



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

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

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

1. In its decision IPBES-2/5, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) adopted an ambitious first work programme with a sequenced set of deliverables for the period 2014–2018, on the understanding that work on specific deliverables would be initiated following further decisions by the Plenary in accordance with the procedures for the preparation of deliverables (decision IPBES-3/3, annex I).
2. In its decisions IPBES-3/1, IPBES-4/1, IPBES-5/1 and IPBES-6/1, the Plenary provided further guidance on the implementation of all deliverables. In its decision IPBES-4/1, the Plenary approved the undertaking of a global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, to be considered at the seventh session.
3. The present report has been prepared by the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, to facilitate consideration of the progress achieved in the implementation of the work programme. As a basis for that consideration, the report provides information on the following matters:
 - (a) Progress made in 2018 in completing the implementation of the deliverables set out in the work programme for the period 2014–2018 initiated in decisions IPBES-2/5, IPBES-3/1, IPBES-4/1, IPBES-5/1 and IPBES-6/1;
 - (b) Update regarding the recruitment of staff members to the secretariat in 2018.

I. Progress in the implementation of decisions on the first work programme

4. The global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services will mark the culmination of the first work programme of IPBES. This landmark product, which has engaged the attention of some 400 experts¹ over three years, will, in conjunction with the four regional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the assessment of land degradation and restoration, inform the consideration of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in the broader context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

* IPBES/7/1.

¹ These include selected experts, early-career fellows and contributing authors, but not the expert peer reviewers.

5. In just five years, IPBES has successfully established itself as a major source of credible knowledge in support of decision-making. The regional assessments and the assessment of land degradation and restoration, together with the earlier assessments of pollination and of scenarios and models, began to inform decision-making under several multilateral environmental agreements (see documents IPBES/7/INF/14 and IPBES/7/INF/15), as well as at the regional and national levels. They also received significant media interest around the world, bringing the importance of those issues to the attention of the general public. In a short period, IPBES will have produced eight assessments and forged new paths through its innovative work on the multiple values of biodiversity, on scenarios and models and on its approach to recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge, to cite but a few examples.

6. During the implementation of the first work programme, the biodiversity science-policy community has displayed enthusiastic support for IPBES through the time and effort contributed by selected experts, contributing authors and peer reviewers, through a large and diverse set of other in-kind contributions from Governments and organizations and through contributions by members to the IPBES trust fund and financial support for related activities of IPBES detailed in document IPBES/7/4.

7. The IPBES flexible work programme up to 2030 will benefit from a large body of lessons collectively learned by all involved, which, together with the internal review noted by the Plenary at its sixth session, and the external review, to be considered at the current session, will strengthen its design. The three ongoing assessments, of values and of the sustainable use of wild species, begun in 2018, and of invasive alien species, begun in 2019, will serve as a transition from the first work programme to the new work programme up to 2030.

8. The following groups and task forces were active in 2018: two assessment author groups (on the assessment of the sustainable use of wild species and on the assessment of values) established in 2018; one expert group (on policy support tools and methodologies) reconstituted in 2017; one assessment author group (on the global assessment); one expert group (on scenarios and models) established in 2016; and three task forces (on capacity-building, knowledge and data, and indigenous and local knowledge) established in 2014. Altogether, these groups have involved some 450 experts since the sixth session of the Plenary, bringing to 1,500 the total number of selected experts involved in IPBES since the beginning of the implementation of the first work programme, in 2014. A total of 27 expert meetings were held over that period.² A set of 15 technical support units continued to provide support for the implementation of various deliverables. More information on technical support for the implementation of the work programme is set out in document IPBES/7/INF/5.

9. The following paragraphs set out information on efforts made since the sixth session of the Plenary under each objective of the work programme.

A. Objective 1: Strengthen the capacity and knowledge foundations of the science-policy interface to implement key functions of the Platform

10. Three task forces with technical support units were established in 2014 as part of the first work programme. In 2018, progress was achieved in the following areas:

(a) The task force on capacity-building (deliverables 1 (a) and (b)) made progress in the implementation, together with partners, of the capacity-building rolling plan, as requested in decision IPBES-6/1, section II. The task force met in September 2018 in Paris, hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The IPBES fellowship programme continued to be implemented, with 74 fellows, including alumni, from 53 countries. The Executive Secretary organized a consultation and capacity-building workshop for national focal points of IPBES in June 2018 in Bonn, Germany, attended by a total of 53 government representatives from 49 countries. The aims of the workshop were to facilitate greater engagement of Governments in the review of the second-order draft of the global assessment; to allow for further discussion on the use of the concept of “nature’s contributions to people” within the global assessment; and to hold consultations regarding the draft strategic framework for the next work programme. As requested by the Plenary in its decision IPBES-6/1, the task force held a third meeting of the capacity-building forum, back-to-back with the meeting of the task force on capacity-building, in September 2018, to further enhance collaboration with other organizations in the implementation of the capacity-building rolling plan. The 95 participants in the meeting included existing and prospective partner organizations, members of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, the task forces on

² These include the eleventh and twelfth meetings of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau, but exclude the sessions of the Plenary.

capacity-building and on indigenous and local knowledge, representatives of indigenous peoples, local communities and national platforms, scientists and policymakers. The work of the task force continued to be supported by the technical support unit based at the Norwegian Environment Agency in Trondheim, Norway, thanks to in-kind support from Norway. Additional information on progress regarding work on capacity-building is presented in document IPBES/7/INF/7;

(b) The task force on indigenous and local knowledge systems (deliverable 1 (c)) supported the implementation by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel of the approach to recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge in response to the request in decision IPBES-5/1, section III, and decision IPBES-6/1, section III. The implementation of the approach in the context of the global assessment included a statement in the plenary of and a side event at the seventeenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, held in New York from 16 to 27 April 2018; the participation of global assessment authors in the Action Group on Knowledge Systems and Indicators of Wellbeing in New York on 21 and 22 April 2018; a knowledge café on indigenous and local knowledge and the global assessment at the “Communities, conservation and livelihoods” conference of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, held in Halifax, Canada, from 28 to 30 May 2018; the IPBES global assessment dialogue on arctic indigenous and local knowledge, held in Helsinki from 6 to 8 June 2018; the participation of global assessment authors in the sixteenth congress of the International Society of Ethnobiology, held in Belém, Brazil, from 7 to 10 August 2018; and efforts to encourage indigenous peoples and local communities, indigenous peoples’ organizations and experts on indigenous and local knowledge to participate in the review of the second-order draft of the global assessment. The task force met in Paris in September 2018. A consultation meeting on the participatory mechanism was held back-to-back with the meeting of the task force. The task force prepared an initial set of methodological guidance materials for the implementation of the IPBES approach to recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge, including arrangements for the establishment of a participatory mechanism addressing each stage of the IPBES assessment cycle, and provided advice regarding the future composition of the task force. Work in this area continued to be supported by the technical support unit based at the headquarters of UNESCO, thanks to in-kind support from that organization. Additional information is contained in the document on work related to indigenous and local knowledge (IPBES/7/INF/8);

(c) The task force on knowledge and data (deliverables 1 (d) and 4 (b)) continued to provide advice for ongoing assessments, in accordance with the outline workplan for the task force on knowledge and data for 2017 and 2018 set out in annex III to decision IPBES-5/1. Highlights of the progress achieved in implementation include the further development of the IPBES website and web-based infrastructure; and the provision of support to IPBES experts involved in the global assessment and in the assessments of values and of wild species on the use of the web-based infrastructure and on indicators. Progress is being made towards catalysing the generation of new knowledge by identifying knowledge gaps in the assessment of land degradation and restoration. A web conference was held in January 2019, in response to the request in decision IPBES-6/1, section III, on knowledge gaps identified by experts during the assessment of land degradation and restoration and on the identification of research priorities. Work in this area continued to be supported by the technical support unit based at the National Institute of Ecology in Seochon, Republic of Korea, thanks to in-kind support from the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea. A full progress report is set out in the document on work related to knowledge and data (IPBES/7/INF/9);

(d) The three task forces implementing objective 1 have, overall, fulfilled the mandates given to them by the Plenary. Some of their activities, such as the early-career fellowship programme and the approach to recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge, have become flagship products of IPBES and have considerably increased its inclusiveness, credibility and policy relevance. The Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel recommend that the three task forces be re-established and continue their work in a more integrated manner in the next work programme, building on lessons learned during the first work programme.

