

Decision IPBES-3/4: Communications, stakeholder engagement and strategic partnership

The Plenary

1. *Takes note* of the communications and outreach strategy¹ set out in annex I to the present decision;
2. *Requests* the secretariat, subject to the availability of funds, to undertake the activities described in the initial implementation plan set out in the appendix to annex I to the present decision, as appropriate;
3. *Welcomes* the revised draft stakeholder engagement strategy for supporting the implementation of the Platform work programme set out in annex II to the present decision;
4. *Requests* the secretariat, under the supervision of the Bureau and the Plenary and in collaboration with an open-ended network of stakeholders, to undertake the activities, as appropriate, set out in the initial implementation plan included in the appendix to annex II to the present decision, subject to the availability of resources;
5. *Encourages* all stakeholders representing, inter alia, their regional, disciplinary and knowledge systems in their diversity, to collaborate with the Platform;
6. *Approves* the guidance on the development of strategic partnerships and other collaborative arrangements set out in annex III to the present decision;
7. *Invites* the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, as appropriate, to work with the Bureau to develop strategic partnerships, modelled on the existing strategic partnership arrangement with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, setting out areas for collaboration and cooperation, to be approved by the Plenary at a future session;
8. *Decides* to review steps that have been taken to develop and enter into strategic partnerships and other collaborative arrangements at its fourth session.

Annex I

Communications and outreach strategy (deliverable 4 (d))

I. Introduction

1. The present strategy is based on the principles and guidelines enunciated in the draft communications and outreach strategy presented at the second session of the Plenary (IPBES/2/12), which was designed to provide a framework for the communications of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and serve as the founding document for all communications strategies to come.
2. Following an initial discussion at its second session, the Plenary, in its decision IPBES-2/9, requested the secretariat, under the supervision of the Bureau and in cooperation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, to prepare a draft communications and outreach strategy for consideration by the Plenary at its third session. The present strategy was prepared in response to that request. In decision IPBES-2/9 the Plenary further requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, to develop and implement a policy for the use of the Platform logo (see IPBES/3/INF/9).

II. Context

3. The purpose of all communications activities will be to ensure that the Platform is recognized as a credible, relevant, independent and legitimate platform that produces policy-relevant – but not policy-prescriptive – knowledge products and builds capacity for the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services knowledge in decision-making.
4. More specifically, communications activities will be aimed at promoting the work of the Platform among key audiences and coordinating outreach for the Platform's assessment findings. The aim of the Platform's communications approach and activities shall be to ensure that timely and

¹ IPBES/3/15.

appropriate information enters the public domain – both proactively to communicate reports and reactively in response to questions or criticism.

5. While the communications strategy will need to focus on promoting the work of the Platform among key audiences, the stakeholder engagement strategy should focus on encouraging the participation of stakeholders in the Platform's work. The latter is presented in annex II to decision IPBES-3/4. The present communications and outreach strategy focuses on two key areas: day-to-day communications; and the launch of assessment reports.

6. In developing the strategy, certain factors that could hinder communication efforts among audiences, such as different languages and culture-specific communication styles, were taken into consideration. To address these challenges, communications materials will be provided in all six official United Nations languages, where practical. In its communications and outreach activities, the Platform will also pay attention to the specific context of different countries. This reflects an understanding that the needs of developing countries may differ from those of developed countries and may require tailor-made outreach activities.

7. To ensure coordination and coherence of the Platform's communications, the secretariat will work with all parts of the Platform – the Bureau, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, the technical support units, the coordinating lead authors and others – as appropriate. The secretariat should also evaluate the Platform's communications and report to the Plenary, including on the type and extent of outreach and media coverage. Evaluation reports should also be presented to the Bureau and the Panel at regular intervals.

8. The communications strategy comprises the following elements: goals and objectives, audience analysis, messages, areas of activity and evaluation. For the sake of brevity, the communications and outreach strategy focuses on key points and does not include an exhaustive list of all messages, tools, audiences and outreach activities that will be used to implement communications and outreach work.

III. Goals and objectives

9. The Platform's primary objective is to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. Communications efforts will be based on the principle that the Platform shall be policy relevant but not policy prescriptive. The Platform will not engage in advocacy and will not provide policy recommendations.

10. Setting specific objectives from a communications perspective can provide a process for evaluation from the outset. Such objectives should be achieved in the context of each Platform activity and are:

(a) To reaffirm the Platform's reputation as a credible, transparent, independent and authoritative intergovernmental body that strengthens the policymaking and knowledge interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services;

(b) To communicate assessment findings and provide clear and balanced information on biodiversity and ecosystem services, including on risks and scientific uncertainties, without compromising accuracy;

(c) To raise awareness about all the Platform's functions, which go beyond assessments and support knowledge generation, capacity-building and the identification of policy-relevant tools and methodologies;

(d) To explain the way in which the Platform works, selects its authors and reviewers and produces its reports so as to promote an understanding of its work;

(e) To position the Platform as one that adds value to the work already undertaken in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services to support policymaking;

(f) To foster two-way communication between the Platform and its audiences so as to improve the Platform's products and messages.

IV. Audience analysis

11. The audience for the communications strategy needs to be well defined in order for the strategy to be well focused. The Platform has a mandate to provide scientific and technical information on biodiversity and ecosystem services to policymakers who need scientifically credible and

independent information to enable them to adopt local, national and international policies that could address the challenges of biodiversity loss and decline in ecosystem services. Accordingly, the communications and outreach strategy is directed towards the intended beneficiaries of the Platform work programme: governments and policymakers at all levels, including the States members of the Platform and multilateral environmental agreements.

12. While the stakeholder engagement strategy needs to find ways of boosting the participation of stakeholders in the Platform's work programme and deliverables, the communications and outreach strategy is designed with the intended beneficiaries in mind. By focusing on the intended beneficiaries of the Platform's work, it is easier to make a distinction between primary and broader audiences.

