Decision IPBES-3/1 Annex III (advance version)

GENERIC SCOPING REPORT FOR THE REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Adopted by the third session of the plenary meeting held from 12 – 17 January 2015 in Bonn, Germany

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

A. Scope

1. The overall scope of the regional/subregional assessments is to assess the status and trends regarding biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and their interlinkages, the impact of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and threats to them on good quality of life and the effectiveness of responses, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the national biodiversity strategies and action plans developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity.[1] The assessments will address terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services.

2. The objective of the regional/subregional assessment processes is to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services at regional and subregional levels. The assessments will analyse the state of knowledge on past, present and future interactions between people and nature, including by highlighting potential tipping points, feedbacks and trade-offs. The timeframe of analyses will cover current status, trends (often going back in time several decades) and future projections, with a focus on periods ranging from 2020 to 2050, which cover key target dates related to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the ongoing process of developing the post-2015 development agenda. The conceptual framework of the Platform will guide these analyses of the social-ecological systems that operate at various scales in time and space.

3. The regional/subregional assessments will address the following policy-relevant questions:

(a) How do biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services contribute to the economy, livelihoods, food security, and good quality of life in the regions, and what are the interdependences among them?

(b) What are the status, trends and potential future dynamics of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services that affect the contribution to the economy, livelihoods and well-being in the regions?

(c) What are the pressures driving the change in the status and trends of biodiversity, ecosystem functions, ecosystem services and good quality of life in the regions?

(d) What are the actual and potential impacts of various policies and interventions on the contribution of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services to the sustainability of the economy, livelihoods, food security and good quality of life in the regions?

(e) What gaps in knowledge need to be addressed in order to better understand and assess drivers, impacts and responses of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services at the regional level?

[1] As expressed in deliverable 2 (b) of the work programme of the Platform (decision IPBES-2/5, annex I).

4. Additional specificities are presented in the complementary scoping reports of each region/subregion.

B. Geographic area of the assessment

5. For the purpose of the regional assessments, the geographic area of each assessment is contained in the scoping report for each region. Where appropriate, information about and expertise from observer States, regional economic integration organizations and overseas territories should be made available to relevant regional and subregional assessments according to the rules and procedures of the Platform.

C. Rationale

6. Biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services provide the basis for the economies, livelihoods and good quality of life of people throughout the world. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets provide an overarching framework for effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity in order to ensure that by 2020 ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services, thereby securing the planet's variety of life, and contributing to human well-being and poverty eradication. These considerations are also included in the ongoing development of the post-2015 development agenda and its possible sustainable development goals. Regional and/or national biodiversity strategies and action plans are important vehicles for implementing the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and adapting them to regional and national conditions. All these efforts require a strong knowledge base and strengthened interplay between scientists and policymakers and different knowledge systems, to which the regional/subregional assessments are well placed to contribute.

7. The assessments will themselves be a vehicle for implementation of the Platform's functions as they relate to capacity-building, identification of knowledge gaps, knowledge generation and development of policy support tools. Furthermore, such assessments are critical to furthering the Platform's operational principle of ensuring the full use of national, subregional and regional knowledge, as appropriate, including a bottom-up approach.

8. Additional specificities are presented in the complementary scoping reports of each region/subregion.

D. Utility

9. The regional/subregional assessments on biodiversity, ecosystem function and ecosystem services will provide users with a credible, legitimate, authoritative, holistic and comprehensive analysis of the current state of scientific and other knowledge. They will analyse options and policy support tools for sustainable management of biodiversity, ecosystem function and ecosystem services under alternative scenarios and present success stories, best practices, and lessons learned. They will identify current gaps in capacity and knowledge and options for addressing them at relevant levels.

10. The assessments will inform a range of stakeholders in the public and private sectors and civil society. In particular, requests to the Platform for regional assessments were made by China, Norway, UNEP, the Pan-European Platform, IUCN, along with a large variety of requests to address the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets at regional scales (IPBES/2/INF/9). Outcomes of regional assessments will be presented to a broad audience as outlined the platform's communication strategy, and with more detailed information including with easy-to-understand infographics, maps and geographical information systems' outcomes. The outputs will also include a summary for policymakers, highlighting key policy-relevant, but not policy-prescriptive, findings. The information will be widely disseminated, including by making use of new information and communications technologies.

