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**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy
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Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

Improving the effectiveness of the Platform**Midterm review of the Platform under the rolling work
programme up to 2030: report of the internal part of the review****Note by the secretariat**

1. In decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) adopted the rolling work programme of IPBES up to 2030, comprising six objectives. Objective 6, improving the effectiveness of the Platform, is to ensure the regular internal and external review of the effectiveness of IPBES. Objective 6 (a) includes a periodic review of the effectiveness of IPBES, and is aimed at ensuring that the outcome of the review of the first work programme informs the implementation of the rolling work programme and that a procedure is developed for a midterm and a final review of the rolling work programme.
2. In section VI of decision IPBES-7/1, the Plenary requested the Executive Secretary to seek the views of IPBES members and stakeholders on the process of reviewing IPBES at the closure of its first work programme and requested the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to review that process, taking into account the views expressed by IPBES members and stakeholders, and to prepare draft terms of reference for a midterm review of IPBES, for consideration by the Plenary at its ninth session.
3. In section VI of decision IPBES-9/1, the Plenary noted with appreciation the progress made by the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in developing draft terms of reference for a midterm review of the rolling work programme, to be conducted between the tenth and twelfth sessions of the Plenary, and invited members, observers and other stakeholders to provide their comments on the draft terms of reference.
4. In section VI of decision IPBES-10/1, the Plenary approved the terms of reference for the midterm review, as set out in annex IX to the decision. In the decision, the Plenary requested the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to conduct an internal review, in accordance with the terms of reference, and to present to the Plenary, for consideration at its eleventh session, a report on the outcomes of the review.
5. The report is set out in the annex below without formal editing.

* IPBES/11/1.

Annex*

Report by the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel on the internal part of the midterm review of the Platform under the rolling work programme up to 2030

I. Introduction

1. The terms of reference for the midterm review under the rolling work programme up to 2030 set out that the following elements will be evaluated:

- (a) The effectiveness of the institutional arrangements of IPBES and its secretariat, in particular of:
 - (i) The work and sessions of the Plenary, in particular various mechanisms to facilitate consensus, including preparatory processes;
 - (ii) The implementation of objectives 2, 3 and 4, including the work and structure of IPBES task forces, including their interactions with each other and with the technical support units and the secretariat;
 - (iii) The work of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;
 - (iv) The financial and budgetary arrangements of IPBES;
 - (v) The communications and outreach work of IPBES;
- (b) The effectiveness of the procedures for the preparation of IPBES deliverables, in particular with regard to:
 - (i) Options for addressing emerging urgent matters in a timely manner, including the role and impact of workshops and other IPBES deliverables as well as options to enhance their impact, including through potential review of workshop reports by IPBES members and observers;
 - (ii) Enhancing participation in the external review processes regarding IPBES assessments;
 - (iii) Engagement with other entities, including other science-policy mechanisms;
 - (iv) The nomination and selection process of experts for different roles, taking into account regional and gender balance as well as representation from multidisciplinary backgrounds and Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
 - (v) The inclusion of other knowledge systems and Indigenous and local knowledge in IPBES assessments and other deliverables;
 - (vi) The fulfilment of the IPBES operating principles.
- (c) Online working arrangements, in particular during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and useful lessons for the future work of IPBES;
- (d) To the extent possible, the policy impact of the work of IPBES.

2. According to the terms of reference, the review should include the development and conduct of a number of surveys, with draft survey questions made available for external review before being finalized by the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel; a review of relevant documents and literature, online interviews and online meetings with relevant actors.

3. Considering the short amount of time available in the intersessional period 2023-2024, the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel decided, for the internal review, to combine the different elements, and to develop a set of questions for use in a series of focus group discussions. The draft questions were made available for external review by Governments from 27 May to 21 June 2024 (notification EM/2024/26) and comments received from Australia, Belgium, Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Taking these comments into account, the questions were finalized and used to guide a series of focus group

* The annex has not been formally edited.

discussions, followed by the opportunity to provide further feedback on each of the questions in an online form.

4. Focus group discussions were held as follows:
 - (a) National focal points: two sessions on 15 August 2024;
 - (b) Current and previous members of the Bureau: 22 August 2024;
 - (c) Current and previous members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel: 16 August 2024;
 - (d) Subset of former or current members of task forces: 31 July 2024;
 - (e) Co-chairs of assessments completed since 2019 or currently in preparation: 14 August 2024;
 - (f) Secretariat and former and current members of technical support units: 13 August 2024.
5. In total, the focus group discussions were attended by 128 participants, and 23 written submissions were received, providing detailed input to the review questions.
6. Based on the reflections during the focus group discussions, the inputs received through the online form on each of the questions, as well as the review of relevant documents and literature, the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel prepared the present internal review report.
7. The Plenary, at its eleventh session, will be invited to welcome the report and invite the review panel to take the report into consideration when conducting the external review.

