

# Annual Report 2013



**Biodiversity.be**

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## 1/ INTRODUCTION

Having received a great number of valuable recommendations from the evaluation panel in October 2012, the Platform faced an ambitious workplan for 2013. Yet, it has been fruitfully implemented. As our key achievement of 2013, we present our “Conservation Research Matters conference” (22 October 2013). This meeting was timely and topical as illustrated by the quality and variety of its attendance, and the positive feedback (evaluation questionnaire) received from the participants with regard to the proceeding e-survey, conference content and highly participatory approaches used therein. Over the coming year, the outcomes of the conference will be further validated in a report, providing guidance to funding agencies, decision makers and academia in Belgium; and the network of conservation experts will be further established.

As in previous years, the Platform strongly contributed to the biodiversity e-infrastructures, most importantly through the services it provides as national node to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). By the end of 2013, Belgium provided more than 5.746.965 records from 61 occurrence datasets and 148.056 records from 7 checklists to the GBIF network. The Platform directly served 1.412.035 records from 43 occurrence datasets and 6 checklists. The election of André Heughebaert as Representative for Europe to the Nodes Steering Committee is a consolidation of these efforts.

Our Communities of Practice (CoPs), bringing together relevant knowledge holders and stakeholders around issues of topical interest, have also been very active in 2013. Their maturing is exemplified in the strong engagement of the target audience in the numerous meetings and workshops organised, and in the production of deliverables that can be taken up in policy processes. For example, in 2013, the BELgium Ecosystem Services community (BEES) released the book “Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices”. With more than 80 contributors (both Belgian and international), this book covers scientific input, socioeconomic considerations, and governance issues on ecosystem services. It offers clear recommendations to develop a thorough understanding and management of ecosystem services. 2013 was also the core year for the realization of the Platform’s spin-off project “Alien Alert”, within the CoP of Invasive Alien Species. The project is establishing a science-based framework for the risk analysis of invasive alien species. Although it is still in its testing phase, there is already great interest from policy makers to use this tool in the prioritisation of their actions (e.g. with respect to the EU directive on invasive species being currently drafted).

During 2013, the Platform also proved to be dynamic and responsive to developments in international science-policy arena. The year was marked by two plenaries (one in January, and one in December) of the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) during which many of the administrative and staffing structures were settled, and the work programme itself was approved. Belgium (through the Belgian Biodiversity Platform, hosting the NFP/Head of Delegation) actively participated in the negotiations, especially with regard to the establishment of the IPBES’ Rules and Procedures. The political nature of these processes delivers products for which no single participant can claim ownership, precluding an easy evaluation of the involvement and effectiveness of the Platform in these processes. However, the fact that such involvement is clearly increasing already indicates the Platform’s effectiveness in these activities. Similarly, the Platform actively contributed to several meetings and workshops discussing research priorities in the framework of the implementation of the EU Biodiversity 2020 Strategy; advised on national calls and strategies, and furthermore assisted in the drafting and revision of BiodivERsA’s first two policy briefs. Expertise

gained during this process will be used by the Platform to support its own policy brief writing, scheduled for 2014.

In 2013, several branding activities significantly increased the visibility of the Platform 's image. The most successful was clearly the revamping of the website (layout, structure and content), as recommended by the evaluators, attracting ca. 50% more unique visitors compared to 2012.

The Platform also made some steps forward in addressing some of the concerns from the evaluation panel with regard to its institutional arrangement and management. However, the process of establishing a stable organisation and institutional structure for the Platform is a very slow one, and structure is still not in place yet. During 2013, the complex Belgian context in combination with a difficult budgetary situation has had regrettable consequences. Again, the renewal of personnel contracts was delayed and no solution could be materialised for Dr S. Vanderhoeven (DEMNA), who was disengaged for four months. Also, after a great number of years, Hendrik Segers decided to explore new horizons. The Platform is very grateful for all the efforts Hendrik has put into shaping and supporting the Platform, both in the early years of the Platform as well as in his function as scientific coordinator later on. This year, we also welcomed Sarah Rousseaux, who supported the KNEU project for 6 months. The development of the key performance indicators, as foreseen in the strategic plan, will be one of our major objectives for 2014.

To further respond to the suggestions put forward by the evaluation panel in October 2012, and to synchronize the evolution of the Platform's strategy with the evaluation cycle, a new strategic plan has been developed for the period 2013-2016. Below, we describe the progress made within each work area of this strategic plan, with reference to the six major objectives and tasks. We must, however, note that categorization of tasks is not always straightforward. They may relate to more than one objective; and should be seen as being interlinked and mutually supportive. The presented information on spin-off projects is more condensed, as full reports on these projects are available as results of their own specific reporting obligations. Together, our results testify the credibility and relevance of the Platform as a science-policy interface, and as an important catalyst to the development and support of initiatives related to national and international biodiversity research. Unlike the previous years, the 2014 workplan will be presented as a separate document.

## 2/ PLATFORM STAFF

Biodiversity experts:

- ✓ Kristina Articus (KrA, Dr., ULB; 80% from Jan-April 2013; 60% from May-December 2013)
- ✓ Estelle Balian (EsB, RBINS; 60%)
- ✓ Dimitri BROSENS (DiB, INBO; 100%)
- ✓ Hans Keune (HaK, Dr., INBO; 100%)
- ✓ Hendrik Segers (HeS, Dr., RBINS; 100%)
- ✓ Sonia Vanderhoeven (SoV, Dr., DEMNA; 100% but without contract from September to December 2013)

Communication officer:

- ✓ Angélique BERHAULT (AnB, RBINS; 100%)

IT support team:

- ✓ Julien Cigar (JuC, System Administrator, ULB-VUB; 80%)
- ✓ André Heughebaert (AnH, IT engineer, ULB-VUB; 100%)
- ✓ Nicolas Noé (NiN, IT developer, ULB-VUB; 80%)
- ✓ Nabil Youdjou (NaY, IT developer for AntaBIF; January- June 2013 RBINS on AntaBIF budget; July-December 2013 ULB on Platform budget)