11. Additional specificities are presented in the complementary scoping reports of each region/subregion.

E. Assumptions

12. The regional/subregional assessments will be based on existing data, scientific literature, and other information, including indigenous and local knowledge. Regional assessments will assess the state of knowledge on subregional-specific issues as an integral part of the overall analysis. This knowledge will be gathered from the published literature, including grey literature according to guidelines of the Platform, and also through bodies such as national academies of science, national research institutes, scientific societies and other research communities, government environmental agencies and statistical offices. The regional/subregional assessments will also use existing data and information held by global, regional, subregional and national institutions, such as the relevant multilateral agreements. Experts involved in regional assessments with work closely with the Task Force on Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems to ensure the multiple sources of knowledge are drawn upon. Attention will be given, in accordance with the Platform's data and information management plan, to ensure the collection and archiving of the corresponding metadata, and whenever possible the corresponding underlying data, through an interoperable process to ensure comparability between assessments across regions. Also, should new regional assessments be undertaken data and information should be available for future work of the Platform. Whenever possible, the sets of metadata will thus contain information on the geographical location and temporal reference of the underlying data as well as the scientific protocol with which they were collected.

13. The author expert groups for the different regional/subregional assessments will, in accordance with the procedures, reflect the need for geographic balance within the region. They will interact with each other, with similar groups undertaking global, thematic and methodological assessments in order to ensure conceptual and methodological coherence. They will also work closely with the task forces on knowledge and data, indigenous and local knowledge systems and capacity-building taking into account rights of knowledge holders. The author groups will be supported by the guide to the production and integration of assessments (see IPBES/3/INF/4).[2]

14. The assumptions underlying the regional/subregional assessments include the availability of the necessary expertise and the dependence of the assessment on voluntary contributions to the initiative, including financial resources. It is assumed that there will be sufficient direct and in-kind funding and technical support available for the preparation and implementation of the assessments.

15. Additional specificities are presented in the complementary scoping reports of each region/subregion.

II. Chapter outline

Chapter 1: Setting the scene

16. Chapter 1 presents the policy-relevant questions identified for each region/subregion and how each assessment reflects the conceptual framework and the framework for the science-policy interface. It demonstrates how the assessment addresses policy questions, including those related to implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It presents regional and subregional aspects of priority thematic challenges identified by the Platform, such as land degradation and restoration, invasive alien species, and sustainable use of biodiversity as addressed in the thematic assessments. It also outlines the methodologies and approaches used in the assessment, including its approach to the use of different knowledge systems, and outline how the assessment will identify and address uncertainties and gaps in data and knowledge. It identifies the relevant stakeholders requesting the regional assessment and their priorities.

[2] The guide includes guidance on dealing with scale, indicators, uncertainty terms, use of key methodologies (scenario analysis, consideration of value), how to address policy support tools and methodologies, and on the identification of capacity needs, gaps in knowledge and data, and protocols with regard to the integration of diverse knowledge systems.

Chapter 2: Nature's benefits to people and quality of life

17. Chapter 2 reflects the Conceptual Framework boxes "Nature's benefits to people" and "Good quality of life", and fluxes between them. It will assess the values of nature's benefits to people, including the interrelationship between biodiversity, ecosystem functions and society, the geographical difference between the production and use of ecosystem services, as well as the status, trends and future dynamics of ecosystem goods and services and nature's gifts to people. It will apply methods described in the guide for assessments (IPBES deliverable 2 (a) and interact closely with the thematic assessments in deliverable 3 (b). It will also assess the different impacts of changes in nature's benefits to people with regard to food security, energy security, livelihood security and health security and identify aspects of biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services that are critical to social relationships, spirituality and cultural identity. It will also address issues of equity, including intergenerational and intragenerational equity, social relationships, spirituality and cultural identity with respect to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services. The chapter reflects in particular Goal D of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and will address issues related to the three Aichi Targets under this goal (Aichi Targets 14, 15 and 16) as well as target 18.