II. The work and sessions of the Plenary

8. Since 2019, three sessions of the Plenary – IPBES 8 (2021, online due to the COVID-10 pandemic), IPBES 9 (2022, Bonn, Germany) and IPBES 10 (2023, Bonn, Germany) – were held. The Plenary decided on the dates and venues of the sessions of the Plenary in decisions IPBES-7/3, IPBES-8/3, IPBES-9/2 and IPBES-10/2. The organization of work of these sessions was made available in the annotations to the respective agendas, set out in documents IPBES/8/1/Add.1; IPBES/9/1/Add.1 and IPBES/10/1/Add.1. The rules of procedure for sessions of the Plenary of the Platform, adopted in decision IPBES-1/1/ and amended in decision IPBES-2/1 guide the conduct of the Plenary sessions.
9. In general, the sessions of the Plenary were found to be well-organized and to achieve their objectives. The workload of recent Plenaries and in particular, the upcoming eleventh session of the Plenary, were, however, identified as significant challenges. It was widely felt that efforts are required to considerably reduce the workload of each Plenary session, including by limiting the number of assessments for consideration at any session of the Plenary to only one. Given the current rolling work programme up to 2030, approximately annual Plenary sessions were considered as the most conducive time interval to the work of IPBES.
10. In terms of meeting documents, the timeliness of their availability was generally lauded. Some noted that the volume of documents puts significant strain on smaller delegations. The availability of Chair's notes responding to final Government comments was also generally considered as useful to advance the work of the Plenary.
11. Plenary working groups were also considered as well organized, but it was noted that both working group chairs and assessment experts participating in working groups would benefit from comprehensive training to prepare them for their roles.
12. The use of smaller groups to solve particular issues, such as groups of "friends of the Chair", was also highlighted as useful to achieve consensus.
13. The preparatory process for Plenary sessions, including the informal exchanges of views and the availability of Chair's notes, was generally seen as very helpful. A need was identified to encourage as many members as possible to participate in the preparatory process and to highlight areas of concern so attempt can be made to find solutions ahead of Plenary.
14. The secretariat was lauded for its effectiveness, but it was noted that the volume of work to be processed with very limited staff provides challenging circumstances. There was a general recommendation that matching the work programme with available human and financial resources would ensure a manageable workload and long-term sustainability.

III. The implementation of objectives 2, 3 and 4

15. IPBES was established with four functions: assessing knowledge, building capacity, strengthening the knowledge foundations and supporting policy. The rolling work programme up to 2030, adopted by the Plenary in decision IPBES-7/1, includes six objectives, with one objective related to each of the four functions of IPBES, one to communications and engagement of Governments and stakeholders and one to the review of the effectiveness of IPBES. Objective 2 is on capacity-building, with sub-objectives on enhanced learning and engagement, facilitated access to expertise and information, and strengthened national and regional capacities; objective 3 (a) on advanced work on knowledge and data, which includes an element on data and knowledge management and an element on knowledge generation catalysis; objective 3 (b) on enhanced recognition of and work with Indigenous and local knowledge systems; objective 4 (a) on advanced work on policy instruments, policy support tools and methodologies; and objective 4 (b) on advanced work on scenarios and models of biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services. Between IPBES 7 and IPBES 10, task forces on capacity-building, knowledge and data, Indigenous and local knowledge; policy support and scenarios and models were operational. Since IPBES 10, four task forces, on capacity-building, data and knowledge management, Indigenous and local knowledge, and scenarios and models guide the implementation of related objectives, while work on knowledge generation catalysis and policy support is overseen by the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. A dedicated technical support unit supports each of the six workstreams. The Plenary has approved specific workplans for each workstream for each intersessional period (see relevant annexes to decisions IPBES-7/1, IPBES-8/1, IPBES-9/1 and IPBES-10/1), and reports on their implementation were provided in information documents at each session of the Plenary.

16. Since its establishment, IPBES has made very significant progress on building capacity, strengthening the knowledge foundations and supporting policy. Ongoing work is generally much appreciated by IPBES members and stakeholders, with the fellowship programme, the data and knowledge management policy, and support to assessments with regard to Indigenous and local knowledge and scenarios and models noted as highlights. The goals and activities of IPBES related to knowledge generation catalysis and, in particular, to supporting policy are considered to require further focus and refinement. The Plenary, at its upcoming eleventh session, is expected to make progress in this regard, in particular with supporting members and stakeholders in understanding the content of IPBES assessments and in applying the assessment findings to national circumstances.

17. Task forces have generally been considered as an appropriate mechanism, in particular during the first work programme of IPBES, when much work had to be done to define the scope and mechanisms of IPBES work for each of its four functions. As the work of the task forces is evolving and the need for specific technical expertise is increasing, it has, however, become more and more difficult for the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau to identify members with the specific expertise required for the advanced work on building capacity, strengthening the knowledge foundations and supporting policy from the pool of nominations by governments and stakeholders. Based, in particular, on recent experience with work on knowledge generation catalysis and policy support, the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel were also seen as effective in guiding and overseeing the work on some of the work programme objectives, especially where supported by a dedicated technical support unit.