Spin-off projects:

- ✓ Alien Alert: Bram D'hondt (BrD, Dr., project manager, RBINS; 80%)
- ✓ AntaBIF: Anton Van de Putte (AvP, Dr., project coordinator, RBINS; 100 %)
- ✓ BiodivERsA: Hilde EGGERMONT (HiE, Dr., science officer, RBINS; 60% on BiodivERsA and 40% on Platform budget)
- ✓ Bio-GR: project manager, January-May 2013
- ✓ BiodiversityKnowledge (KNEU): Sarah ROUSSEAU (SaR, Dr., Attaché, RBINS, 100% January-May 2013)

### **3/ PROGRESS OF THE ACTIVITIES**

#### **3.1. Platform management and operational structure**

The management of the Platform remained in the hands of A. Van der Werf (BeISPO). Due to the distributed nature of the Platform, a substantial effort was required of all Platform members to the coordination of activities, in particular of A. Heughebaert and H. Segers, regarding the IT support at ULB-VUB and the scientific activities of the Platform, respectively.

To respond to the suggestions put forward by the evaluation panel in October 2012, the Platform has developed a strategic plan 2013-2016 (see Annex I to this report). In addition, a note was submitted to the State Secretary via the Inspector for Finances in April 2013, requesting the political agreement to support the initiative for a new period of four years. The State Secretary signed the agreement in September 2013, allowing the Platform to be supported until end of 2016 with an annual budget of 700 000 EUR (i.e. conditions of 2013).

In the strategic plan, an entire work package is dedicated to improving the operational structure of the Platform, in order to enhance its visibility, functioning and efficiency. To that end, hosting arrangements with the STIS/BeISPO have been set up for the Platform support functions (IT and communication) and the Platform Secretariat during the second half of 2013. Administrative transfer should be completed by April 2014. Regarding the political governance of the platform, a new cooperation agreement between the federal and federated authorities has been prepared for the development and follow-up of Platform activities. This text should be nailed down in the following weeks.

Unfortunately, the process of establishing a stable organisation and institutional structure for the Platform is a very complex one, and the administrative and political hurdles have caused a substantial delay not reasonably anticipatable. The direct consequence thereof was the interruption of the employment contract of Sonia Vanderhoeven (September to December 2013), biodiversity expert at DEMNA. This situation is prejudicial for the whole initiative as it demotivates the team, and affects the workplan.

#### **3.2. Work Area 1: Strengthening biodiversity e-infrastructures**

##### **3.2.1. – Objective 1: To foster and support the publication, accessibility, and use of biodiversity data through appropriate means**

###### ***3.2.1.1 TASK - Support of Belgian biodiversity data providers by installing tools, and enabling capacity through workshops***

This task encompasses the Platform's role as national node to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF – <http://www.gbif.org>). By the end 2013, Belgium provided more than 5.746.965 records from 61 occurrence datasets and 148.056 records from 7 checklists to the GBIF network. The Platform directly served 1.412.035 records from 43 occurrence datasets and 6 checklists. In addition

to the Platform itself, seven other Belgian institutions are officially part of the GBIF network as Data Publishers: INBO, RBINS, RMCA, UMons, UGent, VLIZ and DEMNA. See Annex II for more details on our contribution to GBIF.

Part of the task of a GBIF node consists of contributing to the development of IT tools supporting the goals of GBIF. In 2013, the Platform participated actively in the testing, translation and providing helpdesk support of the Integrated Publishing Toolkit (IPT), which is now the most Task widely used biodiversity data publishing tool, and the Node Portal Toolkit (NPT). We also helped GBIF Secretariat to deliver the Nodes Training event on the new Global Data Portal and tools.

The Platform also maintains the Belgian BIF, an infrastructure hosting a variety of biodiversity databases being published to GBIF through provider software (IPT, Tapir, BioCase and Digir). A number of data sets were published through the INBO involvement (**DiB**; Belgian Coccinellidae - Ladybird beetles in Belgium, 37820 records; Loopkevers Grensmaas - Carabid beetles near the river Meuse, 5860 records; Saltabel - Orthoptera in Belgium, 46436 records; VIS Fish in Inland waters; 363 100 records).

The Platform also developed a dedicated portal on the Ants of Belgium “Formicidae” (<http://www.formicidae-atlas.be>), containing about 25,000 ant records. The data originate from collections (mainly from RBINS and Gembloux-Ch. Gaspar), field sampling and literature. The data portal was launched in March 2013; and the dataset was consequently published through GBIF. Linked to this portal, the Platform also co-authored a data paper in the international journal *Zookeys*. The paper used a new way of citing a data resource, trying to give more credit to the authors and their institutions. A press note on this matter was released by Pensoft Publishers. ([http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2013-06/pp-ui060613.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2013-06/pp-ui060613.php)). Other data sets, like the Modirisk Monitoring Data were updated. See Annex II for a complete list of hosted datasets.

Meetings organized/attended:

- See also 3.4.1.2.

Publications:

- **Brosens D.**, F. Vankerhoven, D. Ignace, P. Wegnez, N. Noé, **A. Heughebaert**, J. Bortels & W. Dekoninck (2013). FORMIDABEL; The Belgian Ants Database. *ZooKeys* 306: 59, doi: 10.3897/zookeys.306.4898

### ***3.2.1.2 TASK - Development and hosting of dedicated portals; Development and implementation of projects aiming at compiling, linking and integrating biodiversity topical data***

Here, we specifically highlight the Digitization Calls, AntaBIF, FADA, Harmonia, BioGR, Congo River Portal and Open-Up.

