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**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Report of the Executive Secretary on the implementation
of the work programme 2014–2018****Implementation of the work programme for 2014–2018****Report of the Executive Secretary****I. Introduction**

1. At its second session, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services adopted decision IPBES-2/5, by which it approved an ambitious work programme with a sequenced set of deliverables for the period 2014–2018. The work programme was approved on the understanding that work on deliverables would be initiated following active decisions by the Plenary in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of the Platform's deliverables. In the same decision, therefore, the Plenary also initiated and guided work on 17 of 18 work programme deliverables. Further decisions and guidance regarding several deliverables will be required of the Plenary at its third session. Such decisions could lead to different pathways towards achieving the objectives of the work programme.

2. The present report has been prepared by the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, to facilitate the consideration by the Plenary of the overall state of play regarding the implementation of the work programme. As a basis for its consideration, the Plenary is provided with information on:

- (a) Progress on the implementation of deliverables set out in the work programme initiated by decision IPBES-2/5;
- (b) Lessons learned by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, the Bureau and the secretariat over the course of 2014, the first year of implementation of the work programme;
- (c) Four options, representing different pathways for the implementation of the work programme and their implications in terms of timelines, workload, level of integration and administrative and budgetary consequences.

II. Progress in the implementation of decision IPBES-2/5

3. Work on all 18 work programme deliverables has been initiated, although for three deliverables work has been limited to pre-scoping activities. Groups of experts, including three task forces, two assessment author groups, three time-bound expert groups and two time-bound scoping groups, were established, with 516 experts selected from a total of 1,691 nominations submitted. In all, 20 meetings were held in eight different locations.¹ Six institutional arrangements, with four technical

* IPBES/3/1.

¹ Meetings include the third and fourth meetings of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau meetings, but exclude the third session of the Plenary.

support units and two consultants, were established following in-kind offers received from 10 Governments and 22 organizations. More information on the institutional arrangements is set out in the note by the secretariat on the matter (IPBES/3/INF/13).

Objective 1

Strengthen the capacity and knowledge foundations of the science-policy interface to implement key functions of the Platform

4. Three task forces with technical support units were established for the period 2014–2018. Progress was made, including in the following areas:

(a) *Task Force on Capacity-building* (deliverable 1 (a) and (b)): the establishment of a technical support unit in the Norwegian Environment Agency and the development of a draft list of priority capacity-building needs; a proposed programme of fellowship, exchange and training programmes; and proposed approaches with regard to a matchmaking facility, a capacity-building forum and partnerships and networking (see IPBES/3/3 and IPBES/3/INF/1);

(b) *Task Force on Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems* (deliverable 1 (c)): the establishment of a technical support unit at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the development of draft preliminary approaches and procedures for working with indigenous and local knowledge; the organization of a pilot global dialogue process to mobilize relevant indigenous and local knowledge for the thematic assessment of pollination and pollinators associated with food production; discussions with regard to the establishment of a roster of experts, including criteria for selection; and a draft proposal for a participatory mechanism to facilitate linkages between indigenous and local communities and scientists (see IPBES/3/INF/2);

(c) *Task Force on Knowledge and Data* (deliverable 1 (d)): the establishment of a technical support unit through the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Korea with the National Institute of Ecology in Seocheon-gun, Republic of Korea, the development of a draft data and information management plan (deliverable 4 (b)) for consideration by the Plenary (IPBES/3/4) and a draft knowledge and data strategy (see IPBES/3/INF/3).

Objective 2

Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services at and across subregional, regional and global levels

5. Progress under this objective includes the development of:

(a) A guide on production and integration of assessments from and across all scales, developed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in consultation with the Bureau, with the support of a time-bound and task-specific expert group (deliverable 2 (a)). The guide is meant to be a living document that will be updated as the various task forces and expert groups complete their work (see IPBES/3/INF/4);

(b) Draft scoping reports for a set of regional and subregional assessments developed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau following a regional scoping process (deliverable 2 (b)). The process included the development of a guidance document, the convening of a workshop of a joint regional scoping group and a review phase allowing Governments and stakeholders to comment on the outcome of the workshop. A consultant to support delivery has been provided through an in-kind contribution from China. The draft scoping reports will be submitted to the Plenary for consideration at its third session (IPBES/3/6 and Add.1–6);

(c) An initial scoping document for a global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services prepared by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau (deliverable 2 (c)), which will be submitted to the Plenary for consideration at its third session (IPBES/3/9).

