized the third task force meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand in June 2016. In addition, two dialogue workshops were organized, one in June 2016 in Chiang Mai, and the other in July 2016 in Sucre, Bolivia. These were in the framework of the Asia Pacific assessment and the Americas assessment respectively (deliverable 2(c)). In 2016, two publications on "Knowing our Lands and Resources: Indigenous and Local Knowledge of Biodiversity

and Ecosystem Services in Europe and Central Asia” and “Knowing our Lands and Resources: Indigenous and Local Knowledge of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Africa” were delivered in support of the other two relevant regional assessments (deliverable 2(c)).

13. **Deliverable 1(d):** At the invitation of the co-chairs of the task force on knowledge and data, both UNESCO and UNEP-WCMC are providing resource persons to support the work of the task force. In the case of UNEP-WCMC, this includes providing support in collating indicator information and data for use in the regional and global assessments (deliverable 2(b) and 2(c)) working through the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (for which UNEP-WCMC provides the secretariat), and support in discussions relating to managing and accessing data, information and knowledge (including with respect to implementation of deliverable 4(b)). UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (see below) have made expertise available to the task force on a variety of issues. In addition, UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme continues contributing to site-level assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services in its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (669 sites in 120 countries). The Lima Action plan adopted at the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima, Peru (March 2016) makes substantive provision for research and co-production of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services and stakeholder engagement.

Objective 2: Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services at and across subregional, regional and global levels

14. **Deliverable 2(a):** UNEP-WCMC is continuing to provide technical and logistical support to the secretariat concerning delivery of the guide on production and integration of assessment from and across all scales. UNEP-WCMC’s role in doing this is recognized by the secretariat and Bureau, but is supported financially by the Government of Norway. As part of this, UNEP-WCMC is supporting related capacity-building activities, including preparing an e-learning module on the IPBES assessment process (the latter with funding from the IPBES trust fund).

15. **Deliverable 2(c):** At the request of experts working on the global assessment, UNEP-WCMC is developing indicator extrapolations to 2020 based on indicators and indicator data made available by members of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. This builds on work previously presented in the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook prepared by the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Objective 3: Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services with regard to thematic and methodological issues

16. **Deliverable 3(b):** FAO supported participation of the Chair of the Inter-Governmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) of the Global Soils Partnership (GSP) in the author meetings for the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration, in his capacity as co-chair of that assessment. In addition, FAO extended an invitation to the IPBES Secretariat to host the third author meeting for the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. The invitation was accepted, and the meeting will take place in July 2017 with approximately 80 participants. A member of UNEP-WCMC staff has also supported this assessment as a review editor.

17. Following the previous Plenary where the thematic assessment on pollination, pollinators and food production was completed, UN Environment, UNESCO and FAO promoted the assessment through press releases and as appropriate through meetings and side events. UNDP has included the theme of pollination, pollinators and food production within BES-Net, where links are made as appropriate to IPBES resources.

18. **Deliverable 3(c):** In April 2016, UNESCO, the University of Paris XI and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity convened an expert workshop on reconciling scenarios of biodiversity and ecosystem services with climate change scenarios, working with IPBES experts and the technical support unit for scenario analysis and modelling. The workshop benefited from support from the Government of Japan.

19. **Deliverable 3(d):** In June 2016, UNESCO and the Basque Centre on Climate Change organized an expert workshop specifically devoted to the notion of ‘relation values’, which bridge conventional economic and non-economic approaches to valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The expert workshop, which took place in Bilbao, Spain was organized in collaboration with IPBES experts working on the issue of conceptualization of values. The workshop benefited from support from the Government of Japan. Its outcome is presented in IPBES/5/INF/25.

Objective 4: Communicate and evaluate Platform activities, deliverables, and findings

20. **Deliverable 4(c):** The 8th meeting of the MEP and Bureau accepted an offer from UNEP-WCMC to provide technical support to the expert group working on policy support tools and methodologies. This support has been in place since October 2016 (see IPBES/5/8 for further information), supported in part from the IPBES Trust Fund. UNEP-WCMC is also able to leverage additional resources to support this work, and, as a member of the team involved in the development of Oppla (which is being used as the platform for the prototype catalogue of policy support tools), UNEP-WCMC is well placed to support this work. In addition, a member of UN Environment staff serves as a member of the expert group on policy support tools and methodologies.