## Digitization Call

To promote the digitization of biodiversity related data, the Platform organizes a yearly call for relevant projects. The 5<sup>th</sup> Digitization call was issued on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 (submission deadline: October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011) with a total budget of €100.000. Eleven proposals were received, of which four were selected. The following projects have been funded in 2013: “IFBL3” from the National Botanical Garden of Belgium, Fabienne Van Rossum; “African Plants IUCN redlists” from the National Botanical Garden of Belgium, Steve Dessein and Université Libre de Bruxelles, Pierre Meerts; “EarlyBirds2” from Aves-Natagora, Yves Paquet; and “Arachnofauna” from the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences, Frederick Hendrickx. The Digitization work took place during the second half of the year. The resulting datasets will be published to GBIF early next year. In total these projects should deliver 700.000 additional occurrence records.

## AntaBIF (Antarctic Biodiversity Information Facility; see <http://www.biodiversity.aq>)

AntaBIF is a project funded by the Belgian Science Policy Office (<http://www.belspo.be>: SD/BA/856, total budget € 470.860,00 (2009-2014)) that aims at building a dedicated Antarctic biodiversity data portal giving access to a distributed network of contributing databases, following to the principles of GBIF. It links the marine biodiversity information network SCAR-MarBIN (<http://www.scarmarbin.be>) with the Evolution and Biodiversity in Antarctica (EBA) databases held by the Australian Antarctic Division. The latter predominantly pertain to terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity. AntaBIF acts as biodiversity data management support system for the Belgian Princess Elisabeth Antarctic Station.

Whereas AntaBIF serves as GBIF node for the Antarctic, SCAR-MarBIN acts as Antarctic node of the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS, <http://www.iobis.org>). Development of information networks, database infrastructure and web portals benefits greatly from the relevant expertise by the Platform’s IT node and is performed in collaboration with the Flanders Marine Institute (Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee, VLIZ).

During 2013 work focused on implementing the recommendations of the external evaluation that took place at the end of 2012. The 36<sup>th</sup> Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting was held in Brussels. Belgium and SCAR also submitted a Working Paper to the Committee on Environmental Protection, entitled “[www.biodiversity.aq](http://www.biodiversity.aq) the new Antarctic Biodiversity Information Network”, and received near-unanimous support for the initiative from the participating governments.

The project received additional funding from BelSPO so that the work can continue until end of June 2014. At present the project is running as planned and preparations are on-going to secure the project’s future. It is envisaged that the project would be introduced as a Belgian Federal LifeWatch project. AntaBIF is also a component of a successful BRAIN-project submitted in 2013; work will start during 2014.

To respond to the request of the international evaluation panel, SCAR-MarBIN and AntaBIF were both moved to Biodiversity.aq as a unique interface for the Antarctic biodiversity data (ULB server, BBPF). The ‘Data Search and Mapper at the VLIZ servers have also been turned off; people are now also directed towards [data.biodiversity.aq](http://data.biodiversity.aq) providing taxonomic and metadata search capacities and allows to map search results. Register of Antarctic Marine Species (RAMS) being an integral component of



WORMS will, however, remain at the VLIZ servers. Over the past years significant advances regarding the completion of RAMS have been made. By the end of 2013, it represents the most comprehensive resource on the taxonomy of Antarctic marine species. RAMS offers authoritative information on over 18,000 taxa (including more than 10,000 species). The information made available through RAMS further contributes to other global efforts, such as the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS; <http://www.marinespecies.org>), the Catalogue of Life (CoL; <http://www.catalogueoflife.org>) and the Encyclopedia of Life (EoL; <http://www.eol.org>).

Databases published:

- **Balian E., H. Segers & K. Martens** (eds) (2008-2013). The Freshwater Animal Diversity Assessment database. <http://fada.biodiversity.be>
- **Van de Putte A. , N. Youdjou & H. Segers** (eds) (2013). AntaBIF: The Antarctic Biodiversity Information Facility. <http://www.biodiversity.aq/>

Meetings organized/attended:

- 36th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM), Brussels, Belgium, 20- 29 May 2013 (**HeS; AVdP**)
- 3th OBIS Steering Group Meeting, Oostende, Belgium, 3-6 December (**AVdP**)
- mARS workshop, Brussels, Belgium, 9-13 December (**AVdP,NaY**)
- XIth SCAR Biology (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research) symposium, 15-19 July (Also AntaBIF Annual meeting and IPT workshop) (**AVdP**)
- Scientific Committee on Antarctic Data Management (SCADM) workshop, Tokyo, Japan, 13-14 October (**AVdP**).
- 'Polar Data Activities in Global Data Systems', Presentation, Tokyo Japan, 15-16 October (**AVdP**).

Publications:

- Danis B., **A. Van de Putte**, S. Renaudier & H. Griffiths (2013). Connecting Biodiversity Data During the IPY: The Path Towards e-Polar Science. In *Adaptation and Evolution in Marine Environments*, Volume 2 (pp. 21-32). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Gutt J., D. Barnes, S. J. Lockhart & **A. Van de Putte** (2013). Antarctic macrobenthic communities: A compilation of circumpolar information. *Nature Conservation* 4: 1-13.
- **Van de Putte A & H. Segers** (2013) [www.biodiversity.aq](http://www.biodiversity.aq) Gateway to Antarctic Biodiversity data. *Science Connection* 41: 16-19.
- Volckaert FAM & **A. Van de Putte** (2013) Pelagic fish of the Southern Ocean. *Science Connection* 41: 24-27.
- Tavernier I., D. Obbels, **A. Van de Putte** (2013) APECS BeNeLux United we stand, divided we fall. *Science Connection* 41: 57-59.

## FADA

The Platform's "Freshwater Animal Diversity Assessment" responds to a knowledge gap identified through the activities of the BBPf freshwater biodiversity forum and continues to aim at creating a standard names and taxonomy for the freshwater animal organisms of the world.

Following the inclusion of 3 groups from the FADA database (Rotifera, Nematomorpha and Ephemeroptera) in the Catalogue of Life index (<http://www.catalogueoflife.org/col/info/databases>) at the end of 2012, we received updates for 5 species groups (Halacaridae, Cladocera, Ephemeroptera, Mollusca and Turbellaria), which have all been included in the Catalogue of Life early 2013.