18. A dedicated technical support unit for each objective or sub-objective has proven crucial to support implementation. While coordination among technical support units was found to be effective, the engagement among task forces could be increased.

IV. The work of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel

19. The Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel were established in the founding resolution of IPBES as the subsidiary bodies of the IPBES Plenary. Their functions are set out in the functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements appended to the resolution, and their composition and work guided by the rules of procedure for sessions of the Plenary of the Platform. The review of IPBES at the end of its first work programme (see document IPBES/7/5 for recommendations) had found that the respective roles of the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel needed to be defined more clearly. In response, the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel have undertaken efforts to distinguish their roles more clearly in practice, and their work (see document IPBES/8/INF/22) has been welcomed by the Plenary in decision IPBES-8/1.

20. The size of both the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and their interactions have generally been found adequate. In order for the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to fulfill their mandates effectively, however, a need has been identified for all members of the Bureau

and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to dedicate sufficient time to their roles and fully engage in the work.

21. With regard to the nomination of candidates for the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel by Governments, it was suggested that members and regions may wish to tailor their nominations more to the requirements of the different roles, also accounting for the significant workload of the two bodies.

22. Noting that a significant work has already been undertaken to distinguish the roles of the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, further work on defining and implementing the different roles in practice could help the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to be more effective.

23. Both the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel were found to fulfil their roles in the implementation of the work programme. It was suggested that the role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel in providing scientific advice during sessions of the Plenary could be more clearly defined and strengthened. The work of the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel would also benefit from additional mechanisms to make use of lessons learned from previous members and strengthened institutional memory, including through the technical support units.

V. The financial and budgetary arrangements of IPBES

24. At each of its sessions since 2019, the Plenary adopted the relevant budgets and decided to proceed with the implementation of the work programme in line with these budgets (see decisions IPBES-7/4, IPBES-8/4, IPBES-9/3 and IPBES-10/3). Financial and budgetary arrangements are guided by the financial procedures for IPBES, adopted by the Plenary in decision IPBES-2/7 and amended in decision IPBES-3/2. A fundraising strategy was approved by the Plenary in decision IPBES-5/6. Information on the status and level of contributions was reported to the Plenary in documents IPBES/7/4, IPBES/8/5, IPBES/9/5 and IPBES/10/5.

25. It was noted that IPBES operates entirely on voluntary funds. Funds have been used extremely efficiently, enabling the implementation of large amounts of work with a comparatively small budget. For an overview of the budget situation see document IPBES/11/4.

26. A major concern remains regarding annual expenses exceeding income. There was a general recommendation that matching the work programme with available resources would ensure a manageable workload and long-term sustainability.

27. It was found that contributions need to be further increased, while contributions need to be sought in particular from members not contributing to the trust fund to date. At the same time, the number of parallel activities needs to be reduced, in order to sustainably balance income and expenses. The business and biodiversity assessment, once completed, could be used to raise awareness of IPBES within the private sector and thereby support IPBES in attracting further contributions from the private sector.

VI. The communications and outreach work of IPBES

28. In decision IPBES-3/4, the Plenary took note of the IPBES communications and outreach strategy and requested the secretariat, subject to the availability of funds, to undertake the activities described in the initial implementation plan set out in the appendix to the strategy. The rolling work programme of IPBES up to 2030 (see annex I to decision IPBES-7/1) includes objective 5 (a) on strengthened communication, which builds on the work initiated and lessons learned during the first IPBES work programme, and includes the continuation of the implementation of the IPBES communication and outreach strategy with a view to increasing the visibility of IPBES and its products and the use of IPBES products by Governments and stakeholders. Reports on the implementation of the communications and outreach strategy were provided to the Plenary at each of its sessions, in documents IPBES/8/INF/15, IPBES/9/INF/17 and IPBES/10/INF/14.

29. The communications work of IPBES is widely recognized as very effective and successful. IPBES is generally considered to meet the six goals for communications set out in the IPBES communications and outreach strategy. Further efforts could be made to raise awareness about all the functions of IPBES, which go beyond assessments and support knowledge generation, capacity-building and the identification of policy-relevant tools and methodologies; and to foster two-way communication between IPBES and its audiences so as to improve the products and messages of IPBES.

30. IPBES has been established as a highly regarded brand. IPBES is acknowledged as leading authority on biodiversity and ecosystem services and held up as an example of credible, transparent and independent processes. The social media presence of IPBES is widely acknowledged.
31. There is potential to improve media coverage of IPBES work in developing countries and media coverage of IPBES-related activities in developing countries (especially non-English speaking countries). Shorter assessments, which include a clear storyline, and tools such as fact sheets and the online learning tool for the Invasive Alien Species Assessment have been found to facilitate communication efforts.
32. The user-friendliness of the IPBES website could be further improved, in particular with regard to the accessibility of documents and information.

