

# SCOPING FOR A REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES FOR ASIA-PACIFIC

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

### A. Scope

1. Within the scope outlined in the draft generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES/3/6/Add.1), particular challenges found across the Asia-Pacific region include climate change (particularly sea-level rise, increased intensity of extreme storm events, ocean acidification and glacier retreat) population growth, poverty, human consumption of natural resources, land degradation, deforestation, invasive alien species, trade impacts (including the illegal trade in wildlife and non-timber forest products), rapid urbanization, coastal pollution, poor governance of natural resources and the impact of altered fire regimes. These factors, together with others that have an impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services, will be considered in the report. There are also positive trends, such as an increase in awareness, forest cover and protected areas and a reduction in the carbon footprint. Issues specific to particular Asia-Pacific subregions will also be addressed, for example, the interplay between food, water and energy security, biodiversity and livelihoods, waste management and cooperative management of critical ecosystems shared by more than one country.

### B. Geographic area of the assessment

2. The assessment will include countries and territories in five subregions as follows:

<i>Subregions</i>	<i>Countries and territories</i>
Oceania	Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Pacific island territories of Cook Islands, New Caledonia, American Samoa, <sup>a</sup> Tokelau, <sup>a</sup> French Polynesia, <sup>a</sup> Niue, <sup>a</sup> Guam, <sup>a</sup> Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Pitcairn Island <sup>a</sup> and Wallis and Futuna. <sup>a</sup> Oceanic and sub-Antarctic islands in the Pacific region (or Pacific and Indian Ocean regions)
South-East Asia	Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam
North-East Asia	China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia and Republic of Korea
South Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
Western Asia	Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen (Arabian peninsula), Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine and Syrian Arab Republic (Mashriq)

<sup>a</sup> Overseas territory.

### C. Rationale

3. In the context of the general rationale outlined by the draft generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services, the present section sets out the rationale specific to the Asia-Pacific region, which hosts some of the world's most important

biological, cultural (including indigenous and local knowledge), geographic and economic diversity and has issues common and specific to small island nations such as sea-level rise and invasive alien species. The substantial rate of biodiversity loss in the region has a significant impact on human well-being. The assessment will review the status of biodiversity and ecosystem services pertaining to human well-being in the region through the lens of the sustainable development agenda and the forthcoming sustainable development goals. Asia-Pacific is a very diverse sociocultural region, typified by rapidly urbanizing nations, wealthy nations and small and large island nations across the Pacific. In view of the contribution of the region's ecosystems to the overall well-being of the population, it is vital to maintain their capacity to provide goods and services. The major policy challenge of many nations in the region is to improve the standard of living in ways that provide equitable access to resources and do not further degrade biodiversity and ecosystem services. [As much of the region's biodiversity is outside protected areas, innovative approaches have to be found for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services in multiple-use ecosystems.] Intra-regional trade places further pressure on biodiversity and ecosystem services in the region by displacing environmental impacts from one nation to another. The transboundary management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is a significant policy challenge throughout most of the region.

#### **D. Utility**

4. In the context of the general utility outlined in the draft generic scoping report, this section sets out the utility specific to the Asia-Pacific region. The Asia-Pacific regional assessment will report on the status and trends of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the potential impacts of loss across relevant scales in an Asia-Pacific context, using scientific information and other knowledge systems. The assessment will help decision makers and policymakers to develop relevant policy solutions, identify practical management options and tools and best practices for biodiversity and ecosystem services conservation in the Asia-Pacific region, its five subregions and national constituents. It will also devise management approaches for dealing with similar ecosystems and issues that are common across the region. Furthermore, it may assist in mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services. The assessment will take into account the disparate national wealth and human population growth rates in the region to increase relevancy at all scales for all end users and decision makers. The Asia-Pacific region has the most countries and territories and the highest concentration of local and indigenous communities of any region. The regional assessment report therefore needs to pay particular attention to cultural diversity, the interdependency of national economies in the region, intraregional trade impacts, financial flows and existing cross-regional policies, among other factors. In order to be relevant to end users, these factors will be taken into consideration along with datasets and tools scalable to a local or contextual level. The regional assessment report will contribute to achieving the sustainability and conservation goals set out in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, to be met by 2020, as well as the sustainable development goals that are to come into force in 2015. The Asia-Pacific regional assessment report will be valuable to Governments and to intergovernmental agencies (e.g., the Asian Productivity Organization and the Mekong River Commission), United Nations agencies, conservation organizations, scientific/research bodies (Future Earth and the Asia-Pacific Biodiversity Observation Network), scientists, indigenous and local communities and the rest of civil society. The assessment report will also be of interest to those institutions involved in intraregional trade policy, biodiversity and ecosystem services, and conservation policy and development, such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the World Trade Organization, the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East-Asia. Furthermore, the assessment report will be valuable to funding bodies and economic cooperation organizations that support research involving biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund, the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Asian Development Bank, as well as private investors and philanthropic organizations.

