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Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Initial work programme of the Platform: scoping
documents for regional assessments, land degradation
and restoration and the conceptualization of values**

**Report on the regional scoping process for a set of regional and
subregional assessments (deliverable 2 (b))**

**Draft complementary scoping report for the regional assessment of
biodiversity and ecosystem services for the Open Ocean region**

Note by the secretariat

Within the general framework of the draft generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES/3/6/Add.1), the annex to the present note sets out the draft complementary scoping report for the regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the Open Ocean region. It was developed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau on the basis of the outcome of the joint regional scoping process undertaken in response to decision IPBES-2/5 (see IPBES/3/6 for further details regarding the process). The draft complementary scoping report outlines characteristics specific to the open ocean that would need to be assessed in order for the assessment to be policy-relevant.

* IPBES/3/1.

Annex

Scoping for a regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the Open Ocean region

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

A. Scope

1. Within the scope outlined in the draft generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES/3/6/Add.1), the Open Ocean assessment will focus mainly on marine areas beyond national jurisdiction and on assessing current legal frameworks, policies and policy tools and their effectiveness in the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Open Ocean region and subregions. It will reflect requests by member States and submissions by observers, including on topics such as sustainable fisheries and exploitation of renewable and non-renewable resources (notably minerals and fuel), food security and biodiversity, bioprospecting, and global change impacts on marine systems and their interactions. The assessment will place strong emphasis on the development of future scenarios and policy options for restoring and maintaining the biodiversity and ecosystem services in the open ocean, including knowledge of how climate change impacts open oceans biodiversity through changes in pelagic habitats and species distributions, ocean acidification, melting of sea ice and cumulative impacts of all the different uses of the oceans.

B. Geographic boundary of the assessment

2. The Open Ocean assessment will mainly include areas beyond territorial or exclusive economic zone waters and may include several subregions as identified in the United Nations World Ocean Assessment: North Atlantic; South Atlantic; North Pacific; South Pacific; Indian Ocean; and “open ocean deep sea”. The assessment will also include the Arctic Ocean and the Southern Ocean. Seas that are to a large extent landlocked, such as the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Caspian Sea and the Caribbean Sea, will be covered to the extent that they are not covered as part of the assessment of coastal areas in the other regional assessments.

C. Rationale

3. In the context of the general rationale outlined in the draft generic scoping report, the present section sets out the rationale specific to the Open Ocean. The oceans cover 70 per cent of the planet’s surface, and more than 90 per cent of the biosphere is marine. Marine ecosystems host a large proportion of the total biodiversity of the planet and provide key services to people (such as food, fibre, genetic resources, energy, carbon sequestration, climate regulation, contributions to the nutrient cycle, and many cultural and spiritual values), thus contributing greatly to human well-being. However, there is mounting evidence of widespread degradation of marine ecosystems globally and of its impact on marine biodiversity, ecosystem services and benefits to people and human well-being for current and future generations. There is therefore a need to assess the impacts of current policies and practices on the current and future trends in biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Open Ocean and to provide information on how they could be optimized, in order to restore and maintain biodiversity and nature’s benefits to people. It is imperative to assess the application of new policy and market options and tools and the impact of different access rights to marine resources.

D. Utility

4. In the context of the general utility outlined in the draft generic scoping report, the present section sets out the utility specific to the Open Ocean. Since the Open Ocean region and its subregions are primarily beyond national jurisdiction, the assessment will be of use to all regional, national, supranational and international stakeholders and organizations with interests in marine biodiversity and ecosystem services. The assessment will contribute to strengthening the science-policy interface in support of developments under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other policy-relevant initiatives. Such developments include any outcomes of the agreement among States at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, including deciding by the end of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly in September 2015 whether or not to launch the negotiations for the conclusion of an implementing agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The assessment will also support other relevant processes, including: (a) the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine

areas currently conducted within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity; (b) the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular target 11; (c) the current work of regional seas programmes (e.g., the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention)), conservation organizations and regional fisheries management organizations to develop areas-based management tools in areas beyond national jurisdiction; (d) more generally, the work programmes developed by other international and regional organizations in areas beyond national jurisdiction; (e) and any future ocean-relevant sustainable development goals and targets in the post-2015 development agenda.

