

Executive summary

- 1 The nature and functioning of the physical, biotic and social elements of our planet has been changing dramatically in past decades. Part of maintaining stable biotic-social systems in the future is to understand the drivers of change and their individual and collective impacts on the biophysical and social systems so that we can make informed choices on those responses.
- 2 The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) provides a unique opportunity for both the science and policy communities to work together in order to deliver the information and guidance needed to help society manoeuvre the challenges it will face in the future.
- 3 Significant progress was made at the first session of the plenary meeting held in Nairobi, October 2011, where over 130 countries began the discussions on the scientific scope, institutional modalities and rules of procedures for the implementation of IPBES. Final agreements on these issues will be decided at the second session of the plenary meeting, to be held in April, 2012 in Panama.
- 4 The second session meeting in Panama will be a corner stone event for the establishment of IPBES. Establishing a complex science-policy interface such as IPBES will require many decisions. The challenge in Panama will be to agree on a minimum set of decisions to enable an effective and efficient process for the implementation of the platform.
- 5 In response to this challenge, participating scientists from the international scientific community submitted the following considerations and recommendations for the second session of the IPBES plenary. They are based on a workshop convened by the Governments of Japan and South Africa and hosted by the United Nations University, February 27-29, Tokyo, Japan.
- 6 In preparation for the workshop in Tokyo, the United Nations University, on the request from the Ministry of Environment, Japan, launched a global survey in January 2012. The objective of the survey was to gather feedback from the larger scientific community on many of the issues to be deliberated in Panama. Over 2000 scientists participated in the survey with 1607 respondents from over 136 countries fully completing the survey. The survey feedback by the international scientific community sends a strong message to the policy community calling for their support as well as recommendations for strengthening the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- 7 This document draws upon the first and second informal science workshops on assessment held in Tokyo, the first session plenary meeting of IPBES and the

global survey. Participants at the second informal science workshop on assessments highlight four key messages (See Box1) that cut across the working documents prepared for the second session plenary meeting of IPBES.

Box 1. Key Messages

Key Message 1: *Ensure a bottom up and integrated programme of work:* The scientific community recommends a programme of work according to which assessment, knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building are undertaken in an integrated way, taking into account social, cultural, economic and ecological components through regional working groups—coordinated by a science panel—that address all four of these functions in all four dimensions.

Key Message 2: *Establish a transdisciplinary common conceptual framework to guide the work programme:* There is a strong recommendation from the scientific community for the development of a common conceptual framework to provide for consistent and coherent assessments at different scales and in different regions, developed in a transdisciplinary multi-knowledge way and addressing the needs of the different end users.

Key Message 3: *Establish a governance structure and rules of procedures that ensure scientific independence and credible review processes:* There was strong support for the independence and credibility of the science of IPBES as well as for an effective and efficient governance within IPBES. The scientists suggest the mechanisms of a science panel and an independent review process to support independent and credible science.

Key Message 4: *Ensure equitable and inclusive participation for IPBES:* IPBES to integrate capacity building into all components of the IPBES work program and plenary to request United Nations organizations to work closely with scientific and educational organizations for the successful implementation of IPBES work program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8 Based on a review of the documents for discussion in Panama and the four key messages, this document provides recommendations for delegates to consider while deliberating and making key decisions at the second session meeting of IPBES in Panama, 2012. Below, we outline these key recommendations for each working document in the order they are presented in the agenda (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/1).

For the document “Possible elements of the work programme of the platform” (UNEP IPBES.MI/2/2)

Recommendation 1

- 9 The IPBES plenary be requested to undertake a one-year scoping exercise whereby all Potential Activities (PA) are designed in an integrated manner to the implementation of its work programme and not as separate components as presented in UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/2.

Recommendation 2

- 10 Based on a review of existing assessment frameworks (PA1), to develop a trans-disciplinary common conceptual framework, methods and approaches (PA2) and maintain a dynamic catalogue of the relevant assessment landscape with the establishment of a state of art knowledge management system at the very beginning of IPBES.

Recommendation 3

- 11 Ensure engagement with a wide set of users in the development and screening of requests and priorities to determine the work programme (Section II A paragraphs 13, 14, and 15), and ensure effective communication to secure wide ownership and audience, full engagement, awareness and interest (Section II C 1 paragraph 23).

Recommendation 4

- 12 Make capacity-building an integral part of the platform’s work programme as articulated in Section III A 4 in order to ensure full global participation of scientists and policymakers in the work programme. We further support Potential Activities 13 and 14 in Section B on priorities and funding for capacity-building and recommend they be considered as early stage activities.