The FADA initiative is complementary to the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS). Recognizing this, the Platform and the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) started a collaboration to improve interoperability of FADA and WoRMS in a global aquatic taxonomic backbone. This activity is supported by the Flanders LifeWatch project to VLIZ and lead to the organisation of a workshop to extend the FADA database with taxon lists for macro-invertebrates. This FADA meeting: "*Global Species Database on Aquatic Macro-invertebrates*" took place from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2013. It was organised by the Limnology research group at UGent, with financial support from BioFresh<sup>1</sup> and LifeWatch Flanders (VLIZ). The Platform co-organized this event, and provided IT support during the meeting to guide participants through the template for providing data, and to help them in the process of reformatting their data. The workshop and its follow-up activities have been a big success, as they lead to the mobilisation of checklists for 9 Coleoptera families, the 4 Diptera groups and 2 other groups accounting for about 40.000 new species names.

To further extend the collaboration between FADA and WoRMS, RBINS, VLIZ and ULB were awarded a BRAIN-project "AquaRES: Aquatic species Register Exchange and Services". This project mainly focuses on exchanging data in an automated way, and should simplify the work for editors who provide data to both WoRMS and FADA. As WoRMS also includes freshwater data for several species groups currently missing from FADA, this will also result in an extension of the database.

Meetings organized/attended:

- Freshwater Animal Diversity Assessment workshop, Ostend, Belgium, 18-20 June 2013 (**HeS** as co-organizer, session Chair, speaker; **NaY**)

## HARMONIA information system and invasive species impact assessment

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<sup>1</sup> a large-scale integrating project 2009-2014, 2008 FP7 call "ENV.2008.2.1.4.1. Improving the capacity to protect and manage the biodiversity of continental waters", total budget 6,4M€, EC contribution to RBINS: € 859,359.5. The Platform provides technical advice on IT, and offers FADA as taxonomic backbone for BioFresh

In 2013, efforts were carried on to promote the use of Harmonia as the information system of choice and to underpin impact assessment of invasive alien species in science-policy initiatives at the federal, regional and European scale. In particular, Harmonia was promoted in three elements developed at the EU level: (1) the network of interoperable web services EASIN (European Alien Species Information Network), (2) a European Information System for Alien Species (supported by an EU funded COST Action: Alien Challenge, A European Information System for Alien Species; 30 participating countries; estimated overall budget 116 Million €; SoV being the Belgian representative at the management committee), and (3) the establishment of a list of invasive species of EU concern related to the new EU regulation instrument. In 2013, the different partners involved in the implementation of Harmonia for the Benelux and Northern France carried on their collaboration. The Belgian contribution was concretized through the funding of the Alien Alert project (see further; 3.3.1.3.).

#### **Bio-GR**

The Platform collaborates in the Bio-GR project aiming at removing existing technical barriers, adopting a common exchange format and sharing of biodiversity primary data from the Great Region (located between Rhine, Mosel, Sarre and Meuse; total area of 65.401 km<sup>2</sup>) and building a web portal for geographic visualization. The Platform budget amounts to 50.000 euro, provided by five regional partners. By offering a trans-boundary view on species observations related to Birds and Habitats Directive, this project delivers a more accurate evaluation of the Natura2000 network. The Data Portal was officially launched in September 2012 and showcased during a Greater Region Press Conference in Trier in May 2013. The portal was updated to support vernacular names in French and German. Further work for Bio-GR by the Platform is expected for 2014 but depends on the funding decision of the Great Region partners.

Meetings organized/attended:

- Bio-GR Press Conference, Trier, Germany, 23 May 2013 (**AnH**)
- GR Days, Pirmasens Germany, 21-23 June 2013 (**NiN**)

#### **Congo River data portal**

As management tool for biodiversity data generated by the 2010 Congo River Expedition, the Platform subsequently developed a dedicated data portal site. Meanwhile, some 24 datasets by various researchers, in different formats, were integrated. Several thousands of images were converted to illustrate the data and/or expedition sites; and the Platform continued the update of underlying datasets and metadata. Further improvements are expected based on the feedback of expedition researchers and site visitors.

#### **Open-Up**

This project is a Best Practice Network, co-funded by the European Commission under the 'eContentplus' programme, as part of the i2011. The result of this project and the procedures set in place to publish natural history data can serve as proof of concept of the networking and distributed access mechanisms used for EUROPEANA content provision. This experience can be extended to other content provider communities with a similar high degree of distribution.

As Belgian BIF, the Platform takes part of the WP7: Helpdesk Facility and Extending the Network. In 2011, we concentrate our efforts on helping the three major Belgian partners (RBINS, RMCA and NGBG) to deliver their multimedia content to the Europeana and GBIF networks. RBINS also the Platform to publish its contribution to OpenUp! and to develop/host a multimedia website that showcases the insects images they provided. OpenUp! project will end in 2014 but the multimedia website ([Pictorial Beetle Collection of the RBINS](#)) will remain active and regularly updated.

### **3.2.2. – Objective 2: To promote and contribute to the development and application of internationally accepted standards and infrastructures for the exchange and use of biodiversity information**

#### **3.2.2.1. TASK - Development and implementation of biodiversity standards and tools**

This task was implemented through supporting of several relevant international initiatives such as GBIF (see also sections 3.2.1.1 and 3.4.1.2.) and FADA (see section 3.2.1.2); and attending dedicated meetings.

