

**Intergovernmental Science-Policy
Platform on Biodiversity and
Ecosystem Services**Distr.: General
18 May 2023

Original: English

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

Bonn, Germany, 28 August–2 September 2023

Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

Improving the effectiveness of the platform**Improving the effectiveness of the Platform****Note by the secretariat****Introduction**

1. In decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) adopted the 2030 rolling work programme of IPBES, comprising six objectives. Objective 6, “improving the effectiveness of the Platform”, is to ensure the regular internal and external review of the effectiveness of IPBES through:

(a) *Periodic review of the effectiveness of IPBES.* This objective is aimed at ensuring that the outcome of the review of the first work programme informs the implementation of the 2030 rolling work programme and that a procedure is developed for a midterm and a final review of the 2030 rolling work programme;

(b) *Review of the IPBES conceptual framework.* This objective aims to ensure that the use and impact of the IPBES conceptual framework are reviewed to inform the evolution of the rolling work programme;

(c) *Improving the effectiveness of the assessment process.* This objective aims to provide lessons learned and advice from the authors of, and other contributors to, completed assessments to those undertaking future assessments.

2. Sections I and II of the present note introduce actions taken to implement objectives 6 (a) and 6 (c) as set out above, as well as decisions taken at the seventh, eighth and ninth sessions of the Plenary that relate to these objectives. The annex sets out revised draft terms of reference for the midterm review of the 2030 rolling work programme of IPBES. A draft decision on the item is set out in document IPBES/10/1/Add.2.

3. Regarding objective 6 (b), review of the IPBES conceptual framework, the Plenary had already welcomed, in decision IPBES-9/1, the note by the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel on the use and impact of the conceptual framework of the Platform¹ and invited the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau to take into account the conclusions presented in that note when guiding and supporting the application of the conceptual framework by IPBES experts and others.

* IPBES/10/1.

¹ IPBES/9/INF/20.

I. Periodic review of effectiveness

A. Outcomes of the review of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services at the end of its first work programme

4. As part of the first work programme of IPBES, the Plenary, in section IX of decision IPBES-2/5, mandated a review of the effectiveness of the administrative and scientific functions of IPBES. An internal review, led by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau, was undertaken in the intersessional period between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Plenary. An external review by a review panel comprising 10 members was completed in time for the seventh session of the Plenary.

5. The Plenary, in its decision IPBES-7/2, took note of the activities undertaken to implement the recommendations set out in the report prepared by the internal review team² and welcomed the report on the review of IPBES at the end of its first work programme by the review panel³ and the responses by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau⁴ and by the Executive Secretary⁵ to that report. In the same decision, the Plenary requested the Bureau, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Executive Secretary, in accordance with their respective mandates, to take the recommendations made by the review panel into account in the implementation of the rolling work programme of IPBES up to 2030 and to identify solutions and/or issues for the Plenary to consider at its eighth session.

6. In section VI of decision IPBES-8/1, the Plenary welcomed the report by the Bureau, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Executive Secretary on progress in addressing the recommendations set out in the report on the review of IPBES at the end of its first work programme.⁶ It also welcomed a note prepared by the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel on the implementation of their respective roles in practice.⁷ At its eighth session, the Plenary also received an overview table with responses to each recommendation of the review panel.⁸ Furthermore, a text-only version of a manual for national focal points had been finalized and was made available to the Plenary; it has since been replaced by a laid-out version and made available in the six official United Nations languages.⁹

7. Also in section VI of decision IPBES-8/1, the Plenary requested the Bureau, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Executive Secretary, in accordance with their respective mandates, to continue to take the recommendations made by the review panel into account in the implementation of the rolling work programme of IPBES up to 2030 and to report on progress to the Plenary at its ninth session, and future sessions of the Plenary, as appropriate, including on further solutions and issues.

