EP

**Plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional
arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy
platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services
First session**
Nairobi, 3–7 October 2011
Item 4 (f) of the provisional agenda∗
**Consideration of the modalities and institutional
arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy
platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services:
work programme of the platform**

Options for implementing the policy support function of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note sets out the executive summary of a report by the secretariat on options for implementing the policy support function of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The full report, in English only, will be circulated in document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/5/Add.1. The report has been produced by the secretariat in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

∗   UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/1.

Options for implementing the policy support function of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

Executive summary

1.   A range of international processes, initiatives and approaches exist with the aim of supporting policymaking and policy implementation in respect of biodiversity and ecosystem services. One possible categorization of such efforts could be as follows:

(a)   Assessments;

(b)   Models, scenarios and other forecasting techniques;

(c)   Risk analyses, cost benefit analyses and valuation and accounting methods;

(d)   Indicators;

(e)   Information sharing, networking, mapping and knowledge platforms.

2.   Despite such efforts, a number of gaps remain in the advancement of policies relating to biodiversity and ecosystem services. The most critical areas that need to be addressed by renewed policy formulation and implementation efforts for biodiversity and ecosystem services are outlined in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, including its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the Millennium Development Goals. There is in particular a need to demonstrate the role of ecosystem services in enhancing human well-being as it relates to health, material needs, social relations and security.

3.   There are a number of options for the policy support element of the work programme of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. It could include work on a broad range of policy supportive tools and methodologies or it could focus on a narrower range of measures. If the narrower approach is chosen some possible areas of focus might be:

(a)   New and emerging tools or tools that are particularly suitable for wider replication;

(b)   Conceptual frameworks, economic instruments and knowledge-based policy support tools such as focused synthesis reports from assessments;

(c)   Indicators, quantitative models, monitoring systems, scenarios and indicators that can help advance understanding of the relevance of biodiversity and ecosystem services to current and future human wellbeing.

4.   A useful first step might be for the platform to identify and initiate an assessment of the range of existing policy-relevant tools and methodologies as a basis for determing the scope of the policy support function of the platform.

5.   There are a number of options for implementing the policy support function of the platform. For example, depending on the scope of work, the function could be performed, with the support of the secretariat and through partnerships, directly by the plenary or, alternatively, by a separate policy support working group and/or ad-hoc expert groups established by the plenary.

6.   The policy support functions may benefit from being designed in a way that is mutually supportive of the knowledge generation, assessment and capacity-building functions of the platform. For example:

(a)   The identification of policy-relevant tools and methodologies could be incorporated into the platform's global and sub-global assessments to identify and assess the availability and effectiveness of current and emerging policy-relevant tools and methodologies, as well as how easily they can be replicated;

(b)   Ad-hoc expert groups, the secretariat or both could promote and catalyse the further development of the identified policy-relevant tools and methodologies, perhaps working with existing groups of tool developers. The plenary could also outsource tool and methodology development by issuing general or targeted invitations to donors, partners and other institutions;

(c)   Decision maker access to identified policy-relevant tools and methodologies could be facilitated by assigning an existing knowledge management platform or the secretariat with the development of a knowledge management platform for all functions of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

7.   The plenary may also wish to give attention to the modalities for how the policy support element of the programme of work might relate to other bodies of relevance, in particular the scientific and technical bodies of conventions of relevance to biodiversity and ecosystem services.

_____