Meetings organized/attended:

- Meeting of the Council and Annual General Meeting of the Society for the Management of Electronic Biodiversity Data, Ostend, Belgium, June 20th, 2013 (**HeS** as organizer, Chair).
- Biodiversity Informatics horizon 2013, 2-6 September 2013, Rome, Italy (**DiB, AVdP**)
- Biodiversity Information Standards TDWG 2013 Annual Conference, Florence, Italy, 28<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> November 2013 (**NaY, NiN, DiB**)
- PostgreSQL Europe 2013, Dublin, Ireland, 29 October-1 November 2013 (**JuC**)
- DiangoCon.eu, Warschaw, Poland, 15-19 May 2013 (**NiN**)

Publications:

- Costello, M., W. Appeltans, W. Berendsohn, Y De Jong, M. Edwards, R. Froese, F Huettmann, W. Los, J. Mees, **H. Segers** & F. Bisby (2013). Strategies for the sustainability of online open-access biodiversity databases. *Biological Conservation*  
[hdl.handle.net/10.1016/j.biocon.2013.07.042](http://hdl.handle.net/10.1016/j.biocon.2013.07.042)

#### **3.2.2.2. TASK - Development and maintainance BeCRIS database and data portal**

Belgian Biodiversity Current Research Information System (BeCRIS: <http://biobel.biodiversity.be>) centralizes access to expertise and resources available in Belgium in the field of biodiversity. It allows information on institutions, research units, researcher and projects related to biodiversity in Belgium to be freely retrieved. This freely accessible database replaces BioBEL and BIODIV, the former inventories on the subject. BioBEL was a Belspo-funded initiative that started in 2007; content was maintained and updated directly by the biodiversity research community through a secured access. Since May 2012, BioBEL was no longer directly updated by the researchers. The Belgian Biodiversity Platform is only updating the database on demand, or on specific topics (for example, in the framework of research analysis projects performed by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform). Furthermore, BioBEL is used as an internal tool for inventorisation and analysis of biodiversity research in Belgium (e.g. to support the work of the forums/Communities of Practice). At the European scale, updated information related to Belgian biodiversity research funding programmes and projects can now be found in the pan-European BiodivERsA database; this database is also hosted, managed and updated by the Platform (see 3.4.2.6.).

### **3.2.2.3. TASK - Contribute to biodiversity EU e-infrastructures**

During 2013, the Platform continued its support the Belgian LifeWatch contact group, at present consisting of experts of sponsored institutions (VLIZ, INBO, UCL, RBINS and MRAC). No new Belgian Federal Lifewatch projects have been developed.

Meetings attended/organized:

- EU BON kick off meeting & symposium: “Nature and governance: biodiversity data, science and policy interface”, Berlin, Germany, 11-12 February 2013 (**KrA**)
- Workshop "Towards a Roadmap for Research Infrastructures on Biodiversity and Ecosystem research in Europe", Brussels 19-20 March 2013 (**DiB**)

## **3.3. Work Area 2: Fostering biodiversity research**

### **3.3.1. – Objective 3: To foster inter- and transdisciplinary research by encouraging communication and discussion amongst scientists, and between scientists, policy makers and other stakeholders, through the animation of Communities of Practice (CoPs) in topical areas in biodiversity research**

The CoPs are recognized tools to develop capacity and to build exchange knowledge amongst members of a community of stakeholders. At present, the Platform animates CoPs in three topical areas: “Ecosystem Services and Ecosystem Valuation”, “Biodiversity and Health” and “Invasive Alien Species”. Progress in each of these is specified below.

### **3.3.1.1. TASK - Animation of the CoP on Ecosystem Services and Ecosystem valuation (national and international); Belgian Ecosystem Services (BEES)**

Webadres: <http://www.beescommunity.be>

*BEES book:* In the first half of 2013, the BEES coordinators have finalized the BEES book *Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices* (see publications). With more than 80 contributors (both Belgian and international), this was quite a logistical challenge. The book was published by Elsevier end of 2013: <http://store.elsevier.com/Ecosystem-Services/isbn-9780124199644/>

*BEES – survey – BEES working groups:* In order to revitalize the BEES community activities, a survey was launched to collect ideas for topical workshops. Given that prioritization of these topics was not straightforward, the BEES coordinators proposed to group topical ideas in working groups that would go beyond workshops with presentations, but could foster concrete collaboration. Two of the working groups (one on integrated valuation and one on reflection on ES operationalization) had their first meeting in December 2013. Other working groups (on agriculture, governance and business) will take off early 2014.

*Belgian Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (BE-MAES) Working Group:* On June 6<sup>th</sup> 2012, the Belgian representatives Nicolas Dendoncker (FUNDP) and Hans Keune (Belgian Biodiversity Platform) initiated the Belgian MAES working group, open to Belgian biodiversity and ecosystem services experts and stakeholders. It was agreed to follow both the agenda and the frequency of the MAES-EU working group meetings. The group met twice in 2013, and plans further meetings as needed in 2014.

*9<sup>th</sup> of July group:* Following up on the second BE-MAES meeting, Flemish, Walloon and federal policy representatives and scientists joined forces to 1) develop a policy brief to raise awareness on the importance of the uptake of the concept of ecosystem services in policy and society at large, and 2) wrap up a vision text for BEES. The policy brief is currently being finalized.

*Collaboration with the Dutch Community of Practice Ecosystem Services:* In 2013, we initiated contacts between BEES and the Dutch Community of Practice Ecosystem Services to exchange best practices. A meeting between both parties is scheduled for 2014.

*Ecosystem Services Partnership Regional Chapter “Europe incl. Russia & Turkey”:* Together with the Dutch Community of Practice Ecosystem Services, BEES coordinated the ESP regional chapter “Europe incl. Russia & Turkey”. During the 2013 ESP conference, they also organized a session on “Evaluation of science-policy-practice: transdisciplinary capacity building and cooperation in ES projects”.

*Ecosystem Services Partnership Thematic Working Group Value integration:* In October 2013, the BEES-coordinators co-initiated (and coordinated) the establishment of the ESP Thematic Working Group Value integration: <http://www.fsd.nl/esp/81931/5/0/50>. This working group will focus on the methodological challenge of combining different value systems in resource use decisions. The initiative follows from the ESP 2013 conference session “Sustainability in ES research and practice – from central goal to afterthought?” co-organized by the BEES coordinators.