VII. Options for addressing emerging urgent matters in a timely manner

33. The work of IPBES is guided by the procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables, adopted by the Plenary in decision IPBES-3/3. They set out the procedures for the preparation of assessments, including a fast-track approach, and for the organization of Platform workshops, among other things. IPBES to date finalized 11 assessment reports; five other assessments are currently in preparation, including three (business and biodiversity; monitoring; spatial planning and connectivity) following the fast-track approach. To date, two workshops were held: one on biodiversity and climate change, co-sponsored with IPCC, and one on biodiversity and pandemics, both in support of the nexus assessment.
34. Considering its mandate and nature, IPBES was generally found to be successful at remaining timely while maintaining scientific standards and a rigorous, transparent process.
35. Platform workshops were seen as a viable means of addressing urgent matters, but were found to have limitations in terms of the use of their reports. It was suggested to carefully consider the way in which completed workshop reports are communicated.
36. It was found that shorter and more focused IPBES assessments, such as the thematic assessments under the first work programme of IPBES, are generally more amenable to the identification of concrete policy options and potential next steps to facilitate implementation, and therefore their use in policymaking.
37. The need to allow sufficient time for expert groups in preparing the assessments to ensure the highest scientific quality, and sufficient time for governments to review in order to ensure policy-relevance, was underlined. Completed assessments could be drawn upon continuously for addressing emerging issues in policymaking, where appropriate.

VIII. Enhancing participation in the external review processes regarding IPBES assessments

38. The procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables guide the organization of external review processes for IPBES assessments. The Plenary has, in recent years, included the organization of dialogue workshops with IPBES members and stakeholders in support of the external review processes into the workplans on capacity-building. The Plenary has also enabled additional government reviews, mainly of the summaries for policymakers, of the Assessment on Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature, the Assessment of Invasive Alien Species and their Control, the nexus assessment and the transformative change assessment.
39. With regard to ensuring broad and diverse participation in all elements of the IPBES work programme, it was found that too many parallel processes and at times too short periods for review are the main challenges for Governments and experts to participate in external review processes. The length of the chapters was also considered as a challenge.
40. The dialogue workshops in support of external review processes have been found very useful, especially if held later in the review period. Some suggestions included additional dialogue workshops, either as an introduction at the beginning of the review period, or at the regional level. Yet it was noted that, based on the experience on regional policy support dialogues, additional dialogues might result in limited benefits considering the required resources.

41. Further communication and outreach about opportunities to review, in particular to experts with a background in economics, social sciences and the humanities or business was suggested as a potentially helpful way to further enhance participation in the external reviews. More training and capacity-building for national focal points, in particular for newly appointed national focal points, on IPBES procedures, including on how to participate in an external review could also be helpful. The manual for IPBES national focal points was highlighted as a good starting point.

IX. Engagement with other entities, including other science-policy mechanisms

42. In decision IPBES-3/4, the Plenary welcomed the revised draft stakeholder engagement strategy and requested the secretariat to undertake activities to implement it in collaboration with an open-ended network of stakeholders. Decision IPBES-2/8 sets out a collaborative partnership arrangement to establish an institutional link between the Plenary of IPBES and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Objective 5 (b) of the IPBES rolling work programme up to 2030 (see annex I to decision IPBES-7/1) foresees strengthened engagement of Governments, including by continuing to engage with Governments, in particular by supporting IPBES national focal points in the uptake of IPBES deliverables and the implementation of the work programme. Objective 5 (c) of the work programme provides for strengthened engagement of stakeholders, including developing and strengthening the implementation of the IPBES stakeholder engagement strategy and continued engagement with strategic partners and other stakeholders, including, among others:

(a) UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP and FAO in the context of the collaborative partnership arrangement;

(b) The Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, in the context of the memorandums of understanding between the IPBES secretariat and the secretariats of those conventions, and IPCC;

(c) Self-organized stakeholder networks of IPBES;¹

(d) A limited number of strategic partners, in line with the guidance on the development of strategic partnerships and other collaborative arrangements as set out in annex III to decision IPBES-3/4 and recognized on the IPBES website;

(e) A larger set of collaborative supporters, selected by the Bureau and recognized on the IPBES website for their own work supporting the overall objective of IPBES and the implementation of the rolling work programme up to 2030.

43. Information on progress in the implementation of objectives 5 (b) and 5 (c) was provided to the Plenary in documents IPBES/8/INF/16, IPBES/9/INF/18 and IPBES/10/15.

44. The collaborative partnership arrangement between the IPBES Plenary and UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP, and FAO is considered as very important to the work of IPBES, and it was suggested to encourage more engagement from the four partners.