13. Some primary and broader target audiences for the Platform's outputs are listed below. In the interests of brevity, the list is not exhaustive:

- (a) Primary target audiences:
 - (i) Policymakers in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services at all levels: Platform member States, ministries of environment, energy, industry, planning, finance and agriculture, local authorities and the scientific advisers of policymakers need to be informed about the Platform so that they can use it as a source of independent knowledge;
 - (ii) United Nations programmes and multilateral environmental agreements: some United Nations programmes and multilateral environmental agreements are key clients for the Platform's reports. The Platform will work with them, including during outreach and dissemination activities;
- (b) Broader audiences:
 - (i) Scientific community: the Platform depends on the scientific community for the production of its reports and should therefore target this community to increase its engagement. International associations of scientists could be targeted as part of outreach activities;
 - (ii) Indigenous and local knowledge holders: the Platform has identified the indigenous and local knowledge community as an important target audience;
 - (iii) Business and industry: it is anticipated that the Platform's reports will be considered by businesses and industries interested in the Platform to help them find sustainable ways of avoiding, minimizing and offsetting their impacts on ecosystems;
 - (iv) Practitioners or implementers: a multitude of organizations and individuals involved in the implementation of biodiversity and ecosystem services working on the ground will be interested in learning about the products of the Platform, such as policy support tools, and how they can use them;
 - (v) Community-based organizations: certain communities will be greatly affected by biodiversity loss and will therefore need to be aware of the findings of the Platform's assessments and policy support tools. The Platform secretariat could work with relevant networks to disseminate communications materials to these communities;
 - (vi) Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations: these may be able to support the Platform's objectives by providing outreach to their constituencies, including policymakers or the private sector;
 - (vii) The media: the Platform secretariat would not be in a position to reach all audiences directly and would therefore rely on good media relations to reach broader audiences;
 - (viii) Communities and the public at large.

14. While the Platform secretariat itself might not be in a position to produce derivative products aimed at specific audiences, it may engage with organizations that take elements of the Platform's assessments and communicate them in more audience-specific formats.

V. Messages

15. Messaging will need to be coordinated, in particular during the launch of assessment reports, when there will be heightened interest in the work of the Platform. Prior to the launch of assessment reports, the secretariat should work with report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and review editors to ensure the consistency of messages to policymakers, their scientific advisers and the media. Messaging will need to respect the bounds set for the Platform's reports, namely, that they should be policy relevant but not policy prescriptive. It is therefore an essential quality of the Platform's work that messaging and reports should remain policy neutral and maintain scientific balance.

16. In addition, a number of overarching key messages explaining what the Platform is actually doing need to be agreed upon and be used in all materials for the media or events attended by different audiences. The focus of these messages should be to explain the process and its legitimacy, shedding light on such notions as "global consensus", "peer review", "highest-quality science" and others.

17. Although by no means exhaustive, the list below presents overarching messages that can be used to illustrate the Platform's added value and role among all audiences that are not familiar with its operations:

(a) The Platform is the authoritative body which provides state-of-the-art and up-to-date reports on key aspects of biodiversity and ecosystem services, in response to requests from policymakers;

(b) The Platform does not duplicate existing work but adds value to the wide range of organizations already working in this field by filling gaps and building upon their work;

(c) The Platform is unique in that it aims to strengthen capacity for the effective use of science in decision-making at all levels;

(d) The Platform is scientifically independent and ensures credibility, relevance and legitimacy through peer review of its work and transparency in its decision-making processes for the exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies from all relevant sources;

(e) The Platform recognizes and respects the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems;

(f) The Platform recognizes the unique biodiversity and scientific knowledge of different regions and the need for the full and effective participation of developing countries and balanced regional representation and participation in its structure and work;

(g) The Platform takes an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach that incorporates all relevant disciplines, including social and natural sciences.

VI. Areas of activity

A. Day-to-day communications

18. The Platform secretariat will provide information and regular updates about its deliverables, events and activities through its website, social media accounts, presentations and so forth. A list of all suggested activities that could be undertaken by the secretariat as of 2015 and a timeline are set out in the appendix to the present strategy.

B. Launch of assessment reports

19. Two assessments reports will be launched at the fourth session of the Plenary: first, the thematic assessment of pollination and pollinators associated with food production and, second, the methodological assessment of scenarios and modelling of biodiversity and ecosystem services. More assessment reports will follow. There will be a short period, probably lasting three months, of sustained and concentrated interest in each of the reports all over the world. It is essential that the Platform be well prepared for this.

20. The launch of assessment reports will spark a period of heightened interest in the Platform's work from the media, policymakers and other stakeholders. The Platform's key strategic objectives at these periods of heightened activity are, first, to maintain vigorous, accurate and sustained press coverage, second, to coordinate and control messaging that is kept strictly within the bounds set for the Platform's reports, namely, that they should be policy relevant, not policy prescriptive, and, third, to meet the requests made by end users – in particular policymakers and scientific and technical experts in government and the private sector – for the conduct of seminars, briefings and meetings.

21. To promote the findings of the assessment reports it will be important to develop an outreach strategy and mount a media relations campaign, including press releases, the use of social media and website announcements, press conferences, messaging, speeches, speaking notes and other approaches.
22. To be effective and to have the required impact, it is recommended that the Platform appoint a communications consulting firm a few months prior to the launch of assessment reports to handle the increased volume of activities and products that will need to be developed and disseminated. This recommendation is in line with similar practices adopted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has enlisted the help of communications consulting firms during peak periods. Such an appointment could be covered by the communications budget allocated for each assessment and would only take effect during the peak periods before, during and after the launch of assessment reports. Consulting firms will work under the supervision of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and in collaboration with the communications officer of the secretariat.
23. Communicating the results of the Platform's assessments will be a challenging task because of the range and complexity of scientific issues and the increasing need to reach audiences beyond scientists and Governments. With the help of a communications consulting firm, clear messages can be crafted for different audiences. Furthermore, trained science writers can translate technical language into text suitable for mass communication or design web pages that explain scientific concepts to lay audiences without misconstruing or distorting the evidence underpinning those concepts.
24. In order to promote understanding, acceptance and practical use of assessment reports, it is critical that, subject to the availability of resources, the secretariat and communications firm work together with the task force on capacity-building to develop and implement training programmes for decision makers at various levels, when needed, and to provide guidance to member States, regional hubs and networks.
25. As the assessment on pollination and pollinators will be one of the first two reports to be launched, it could be used as a model for the activities and products needed prior to, during and after the launch of each assessment report. A timeline of suggested activities is set out in the appendix to the present strategy.