8. In section VI of decision IPBES-9/1, the Plenary took note of the note by the secretariat on improving the effectiveness of the Platform¹⁰ and requested the Bureau, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Executive Secretary, in accordance with their respective mandates, to continue to take into account the recommendations set out in the report on the review of IPBES at the end of its first work programme in the implementation of the rolling work programme of the Platform up to 2030 and report to the Plenary at its tenth session on further progress, including on further issues and solutions. At its ninth session, the Plenary also received an overview table with responses to each recommendation of the review panel.¹¹

9. An updated table describing the progress made in addressing each recommendation in the report on the review of IPBES at the end of its first work programme is set out in document IPBES/10/INF/16. Information on improving the effectiveness of the assessment process is also set out in section II below.

² IPBES/7/INF/17.

³ IPBES/7/INF/18.

⁴ IPBES/7/INF/19.

⁵ IPBES/7/INF/20.

⁶ IPBES/8/8.

⁷ IPBES/8/INF/22.

⁸ IPBES/8/INF/21.

⁹ Available at <https://ipbes.net/national-focal-points>.

¹⁰ IPBES/9/11.

¹¹ IPBES/9/INF/19.

B. Midterm review of the 2030 work programme

10. In section VI of decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary requested the Executive Secretary to seek the views of IPBES members and stakeholders on the process of reviewing IPBES at the closure of its first work programme and requested the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to review that process, taking into account the views expressed by IPBES members and stakeholders, and to prepare draft terms of reference for a midterm review of IPBES, for consideration by the Plenary at its ninth session.

11. In response to that request, the Executive Secretary issued notification EM/2022/02 of 12 January 2022, which included a questionnaire seeking the views of IPBES members and stakeholders on the process of reviewing IPBES at the closure of its first work programme. A total of 130 responses to the questionnaire were received by the deadline. A summary of the responses received was made available to the Plenary at its ninth session.¹² On the basis of these responses, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel had developed draft terms of reference for a midterm review,¹³ which were made available to the Plenary at its ninth session.

12. In section VI of decision IPBES-9/1, the Plenary noted with appreciation the progress made by the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in developing draft terms of reference for a midterm review of the 2030 rolling work programme of IPBES, which would be conducted between the tenth and twelfth sessions of the Plenary, and invited members, observers and other stakeholders to provide their comments on the draft terms of reference to the secretariat by 31 August 2022.

13. Comments were received from 11 Governments and three individual stakeholders. They included suggestions to further clarify the timing of the review and its internal and external parts, several suggestions for additional elements to be evaluated as part of the review, suggestions for additions to the methodology to be used for the review, as well as the recommendation that the external part of the review should not be supported by the IPBES secretariat.

14. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau considered the comments received and prepared revised terms of reference, set out in the annex to the present document, for consideration by the Plenary, with a view to approval of the document at the Plenary's tenth session.

II. Improving the effectiveness of the assessment process

15. Objective 6 (c) of the rolling work programme up to 2030, "improving the effectiveness of the assessment process", is aimed at providing lessons learned and advice from the authors of, and other contributors to, completed assessments to those undertaking future assessments. In that context, the Plenary, in decision IPBES-7/1, requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate such exchange of lessons learned and advice. Recommendation 17 of the external review¹⁴ proposed examination of the range of available ways to modernize the assessment process, including ways to channel and enable effective engagement, and examination of new structures and ways of working, including by digital means.

16. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau have continued to support the piloting of new and innovative methods and tools in ongoing IPBES assessments, and the task force on knowledge and data has continued to lead related efforts. The latest progress made in such efforts is described in document IPBES/10/INF/11.

17. In response to decision IPBES-7/1, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau reviewed feedback and insights into the IPBES assessment process. ON the basis of their recommendation, the Plenary, in section II of decision IPBES-8/1, decided, notwithstanding section 3.1 and related provisions of the procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables,¹⁵ to enable Governments to undertake an additional review of the summary for policymakers of the *Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature*, in October 2021, and an additional review of the summary for policymakers of the *Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species* later in 2021, if considered necessary and feasible by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the co-chairs of the assessment following a review of the comments received during the second external review of the assessment.

¹² IPBES/9/11, sect. I.

¹³ IPBES/9/11, annex.