45. Engagement with other entities, in particular biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements and IPCC, was found to have been growing steadily. It was recommended that IPBES continue ensuring close communication with relevant processes, to facilitate the uptake of completed IPBES assessments in all relevant sectors. It was also suggested to engage with the new science-policy panel on chemicals and waste, once established. All new engagements would need to take into account the limited resources of IPBES.

46. It was acknowledged that engagement with IPCC has been challenging in the past. It was suggested to continue and where possible increase engagement with IPCC, respecting the different mandates and procedures of the two bodies.

¹ In line with section II of decision IPBES-4/4. The self-organized networks are, to date, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Open-ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders.

47. Self-organized IPBES stakeholder networks were found to be very effective in disseminating information about opportunities to engage in IPBES and about completed IPBES products. Some noted a need to enhance stakeholder participation in the sessions of the Plenary.

X. The nomination and selection process of experts for different roles

48. The procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables guide the process for the nomination and selection of experts. Practical information on the nomination process is available in the IPBES manual for national focal points. In response to a request in decision IPBES-8/1, the Bureau, Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Executive Secretary prepared a review of the IPBES nomination and selection processes, which was made available in document IPBES/9/INF/22.

49. It was noted that the nomination of experts from all genders, disciplines and regions, in particular by IPBES members, but also by relevant organizations, is paramount for the ability of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel to select balanced expert teams.

50. Developing country members could be further encouraged to nominate experts interested in contributing to the work of IPBES. The under-representation of experts in particular from Eastern Europe in IPBES expert groups and small island States remains a concern that requires further attention, including through support from the capacity-building task force. Some developing country members highlighted challenges with nominating the same experts and the potential fatigue especially if those experts are not selected.

51. Invitations to apply should be shared as widely as possible, including with academia and other relevant organizations, as well as stakeholder networks. The dialogue workshops for members and stakeholders with the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel on the expectations and requirements of specific assessments were found very useful and were encouraged to be continued for future assessments.

52. In terms of the transparency of the process, nominators asked for as much information as possible on the nomination and selection process in order to support their communication with their respective nominees.

53. Some specific suggestions for improving the clarity of the instructions in the calls for nomination and the IPBES website were made. It was also suggested to communicate the timeline of the selection process more clearly.

54. The amount of time given to nominators to confirm their nominees was generally considered adequate.

XI. The inclusion of other knowledge systems and Indigenous and local knowledge in IPBES assessments and other deliverables

55. The Plenary approved an approach to recognizing and working with Indigenous and local knowledge (annex II to decision IPBES-5/1); requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, supported by the task force on Indigenous and local knowledge, to implement the approach; and requested the Executive Secretary to make the arrangements necessary to implement it, including arrangements for the establishment of the participatory mechanism, subject to the availability of resources. In the same decision, the Plenary invited Indigenous Peoples and local communities and their representatives, as well as experts on Indigenous and local knowledge, to engage in the activities described in the IPBES approach to Indigenous and local knowledge, in particular through the participatory mechanism, and invited Governments, stakeholders, strategic partners and others to support activities mobilizing Indigenous and local knowledge where such knowledge was needed. The task force has since prepared methodological guidance to support the implementation of the approach. Information on work on Indigenous and local knowledge was provided to the Plenary in documents IPBES/8/10, IPBES/9/13 and IPBES/10/10.

56. IPBES has been widely lauded for its approach to recognizing and working with Indigenous and local knowledge, including for its participatory mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. While various areas for further development have been flagged, including with regard to further enhancing the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, the work with Indigenous and local knowledge has been considered a success. The important role of the technical support unit hosted at UNESCO has been acknowledged. Efforts are underway to work with Indigenous and local knowledge in the different functions of IPBES, including, for example, work on scenarios and models.

57. IPBES still needs to find ways to further encourage participation from Indigenous Peoples, especially from developed countries, given IPBES limitations to provide resources for their participation. Efforts could also be made to engage more members from different Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the work of IPBES.

58. The consideration of literature in languages, including the five official languages of the United Nations other than English could be further increased, noting the resource limitations of IPBES.

XII. The fulfilment of the IPBES operating principles

59. The operating principles of IPBES are set out in the functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements appended to the resolution on the establishment of IPBES.

60. It was found that IPBES was generally fulfilling its operating principles, and that its functions and their implementation had, in general, been delineated well. The role of the Plenary in deciding on specific activities for each intersessional period was highlighted.

61. With regard to ensuring gender, disciplinary, geographic, sectoral and scale balance in the work programme of IPBES, similar measures as under section X (nomination of experts) were suggested, including encouragement of national focal points to nominate experts, increased and wider communication of opportunities to engage, and capacity-building activities for members and stakeholders on relevant processes and procedures.

62. The code of conduct for IPBES authors was considered useful. There was a suggestion to periodically remind IPBES experts about the code.