B. Objective 2: Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services at and across subregional, regional and global levels

11. Progress achieved under objective 2 includes the following outputs:

(a) An updated version of the guide on the production of assessments (deliverable 2 (a)), prepared by a group of members of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, supported by the secretariat and the technical support unit; a laid-out summary of the guide available online and in printed form; an infographic setting out the overall IPBES assessment process; key graphics from the

guide as separate files; and an e-learning tool on performing an IPBES assessment.³ This work continued to be supported by the technical support unit established at the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), thanks to in-kind support from that organization. The guide is a living document to which new modules will be added or modified as needed. Further information on the work related to the guide for assessments is available in document IPBES/7/INF/10;

(b) Laid-out versions of the summaries for policymakers of the four regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services (deliverable 2 (b)) approved by the Plenary at its sixth session, available in portable document format (PDF) on the IPBES website and in printed form; and laid-out versions of the full assessment reports (front matters, summaries for policymakers, chapters and back matters), available on the IPBES website. Work in this area and on the uptake of the assessments continued to be supported, until July 2018, by technical support units based at the Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute, in Bogotá, and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, in Pretoria, thanks to in-kind support from Colombia and South Africa. Work on the finalization of the reports and their uptake will continue to be supported by technical support units based at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, in Tokyo, until August 2019, and by the University of Bern, Switzerland, until December 2018, thanks to in-kind support from Japan and Switzerland;

(c) The final draft of the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services prepared by the assessment author group (deliverable 2 (c)), for consideration by the Plenary at the current session, following the external review by Governments and peers of the second-order draft of the chapters and the first-order draft of the summary for policymakers of the assessment from April to July 2018; the convening, in Germany, of the third author meeting for the assessment in July 2018 and of a writing workshop for the summary for policymakers in August 2018; the convening of a workshop for national focal points in June 2018 in Bonn, to strengthen the capacity of Governments to review the assessment and to contribute to its consideration at the seventh session of the Plenary (see para. 10 (a)); the convening of a meeting to finalize the content of chapter 2 in September and October 2018 in the United States of America and of a meeting to finalize the content of chapter 4 in October 2018 in France; and implementation of the approach to recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge in the context of the global assessment (see para. 10 (b)). Work in this area continued to be supported by a technical support unit based at the secretariat in Bonn, including one consultant supported thanks to a contribution from Germany. A full report on the preparation of the global assessment is set out in document IPBES/7/INF/2;

(d) The regional and global assessments under objective 2, which were time-bound activities, have been successfully delivered. IPBES will continue to update its guide for assessments over the course of the work programme up to 2030, as new methodologies emerge from its work.

C. Objective 3: Strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services with regard to thematic and methodological issues

12. Progress achieved under objective 3 includes the following outputs:

(a) Laid-out version of the summary for policymakers of the assessment of land degradation and restoration (deliverable 3 (b) (i)), available in PDF on the IPBES website and in printed form, and laid-out version of the full assessment report (front matters, summary for policymakers, chapters and back matters), available on the IPBES website in PDF. Work in this area was supported, until July 2018, by a technical support unit located at the secretariat in Bonn. The finalization of the laid-out version of the assessment report was supported by the technical support units based at the University of Bern, thanks to in-kind support from Switzerland;

(b) Call for the nomination of experts for the assessment of invasive alien species (deliverable 3 (b) (ii)); selection of co-chairs for the assessment; and establishment of the technical support unit based at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, thanks to in-kind support from Japan. A progress report is set out in document IPBES/7/INF/6;

(c) Selection of the author group for the assessment of the sustainable use of wild species (deliverable 3 (b) (iii)) and the convening of the first author meeting in December 2018 in Montpellier, France; preparation of the first-order draft of the assessment, to be ready by mid-2019; and establishment of the technical support unit at the Foundation for Research on Biodiversity and the

³ All elements are available for download on the IPBES website at www.ipbes.net/guide-production-assessments.

French Biodiversity Agency, thanks to in-kind support from France. A progress report is set out in document IPBES/7/INF/6;

(d) Further work by the expert group on scenarios and models (deliverable 3 (c)), in response to decision IPBES-5/1, section VI, and decision IPBES-6/1, section VI, regarding the provision of expert advice on the use of existing models and scenarios to support ongoing IPBES assessments, including the global assessment; and regarding the catalysis of the development of scenarios and associated models by the broader scientific community, including the convening of a meeting of the expert group on the subject “Next steps in developing nature futures” in The Hague, the Netherlands, in June 2018 and of a workshop on scenario development entitled “From visions to scenarios for nature and nature’s contributions to people for the twenty-first century” in April 2019. Work in this area continued to be supported by the technical support unit at the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, thanks to in-kind support from the Netherlands. A progress report is set out in document IPBES/7/INF/11;

(e) Selection of the author group for the methodological assessment regarding the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits, including biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services (deliverable 3 (d)); convening of the first author meeting, in November 2018 in Mexico City; preparation of the first-order draft of the assessment, to be ready by mid-2019; and establishment of the technical support unit at the Ecosystems and Sustainability Research Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, thanks to in-kind support from Mexico. A progress report is set out in document IPBES/7/INF/6.