VII. Evaluation

26. The evaluation process will comprise three stages, as appropriate and depending on the availability of funding:
- (a) *Perception surveys.* One survey targeting primary and broader audiences will be conducted as necessary to gauge perceptions about the Platform and its work;
 - (b) *Focus group discussions.* To measure the effectiveness of the communications and outreach strategy, focus group discussions will be held at key stages of the campaign as it progresses. These discussions will be held during major events or targeted at specific audiences, such as policymakers;
 - (c) *Media content monitoring.* Press coverage in websites, newspapers, magazines and scientific publications will be continually monitored.

Appendix

Implementation plan

1. The present implementation plan provides further details about the activities that could be implemented under the two key areas of communications: first, day-to-day communications and, second, the launch of assessment reports.

A. Day-to-day communications

2. As of 2015, the secretariat will develop the following products and undertake the following activities:

(a) *Needs analysis*. This will be conducted as part of the stakeholder engagement strategy (decision IPBES-3/4, annex II). The findings of this analysis will be valuable for communications planning purposes;

(b) *Website revamp*. A large-scale project to be undertaken by the secretariat will be the revamping of the Platform's website on the basis of an open consultation process on areas to be improved. The aim will be to create a user-friendly and intuitive website with a contemporary and fresh look and feel;

(c) *Information and communications technology tools*. The secretariat will use information and communications technology tools, which will provide an opportunity for dialogue and communication to the Platform's bodies (Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel), task forces and expert groups. Such information and communications technology tools will facilitate file sharing and collaboration online, along with videoconferencing services;

(d) *Visual identity*. With the help of professional graphic designers, a consistent corporate visual identity for all communications products and activities of the Platform, including its website, presentations, fact sheets, publications and other outputs, will be developed;

(e) *Presentations*. Once the visual style guide has been developed, professional and visually appealing presentations promoting the work of the Platform will also be developed;

(f) *Fact sheets*. One-page fact sheets presenting the Platform's work will be created using the same visual style guide. Where practicable, these fact sheets will be made available in all six official languages of the United Nations;

(g) *Social media*. A social media strategy will also be developed to promote opportunities for participation in the Platform's work. Accounts for the Platform will be created on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube providing updates about the Platform's work;

(h) *FAQ web page*. This will be created on the revamped website providing key messages to explain why the Platform has been set up, how it adds value to the current array of initiatives and how it operates and under what principles;

(i) *Events and outreach*. An interactive calendar with Platform events will be included in the revamped website;

(j) *Translations*. Where practicable, translations of key communications products will be made available in all six official United Nations languages;

(k) *Wikipedia*. The Platform's webpage on Wikipedia will be updated after major events, such as sessions of the Plenary and the launching of assessment reports;

(l) *Annual survey*. A survey to gauge stakeholder perceptions will be conducted each year.

Table 1
Timeline of communications activities

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Needs analysis	Completion by April 2015
Website revamp	January–April 2015
Information and communications technology tools	Procurement by April 2015
Visual identity	Completion by June 2015
Presentations	Completion by July 2015
Fact sheets	Completion by August 2015
Social media	Throughout the year
FAQ web page	Completion by June 2015
Events and outreach	Throughout the year
Translations	Completion by November 2015
Wikipedia	Updated regularly
Annual survey	Completed in October each year

B. Launch of assessment reports

3. As the thematic assessment of pollination and pollinators will be one of the first two reports to be launched, it will be used as a model for the activities and products needed prior to, during and after the launch of each assessment report. A timeline of possible activities could be used as a model for the launch of the assessment reports that will follow.

Table 2
Timeline of possible launch-related activities

<i>Activities prior to, during and after the launch of the thematic assessment of pollination and pollinators</i>	<i>October 2015</i>	<i>November 2015</i>	<i>December 2015</i>	<i>January 2016</i>	<i>February 2016</i>	<i>March 2016</i>
Publications						
Supporting materials						
Derivative products						
Dedicated conference						
Special events, briefings, side events						
Speaker opportunities						
Online Q and A sessions with experts						
Rapid response plan						
Spokespersons						
Media training						
List of influential media						
Media monitoring						
Marketing						
Mailing lists						
Press conferences						
Interviews						

Annex II

Stakeholder engagement strategy (deliverable 4 (d))

I. Introduction

1. In decision IPBES/1/2, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services invited the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Council for Science (ICSU) to work with relevant stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities and the private sector, and with the secretariat, to prepare, in consultation with the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, a draft stakeholder engagement strategy for supporting the implementation of the work programme. After a broad consultative process that included a call for input, an in-person workshop and an online review, all comments and suggestions were incorporated in a draft stakeholder engagement strategy that was submitted to the Plenary for consideration at its second session (IPBES/2/13).

2. At the second session of the Plenary, representatives expressed general support for the draft strategy and, following the discussion, the Chair proposed that the secretariat develop a revised version for consideration by the Plenary at its third session (IPBES/2/17, sect. VII.B). In addition, at the third Bureau meeting, in March 2014, the Chair asked the secretariat to develop an initial implementation plan, to be presented together with the draft strategy to the Plenary at its third session.