Publications:

- Jacobs S., N. Dendoncker & **H. Keune** (Eds.) (2013). Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier. <http://store.elsevier.com/Ecosystem-Services/isbn-9780124199644/>
- Dendoncker N., **H. Keune**, S. Jacobs & E. Gómez-Baggethun (2013). Inclusive Ecosystem Services Valuation. In S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier.
- Jacobs S., N. Dendoncker & **H. Keune** (2013). Editorial: No Root, No Fruit – Sustainability and Ecosystem Services. In S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier.
- Jacobs S., **H. Keune**, D. Vrebos, O. Beauchard, F. Villa, & P. Meire (2013). Ecosystem Service Assessments: science or pragmatism? In S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier.
- **Keune H.**, T. Bauler & H. Wittmer (2013a). Enquiring the Governance of Ecosystem Services: an introduction. In S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier.
- **Keune H.**, T. Bauler & H. Wittmer (2013b). Ecosystem services governance: managing complexity? In S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier.
- **Keune H.** & N. Dendoncker (2013). Negotiated complexity in ecosystem services science and policymaking. In S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier.
- **Keune H.**, N. Dendoncker & S. Jacobs (2013). Ecosystem service practices. In S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier.
- **Segers H.**, **D. Brosens**, **H. Keune**, S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & P. Meire (2013). Introduction. In S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. NY: Elsevier.
- Turkelboom F., P. Raquez, M. Dufrene, L. Raes, I. Simoens, S. Jacobs, M. Stevens et al., **H. Keune** (2013). CICES going local: Ecosystem services classification adapted for a highly populated country. In Sander Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier.

#### Meetings organized/attended:

- Ecosystem services workshop at the Flemish Land Agency with presentations of several BEES members, Brussels, Belgium, 25 February 2013 (**HaK**)
- BE-MAES WG meeting, Brussels, Belgium, 5 March 2013 (**HaK**)
- BE-MAES WG meeting, Brussels, Belgium, 26 June 2013 (**HaK**)

- Meeting BEES – Dutch CoP ES - ESP CoP WS Bali conference preparation, Antwerp, Belgium, 3 July 2013 **(HaK)**
- First 9th of July group meeting: Flemish, Walloon and Federal policy representatives and scientists aim for 1) a policy brief to raise awareness on the importance of the uptake of the concept of ecosystem services in policy and society at large, 2) development of a vision text for BEES, Brussels, Belgium, 9 July 2013 **(HaK)**
- 2013 ESP conference session on: Evaluation of science-policy-practice: transdisciplinary capacity building and cooperation in ES projects, Bali, August 2013 **(HaK)**
- 2013 ESP conference session on: Sustainability in ES research and practice – from central goal to afterthought? Bali, August 2013 **(HaK)**
- 9th of July group meeting, Brussels, Belgium, 5 September 2013 **(HaK)**
- BEES – ECOPLAN lectures: Roy Haines-Young, Roel Sloomweg and Erik Gómez-Baggethun, Antwerp, Belgium, 3 October 2013 **(HaK)**
- 9<sup>th</sup> of July group meeting, Brussels, Belgium, 29 October 2013 **(HaK)**
- BEES delegation is invited in Namur to meet with the Cabinet of the Walloon Minister for sustainable development Nollet to discuss the importance of concept of ecosystem services, Namur, Belgium, 20 November 2013 (BEES coordinators incl **HaK**)
- Presentation on BEES and transdisciplinarity at Walloon « réunion information et « laboratoire » d'échange pour des projets de recherche sur le développement durable sous le fonds WISD », Brussels, Belgium, 22 November 2013 **(HaK)**
- Start-up meeting BEES WG Integrated valuation, Brussels, Belgium, 19 December 2013 **(HaK)**
- Start-up meeting BEES WG Reflection on ES operationalization, Belgium, 19 December 2013 Brussels **(HaK)**

### **3.3.1.2. TASK - Animation of the CoP on Biodiversity and Health (national and international)**

Web address: <http://www.biodiversity.be/health>

The first activity for this CoP in 2013 was a meeting to discuss potential linkages with the European Environment and Epidemiology (E3) Network initiative of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Follow-up of this contact has been organized, and future collaboration will be explored.

As a follow-up of the 2011 “Biodiversity & Health” conference, we conducted an inventory of research needs, available expertise in this emerging field and potential for collaboration to feed into the development of Belspo funded Calls/Funding programmes. The final report was published early 2013; and recommendations were incorporated in Belspo’s BRAIN call.

During 2013, several CoP meetings have been organised to discuss a joint strategy to respond to the BRAIN call. It was decided to not yet aim for one, large collaborative project (as Biodiversity and Public Health research is still in its infancy) but to first focus on involvement in several smaller projects addressing specific research questions. The CoP was invited as non-funded partner in several proposals. A more collaborative and integrated CoP project is aimed at in a later phase, and could build on the outcomes of these smaller-sized projects.



During 2013, efforts were also made to redesign the CoP's logo and revamp its website (<http://www.biodiversity.be/health>). Both should be in place over the coming months.

The CoP also reached out internationally. Following the start of the Thematic Working Group "Ecosystem services and public health" for the Ecosystem Services Partnership (<http://www.fsd.nl/esp/80520/5/0/50>) in early 2013, we co-organized two workshops focusing on the links between ecosystem services, biodiversity and public health: one at Nottingham University, and one at the 2013 ESP conference in Bali. End of 2013, we launched a survey on "Ecosystem services and human health - awareness and attitudes" (<http://cohab.limequery.com/index.php/356482/lang-en>) as a follow up of the aforementioned workshops. The aim of this survey is to gain a clearer view of how human health issues are addressed by people working in the field of ecosystem services research, policy and practice (what we call the "ecosystem services community"). A similar survey will be launched within the public health research, policy and practice community to investigate their openness to an ecosystem services perspective.