Objective 3

Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services with regard to thematic and methodological issues

6. Progress under this objective includes the development of:

(a) The assessment on pollination and pollinators associated with food production (deliverable 3 (a)) by an assessment author group, with a first draft to be completed by the end of 2014 and the final report to be completed in 2015. A consultant has been hired by the secretariat to provide technical support for the expert group (see IPBES/3/INF/5);

(b) A draft scoping report for a thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration (deliverable 3 (b) (i)) prepared by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau with the support of the outcome of a scoping group workshop. The report will be submitted to the Plenary for consideration at its third session (IPBES/3/7). Additional information is set out in the note by the secretariat on the subject (IPBES/3/INF/18). The draft scoping reports on a set of regional and subregional assessments reflect the themes of the assessment;

(c) A proposal to reflect the thematic assessments of invasive alien species (deliverable 3 (b) (ii)) and of the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity (deliverable 3 (b) (iii)), scheduled to be scoped in 2015, in the draft scoping reports on a set of regional and subregional assessments;

(d) An assessment on scenario analysis and modelling of biodiversity and ecosystem services (deliverable 3 (c)), prepared by an assessment author group, with a first draft to be completed by the end of 2014 and the final in 2015. A technical support unit is provided by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency in Bilthoven, Netherlands. Further information on progress on this deliverable is set out in a note by the secretariat on the subject (IPBES/3/INF/6);

(e) A draft scoping document for a methodological assessment on the diverse conceptualization of values of biodiversity and nature's benefits to people (deliverable 3 (d)) by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau supported by an expert group, which will be submitted to the Plenary for consideration at its third session (IPBES/3/8). The group has also prepared a preliminary guide (see IPBES/3/INF/7).

Objective 4

Communicate and evaluate Platform activities, deliverables and findings

7. Progress under this objective includes the development of:

(a) The online catalogue of relevant assessments (deliverable 4 (a)) as presented in the report on the status of the catalogue of assessments (IPBES/3/INF/4);

(b) A proposal for a catalogue of policy tools and methodologies, for consideration by the Plenary (deliverable 4 (c)), by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau supported by a group of experts, submitted to the Plenary for consideration at its third session (IPBES/3/5). Further information is set out in document IPBES/3/INF/8. Preliminary guidance on how the further development of such tools and methodologies could be promoted and catalysed in the context of the Platform has also been developed (IPBES/3/5);

(c) A draft communications and outreach strategy developed by the secretariat under the supervision of the Bureau and in cooperation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. The draft builds on the draft communication strategy submitted to the Plenary at its second session (see IPBES/2/12) and will be submitted to the Plenary for consideration at its third session (IPBES/3/15). Furthermore, as requested in the report of the Plenary on the work of its second session (IPBES/2/17, sect. VII.C), the secretariat, in cooperation with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau, prepared a draft stakeholder engagement strategy and a draft initial implementation plan for consideration by the Plenary (IPBES/3/16), based on the draft strategy submitted to the Plenary at its second session (see IPBES/2/13). Both products contribute to deliverable 4 (d);

(d) A procedure for the review of the effectiveness of administrative and scientific functions of the Platform (deliverable 4 (e)) by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in consultation with the Bureau. Information on progress in developing the procedure is set out in the note by the secretariat on the subject (see IPBES/3/INF/11).

III. Lessons learned during the first year of implementation (2014)

8. Lessons learned from the implementation of deliverables relate, in particular, to the following efforts:

(a) *Promoting coherence across the work programme.* A well-integrated work programme requires collaboration across deliverables at different levels. Examples of efforts in this respect include plans for all task forces to be convened in parallel in 2015 and a proposal to reflect the themes of the thematic assessments in the draft scoping documents for the regional and subregional assessments;

(b) *Nomination and selection of experts.* The 10 calls to different expert groups for nominations in 2014 have resulted in a heavy burden on the member countries and stakeholders who nominate experts, on the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, which selects them, and on the secretariat, which supports the process. It proved necessary to seek additional nominations from Governments in

order to ensure geographic,² disciplinary and gender balance among experts. This is especially true with regard to the selection of experts from the Eastern European region and for selection of experts from social sciences, indigenous and local knowledge holders and policy practitioners. Experts have voiced reservations about being nominated owing to lack of travel support for developed country experts. Given the fact that several hundred additional experts may need to be selected in 2015, the Plenary may therefore wish to consider ways of addressing the issues identified above, including by:

- (i) Encouraging member States and stakeholders to put forward nominations which help address the risk of unbalances;
- (ii) Considering revisiting the requirement of 80 per cent of selected experts having to come from government nominations to make it a less stringent requirement. This would potentially reduce the need for requesting Governments for additional nominations;
- (iii) Considering continuing the practice of providing financial support to experts from all countries of the Eastern European region (see IPBES/3/2/Add.1) in order to ensure regional representation of Eastern Europe in the various expert groups established;
- (iv) Encouraging developed country members to consider modalities for providing travel support for experts from their countries and all institutions to support experts taking part in work under the Platform;

(c) *Selection of assessment author groups.* The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel found the selections of experts for the assessment author groups (deliverables 3 (a) and 3 (d)) particularly demanding, both because of the number of experts involved and because of the need for in-depth knowledge of the topic at hand. To ensure that the Platform is making an informed decision, the Panel settled on a staged process whereby it first selected two co-chairs, and then worked with them to finalize the selection of coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors. One management meeting, involving the co-chairs, the technical support unit, the relevant Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau members and the secretariat, was held to facilitate the selection process and for fine-tuning the scope, time schedule and the roles and responsibilities of all actors involved. One such management meeting in the selection and start-up phase of new assessments has thus been included in the proposed revised budget (IPBES/3/10);

(d) *Ensuring expertise on policy support tools and methodologies.* To ensure the necessary quality of oversight and advice with regard to policy support tools and methodologies, in particular regarding the proposed catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies, it is suggested that the mandate of the expert group on policy support tools and methodologies be extended until 2018 to support the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau in fulfilling their role of oversight and quality control.

9. Lessons learned from the operations of the bodies established under the Platform can be summarized as follows:

(a) *Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau.* The number of activities undertaken over the course of 2014 placed a burden on Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau members, and, in terms of the work and travel load, exceeded the 20 per cent foreseen in the lessons learned from the interim Panel (see IPBES/3/INF/16). The workload has been distributed with three Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and two Bureau members being appointed to oversee the implementation of each deliverable, with each Panel and Bureau member following on average three and five deliverables respectively. Efforts will be made to reduce the work and travel load of Panel and Bureau members, while maintaining their substantive involvement and advisory role (through, for example, the use of videoconference facilities);

² Government nominations were distributed as follows: African States, 15 per cent; Asia-Pacific States, 14 per cent; Latin American and Caribbean States, 17 per cent; Eastern European States, 7 per cent; and Western European and other States, 47 per cent. The average representation of regions for selected experts across all expert groups is as follows: African States, 18 per cent; Asia-Pacific States, 20 per cent; Latin American and Caribbean States, 21 per cent; Eastern European States, 12 per cent; and Western European and other States, 29 per cent. In terms of gender balance, 31 per cent of government nominees were women and 31 per cent of all selected experts, across all expert groups, were women.

(b) *Technical support units.* The experience of the first year shows that establishing institutional arrangements to operationalize a technical support unit, and accompanying the unit in its work, takes more time and effort than anticipated. The secretariat needs to be provided with the capacity necessary to properly establish, operationalize, oversee and coordinate technical support units once established. This is reflected in the proposed revised budget (IPBES/3/10);

(c) *Secretariat.* Recruitment for the secretariat of the Platform has been performed over the course of 2014 (see table 1). To compensate for the delay in recruitment, the secretariat has been supported through interim arrangements with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. The secretariat has managed to facilitate all processes requested for the implementation of the work programme. It became apparent that several key functions were missing in the structure approved for the secretariat in order to sustainably and effectively support the implementation of the work programme. Those functions include (a) the administration of the Platform website and support for the technical support units; (b) the coordination and organization of meetings, the initialization of travel authorization requests for participants and the timely settlement of claims for the large number of meetings organized; and (c) the ability of the secretariat to create finance documents in house and thus control its financial records. The Bureau is therefore recommending that the following three positions be added to the composition of the secretariat approved by the plenary: one Associate Programme Officer (P-2), one Travel Assistant (General Service) and one Finance Assistant (General Service). Additional rationale regarding these three positions and information on their budgetary implications is set out in the proposed revised budget (IPBES/3/10). Those positions are considered to be necessary regardless of the option selected for the implementation of the work programme (see sect. III below).