3. In response to that request, the secretariat, working with Bureau members and in consultation with Panel members, prepared a revised version of the draft stakeholder engagement strategy and a draft implementation plan and invited comments from stakeholders. In total, the secretariat received 364 comments from stakeholders and took them into consideration in the preparation of the revised draft strategy. In addition, the secretariat took into consideration suggestions from stakeholders that were discussed by the Platform's Pan-European Stakeholder Consultation at its second meeting, held in Basel, Switzerland, in September 2014. The revised version of the draft strategy and the initial implementation plan, as set out below, were welcomed by the Plenary at its third session.

II. Context

4. Stakeholder engagement has been identified as an important element for the relevance, effectiveness, credibility and overall success of the Platform. The stakeholder engagement strategy differs from the communications strategy in the following respects: while the stakeholder engagement strategy needs to focus on encouraging the participation of scientists and other knowledge holders in the Platform's work and on facilitating the use of the Platform's products, such as its policy support tools, the communications strategy needs to focus on promoting the work of the Platform among key audiences via publications, media relations, special events and other measures.

III. Oversight

5. The stakeholder engagement strategy will be implemented and operationalized by the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, working under the supervision of the Bureau and the Plenary and in collaboration with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. The Platform encourages the self-organization of an inclusive, open-ended network of stakeholders representing their diversity, working primarily on a virtual basis. Collaboration between the Platform and the network will be guided by the stakeholder engagement strategy. A strategic partnership between the Platform and the network will specify the arrangements for this collaboration and will be subject to the approval of the Plenary.

IV. Purpose and objectives

6. The purpose of the Platform is to strengthen the science-policy interface on issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem services through its four functions (assessments, knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building). The overall purpose of stakeholder engagement is to support the implementation of the Platform's work programme and its specific deliverables for the period 2014–2018 in a participatory, inclusive and transparent manner. The Platform will depend on expert individual contributions for its assessments. In addition, the other three functions of the Platform also require input from and participation by a diverse mix of stakeholders. Accordingly, the strategy for engaging with stakeholders is a key element of the efforts to mobilize support for the implementation of the Platform's work programme for the period 2014–2018.

7. Setting clear objectives that are aligned with the purpose of stakeholder engagement will help the strategy to maintain its focus. Key objectives of the Platform's stakeholder engagement include:
- (a) Reaching out to a diversity of potential users and providers of information to increase the relevance and use of the Platform;
 - (b) Bringing diverse perspectives together to facilitate creativity and innovation;
 - (c) Attracting scientists, such as assessment experts, and other knowledge holders from citizen science initiatives and indigenous peoples and local communities to contribute to the Platform's deliverables;
 - (d) Strengthening support for the Platform's deliverables from different regions and scientific disciplines;
 - (e) Endeavouring to reach balance in the contribution of knowledge across regions, sectors, genders and knowledge types;
 - (f) Delivering high-quality products in the context of science and knowledge to decision makers who are the end users of the Platform's deliverables;
 - (g) Mobilizing resources for capacity-building in order to contribute to the development of assessments and policy support tools and facilitate the use of policy support tools;
 - (h) Mobilizing in-kind support from stakeholders to promote the implementation and use of the Platform.

V. Definitions of stakeholders

8. In the context of the work programme, stakeholders will act as both contributors to and end users of the Platform and will be individual scientists and knowledge holders as well as institutions, organizations and groups working in the field of biodiversity and ecosystems services that can:
- (a) Contribute to the activities of the work programme through their experience, expertise, knowledge, data, information and capacity-building experience;
 - (b) Use or benefit from the outcomes of the work programme;
 - (c) Encourage and support the participation of scientists and knowledge holders in the work of the Platform.
9. The Platform aims to strengthen the interface between science and policymaking on issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem services. Two categories of stakeholders have been identified: contributors (scientists, knowledge holders, practitioners and others) and end users (policymakers and others).
10. Stakeholders are not entitled to observer status unless they are admitted as such according to the rules of procedure.

VI. Scope

11. Stakeholder engagement is essential to efforts to advance the four functions of the Platform (assessment, knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building). One aspect of the Platform's stakeholder engagement is the need to mobilize stakeholders who can act as contributors to its four functions, while another aspect is efforts to facilitate use of the Platform's products, such as the catalogue of relevant assessments or the catalogue of policy support tools, by end users. A third aspect is an endeavour to facilitate the participation of observer organizations at sessions of the Plenary and to invite comments from stakeholders on documents to be submitted to the Plenary.
12. Operationalization of the stakeholder engagement strategy will be facilitated through the secretariat, which will provide clear information regarding opportunities for stakeholder engagement and seek feedback from stakeholders with a view to making suggestions to improve the process and foster two-way communication.
13. In some cases, the Plenary has already clearly defined rules and processes for stakeholder engagement. For example, under its first function (assessments), the nomination and selection process of experts, including opportunities for peer review, are clearly outlined in decision IPBES-2/3. Stakeholder engagement in these areas has already begun.
14. There are, however, other areas of the work programme that might offer opportunities for stakeholder engagement and for which no rules or processes of engagement have yet been considered.

The three task forces might offer opportunities for stakeholder engagement, as their work will heavily rely on collaboration with various partners in the fields of capacity-building, indigenous and local knowledge and knowledge and data. The secretariat will accordingly work with the task forces to develop options for stakeholder engagement in the work of the task forces.

VII. Incentives and disincentives

15. In implementing the stakeholder engagement strategy, it will be useful for the Platform to be aware of potential incentives and disincentives to engagement. Some useful insights can be drawn from the preliminary review of the motivation for participating in Platform assessments. The United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) prepared a paper reviewing the motivation for the participation of experts in Platform assessments (see IPBES/1/INF/15).

16. Possible incentives for experts to participate in the work of the Platform, identified in the paper by WCMC, include: prestige and opportunities to engage in a project of scientific excellence; making a difference; relevance to their research interests; networking opportunities; working on something that they consider important; being part of an influential organization; and recognition for grants, scholarships and fellowships. Possible disincentives include: engaging in a process with regard to which they have not been involved in developing the questions; heavy time commitments; lack of clarity on how to participate; uncertainty as to how funding incentives are to be established; and lack of recognition by institutions for the contributions made by their scientists.