#### Publications:

- **Keune H.**, Gilbert M., Flandroy L., Wallens S., Perremans D., Istasse M., Chemay F., Verboven J., Heyrman H., Van den Broeke E., Thiry E., Delagraniere A., Martens P., Peeters A., Vanwambeke S., Obsomer V., Versteirt V., Tack W., Symoens F., Vandamme A., Vranken L., Mathijs E., Leirs H., Tersago K., Turkelboom F., Van Herzele A., Simoens I. (2013). Overview results of the inventory of scientific research needs and ideas. Biodiversity – Public Health <http://www.biodiversity.be/1996>
- **Keune H.**, C. Kretsch, G. De Blust, M. Gilbert, L. Flandroy, K. Van den Berge, V. Versteirt, T. Hartig, L. De Keersmaecker, **H. Eggermont**, **D. Brosens**, J. Dessein, S. Vanwambeke, A. H. Prieur-Richard, H. Wittmer, A. Van Herzele, C. Linard, P. Martens, E. Mathijs, I. Simoens, P. Van Damme, F. Volckaert, P. Heyman and T. Bauler (2013), Science–policy challenges for biodiversity, public health and urbanization: examples from Belgium, In: Environmental Research Letters, special issue "Biodiversity, Human Health and Well-Being", <http://iopscience.iop.org/1748-9326/8/2/025015/>.
- **Keune H.**, P. Martens, C. Kretsch & A.-H. Prieur-Richard (2013). The natural relation between biodiversity and public health: an ecosystem services perspective. In S. Jacobs, N. Dendoncker, & H. Keune (Eds.), Ecosystem Services: Global Issues, Local Practices. New York: Elsevier.

#### Meetings organized/attended:

- ECDC meeting: how the Community of Practice Biodiversity – Public Health can link up to the European Environment and Epidemiology (E3) Network initiative at the ECDC, Brussels, Belgium, 8 February 2013 (**HaK**)
- CoP meeting BRAIN call, Brussels, Belgium, 19 February 2013 (**HaK**)
- CoP meeting BRAIN call, Brussels, Belgium, 26 February 2013 (**HaK**)
- Meeting BRAIN proposal nature experience, Brussels, Belgium, 18 March 2013 (**HaK**)
- Meeting BRAIN proposal ticks, Brussels, Belgium, 17 April 2013 (**HaK**)
- Meeting BRAIN proposal nature experience, Brussels, Belgium, 19 April 2013 (**HaK**)
- Telephone presentation BiodivERsA on biodiversity and health research (potential call topic), Belgium, 12 May 2013 (**HaK**)

- 20130731 Workshop Nottingham University Biodiversity – Health – Ecosystem services, Nottingham, UK, 31 July 2013 (**HaK**)
- Ecosystem services and Public health – session at the 2013 ESP conference, Bali, August 2013 (**HaK**)

### 3.3.1.3. TASK - Animation of the CoP on Invasive Alien Species

Tools developed by the Forum in recent years have been considerably successful. During 2013, numerous initiatives were implemented at regional, federal and European levels in which the expertise of the forum was instrumental. During 2013, **SoV** ensured the consistent and coherent use of BFIS (Belgian Forum on Invasive Species) data and tools amongst different initiatives:

- Pilot Project: ‘*Surveillance, early warning and rapid response*’ (2013-ongoing) (Funding source: ANB € 50.000, Partners: INBO, Natuurpunt). The BFIS is an observer in this project.
- Life+ Communication project ‘*AlterIAS*’. (2010-2013) Budget € 1.010.804. Co-financed by EU Commission, SPW, SPF, ANB, IBGE). BFIS is project partner, contributing to round table discussions, development of a Code of conduct, booklets on alternative plant species, the publication of an article for the IUCN, and the development of an early detection system for *Harmonia*
- Project ‘*Beheervademecum plantenexoten*’ (2013), Antea (Funding source: ANB). BFIS is a member of the steering committee. – and Project ‘*Haalbaarheidsprotocol*’ (2013-2014) (Funding source: ANB). BFIS is a member of the steering committee
- ‘*Pest Risk Analyses for the Royal Decree On Invasive Species*’ (Funding source: SPF, INBO, DEMNA). BFIS is a member of the steering committee. **SoV** is also member of the reviewing panel for invasive plants and the author of one of the PRAs.
- COST Action: ‘*Alien Challenge, A European Information System for Alien Species*’, with 30 participating countries; estimated overall budget 116 Million €; **SoV** is the Belgian representative in the management committee.

2013 was the core year for the realization of the Platform’s spin-off project “Alien Alert” (Full title: “Alien Alert - Horizon scanning for new pests and invasive species in Belgium and neighbouring areas”. Funding: BELSPO contract nr. SD/CL/011, budget: € 219,438 of which € 90,300 to Platform at RBINS). The project is realized by a consortium of eight Belgian scientific institutions, coordinated by the Platform. The project started on 2012-10-01, and will end on 2014-03-31 (a 6-month extension has been granted to the initial contract). The scientific coordinator (**BrD**) has been appointed since 2012-11-01; web address: <http://ias.biodiversity.be>

Alien Alert aims to develop a more complete screening tool for the invasion risks of emerging alien species in Belgium and its surroundings. The specific objective of the project is to review and extend the current ISEIA protocol for the environmental risk assessment of invasive alien species (cf. Harmonia information system, above). Procedures from the fields of biodiversity, plant, animal and human health are compiled into an integrated protocol following the most recent insights from invasion biology. The protocol aims at informing policymakers on what species to prioritize in their actions.

The project consists of five working packages (‘WPs’). During 2013, consortium partners finalized reports on the spatial mapping of risks (WP1, by Avia-GIS); on how organismal spread is dealt with in

risk analyses (WP2, by ULB); and on how impacts of biodiversity, plant, animal and human health are dealt with in risk assessments (by VUB, CRA-W, CODA-CERVA and WIV-ISP, WP3). This information subsequently fed into the construction of the reviewed protocol (WP4), which will be finalized by March 2014. A major event of the project was the organization of a two-day workshop in October 2013, where some 27 external (inter)national experts discussed the work progress, and test a beta version of the protocol (WP5).