Table 1

Recruitment of secretariat in 2014

<i>Position</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Head of secretariat (D-1)	In place since February 2014
Programme Officer (P-4)	Recruitment not completed
Programme Officer (P-4)	In place since June 2014
Programme Officer (P-3)	Recruitment not completed
Programme Officer (P-3)	In place since August 2014
Associate Programme Officer (P-2)	Recruitment not completed
Administrative support staff (G-6)	In place since June 2014
Administrative support staff (G-5)	In place since July 2013
Administrative support staff (G-5)	In place since July 2014

IV. Options for the further implementation of the work programme (2015–2018)

10. During the first year of the work programme all bodies working within the Platform system have delivered, but they have been under heavy pressure as a result of the workload. Contributions to the Platform trust fund have been generous, but pledges for future contributions to the fund are uncertain. Nonetheless, at its third session the Plenary will consider approving a substantial additional amount of work. In particular, the Plenary will consider initiating seven new assessments based on draft scoping reports for a methodological assessment on values (IPBES/3/8), five regional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES/3/6 and Add.1–6) and one thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration (IPBES/3/7). Furthermore, at its fourth session the Plenary will be invited to approve three additional assessments: a global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services and two thematic assessments on invasive alien species and sustainable use of biodiversity.

11. In the light of this situation, prior to its consideration of how to guide further work on these assessments, the Plenary may wish to explore options for its overall approach to the implementation of the work programme. Drawing on progress made and lessons learned, the present section sets out four such options. Their consequences, in terms of the timeline, the workload, the level of integration and the administrative and budgetary implications are indicated.

12. The options demonstrate that an extension of timelines and an increased level of integration among the themes identified for some of the planned assessments under objectives 2 and 3 could help reduce the workload and costs. The methodological assessment on values will support all other

assessments. An extension of the timeline for the regional assessments by one year is suggested. Those assessments are key vehicles for the implementation of Platform functions, as they relate to capacity-building, knowledge generation and the development of policy support tools. Furthermore, such assessments are critical in furthering the operational principle of the Platform regarding ensuring the full use of national, subregional and regional knowledge, as appropriate, including by ensuring a bottom-up approach. As such, they are vital contributions to the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

13. The work programme foresees that the high-priority themes of land degradation and restoration, invasive alien species and the sustainable use of biodiversity will all be addressed in separate assessments of a global nature. However, the regional and global aspects of those themes can clearly be covered in the regional and global assessments. The draft scoping reports for the regional assessments already reflect the themes. It is the level of integration of these themes into the regional and global assessments that constitutes the backbone of the four options. Their key characteristics, in terms of workload, degree of integration and administrative and budgetary implications, are summarized in table 2.

14. All options assume that the secretariat would be supported, for each of the requested assessments, by dedicated in-kind arrangements, including technical support units.

Table 2

Summary of key characteristics for options 1 to 4 proposed for implementation of the work programme, from lowest (+) to highest (++++)

	<i>Option 1</i>	<i>Option 2</i>	<i>Option 3</i>	<i>Option 4</i>
Workload	++++	+++	++	+
Degree of integration	+	++	+++	++++
Administrative implications	1 position	1 position	0.5 position	no position
Budgetary implications	++++	+++	++	+

Option 1. Implementation of the work programme with minor adjustments

Rationale

15. Option 1 anticipates that implementation will take place in accordance with the modalities articulated in figure II of the work programme (decision IPBES-2/5, annex I), which illustrates the planned schedule for its deliverables, with the exception of a one-year extended timeline for deliverable 2 (b) (a set of regional/subregional assessments) and an extended timeline for deliverable 2 (c) (global assessment: mid-2016 to mid-2019). The proposed extended timeline for the global assessment is meant to ensure a better fit with the reporting needs of the Convention on Biological Diversity in relation to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Targets (see IPBES/3/9 for rationale). Option 1 would involve a total of 9 assessments (assuming 5 regional assessments), ongoing in parallel in 2015, and 10 assessments in 2016 (see table 3).

Table 3

Timetable for the implementation of assessments under option 1

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>
5 regional assessments (2 (b))	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Global assessment (2 (c))	Scoping	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Mid-2019
Pollination (3 (a))	Year 2				
Land degradation (3 (b) (i))	Year 1	Year 2			
Invasive alien species (3 (b) (ii))	Scoping	Year 1	Year 2		
Sustainable use (3 (b) (iii))	Scoping	Year 1	Year 2		
Scenario (3 (c))	Year 2				
Values (3 (d))	Year 1	Year 2			
Total number of assessments per year	9	10	8	1	1

Note: Year 1, year 2 and year 3 refer to the years of implementation of assessments, and mid-2019 to the proposed end of the global assessment.

Financial and administrative consequences

16. Option 1 represents the heaviest workload and highest cost of all options (see table 2). It is estimated that one extra position (Programme Officer (P-3)) would need to be established over and above the proposed additional three positions of Associate Programme Officer, Travel Assistant and Finance Assistant. Additional rationale for those positions is included in the proposed revised budget (IPBES/3/10).