17. Another survey conducted by ICSU and IUCN identified the following factors as potential incentives for organizations to engage as stakeholders in the work of the Platform: the alignment of their priorities with those of the Platform; the opportunity to influence the Platform's work; the opportunity to contribute to useful outcomes; the potential to develop partnerships; the opportunity to gain recognition; and the potential to be compensated for their time.

18. Although the results do not represent the views of all future stakeholders of the Platform, they provide some insights into what needs to be done to enhance stakeholder engagement.

VIII. Risks

19. As part of the Platform's stakeholder engagement planning, it is important to identify and prepare for risks associated with engagement and ways of confronting them. The following are among the most common risks of stakeholder engagement: first, conflict of interest or dissent among stakeholders; second, inability to engage owing to lack of funding; third, participation fatigue; fourth, unmet expectations; and, fifth, unequal levels of engagement among stakeholders. In order to address potential risks, the secretariat will seek feedback from stakeholders during special events and draft a policy for identifying and addressing risks, under the guidance of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.

IX. Evaluation

20. For high-quality stakeholder engagement, evaluation needs to be planned from the outset through the setting of objectives and indicators of performance to enable the Platform to measure and evaluate progress towards achieving high-quality stakeholder engagement and identify areas for improvement. The following draft indicators are classified in groups depending on the nature of the information that they provide:

<i>Indicators for successful stakeholder engagement</i>	<i>Description</i>
Commitment to stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a strategy and an implementation plan • Evidence of consultations with stakeholders • Evidence of clear and accurate policies and processes explaining how stakeholders can get involved and in which areas
Capacity to address challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References to obstacles to stakeholder engagement and the steps planned to surmount them (e.g., hard-to-reach stakeholders, language or cultural barriers, diverse agendas or interests, etc.)
Extent of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics assessing engagement (e.g., number of nominations, peer review comments, participants, fellowships, etc.)
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics assessing representation of stakeholders from different countries, regions, disciplines, etc.
Evidence of outputs and impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the relation between the purpose of engagement and its expected outcomes • Evidence of achieved impacts
Opportunities for two-way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls for input on issues related to stakeholder engagement • Surveys to provide feedback on the engagement • Evidence of stakeholder issues and concerns being addressed

21. One tool for evaluation could be the use of annual surveys, which would provide opportunities for feedback on the process and outcomes of engagement. As mentioned earlier, the secretariat could undertake an annual survey to gauge stakeholder views and perceptions. Monitoring will be conducted continually, by taking into account the comments and feedback during various stakeholder events.

22. In addition, as decided by the Plenary, the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement should be independently reviewed and evaluated as part of the Platform's efficiency and effectiveness (deliverable 4 (e)).

X. Initial implementation plan

23. The initial implementation plan for this stakeholder engagement strategy set out in the appendix includes actions that could be taken by the secretariat to ensure that stakeholders receive sufficient and clear information on how to engage with the Platform. The secretariat will also seek input from stakeholders with a view to improving stakeholder engagement and fostering two-way communication. In 2015, the secretariat, in collaboration with the open-ended network, will undertake the following activities, as appropriate, together with stakeholders, subject to the availability of resources:

- (a) Identification of stakeholders;
- (b) Needs analysis;
- (c) Preparation of how-to guides and translations;
- (d) Preparation of fact sheets and translations regarding information, data sources, knowledge generation and capacity-building;
- (e) Collaboration with task forces to engage with hard-to-reach stakeholders;
- (f) Collaboration with existing networks and hubs;
- (g) Facilitation and establishment of new networks and hubs;
- (h) Use of social media and electronic mailing lists;
- (i) Use of information and communications technology tools;
- (j) Stakeholder events;
- (k) Annual surveys.

24. Details regarding the above-mentioned activities, together with a timeline and an indicative budget, are presented in the initial implementation plan.

25. From 2016 onwards, additional activities could be undertaken by the secretariat to enhance stakeholder engagement. Products related to media relations, outreach, dissemination and promotion of the Platform's products will be covered by the budget allocated to communications as part of the Plenary-approved budget for the work programme.

Appendix

Initial implementation plan

1. In 2015, the secretariat will undertake the following activities, as appropriate, together with stakeholders, subject to the availability of resources.

Identification and mobilization of stakeholders

2. Identification and mobilization of the Platform's potential stakeholders is a complex task, as a great diversity of individuals, institutions, organizations and groups working across and within different sectors and scales (local, national, subregional, regional and global) need to be considered. Other parameters include the different disciplines (natural, social and economic sciences), types of knowledge (traditional, local and indigenous, citizen science) and sectors (industry, health, food, energy) that must be taken into account. Cultural differences, language barriers, differing stakeholder interests and different mandates and governance arrangements represent additional factors that must be taken into consideration.

3. The secretariat, in collaboration with the network of stakeholders, will develop a method for systematically identifying and mobilizing stakeholder groups, taking into account regional and gender balance and diverse knowledge systems. As a starting point, all observer organizations that have already been admitted to sessions of the Plenary will be included. The secretariat will further seek guidance from the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and then publish an open registry of stakeholders. Platform national focal points will, upon request, be informed of relevant information about the identification and the engagement of stakeholders in their countries and regions so as to maximize synergies at the national and regional levels. The secretariat will maintain a database of stakeholders with their contact details and preferred methods of communication.

4. The stakeholder network, under advice from the secretariat, may develop proposals as necessary, regarding ways in which they can support the work of the Platform. The proposals will be shared with the Platform national focal points and will be considered by the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.

5. A detailed categorization of potential stakeholders is provided in the note by the secretariat on additional information on the stakeholder engagement strategy (IPBES/3/INF/10). This categorization was originally initiated by the interim Platform secretariat (provided by the United Nations Environment Programme) in the gap analysis that it conducted to facilitate the discussions on how to improve and strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services (see UNEP/IPBES/2/INF/1). This categorization has been updated and new organizations have been included following suggestions and comments by stakeholders on the revised draft communications strategy.