Chapter 3: Status, trends and future dynamics of biodiversity and ecosystems underpinning nature's benefits to people

18. Chapter 3 will reflect the Conceptual Framework box "Nature", emphasizing the components and fluxes impacting on "Nature's benefits to people". It will assess what is known about the past and current trends and future dynamics of biodiversity and ecosystems and their positive and negative effectson the key ecosystem goods and services identified in chapter 2. It will consider both structural and functional ecosystem diversity and genetic diversity and the area and extent of ecosystems, and include fragile habitats and hotspots and species of special concern and importance, such as Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) species, migratory species and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) threatened species, taking into account species listed at the national level where relevant. It will also include species that are important for the functioning of ecosystems and livelihoods. Available forecasts on current trends will also be outlined. The chapter will also explore how changes in "Nature" impact "Nature's benefit to people". The chapter reflects in particular Goal C of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and will address issues related to the three Aichi Targets under this goal (Aichi Targets 11, 12 and 13), as well as relevant aspects of Aichi Targets 14.

Chapter 4: Direct and indirect drivers of change in the context of different perspectives of quality of life

19. Chapter 4 reflects the Conceptual Framework boxes and fluxes on "Institutions and governance and other indirect drivers" and "Direct drivers". It will assess the status and trends and future dynamics of indirect drivers, focusing in particular on those affecting "Nature" and "Nature's benefits to people" as the foundation for "Good quality of life". It will assess the status and trends in direct drivers, as well as the impact of these drivers on "Nature" based on future predictions, and analyse the interrelations between and among direct drivers and indirect drivers. Indirect drivers include policy changes, changes in economic activity, population change and technology change. Consideration will be given to how institutional and governance arrangements contribute to changes in biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services. Direct drivers include habitat conversion, use of aquatic resources – including through fisheries – land management practices, use of wild species, pollution, invasive alien species, the impacts of climate change on nature, and extreme events. The chapter reflects in particular Goals A and B of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and will address issues covered by the Aichi Targets under this goal (in particular Aichi Targets 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10).

Chapter 5: Integrated and cross-scale analysis of interactions of the natural world and human society

20. Chapter 5 reflects all the boxes and fluxes of the Conceptual Framework. It will build on the analysis in the previous chapter and make extensive use of scenarios and modelling in its

analysis. It will focus on the key issues that society is expected to face over the next 40 years that will determine the dynamics of the interactions between society and nature. It will include integrated and cross-scale analysis of these dynamics, including feedback, synergies, time-lags, tipping points, resilience, cross-regional interrelations, and trade-offs. The chapter will explore various paths towards sustainable development; this involves exploring changes in the trajectories of multiple drivers and the role played by synergies, trade-offs and adaptive behaviour. The chapter relates to the long term 2050 vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and will help to identify possible pathways to achieve this vision. It will rely heavily on outputs of the thematic assessment on scenarios and models of biodiversity, ecosystem function and ecosystem services (Platform deliverable 3 (c) and recommendations in the guide for regional and global assessments (Platform deliverable 2 (a)).

Chapter 6: Options for governance, institutional arrangements and private and public decision-making across scales and sectors

21. Informed by the analysis in previous chapters, chapter 6 will reflect the Conceptual Framework boxes and fluxes on "Institutions and governance and other indirect drivers". It will examine different policy ideas and possible options for decision makers at the regional and subregional levels, in response to the scenario set out in previous chapters, in particular chapter 5. Explorations of options will be policy relevant, but not policy prescriptive, as outlined in the principles of the Platform. Options explored will include different policy instruments, market tools, conservation and management practices, and international and regional agreements. The chapter will look at options at different hierarchical spatial and temporal scales, from the international level to local and indigenous communities and households. It will explore options for policy mixes and alignments in polycentric governance systems, assess the effectiveness of such options and consider who would gain or bear their cost. The chapter will analyse future challenges for sustainable use and conservation in key sectors in each region and assess options for integrating biodiversity, ecosystem function and ecosystem services into poverty reduction strategies and national accounting, and, where appropriate, the recognition of the rights of Mother Earth. The analyses will include incentives, subsidies harmful to biodiversity, positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, ecosystem function and ecosystem services, as well as measures taken to achieve sustainable production and consumption of biodiversity, ecosystem function and ecosystem services and rights-based approaches in order to address biodiversity conservation. The chapter will also identify the enabling environments and limitations for policy uptake and lessons learned, including solutions and methods for ensuring success and capacity-building needs. It will address issues related to Goals A and E of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the relevant Aichi Targets (in particular Aichi Targets 1, 2, 3,4, 17,18, 19 and 20) as well as target 16.

