

Report of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on the work of its third session

Annex IV

Scoping for a regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa (deliverable 2 (b))

I. Scope, geographic area, rationale, utility and assumptions

A. Scope

1. Within the scope outlined in the generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services (decision IPBES-3/1, annex III), the African assessment will focus on thematic priorities, including the food-energy-water-livelihood nexus; land degradation, including climate-related risks such as desertification and silting; catchment to coast; biodiversity conservation and sustainable use; and invasive alien species. The assessment will also include the following cross-cutting themes to be addressed, as appropriate, as part of the thematic priorities listed above: trade agreements and foreign investment; and environmental health and zoonotic diseases.

B. Geographic area of the assessment

2. The assessment will include countries and territories in five subregions:

<i>Subregions</i>	<i>Countries and territories</i>
East Africa and adjacent islands	Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, ^a Reunion, ^a Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania
Southern Africa	Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe
Central Africa	Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe
North Africa	Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Western Sahara ^b
West Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo

^a Overseas territory.

^b Territory under negotiation between the parties concerned, as recognized by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations in their relevant resolutions.

C. Rationale

3. In the context of the general rationale outlined in the generic scoping report, the present section sets out the rationale specific to the Africa region. Africa is characterized by great biodiversity and varied ecosystems, ranging from desert environments to tropical rainforests, Afro-alpine areas and marine habitats. There is also enormous human diversity, with upwards of 1,500 language and cultural groups, representing a rich heritage and a wealth of indigenous and local knowledge stemming from the longest history of human-environment interactions. These interactions are also most acute in the Africa region, where people are heavily dependent on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The nature of these interactions will drive the degradation of biodiversity and ecosystem services if they are not refocused to harness nature's benefits to people more efficiently, at the same time ensuring the sustainability and resilience of biodiversity and ecosystems. The thematic priorities referred to in section I (A) highlight both the unique biocultural heritage of the region and the critical role that biodiversity and ecosystem services play in improving livelihoods within the context of demographic change (population growth, gender relations and urbanization), economic growth and poverty reduction. The assessment should focus on the links between biodiversity, ecosystem functions and nature's benefits to people, paying particular attention to questions of equity, social relationships, spirituality and cultural identity and diversity. In addition, the assessment should consider the relationship between trade agreements and foreign investments, biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The assessment should consider which policy and institutional drivers are internal to the region, as opposed to external drivers with internal impacts.

D. Utility

4. In the context of the general utility outlined in the generic scoping report, the present section sets out the utility specific to the Africa region. The assessment will identify key priorities that will help policymakers to develop policy solutions to meet the specific needs of the Africa region as a whole, as well as the five subregions and their national constituents. The knowledge produced in the assessment, as well as its policy recommendations, will help African Governments and institutions to develop strategies to meet the sustainability and conservation goals set out in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the sustainable development goals that will come into force in 2015. The assessment report will also be of interest to the institutions involved in intra-African trade policies, biodiversity and ecosystem services and conservation policy and development such as the African Union, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa, the Commission for the Forests of Central Africa, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States. The knowledge and recommendations produced in this assessment will also be important sources of information for other stakeholders, including the private sector, concerned with the state of biodiversity in Africa and its sustainable future. Interested civil society organizations, such as non-governmental organizations, the media and individuals, may also find the document a useful source of information linking Africa's biodiversity and ecosystem services to human well-being.

E. Assumptions

5. In the context of the general assumptions outlined in the generic scoping report, the present section sets out the assumptions specific to the Africa region. The assumptions underlying the assessment include the idea that it is necessary to ensure that the authors of the assessment are the best qualified, which will require government national focal points to take a proactive approach in nominating experts of the highest calibre. This will ensure not only the quality of the document but also its relevance. In addition, the process assumes a fundamental reliance on the availability of necessary African experts able and willing to contribute to the initiative and sufficient resources, including financial resources. Access to and the availability of global databases and monitoring systems, including relevant information on the Africa region, are central to this assumption. In order to ensure that the document is of the highest quality, national focal points and observers will need to take a proactive approach in nominating experts of the highest calibre. In view of the great need for capacity-building in the region, there is a further assumption that collaboration between countries in the region, their experts and research organizations will be required to ensure the equitable participation of all countries in the assessment. There will also be a need to source data from various sources as defined by the procedures for the use of literature and to rely on indigenous and local knowledge to fill gaps in scientific knowledge and bring a different perspective to a scientific understanding of human-nature interactions and dependence. There will also be a need to support research programmes to address data and knowledge gaps.

II. Chapter outline

6. The assessment of the Africa region will follow the chapter outline set out in the generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services but will focus in particular on the regionally specific scope set out above (see sect. I).

III. Key data sets

7. Beyond the general issues concerning key data sets outlined in the generic scoping report, this section sets out issues related to key data sets specific to the Africa region. All the appropriate sources of information will be considered when preparing the assessment in order to ensure that it comprehensively reflects the regional and subregional situation in Africa from a wide range of sources, including global, regional, national, subnational and local institutions and organizations.

IV. Strategic partnership and initiatives

8. Beyond the general issues related to strategic partnerships and initiatives outlined in the generic scoping report, the present section sets out issues related to strategic partnerships and initiatives specific to the Africa region. Stakeholder mapping will be conducted to identify the following groups: coordinating agencies providing technical support during the assessment process; data centres and scientific institutions providing knowledge, data and resource persons and structural support for the process; economic cooperation communities; private sector data and knowledge providers and potential funders; networks and technical cooperation partners for wider support of data, methods and resources; United Nations agencies and international research programmes; and outreach partners.

V. Operational structure

9. As noted in the generic scoping report, the operational structures best able to deliver the Africa regional assessment, including its capacity-building component, will need to be identified. A technical support unit may be established for the Africa region to coordinate delivery, working as part of the secretariat. In addition, subregions would propose institutions that would provide capacity-building support for the process.

VI. Process and timetable

10. The process and timetable are set out in the generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

VII. Cost estimate

11. The cost estimate is set out in the generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

VIII. Communications and outreach

12. In addition to what is outlined in the generic scoping report, in Africa the role of technical support units, national focal points, regional and subregional hubs and centres of excellence will be crucial. A clear set of goals and objectives for the communications and outreach strategy relevant to the Africa region will be developed. It is recommended that the stakeholder mapping and communication strategy be undertaken in collaboration with science communication professionals, possibly through a partnership with relevant institutions. Key findings of the assessment should be conveyed to the stakeholders in the appropriate languages and should be accessible and culturally and politically relevant. Traditional communication tools such as presentations, brochures and awareness-raising events will be used to disseminate the findings of the assessment. In addition, appropriate communications and outreach tools should be used, including modern information and communication technologies and media platforms such as social networks, scientific websites and the media.

IX. Capacity-building

13. As noted in the generic scoping report, capacity-building activities will be supported by the work programme of the Platform as implemented by the capacity-building task force. Capacity-building activities will be aligned with the task force work programme and will be carried out continuously throughout the assessment. This will be a learning process. Capacity-building will be implemented through partnerships and target both individuals and institutions. Some of the key priorities identified for capacity-building in Africa include increasing capacity to carry out and use national and regional assessments; improving capacity for policy formulation, access to and generation of data, information and knowledge and lessons learned; increasing capacity for enhanced and meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement; developing capacity to bring together science with local knowledge; improving capacity for interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral communication and collaboration; building capacity to enhance the human resource and skills base, including through North-South and South-South collaboration; and enhancing the capacity to participate effectively in assessments by the Platform.