Needs analysis

6. Apart from the identification exercise, the secretariat will also conduct a needs analysis of stakeholder groups (both contributors and end users) to identify willingness to participate, incentives and disincentives for participating, interest in specific outputs of the Platform, preferred methods of engagement and issues of concern. This analysis will be conducted using a quantitative survey that can be translated into different languages. Existing networks will be asked to forward the survey to their members. This type of survey provides comparable and quantifiable results and can reach a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

7. The needs analysis will help the Platform identify stakeholder expectations and better understand the nature and degree of engagement envisaged by contributors and end users and the engagement methods (e.g., website, direct interaction, hubs, print materials, audiovisual materials, collaborative projects or any combination of the above) best suited to different groups of stakeholders. The results of this survey could help the secretariat improve its approaches to reaching stakeholders as of 2016. A possible questionnaire for stakeholders is included in the note by the secretariat on additional information on the stakeholder engagement strategy (IPBES/3/INF/10).

Engagement with stakeholders

8. *How-to guides.* The Plenary has adopted clear rules for the Platform's assessments, explaining at which stages the participation and input of stakeholders are to be sought. The policy and procedure for the admission of observers' organizations to sessions of the Plenary are also being developed. The secretariat will prepare simple and clear how-to guides explaining these processes. These how-to

guides could be translated into all the official languages of the United Nations and posted on the Platform's website, while fact sheets could be created for wider distribution to existing networks.

9. *Task-forces.* Another aspect of stakeholder engagement is identifying how to strengthen collaboration with stakeholders regarding specific activities of the Platform's work programme, such as the need to fill gaps in knowledge or data, conduct or receive training and participate in the matchmaking facility. The task force on capacity-building recently held a meeting in Brazil, at which it discussed how to communicate and engage with various stakeholders in the context of the proposed Platform matchmaking facility. The secretariat should work closely with this and other task forces to provide clear information about how stakeholders can participate in these areas.

10. *Outreach.* One of the challenges faced by the Platform in pursuing stakeholder engagement is how to give a voice to developing countries, indigenous peoples and local communities and traditional and local knowledge holders, citizen science organizations, and community-based conservation organizations, given the possible language barriers and other constraints such as limited funding or internet access. The secretariat will work closely with the Platform's focal points, the task forces and others, as appropriate, to address these gaps.

11. *Networks and hubs.* Existing networks and regional or local hubs could help by mobilizing their stakeholders, tailoring messages, participating in outreach efforts and potentially translating key documents. Apart from existing networks on biodiversity and natural resources management, some countries have developed their own Platform coordination units to mobilize their scientific communities. These hubs and coordination units could perhaps help set up similar units in other countries and encourage Platform member States to establish their own networks on national and subnational scales.

12. *Social media.* The use of social media will allow the secretariat rapidly to inform diverse groups of stakeholders. Via Facebook and Twitter, the secretariat will disseminate calls for input and recent developments and receive feedback, harnessing a two-way communication model.

13. *Information and communications technology.* The secretariat has procured information and communications technology tools to enable its expert groups, task forces and authors to share files, collaborate online and conduct video conferences. The videoconferencing tools use cutting-edge technology that provides a stable connection even in regions where there are connectivity problems.

14. *Stakeholder events.* The secretariat will organize each year, before each Plenary session, stakeholder days to encourage stakeholders to interact. In addition, several awareness-raising events or targeted expert workshops are expected to be initiated by groups of stakeholders and regional networks that might consider including slots for the Platform's consultations. The secretariat will support these events by assigning a staff member to them, to inform stakeholders about progress in the Platform's deliverables and to listen to their suggestions. Such participation shall of course be subject to the secretariat's budget and workload.

15. *Annual survey.* The secretariat will conduct a stakeholder needs analysis to better assess the needs of stakeholders. This annual survey will aim to gauge perceptions and views of stakeholders so as to improve stakeholder engagement.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Indicative budget</i>
Identification of stakeholders	March–May 2015	N/A
Needs analysis	June–July 2015	N/A
How-to guides and translations	March–June 2015	\$35,000 for 2015
Fact sheets and translations regarding knowledge generation and capacity-building	May–July 2015	\$70,000 for 2015
Hard-to-reach stakeholders	Ongoing	Part of the budget for deliverable 1 (c)
Networks and hubs	Ongoing	N/A
Social media	Ongoing	N/A
Information and communications technology tools (online file sharing and video conferencing tools)	Jan 2015–Dec 2018	Online file sharing and video conferencing for 500 users: \$130,000 for four years
Stakeholder events	One or two days prior to each Plenary	Estimated cost of venue per day: \$38,000
Annual surveys	November each year	N/A

Annex III

Guidance on the development of strategic partnerships and other collaborative arrangements

I. Purpose of strategic partnerships in supporting the work programme of the Platform

1. The primary purpose of any strategic partnership will be to support implementation of the work programme of the Platform through one or more of the following means, recognizing that they might be applied differently depending on the area of work or the Platform's functions:

(a) *Increasing alignment of activities.* Coordinating with existing institutions may help to align the different activities that are currently being undertaken relevant to the delivery of the work programme, thereby filling gaps and building upon their work while avoiding duplication of effort. This might include, for example, coordination of relevant capacity-building activities. In working alongside those institutions already undertaking activities in areas related to the work programme, the Platform is much more likely to add value and avoid duplicating existing work;

(b) *Providing direct support.* There is a range of activities that the Platform could agree to provide or commission other organizations to provide as part of the institutional arrangements for supporting the delivery of the work programme. These activities might include, for example, providing a technical support function, contributing specific knowledge and experience, coordinating areas of work in which an organization has particular expertise, providing administrative support, engaging in outreach and communication functions, increasing access to data and analytical methods and promoting and catalysing capacity-building;

(c) *Building and managing relationships.* Ensuring effective sharing of knowledge and building of mutual understanding may be important in developing good working relationships between the Platform and other intergovernmental processes and, in particular, with multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services;

(d) *Facilitating stakeholder engagement.* It is widely recognized that the Platform will need to engage with a broad range of stakeholders, and this is addressed in the stakeholder engagement strategy. Engagement with scientists and other knowledge holders is particularly relevant to the implementation of the work programme. Strategic partnerships with organizations that can assist with facilitating and promoting stakeholder engagement may be helpful.