22. Additional specificities are presented in the complementary scoping reports of each region/subregion.

III. Key datasets

23. The regional assessments will draw on a wide variety of datasets addressing all the specific components of the conceptual framework. A key activity of the regional/subregional assessments will be to identify relevant datasets, including those arising from ongoing and planned activities, from a wide range of sources, including global, regional and national institutions and organizations, as well as research projects and analysis of the scientific literature and indigenous and local knowledge. The Platform's catalogue of assessments will also be used as a source of information. The common framework on data standards developed by the knowledge and data task force will be applied to all assessments in order to facilitate intra- and inter-regional and subregional comparisons. The task force on indigenous and local knowledge systems will provide guidance and procedures for the analysis and use of indigenous and local knowledge. The capacity to perform these tasks will be strengthened through training, knowledge-sharing and collaborations between subregions and countries where needed.

24. Additional specificities are presented in the complementary scoping reports of each region/subregion.

IV. Strategic partnership and initiatives

25. In accordance with the operating principles of the Platform, partnerships are important in order to avoid duplication and promote synergies with ongoing activities. Strategic partnerships and collaboration will help deliver the regional/subregional assessments. They could provide scientific and technical support, datasets and reports, administrative support, capacity-building, outreach and networking, experience in bridging science and policy, and experience working with indigenous and local knowledge systems. Strategic partnerships will be formal and informal and attention will be paid to ensuring geographic balance in their development. During the inception phase, each regional/subregional assessment process will identify a list of possible strategic partners, including strategic partners who would ensure repeatability and comparability with other Platform assessments beyond the 2014–2018 work programme.

26. Additional specificities are presented in the complementary scoping reports of each region/subregion.

V. Operational structure

27. The operational structures that could best deliver a particular regional/subregional assessment will need to be identified. A technical support unit, working as part of the secretariat, may be established for each regional/subregional assessment to coordinate the delivery of the assessments.

VI. Process and timetable

28. The proposed process for undertaking the assessments and the timetable are outlined in the following table.

Process and timetable for regional and subregional assessments	
Date	*Actions and institutional arrangements*
2015	
First quarter	Plenary at its third session approves conducting the regional assessments coupled with the thematic assessments, asks for offers of in-kind technical support for this assessment, and requests the Bureau and the secretariat to establish the necessary institutional arrangements to put in place technical support
	The Chair, through the secretariat, requests nominations from Governments and other stakeholders for experts to prepare the assessment report
Second quarter	Secretariat compiles lists of nominations
	The Panel selects the assessment co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors, using the approved selection criteria set out in decision IPBES-2/3 (IPBES/2/17, annex)
	Meeting of the Management Committee (co-chairs, head of the technical support unit, and MEP/Bureau members) to select remaining expert team and respective roles (i.e. coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors)
	Selected nominees contacted, gaps filled, and list of co-chairs, authors and review editors finalized
Third quarter	First author meeting (100 participants per region, including 15 thematic experts embedded in the regional expert groups: co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors, plus Panel/Bureau members)
2016	
First quarter	First draft of chapters prepared for the regional assessment (6-7 months); drafts sent to secretariat (technical support units)
Second	First draft of regional assessment sent for expert review (6 weeks)