Option 2. Workload spread over a longer time period*Rationale*

17. The workload under option 2 is similar to that under option 1, but it is spread over a longer period. The implementation of the thematic assessments would be delayed by one year (with a land degradation assessment initiated in 2016 and invasive alien species and sustainable use assessments scoped in 2016 and initiated in 2017) to allow for a better spread of activities. Under this option, 8 assessments would be conducted in 2015, 8 in 2016 and 9 in 2017.

Table 4

Timeline for the implementation of assessments under option 2

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>
5 regional assessments (2 (b))	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Global assessment (2 (c))	Scoping	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Mid-2019
Pollination (3 (a))	Year 2				
Land degradation (3 (b) (i)) (delayed) ^a		Year 1 ^a	Year 2 ^a		
Invasive alien species (3 (b) (ii)) (delayed) ^a		Scoping ^a	Year 1 ^a	Year 2 ^a	
Sustainable use (3 (b) (iii)) (delayed) ^a		Scoping ^a	Year 1 ^a	Year 2 ^a	
Scenario (3 (c))	Year 2				
Values (3 (d))	Year 1	Year 2			
Total number of assessments per year	8 ^a	8 ^a	9 ^a	3 ^a	1

Note: Year 1, year 2 and year 3 refer to the years of implementation of assessments, and mid-2019 to the proposed end of the global assessment.

^a Modification compared with option 1.

Financial and administrative consequences

18. Given the fact that the workload is the same, it is estimated that one extra position (P-3) over and above the three proposed additional positions would be necessary for option 2.

Option 3. Reduced workload, more integration*Rationale*

19. Option 3 involves changes to reduce the workload while promoting more integration. This pathway builds on option 2, but the themes of invasive alien species and sustainable use would be fully integrated with and assessed in the regional assessments and the global assessment. Scoping for these two thematic issues would be addressed using the initial scoping already performed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau (see IPBES/2/16/Add.3 and IPBES/2/16/Add.6), supplemented by a web-based comment period. This possibility is reflected in the scoping reports for regional assessments.

Table 5

Timeline for the implementation of assessments under option 3

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>
5 regional assessments (2 (b))	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Global assessment (2 (c))	Scoping	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Mid-2019
Pollination (3 (a))	Year 2				
Land degradation (3 (b) (i))		Year 1	Year 2		
Invasive Alien Species (3 (b) (ii))	Theme to be assessed in 2 (b) (regional) and 2 (c) (global) ^a				
Sustainable Use (3 (b) (iii))	Theme to be assessed in 2 (b) (regional) and 2 (c) (global) ^a				
Scenario (3 (c))	Year 2				
Values (3 (d))	Year 1	Year 2			
Total number of assessments per year	8	8	7 ^a	1 ^a	1

Note: Year 1, year 2 and year 3 refer to the years of implementation of assessments, and mid-2019 to the proposed end of the global assessment.

^a Modification compared with option 2.

Financial and administrative consequences

20. Given the reduced workload resulting from the two thematic assessments being integrated into the regional and global assessments, it is estimated that half a position (P-3) would be necessary, over and above the three proposed additional positions for option 3.

Option 4. Lowest workload, highest integration*Rationale*

21. Option 4 anticipates changes to further reduce the workload and promote integration. It is identical to option 3, except for the integration of the theme of land degradation and restoration, scoped in 2014 (IPBES/3/7), into the regional assessments and the global assessment. In addition, a technical report on land degradation and restoration reflecting the cross-regional dimensions of the issue would be developed in 2017, based on the findings of the regional assessments. The technical report would complement and contribute to the global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services on this theme.

Table 6

Timeline for the implementation of assessments under option 4

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>
5 regional assessments (2 (b))	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Global assessment (2 (c))	Scoping	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Mid-2019
Pollination (3 (a))	Year 2				
Land degradation (3 (b) (i))	Theme to be assessed in 2 (b) (regional) and 2 (c) (global) ^a				
Invasive alien species (3 (b) (ii))	Theme to be assessed in 2 (b) (regional) and 2 (c) (global)				
Sustainable use (3 (b) (iii))	Theme to be assessed in 2 (b) (regional) and 2 (c) (global)				
Scenario (3 (c))	Year 2				
Values (3 (d))	Year 1	Year 2			
Total number of assessments per year	8	7 ^a	6 ^a	1	1

Note: Year 1, year 2 and year 3 refer to the years of implementation of assessments, and mid-2019 to the proposed end of the global assessment.

^a Modification compared with option 3.

Financial and administrative consequences

22. Given the reduced workload, it is estimated that no extra position over and above the three proposed additional positions would be needed for option 4.