XIII. Online working arrangements

63. Following the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to a request in decision IPBES-8/1, the Executive Secretary, under the guidance of the Bureau prepared lessons learned from online meetings and other online working practices, which were made available in document IPBES/9/INF/21.

64. IPBES made extensive use of online working arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online meetings of experts, the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and dialogue workshops with IPBES members and stakeholders, as well as a comprehensive preparatory process for sessions of the Plenary, among other measures, were established based on lessons learned. These arrangements were considered to allow for more, and more timely engagement with a wider audience, while taking into account the various limitations of online meetings. IPBES is seen as using a balanced mix of online and in-person meetings.

65. In terms of further improvement, it was suggested to consider increasing the use of breakout groups during online meetings.

66. With regard to hybrid meetings, these were found not as efficient and should be discouraged, while the opportunity to view in-person meetings online, without the opportunity to actively participate was considered beneficial in certain contexts, such as sessions of the Plenary.

XIV. To the extent possible, the policy impact of the work of IPBES

67. IPBES does not currently have the resources to systematically track its impacts. The TRACK database is available for IPBES members and stakeholders to input relevant information in different categories. Under its work on policy support, IPBES has issued two surveys on the use of completed IPBES assessments in decision-making (EM/2020/36 and EM/2024/29), the results of the first one (see IPBES/8/INF/13) were included in the TRACK database.

68. The work of IPBES is considered to have an impact on policy and decision making. Not all of these impacts are, however, measurable or known to IPBES. One of the most prominent examples is the role of IPBES assessments in the development of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Many countries have also undertaken national assessments based on the IPBES guide for assessments.

69. While existing tools, such as the IPBES impact tracking database and the surveys regarding the use of IPBES assessments in policymaking are effective in collecting illustrative examples, a comprehensive assessment of the policy impact of IPBES does not appear feasible with current resources.

70. Further efforts to encourage and support the use of completed IPBES assessments (see section III above), for example at the national level and by multilateral environmental agreements and relevant organizations, could contribute to increasing the impact of the work of IPBES. Shorter summaries for policymakers with information relevant to policymakers and the continued use of fact sheets were suggested as mechanisms to increase the use of completed IPBES assessments and hence their impact.

71. IPBES is encouraged to make best efforts, including the use of new technologies, as appropriate, to collect further examples in order to inspire members and stakeholders to make best use of IPBES work towards 2030.

XV. Implementation of the procedures for the preparation of IPBES deliverables

72. In addition to the elements above, the Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel also reflected on the implementation of the procedures for the preparation of Platform deliverables, adopted by the Plenary in decision IPBES-3/3, and the procedure for filling gaps in the availability of expertise adopted in decision IPBES-4/3, as part of the internal review.

73. In this context, it was found that from the perspective of IPBES assessments, the implementation of the procedures for filling gaps in expertise and for addressing unresponsive authors in IPBES assessments were found to be inefficient. It was acknowledged that they are a critical instrument to ensure the functioning of an assessment team and assuring representation, and that efficiency in their implementation is crucial.

74. Often the time commitment for experts, especially in the assessment process is a larger percentage than originally envisioned. The time commitments are irregular in their distribution throughout the year, and tend to increase as the delivery date for final output nears. Experts suggested that these requirements could be communicated more clearly.

75. Also, experts would benefit from effective mechanisms to enable institutional learning from lessons of completed assessments. More information and training could be provided to experts with regard to the process of the Plenary considering the summary for policymaking of an assessment.

76. Complex scoping reports have been found to pose difficulties to assessment authors in the development of the assessments.

77. The importance of a well-functioning technical support unit was also highlighted. The importance of team building and management skills was underscored.

Appendix

Questions used for the internal review

A. Effectiveness of institutional arrangements of IPBES and its secretariat

1. Plenary

- (a) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current way IPBES Plenary sessions are conducted?
- (b) Given the current rolling work programme up to 2030, at what time interval should sessions of the Plenary be held?
- (c) How do you see the current organization of the Plenary:
 - (i) How informative are meeting documents (including Chair's notes) to advance discussions?
 - (ii) To what extent are the sessions organized in a way that assures timeliness in completing the agenda? What measures could be put in place to help avoid, where possible, the sessions running over time?
 - (iii) Is the number of members of the Bureau, experts and staff, including interpretation services, present at Plenary working groups sufficient in supporting each working group?
 - (iv) What are the best mechanisms to help Plenary achieve consensus?
 - Use of contact groups?
 - Use of friends of the Chair groups?
 - Use of figures groups?
 - Are there other approaches that could be used?
- (d) To what extent are the online informal exchanges of views among Governments in preparing for sessions of the Plenary useful? In which ways are they useful? Do you have suggestions for improvements?
- (e) To what extent does the composition and role of the secretariat allow for effective implementation of the work programme?