¹⁴ IPBES/7/5.

¹⁵ See decision IPBES-3/3, annex I.

18. While an additional review of the summary for policymakers of the *Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species* was not considered feasible, an additional review of the summary for policymakers of the *Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature* was held in October 2021 and considered very useful by the assessment authors. Therefore, in decision IPBES-9/1 the Plenary decided to enable Governments to undertake such an additional review of the summary for policymakers of the assessment report on invasive alien species in August 2022. The indicative timeline for the business and biodiversity assessment, presented as part of the scoping report set out in annex I to decision IPBES-9/1, also foresees an additional review of the summary for policymakers by Governments.

19. Such an additional review will also be considered for future assessments, as indicated, for example, in the report by the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel on the prioritization of requests, input and suggestions for additional elements of the rolling work programme of the Platform up to 2030.¹⁶

¹⁶ IPBES/10/10.

Annex

Revised draft terms of reference for the midterm review of the 2030 rolling work programme of IPBES

I. Objectives, timing and expected outputs of the review

1. A midterm review of the 2030 work programme will be conducted between the tenth and twelfth sessions of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), with an internal review conducted between the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Plenary, and an external review conducted between the eleventh and twelfth sessions of the Plenary.

2. The review will evaluate:

(a) The effectiveness of the institutional arrangements of IPBES and its secretariat, in particular of:

- (i) The work and sessions of the Plenary, in particular various mechanisms to facilitate consensus, including preparatory processes;
- (ii) The work and structure of IPBES task forces, including their interactions;
- (iii) The work of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;
- (iv) The financial and budgetary arrangements of IPBES;

(b) The effectiveness of the procedures for the preparation of IPBES deliverables, in particular with regard to:

- (i) Options for addressing emerging, urgent matters in a timely manner, including the role and impact of workshops;
- (ii) Enhancing participation in the external review processes regarding IPBES assessments;
- (iii) Engagement with other entities, including other science-policy mechanisms;
- (iv) The nomination and selection process for experts;

(c) Online working arrangements, in particular during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and useful lessons for the future work of IPBES.

3. The Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will prepare a report on the internal review for consideration by the Plenary at its eleventh session. The review panel will take the report on the internal review into account in the external review and prepare a report on the external review for consideration by the Plenary at its twelfth session. The reports will include specific recommendations for the further implementation of the 2030 rolling work programme, including the implementation of all six work programme objectives in line with relevant decisions of and budgets approved by the IPBES Plenary.

II. Institutional structure of the review

A. Internal review

4. The Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel will conduct an internal review of the elements listed in paragraph 2 above between the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Plenary.

B. External review

5. An external review of the elements listed in paragraph 2 above will be conducted between the eleventh and twelfth sessions of the Plenary, taking into account the findings of the internal review. The external review will be conducted by a review panel. The review panel will be subject to the IPBES conflict of interest policy.

6. The review panel will comprise 15 members familiar with the work of IPBES, selected by the Bureau on the basis of nominations from Governments, with due regard to regional, gender and disciplinary balance.

7. The work of the review panel will be supported by a qualified consultant based partly at the headquarters of the IPBES secretariat, but working independently from the day-to-day business of the secretariat. The consultant would work under the direct supervision of the co-chairs of the review panel.

III. Methodology

8. The review should include the development and conduct of a number of surveys relevant to the matters listed in paragraph 2 above, a review of relevant documents and literature, online interviews and online meetings with relevant actors, and a participatory session at the eleventh session of the Plenary. When developing recommendations, the review should also take into consideration relevant learnings from other science-policy mechanisms and relevant multilateral environmental agreements.

IV. Budget

9. It is assumed that:

(a) The members of the review panel performing the external review would provide their services on a pro-bono basis;

(b) The review panel would conduct its work remotely and meet online as needed;

(c) Two representatives of the review panel conducting the external review would be invited to present the report on their work to the Plenary at its twelfth session; thus a travel budget of \$7,500 would be foreseen.

10. A budget of \$50,000 would be foreseen for the recruitment of the qualified consultant.