E. Assumptions

5. In the context of the general assumptions outlined in the draft generic scoping report, the present section sets out the assumptions specific to the Open Ocean. The assessment will build on, complement and contribute to outputs from the Regular Process for the Global Reporting and Assessment of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects. In 2015, the Process will deliver an output under the working title “World Ocean Assessment I”, a review of the available knowledge on marine biodiversity, drivers and ecosystem services of marine ecosystems. The assessment by the Platform will complement World Ocean Assessment outcomes, especially in the areas of integrated analysis, modelling, future scenarios and assessment of options for governance, policies and new policy instruments. It will also include the current discussions about deep-sea access and exploitation (e.g., the protection of deep-sea areas in European waters, the moratorium on deep-sea bottom trawling in the Mediterranean and the implementation of large-scale marine protected areas). It will use other existing scientific literature and local knowledge, including informal and formal knowledge and data collection systems, and incorporate existing national and international data-gathering and monitoring systems. The assessment will draw on published information from other assessments, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, multilateral agreements, national academies of science, national research institutes, scientific societies and other research communities. In addition, the procedures of the Platform will be applied for the use of indigenous and local knowledge, including through fisheries organizations, non-governmental organization networks and other knowledge holders.

II. Chapter outline

6. The Open Ocean regional assessment will follow the chapter outline as set out in the draft generic scoping report, but will focus in particular on the specific scope as set out in section I above. In chapter 3, Status, trends of biodiversity and ecosystems underpinning nature’s benefits to people, it will include fragile habitats and hotspots, as well as issues related to Aichi Biodiversity Target 14. It will also include species of special concern, such as those covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, migratory species and threatened species as identified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (including sharks and turtles, marine mammals and birds). In chapter 6, on options for governance, institutional arrangements and private and public decision-making across scales and sectors, the assessment will analyse future challenges for sustainable use and conservation in the Open Ocean, such as deep-sea access and exploitation, and in key sectors, such as nature protection, ocean fisheries (e.g., tuna and billfish fisheries) and associated markets and governance systems, energy (including bioenergy), bioprospecting, mineral extraction, food provisioning and other sectors planning to move into the open ocean, for example, aquaculture.

III. Key datasets

7. Supplementing the general issues related to key datasets outlined in the draft generic scoping report, this section sets out issues related to key datasets specific to the Open Ocean. In this respect, it will be important to develop strategic partnerships with data holders and establish links with ongoing assessments, such as the World Ocean Assessment. The Open Ocean assessment will make extensive use of key, accessible databases such as, the Ocean Biogeographic Information System, SeaLifeBase, AlgaeBase and FishBase, AquaMaps, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the European Union Data Collection Framework, the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology and the Biological Information System for Marine Life.

IV. Strategic partnership and initiatives

8. Beyond the general issues concerning strategic partnerships and initiatives outlined in the draft generic scoping report, this section sets out issues related to strategic partnerships and initiatives specific to the Open Ocean. Strategic partnerships to be developed include with the World Ocean Assessment, and with key organizations and initiatives such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the International Maritime Organization, regional seas programmes and regional fisheries management organizations, conservation organizations, regional policy processes that affect open oceans, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat of the United Nations, the International Seabed Authority, and the ad hoc open-ended informal working group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

V. Operational structure

9. As noted in the draft generic scoping report, the operational structures best able to deliver the Open Ocean regional assessment, including for its capacity-building component, will need to be identified. A technical support unit may be established to coordinate the delivery of the Open Ocean regional assessment, working as part of the secretariat.

VI. Process and timetable

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

VII. Cost estimate

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

VIII. Communication and outreach

12. In addition to what is outlined in the draft generic scoping report, the role of the technical support units, national focal points and regional and subregional hubs and centres of excellence will be crucial. A clear set of goals and objectives for the communication and outreach strategy relevant to the Open Ocean region will be developed.

IX. Capacity-building

13. As noted in the draft 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 will be implemented through partnerships and will target both individual and institutional levels.