2. Such strategic partnerships may be relevant at the global level, but they may also serve a useful purpose in supporting delivery of the work programme within particular regions in order to increase cooperation and to increase access to data, information and knowledge. In this regard, needs may vary from one region to another.

3. It is important to recognize that strategic partnerships are not necessary for every action that the Platform may undertake with other organizations and individuals. In particular, the following actions might be sufficient, and in most instances could be undertaken, without entering into more formal partnership arrangements:

(a) *Liaising and communicating.* Given the breadth of organizations involved in biodiversity and ecosystem services, it is essential for the Platform to effectively communicate what it is doing (through a range of mechanisms, including national focal points), to indicate potential opportunities for involvement and to liaise with relevant organizations known to have particularly relevant interests;

(b) *Recognizing what others produce or do as contributions to the Platform.* Some organizations are already carrying out activities directly relevant to the Platform that could be readily used by the Platform. Consideration will be given to ways of identifying and appropriately recognizing these activities and products. This will need to be handled through an open and transparent process and to be addressed in the rules of procedure;

(c) *Promoting cooperation and coordination.* The Platform will provide the necessary impetus for increased cooperation and collaboration among organizations working on similar issues, so that they can together deliver more effectively a product or service to meet the needs of the Platform;

(d) *Informing and potentially influencing the priorities of others.* Priorities identified by the Platform are likely to be taken into account in the planning and prioritization processes of many organizations, networks, programmes and processes relevant to the Platform;

(e) *Informing and potentially influencing working practices.* Promoting the use of standard methodologies, frameworks and tools and access to information on lessons learned would support the working practices of a range of organizations. Each of these has the potential to increase harmonization in approaches so that organizations doing things in similar ways can more easily share the resulting data, information and experience.

II. Key considerations to be taken into account in establishing strategic partnerships

4. Careful consideration on a case-by-case basis is required as to whether a strategic partnership is appropriate and necessary. Given that the Platform is a new and evolving entity there are many organizations that might wish to form partnerships with it in order to try to secure their own roles in its future. In such a situation the partnership arrangements of the Platform should be purpose-driven and centred around the need for effective implementation of its functions and work programme. The Platform must therefore be prudent in its approach to the development of partnerships and give very careful consideration to the value and implications of such partnerships.

5. Taking account of the previous paragraphs, criteria to be used in identifying whether a strategic partnership is appropriate and necessary include:

(a) Necessity of using a formal partnership approach rather than other available mechanisms such as those identified in paragraph 3;

(b) Relevance of the potential partnership to delivery of the work programme agreed upon by the Plenary, including consideration of any priorities agreed upon by the Plenary;

(c) Opportunity to perform work programme activities more effectively, efficiently, economically and ethically;

(d) Experience and capacity of the potential strategic partner in fields relevant to the Platform and its willingness to collaborate in delivering the work programme;

(e) Achievement of a more appropriate regional or thematic balance in the delivery of the work programme.

6. Assuming that a strategic partnership is deemed both necessary and appropriate, consideration must be given to the potential roles and responsibilities of the different partners, any specific deliverables and terms of reference and the necessary time frames. In this regard, a partnership might cover a narrow range of activities or be quite broad, and it might be time-bound or open-ended (noting the need for regular review highlighted in paragraph 10).

7. Any partnership arrangements entered into shall be established within the existing partnership rules and policy of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as the institution administering the Platform secretariat, which will ensure that appropriate generic legal, ethical and financial issues are fully addressed.

8. In establishing strategic partnerships, consideration will need to be given to the issues that are normally addressed in contracts between organizations, a number of which may already be included in the policies and procedures of the Platform. Most of these issues will need to be considered whether or not there is a contractual arrangement and whether or not there is a written agreement. These include:

- (a) Purpose and objective;
- (b) Commitments of each party;
- (c) Conflict of interest;
- (d) Liability;
- (e) Intellectual property rights;
- (f) Confidentiality;
- (g) Representation and use of logos;
- (h) Amendment;
- (i) Entry into force;

- (j) Termination;
- (k) Settlement of disputes.

9. Finally, consideration will need to be given to ensuring that the procedures and operating principles of the Platform are fully taken into account when developing strategic partnerships, and in particular to ensure that those operating principles are applied in an appropriate manner both in choosing partnerships and in the manner in which those partnerships are implemented. Specifically, there must be:

- (a) Transparency and accountability in deciding on and entering into partnerships, so that the reasons for doing so are obvious and it is clear what each party will gain;
- (b) Application of all relevant Platform procedures and operating principles by partners so that partnerships do not become a mechanism for circumventing agreed approaches;
- (c) Clear and understood quality control and quality assurance of processes and outputs through implementation and monitoring using appropriate mechanisms;
- (d) Access to collaboration with the Platform across regions, Platform functions or among a variety of stakeholders;
- (e) Steps taken to ensure that the development of a strategic partnership with one organization does not lead to reduced involvement of other organizations or stakeholders.

10. In order to ensure and maintain public confidence, partnerships shall be the subject of regular review by the secretariat, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, the Bureau and the Plenary to ensure that they continue to serve the purpose for which they were intended and to check that they remain relevant to delivery of the work programme. Any partnership arrangements, including terms of reference, should allow for such periodic review and adjustment.