2. Implementation of objectives 2, 3, and 4

How does IPBES effectively achieve its work programme objectives on: 2) Building capacity, 3) Strengthening the knowledge foundations and 4) Supporting policy?

- (i) To what extent are task forces the appropriate mechanism to accomplish these objectives? What could be other mechanisms to advance work toward objectives 2, 3 and 4?
- (ii) Are there suggestions regarding the support provided by the technical support units to the task forces and their interactions?
- (iii) Is the coordination of task forces with the MEP and Bureau, with each other, of technical support units with each other, and of technical support units with the MEP and Bureau and the secretariat satisfactory? Do you have suggestions for improvements in this area?

3. Work of the Bureau and MEP

- (a) To what degree are Bureau and MEP, as currently constructed, fulfilling their roles?
 - (i) Is the number of members for the Bureau appropriate? For the MEP?
 - (ii) To what extent do the processes for nominating and electing members of the MEP/Bureau facilitate the election of members with the required expertise and experience?

- (iii) To what extent have the respective roles for the MEP/Bureau been successfully defined? What could be further done?
 - (iv) To what extent are the MEP and the Bureau fulfilling their roles in the implementation of the IPBES work programme? Do you have suggestions for improvements?
 - With regard to ensuring the adherence to procedures and the scoping report of the assessments?
 - With regard to improving the policy-relevance of the assessments?
 - With regard to ensuring the scientific quality of the assessments?
 - With regard to guiding the use of IPBES frameworks, concepts and typologies?
 - (v) Are there suggestions for indicators to measure the extent to which the MEP and Bureau fulfil their roles?
4. Financial and budgetary arrangements
- (a) To what degree have the financial resources been used in a cost-effective way?
 - (b) How should the existing discrepancy between contributions and expenditures be addressed?
 - (i) Should the number of reports and related activities be decreased in future to better align with the existing level of contributions? In which other ways could expenditures be reduced?
 - (ii) What are ways and examples to increase voluntary financial contributions from members to the trust fund?
 - (iii) What barriers to making voluntary contributions are currently encountered by members?
 - (iv) What are ways and examples to increase contributions from non-governmental donors, including the private sector?
5. Communications and outreach work of IPBES
- (a) How well is IPBES currently meeting the six goals for communications that have been mandated by the Plenary?
 - (i) To reaffirm the reputation of IPBES as a credible, transparent, independent and authoritative intergovernmental body that strengthens the policymaking and knowledge interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services;
 - (ii) To communicate assessment findings and provide clear and balanced information on biodiversity and ecosystem services, including on risks and scientific uncertainties, without compromising accuracy;
 - (iii) To raise awareness about all the functions of IPBES, which go beyond assessments and support knowledge generation, capacity-building and the identification of policy-relevant tools and methodologies;
 - (iv) To explain the way in which IPBES works, selects its authors and reviewers and produces its reports so as to promote an understanding of its work;
 - (v) To position IPBES as a Platform that adds value to the work already undertaken in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services to support policymaking;
 - (vi) To foster two-way communication between IPBES and its audiences so as to improve the products and messages of IPBES.
 - (b) How well is IPBES currently reaching the primary and some of the broader target audiences identified for IPBES communications by the Plenary?
 - (i) Primary target audiences:

- Policymakers in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services at all levels;
 - United Nations programmes and multilateral environmental agreements;
- (ii) Broader audiences:
- Scientific community;
 - Indigenous and local knowledge holders;
 - Business and industry;
 - Practitioners or implementers;
 - Community-based organization;
 - Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
 - The media;
 - Communities and the public at large.
- (c) Is IPBES measuring and reporting sufficiently on the metrics necessary to understand ‘traditional media’ reach? ‘social media’ performance? Would you suggest any specific changes in these domains?
- (d) Given existing resources, does IPBES have an optimal presence on social media – especially in terms of the channels and languages currently used?
- (e) How well has IPBES developed its brand? Do you have any suggestions for changes in IPBES branding or brand outreach?
- (f) Is the current three-phase communication strategy to promote IPBES assessment reports before, during and after their launches effective? Do you have any suggestions for changes to this approach?
- (g) Do IPBES communication activities require additional budget or other resources to effectively meet the mandated goals and audiences? Which specific activities?
- (h) How well does IPBES capture and share information about examples of specific uptake of its work? Of specific impact of its work?
- (i) What tools or approaches do or would help IPBES members and stakeholders to more effectively amplify IPBES communications? How user-friendly is the IPBES website? Is the information easily accessible to anyone (incl. users who do not consult the website frequently)?