#### **E. Assumptions**

5. In the context of the general assumptions outlined in the draft generic scoping report, the present section sets out the assumptions specific to the Asia-Pacific region. While it is assumed that

countries within the Asia-Pacific region will have sufficient experts available and willing to contribute to the assessment report with respect to development, resources, funding, data and knowledge, it is acknowledged that there will be a need for capacity-building across the region. In accordance with the rules of procedure of the Platform, the draft assessment report will be open to peer review by experts, policymakers and stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities. It is assumed that the regional assessment experts will collaborate with national Governments, national experts, research organizations, and local and indigenous communities. It is further assumed that best endeavours will be made to engage Governments, stakeholders and indigenous and local communities represented within the Asia-Pacific expert group. Data, models and scenarios will be adaptable and scalable to develop best management strategies, but there will be significant data gaps across the region.

## **II. Chapter outline**

6. The assessment of the Asia-Pacific region will follow the chapter outline as set out in the draft generic scoping report but will focus in particular on the regionally specific scope set out in section I above.

## **III. Key datasets**

7. Beyond the general issues concerning key datasets outlined in the draft generic scoping report, this section sets out issues related to key datasets specific to this region. Relevant datasets from ongoing activities drawn from a wide range of sources, including global, regional, national, subnational and local institutions and organizations will feed into the Asia-Pacific regional assessment. Some examples are national biodiversity and strategic action plans, national reports and data portals: National Specimen Information Infrastructure (NSII), the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the Indian Bio-resource Information Network, the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network with regional components, the Asia-Pacific Biodiversity Observation Network and subregional or national components, the Japanese Biodiversity Observation Network and the Korea Biodiversity Observation Network; regional initiatives: the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Southeast Asia; regional research institutes: Bioversity International (Asia Pacific Oceania division), Ocean Biogeographic Information System, the World Resources Institute, the CGIAR Consortium for Spatial Information, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, the International Union for Conservation of Nature; government research institutes and non-governmental organizations. Datasets from published scientific literature and citizen science projects, along with indigenous and local knowledge sources, will also be used within the assessment report.

## **IV. Strategic partnerships and initiatives**

8. Beyond the general issues concerning strategic partnerships and initiatives outlined in the draft generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services, the present section sets out issues related to strategic partnerships and initiatives specific to the Asia-Pacific region. In order to avoid duplication and identify synergies, the Asia-Pacific regional assessment process will develop strong connections with regionally specific activities of the multilateral environmental agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna; and with regional bodies such as the Pacific Regional Environment Programme. It would also be useful to build a strategic partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Centre for Biodiversity and the Centre for International Forestry Research, which publish their own biodiversity assessments. Private stakeholders that might support scientific and technical support towards the Asia-Pacific regional assessment report include the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the Economy and Environment Programme for Southeast Asia, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Australian Agency for International Development, to name a few institutions that currently support a number of

environmental initiatives. Local community networks, such as the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, could help to link the Asia-Pacific regional assessment report to [local and indigenous communities] or help with outreach and network aspects. The assessment will benefit from collaboration with many of the centres of excellence and research hubs based in the region.

## **V. Operational structure**

9. As noted in the draft generic scoping report, the operational structures best able to deliver the Asia-Pacific regional assessment, including its capacity-building component, will need to be identified. A technical support unit may be established for the region to coordinate the delivery of the regional assessment, working as part of the secretariat.

## **VI. Process and timetable**

10. The process and timetable are set out in the draft generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

## **VII. Cost estimate**

11. The cost estimate is presented in the draft generic scoping report for the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

## **VIII. Communication and outreach**

12. In addition to what is outlined in the draft generic scoping report in this regard, it is suggested that national/local Governments should be encouraged to translate relevant material from the Asia-Pacific regional assessment report into local languages. The Platform will also engage with the relevant scientific community, stakeholders and policymakers/decision makers through national focal points and a non-exhaustive list of partners, including centres of excellence (the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions), research and academic institutions (the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, the International Council for Science Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the Asia Pacific Institute of Research, the Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre, among others), international organizations, local non-governmental organizations and scientific networks.

## **IX. Capacity-building**

13. As noted in the draft generic scoping report, capacity-building activities will be supported by the work programme of the Platform as implemented by the capacity-building task force. This would help strengthen the linkage between the science and indigenous and local knowledge components of the regional assessment. The task force on capacity-building will highlight priority issues to be addressed at the subregional level.

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