Additional supportive actions directly related to work programme implementation

21. UN Environment supports the Sub-global Assessment Network, the secretariat of which is provided by UNEP-WCMC. This is a community of practice established to support ecosystem assessment practitioners, and has a particular focus on supporting those carrying out national ecosystem assessments and supporting use of the results. The work of the SGA Network is directly relevant to achievement of the capacity-building priorities approved by the Plenary, and UN Environment and UNEP-WCMC are building on this by facilitating the implementation of national ecosystem assessments in a number of countries to support national decision-making.

22. FAO hosts the secretariat of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) and facilitates the implementation of the GSP actions through its regional partnerships and networks. The Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) provides scientific and technical advice on global soil issues. As requested by member countries, FAO facilitated interactions with IPBES in order to forge mutually fruitful cooperative links between ITPS and IPBES on the thematic assessment of land degradation and restoration. As part of this interaction, during the Fifth Working Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS), held from 14 - 18 March 2016, Rome, Italy, FAO invited the IPBES Executive Secretary to discuss collaboration between ITPS and IPBES in order to avoid duplication and promote synergies with ongoing respective activities. This included an invitation of IPBES to ITPS members to contribute to review of the current land degradation and restoration assessment. ITPS have submitted consolidated inputs for improving the report and three ITPS members were invited to contribute and develop specific chapters.

23. BES-Net, through its online and face-to-face activities, promotes the IPBES work and opportunities to engage in the work of the Platform amongst its global capacity-building network of networks. In addition to managing BES-Net, UNDP provides technical backstopping on capacity-building, contributing ideas and knowledge to the formulation of the IPBES work programme and its implementation in regions. Through the BES-Net Advisory Committee, UNDP also supports identifying and creating synergies in the area of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for human well-being and sustainable development. The BES-Net Advisory Committee is composed of the BES-Net donors, the IPBES secretariat, various IPBES groups and bodies (including the technical support unit for the task force on capacity-building), and other resource organizations, such as the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the SGA Network. The co-chairs of the IPBES task force on capacity-building are kept informed of the Committee's process, and the other UN entities supporting the IPBES process have been invited as observers.

24. UNESCO has mobilized the contribution of the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS), a free and open-access data holding and sharing facility, hosted by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO. Contribution of relevant data and information under OBIS, as well as of relevant expertise in marine biodiversity and ecosystem service data management, will be instrumental in involving the ocean biodiversity community in IPBES. The OBIS secretariat has been supporting authors of the ocean component of the IPBES global assessment (deliverable 2(c)) with the development of information products and maps. Through a project funded by the Flanders Government (Kingdom of Belgium), OBIS has built an information portal with statistics for countries as well as areas beyond national jurisdiction. Furthermore, marine species trend indicators as well as completeness and knowledge gap metrics are in development that could directly feed into the marine components of the IPBES assessments. The 2015 IOC Assembly (148 Member States) encouraged increased participation of IOC in the work of IPBES through OBIS and other relevant IOC programmes (IOC-XXVIII/Dec.6.1), and more recently the OBIS steering group recommended support for a writing workshop for the IPBES global assessment.

IV. Other issues

25. One of the major issues addressed at the second meeting of the UN Environment Assembly in May 2016 concerned enhancing synergies amongst the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements. Both working documents on this issue (UNEP/EA.2/12 and UNEP/EA.2/12/Add.1) make explicit reference to the Platform and its potential role in helping to harmonize efforts across the biodiversity related multilateral environmental agreements with respect to the use of evidence in policy-making, and the building of the science-policy interface at all appropriate levels. At least in part as a result of this, IPBES is also explicitly referenced in the decision on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations adopted by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (decision XIII/24 of the Conference of the Parties).