B. Effectiveness of the procedures for the preparation of IPBES deliverables

6. Address urgent matters

- (a) To what extent is IPBES successful at remaining timely while maintaining scientific standards and a rigorous, transparent process?
- (b) What is a reasonable timeframe in which IPBES should be able to respond to requests?
- (c) To what extent can workshops and deliverables other than assessments be used to address emerging urgent matters? How could their use be enhanced?
- (d) To what extent are the current procedures for the preparation of assessments following the “standard” and “fast-track” approaches, as well as for workshops, as set out in annex I to decision IPBES-3/3, fit for purpose?
- (e) To what extent is the current balance between complex, longer assessments vs. simpler, shorter assessments appropriate to maximize the impact of the assessments in policymaking at the national and global scale? If not, what could be improved?

7. Enhancing participation in the external review processes regarding IPBES assessments

How can IPBES ensure broad and diverse participation in all elements of its work programme, in a cost effective way?

- (i) Is the number of external reviews appropriate, and if not, how can the review of IPBES products be broadened?
 - (ii) Should the dialogue workshops with Governments and stakeholders organized during the external review periods be modified, and if so how?
 - (iii) How can IPBES make it easier for new national focal points and experts to understand IPBES and its procedures?
8. Engagement with other entities including other science-policy mechanisms
- (a) What other multilateral organizations should IPBES formally engage with (e.g. U.N. organizations, multilateral conventions, international NGOs, self-organized stakeholders), if any?
 - (i) Is the collaborative partnership arrangement between UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO and FAO effective in engaging these organizations and generating support to IPBES?
 - (ii) Are there other multilateral environmental agreements, in addition to CBD, CMS, the Ramsar Convention, CITES, and UNCCD who could provide support to and collaborate with IPBES, and if so which ones?
 - (iii) Is the engagement of IPBES with IPCC efficient, and what could be done to drive further efficiency?
 - (iv) With which other organizations should IPBES formally engage, if any?
 - (v) Are the modalities, criteria and procedures for collaborating with IPBES clear?
 - (b) What role should self-organized stakeholder networks play in IPBES? What should IPBES expect from such relationships?
 - (c) How effective is IPBES stakeholder engagement? Do you have suggestions for improvement?
9. Nomination and selection process for experts for different roles
- (a) How can IPBES ensure to receive a diverse and large pool of applicants to select from for participation in the scoping and preparation of assessments, task forces, workshops and its fellowship programme?
 - (b) Are there additional measures to take to continue ensuring that the expert selection process is transparent and open to all?
 - (c) Is the nomination process clear to applicants as well as nominating governments or organizations? If not, what can be improved in either the announcement/instructions and forms of the process?
 - (d) To what extent are the procedures for addressing unresponsive authors effective?
 - (e) Is it feasible for timeframes to be extended to allow Governments more time to confirm expert nominations?
10. Inclusion of other knowledge systems and ILK in IPBES assessments and other deliverables
- (a) How effective is IPBES in implementing its approach to working with ILK?
 - (b) How effective is IPBES in using FAIR (principles to improve the findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability of data objects) and CARE (principles for Indigenous data governance) principles in the production of its products?
 - (c) To what extent are the mechanisms used to ensure that the rights of ILK holders are respected, when using their knowledge in IPBES products, sufficient?
 - (d) To what extent is the ILK task force an efficient and transparent mechanism, among others, to engage ILK holders in the work of IPBES?
 - (e) Given available resources, to what extent is IPBES using evidence available in languages other than English?

11. Implementation of the procedures for the preparation of IPBES deliverables

Are there any lessons from the procedures and management of assessment teams for preparing past assessments that could be reflected upon to improve the production process of future assessments?

12. Fulfilment of IPBES operating principles

What other items should be addressed for the successful implementation of IPBES?

- (i) Are there additional measure to take for IPBES to maintain its credibility, relevance and legitimacy?
- (ii) How to ensure gender, disciplinary, geographic, sectoral and scale balance in the work programme of IPBES?
- (iii) How effective is the code of conduct for IPBES experts and are there any improvements that could be made?
- (iv) What would the budgetary or other resource requirements be to implement these actions? How could members contribute to the implementation of these suggestions?

C. Online working arrangements13. Online work activities

- (a) What did we learn from our online experience? When do hybrid meetings work for IPBES activities and when do they not?
- (b) How can we take advantage of online activities to make in-person work more effective?

D. Policy impact of the work of IPBES14. Policy impact

- (a) To the extent that it is possible to measure, is IPBES making a difference (for example, are IPBES assessments used to develop National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; Nationally Determined Contributions; contributing to the development of relevant networks)?
- (b) How can we know? How do we measure policy impact in the science community? The policy community? In effectiveness in helping conserve nature?
- (c) Do you have suggestions for improvement?
- (d) What type of products or activities might be effective or useful in amplifying policy impact?
- (e) What mechanisms do we have or envision to integrate IPBES assessment findings into policymaking at the national and subnational levels, in order to make tangible contributions to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services?
- (f) What would the budgetary or other resource requirements be to implement these actions? How could members contribute to the implementation of these suggestions?
- (g) Which possible future impacts of the work of IPBES do you envisage, in particular in terms of policy decisions across scales?