D. Objective 4: Communicate and evaluate Platform activities, deliverables and findings

13. Progress achieved under objective 4 includes the following outputs:

(a) Updating of the catalogue of assessments (deliverable 4 (a)) as part of the catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies, as set out in document IPBES/7/INF/13, supported by the technical support unit at UNEP-WCMC, thanks to in-kind support from that organization;

(b) Further revised catalogue of policy support tools and methodologies (deliverable 4 (c)),⁴ prepared in response to decision IPBES-6/1, section VII, by the expert group complemented by resource people from relevant international processes and interested partners; procedures for uploading content to the catalogue and for the validation of its content; and methodological guidance to IPBES assessment experts on how to assess policy instruments and facilitate the use of policy support tools and methodologies through IPBES assessments. The expert group met in August 2018 in Cambridge, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This work continued to be supported by the technical support unit at UNEP-WCMC, thanks to in-kind support from that organization. A progress report on the matter is set out in document IPBES/7/INF/13;

(c) Activities in the context of the communication and outreach strategy and collaboration with open-ended networks of stakeholders with regard to the implementation of the stakeholder engagement strategy in accordance with decision IPBES-4/4 (deliverable 4 (d)), as set out in document IPBES/7/INF/14, with technical support for the implementation of the stakeholder engagement strategy provided by the International Union for Conservation of Nature; the development of additional partnerships, including the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; and the listing of collaborative supporters on the IPBES website (for further information on collaboration and partnerships, see document IPBES/7/INF/15);

(d) Preparation of a report on the review of IPBES at the end of its first work programme (deliverable 4 (e)), in response to decision IPBES-5/2, by the review panel, set out in document IPBES/7/INF/18, including recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of IPBES, as set out in document IPBES/7/5;

(e) Further work by the Committee on Conflicts of Interest, and preparation of a report, as set out in document IPBES/7/INF/16, in accordance with rule 10 of the implementation procedures of the conflict-of-interest policy set out in annex II to decision IPBES-3/3.

⁴ Available at www.ipbes.net/policy-support.

II. Update regarding the recruitment of staff members to the secretariat in 2018

14. In June 2018, the new position of Information Systems Assistant (G-5) was filled. In its decision IPBES-5/6, the Plenary had approved funding for one half of the cost of that position, and Germany has since provided an in-kind cash contribution to enable the recruitment of a full-time staff member to support the further development and maintenance of the data management system that supports the implementation of the IPBES work programme.

15. Two staff members left in 2018, and one in 2019. Recruitment to fill the position of Programme Assistant (G-5), vacant since May 2018, was completed in November 2018, while recruitment to fill the position of Programme Management Officer (P-3), vacant since June 2018, is being completed. Recruitment to fill the position of Assistant to the Head of Secretariat (G-6), vacant since January 2019, is ongoing.

16. At its sixth session, the Plenary approved, as part of its decision on the budget, beginning in 2018, the reclassification of two P-2 positions as P-3 positions, since the duties carried out under the positions were deemed to be of a higher level of responsibility than originally envisaged. Recruitment for the reclassified posts is being completed.

Staffing of the secretariat in 2018

Position	Status
Head of Secretariat (D-1)	In place since February 2014
Programme Officer (P-4) ^a	In place since March 2015
Communications Officer (P-4)	In place since July 2016
Programme Officer (P-3)	Vacant
Administrative Officer (P-3)	In place since May 2017
Associate Knowledge Management Officer (P-2)	In place since May 2016
Associate Programme Officer (P-2)	In place since February 2016
Administrative support staff member (G-6)	In place since August 2016
Administrative support staff member (G-6)	Vacant
Administrative support staff member (G-5)	In place since June 2018
Administrative support staff member (G-5)	In place since July 2016
Administrative support staff member (G-5)	In place since November 2018
Administrative support staff member (G-5)	In place since August 2015

^aIn-kind position received from UNEP.