quarter	Collation of review comments by secretariat/technical support units for first draft of regional assessment sent to authors (2 weeks)
Second/ early Third quarter	Second author meetings of the regional assessments in the regions coupled with second authors meeting of the land degradation and the first authors meeting of invasive alien species and sustainable use (100 people per region including the 15 thematic experts embedded in the regional assessments: co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors)
Third quarter	Second draft of chapters and first draft of summary for policymakers (SPM) prepared for the regional assessment (5-6 months)
2017	
First quarter	Second draft of the regional assessment and first draft of the summary for policymakers sent for government and expert review (2 months)
First quarter	Collation of review comments for second draft of the regional assessment and first draft of summary for policymakers sent to authors (2 weeks)
Second quarter	Third author meeting of regional assessment coupled with third author meeting of land degradation and second author meetings of invasive alien species and sustainable use assessments (30 participants per region: co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and review editors and Panel/Bureau members)
Third quarter	Final text changes to regional assessment and the summary for policymakers (3 months)
Third quarter	Translation of summary for policymakers into the six official languages of the United Nations (1 month)
Fourth quarter	Submission of the regional assessment, including the translated summary for policymakers, to Governments for final review prior to Plenary (6 weeks)
Fourth quarter	Final government comments on the summary for policymakers for consideration by authors prior to Plenary
2018	
January 2018 (To be confirmed)	Plenary to approve/accept regional assessments, including the summaries for policymakers

VII. Cost estimate

29. The table below shows the estimated cost of conducting and preparing the assessment report in one region. Cost estimates will need to be adjusted to the expected nature and level of activity of the regional assessment.

Year	*Cost item*	*Assumptions*	*Cost (United States dollars)*
2015	4 x Management committee meeting (2 co-chairs, head of technical support unit, secretariat)	Meeting costs	0
		Travel and DSA (3 x $3,750)	45 000
	4 x First authors' meeting (100 co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors)	Meeting costs (1 week, regional, 100 participants) (25 per cent in kind)	75 000
		Travel and DSA (80 x $3,000)	96 0000
	4 x Technical support	2 full-time equivalent professional positions (50 per cent in kind)	600 000
2016	4 x Second authors' meeting (30 co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, and review editors)	Meeting costs (1 week, international, 110 participants) (25 per cent in kind)	93 750
		Travel and DSA (88 x $3,000)	1 056 000
	4 x Technical support	2 full-time equivalent professional positions (50 per cent in kind)	600 000
2017	4 x Third authors' meeting (110 co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors, and review editors)	Meeting costs (1 week, regional, 30participants) (25 per cent in kind)	37 500
		Travel and DSA (24 x $3,750)	360 000

Year	*Cost item*	*Assumptions*	*Cost (United States dollars)*
	4 x Technical support	2 full-time equivalent professional positions (50 per cent in kind)	600 000
2018	4 x Co-chairs' participation in the fifth session of the Plenary	Travel and DSA (2 x $3,750)	30 000
	4 x Dissemination and regional outreach (summary for policymakers (3 x 10 pages) and report (200 pages))	Translation of summaries for policymakers into all United Nations languages, publication and outreach	117 000
Total			**4 932 750**

VIII. Communication and outreach

30. The regional/subregional assessment report and its summary for policymakers will be published in electronic format. The summary for policymakers will be available in all official languages of the United Nations and will be printed on demand. These reports will be made available on the Platform website. Outreach to a broad set of stakeholders, including the general public, will be based on the Platform's communication and outreach strategy. Dissemination will target all Platform stakeholders and will be adapted to the specific interests of different users, and metadata used in the assessments will be made publicly available in accordance with relevant guidance developed by the Platform.

IX. Capacity-building

31. A key objective of the regional assessments is to build capacity to undertake assessments at the regional and subregional levels and to initiate a broader community capacity-building exercise that will continue after the assessment is complete, including in particular the strengthening of effective contributions of indigenous and local knowledge systems into assessments. The regional/subregional assessments will be supported by the task force on capacity-building and its technical support unit, in particular through the implementation of the proposed programme on fellowship, exchange and training presented in document IPBES/3/3.[3] The regional/subregional assessments will identify a pool of experts, which can be used to support capacity-building activities related to the Platform.

32. Additional specificities are presented in the complementary scoping reports of each region/subregion.

[3] The programme includes components such as fellowships, a programme for temporary secondment of staff and exchange of individuals, a mentoring scheme and training programmes.