For the document “Functions and structures of bodies that might be established under an IPBES” (UNEP IPBES.MI/2/3)

Recommendation 5

- 13 Establish two subsidiary bodies – a science panel and an administrative bureau – as articulated in Section III B 15 Option 2. The science panel should be composed of a multidisciplinary group of scientists chosen through an open nomination process and selected by the plenary to carry out the scientific and technical functions of the platform. An administrative bureau is selected by the plenary to carry out the administrative functions of the platform (see Figure 1).

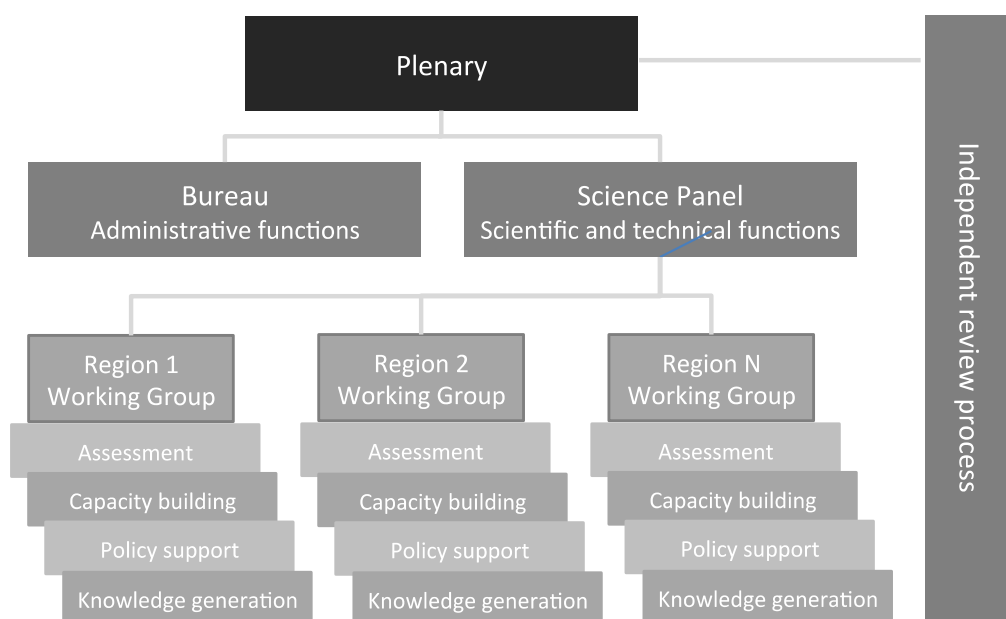


Figure 1. Governance structure with a science panel and a bureau

Recommendation 6

- 14 In the case of Option 1 (expanded bureau) being the favoured option, establish the necessary governance, rules and procedures within the expanded bureau to ensure the independence and credibility of the science function.

Recommendation 7

- 15 Establish regional integrated working groups to oversee work programmes which fulfil the 4 functions of assessment, knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building and overseen by the science panel to ensure consistency and coherence across all regions and work components of IPBES. Make allowance for the appointment of ad-hoc and time-bound integrated global and thematic working groups as articulated in Section III C 19 Option 3 (see Figure 1).

Recommendation 8

- 16 Establish an independent review process to oversee the review of the scientific outputs of IPBES and the review of the platform itself (see Figure 1).

For the document “Rules of procedure for the meetings of the platform’s plenary” UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/4

Recommendation 9

17 Request inter-sessional meetings to be organized by countries between the end of the second session meeting of the plenary in Panama and the first plenary meeting of IPBES—engaging the scientific community—to develop rules of procedures proposed under paragraph 7 for specifically items 7b and 7g of UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/4, and present at the first IPBES plenary meeting. The IPBES plenary will be requested to develop the rules for the remaining items as listed below:

- **Nomination and selection of authors, reviewers and review editors (7b);**
- Preparation, review, acceptance, adoption, approval and publication of reports and other deliverables (7c);
- Assigning and defining levels of uncertainty (7e);
- Reflection of minority and majority views in reports (7e);
- Addressing errors in reports (7f);
- **Guidelines for the treatment of traditional and indigenous knowledge (7g);**
- Independent review and evaluation of the platform (7h);
- Management, oversight and external review of the IPBES secretariat (new item).

Recommendation 10

18 The inclusion of observers from UN bodies, relevant intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (Section II B in UNEP IPBES.MI/2/3) in the plenary.