III. Form of strategic partnerships

11. The form that strategic partnerships assume may vary considerably. For example, intent to collaborate may be established through an exchange of letters or a memorandum of understanding that can be used for defining strategic alliances and for declaring agreement on intent, on areas of common interest, on cooperation in terms of project and programme implementation and on the sharing of responsibilities for joint programming – recognizing that there are potential costs and benefits to both parties. They are essentially frameworks through which the parties to an agreement confirm that they share a common understanding.

12. In order to operationalize partnerships, consideration might be given to drawing up a project document of some form or a jointly agreed programme of work, which would spell out how the intent to collaborate would be realized. Such documents would provide more detailed definitions of activities, timetables and deliverables and would be likely to include implementation plans and potentially also budgets. These more detailed documents may cover the whole period of the partnership or may be periodically updated.

13. While in some cases partnerships may involve the transfer of funds to support a particular set of tasks, this is not necessarily always the case. Partnerships could also be established with no implied exchange of funds. In some cases it would be assumed that the legal entities involved would provide the necessary resources for their own activities (which may well be activities that they intended to carry out anyway). The agreements might be used, however, as a vehicle to help find additional funding from elsewhere, and this should be considered when they are drawn up.

14. There may also be cases where a legal agreement in the form of a contract is necessary in order to ensure timely delivery of a product or service necessary for the efficient implementation of the work programme. The form that the contract takes may well vary depending on the type of organization and the institutional relationship between the Platform or UNEP and the organization concerned.

IV. Categories of strategic partnership and processes for their identification

Bodies identified in the functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform

15. The following two categories of institutions are already recognized as being a part of the Platform and are explicitly referred to in the resolution establishing the Platform² and in Plenary decisions. Establishment by way of a Plenary decision of some form of strategic partnerships with institutions in these two categories will help promote and support delivery of the work programme through improved collaboration and cooperation:

(a) *United Nations system.* Through decision IPBES-2/8, the Platform has already established a collaborative partnership with UNEP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

(b) *Multilateral environmental agreements.* It is in the interests of both the Platform and the multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services that the agreements work closely together and with the Platform. The Bureau will therefore work with the appropriate governance body (or bodies) for each of the multilateral environmental agreements to develop strategic partnership arrangements between each multilateral environmental agreement and the Platform for approval by the Plenary. It is expected that these partnerships will be modelled on the existing memorandum of cooperation between the Platform and the Convention on Biological Diversity.³

Technical support for implementation of the work programme

16. Some arrangements, whether they are known as strategic partnerships or not, will be necessary to provide technical and administrative support for implementation of the work programme. These arrangements essentially provide additional support to the secretariat in a time-bound manner relating to one or more defined deliverables. By decision IPBES-2/5 (sect. X, para. 3), the Plenary mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to establish the institutional arrangements necessary to operationalize technical support for the implementation of the work programme. This will continue as necessary throughout the duration of the work programme. It should be recognized that, while such arrangements may reduce the overall workload, the work of formalizing and managing such partnerships will in itself require the time and attention of the secretariat.

17. The following approaches aim to help ensure the alignment of strategic partnerships and other collaborative arrangements with the delivery of the work programme, placing the responsibility for identifying potential strategic partnerships and other collaboration arrangements with those most directly involved with each deliverable:

(a) *Supporting the work of task forces.* The terms of reference of the three task forces (decision IPBES-2/5, annexes II–IV) explicitly ask each task force to advise on strategic partnerships that would help to deliver support in the area for which the task force is responsible, namely, key capacity-building initiatives, engagement with scientific and observing communities and indigenous and local knowledge communities. In carrying out this function the task forces shall identify both strategic partnerships and other collaborative arrangements that are necessary for delivery of their responsibilities and review their proposals with the Bureau. A range of different types of relationships will be proposed and, based on the guidance provided in paragraph 18, the Bureau will approve, deny or refer to the Plenary for decision the proposed partnership;

(b) *Supporting thematic and global, regional and subregional assessments.* The expert group appointed to scope each assessment shall advise on strategic partnerships and other arrangements that would be valuable in helping with the conduct of the assessments. The suggestions of the group will then form part of the scoping document or its accompanying documentation, which will be reviewed and adopted by the Plenary. In addition, however, it may be necessary to establish strategic partnerships or other appropriate arrangements with other assessment processes or bodies responsible for those assessment processes, in particular in thematic areas specific to certain regions. In this case the Bureau, working with the secretariat, shall define the type of relationship required. A range of different types of relationship will be proposed and, based on the guidance provided in

² UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, annex I.

³ A memorandum of cooperation was signed in October 2014 between the Platform secretariat and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

paragraph 18, the Bureau will approve, deny or refer to the Plenary for decision the proposed partnership;

(c) *Policy support, including that related to methodological assessments.* Two types of advice will come from the expert groups working on methodological assessments. Any expert group scoping a methodological assessment shall make recommendations to the Plenary regarding strategic partnerships or other arrangements that would be valuable in carrying out the assessment as part of the scoping document or other associated documentation. In addition, when the assessment – or guide – is presented to the Plenary, the expert group carrying out the assessment shall advise on any strategic partnerships or other arrangements that would be valuable in the future development and implementation of policy support tools arising from the assessment;

(d) *Communications, outreach and stakeholder engagement.* The Bureau, working with the secretariat, will identify strategic partnerships and other arrangements that would be valuable in helping to carry out communication, outreach and stakeholder engagement activities. A range of different types of relationship may be considered and, based on the guidance provided in paragraph 18, the Bureau will approve, deny or refer to the Plenary for decision the proposed partnership.

18. In deciding whether or not it is appropriate to consult the Plenary before entering into any form of partnership arrangement, the Bureau will keep in mind the following considerations:

(a) High-level partnerships with bodies identified in the functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform will be approved by the Plenary;

(b) Partnerships with institutions providing technical support for implementation of the work programme may be approved by the Bureau following any generic or specific guidance provided by the Plenary;

(c) The Bureau will consult the Plenary prior to entering into a partnership agreement where for any reason further guidance is required.