#### Publications:

- Katsanevakis S., Genovesi P., Gaiji S., Nyegaard Hvid H., Roy H., Nunes A.L., Sánchez Aguado F., Bogucarskis K., Debusscher B., Deriu I., Harrower C., Josefsson M., Lucy F.L., Marchini A., Richards G., Trichkova T., **Vanderhoeven S.**, Zenetos A., Cardoso A.C. (2013). Implementing the European policies for alien species – networking, science, and partnership in a complex environment. *Management of Biological Invasions* 4 (1):3-6.
- **Vanderhoeven. S.** (2013) Risk analysis of *Ludwigia grandiflora*, Risk analysis report of non-native organisms in Belgium. Cellule interdépartementale sur les espèces invasives (CiEi), DGO3, SPW / Editions, 36 pp.

#### Meetings organized/attended:

- Biodiversity's ticking time bomb: understanding and addressing the problem of IAS in Europe, 21 February 2013, European Parliament, Brussels (**BrD, SoV**)
- Training of the European & Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) on the prioritization process for invasive alien plants, EPPO Headquarters, Paris, France, 12-14 March 2013 (**BrD**)
- ALTER-Net Conference: Science underpinning the EU2020 Biodiversity Strategy, Session on Invasive Species (EU-Target 5), Ghent, Belgium, 15-18 April 2013 (**BrD**: poster, **SoV, KrA, EsB, HiE**)
- Best-practice workshop 'managing invasive mammals and birds' (RINSE project), Ghent, Belgium, 3-4 July 2013 (**BrD**)
- AlterIAS symposium : Quatre années de sensibilisation sur les plantes invasives', Gembloux University, Belgium, 25 Septembre 2013 (**SoV**: oral presentation)
- Alien Alert workshop, Brussels, Belgium, 30 September - 1 October 2013 (**SoV, BrD**: organizers)
- 5th Symposium of the Belgian Wildlife Disease Society, Tervuren, Belgium, 18 October (**BrD**: poster)
- Non-indigenous species in the North-East Atlantic, Ostend, Belgium, 20-22 November 2013 (**SoV**: oral presentation)
- Cost Action *Alien Challenge* – Annual meeting, Italy, 10-12 December 2013 (**SoV**: oral presentation)
- Workshop Invasive Alien Species, European Parliament, Brussels, 17 December 2013 (**BrD**)
- Themadag Werkgroep Exoten, Baarn, Belgium, 19 December 2013 (**BrD**)

### 3.3.2. – Objective 4: To inventorize and analyse biodiversity related research and resources on topical issues in Belgium

#### 3.3.2.1. TASK – Identifying new topical and policy relevant issues in biodiversity research; and organisation of the (bi)annual Platform conference

The Platform conference 'Conservation Research Matters' (<http://www.biodiversity.be/conservation>) was held on 22 October 2013. The four main activities related to this conference include: a national survey on conservation research, the analysis of this survey using an innovative approach, the conference itself, and the 'Conservation Research in Belgium brochure'.

*The electronic survey:* In 2012, the Platform consulted the Belgian conservation community regarding urgent and emerging issues for conservation research and the challenges linked to conservation work. People addressed included scientists, policy makers, practitioners, civil society and the private sector. The survey was available in French, Dutch and English. This national consultation was established as an online survey, and resulted in ~ 800 proposed research topics and ~ 300 identified challenges.

*Survey analysis:* This included translation into English of all received answers, identification of keywords (so-called notions) and visualization of trends in 'networks of notions' using software specifically designed for this purpose (Beryl<sup>2</sup>). The resulting graphs formed the basis of the discussions during the conference day.

*Conference:* The conference was the perfect occasion to reflect jointly on the survey outcomes, to formulate collaboratively research recommendations, and to identify ways to meet the challenges. About 70 scientists, policy makers and practitioners followed our invitation and produced ca. 50 research recommendations for 9 high-level themes, and 100 recommendations on how to overcome observed obstacles. The recommendations will be provided as guidance to research funding agencies, decision makers, conservation institutions and academia in Belgium.

We engaged four speakers animating the conference and providing insights in international and national conservation initiatives. Dr Thomas Brooks, IUCN Head of Science and Knowledge, spoke about the application of knowledge products mobilized through IUCN to inform policy and practice. Dr Steven Dessein, general director *ad interim* of the National Botanic Garden of Belgium, presented the importance of the plant Red Listing with examples from Brazil and Congo. Dr Lynn Dicks from the University of Cambridge shared experiences of a problem-based (research prioritization of pollinator conservation) and a partnership-based approach (the Cambridge Conservation Initiative) in science-policy interfacing. **Dr. Sarah Rousseaux** reported on the Belgian activities of the EU FP7 supported Biodiversity Knowledge project. The presentations can be downloaded from the conference website. The conference used a highly participatory approach, with lively round table discussions and gallery walks. The meeting has been very constructive and inspiring with a high level of engagement by all

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<sup>2</sup> The Beryl web application was developed by the Platform's IT team. It not only offers access to the Survey raw data, but it was also used to understand and analyse survey data in preparation of the annual conference participatory exercises

participants, as reflected in the conference pictures (<http://www.biodiversity.be/conservation/page/show/5>).

*Conservation Research in Belgium brochure:* In connection to the conference, we produced the “Conservation Research in Belgium” brochure illustrating the research expertise at Belgian universities, research institutions and organizations within the field of conservation. About 50 research entities from different disciplines dealing with conservation aspects followed our invitation and participated in this brochure. The brochure will be used as a networking tool that facilitates the exchange between scientists and policy makers, administration, practitioners and other scientists. Downloadable version: <http://www.biodiversity.be/2240>.

End of 2013, the Platform started to explore ‘Citizen Science’ as a potential new issue of interest to the Belgian research community. Further exploration of this topic, and its importance in feeding biodiversity policies is scheduled for 2014.

Publication:

- **Articus-Lepage K., A. Berhault & S. Vanderhoeven**, 2013. Conservation Research in Belgium. 38 pp.

Meeting attended/organized:

- Swedish Systematics Society: Systematikdagarna, Stockholm, Sweden, 2013, 25-26 November 2013 (**KrA** Oral presentation: Taxonomy needs in Belgium Conservation Research)
- TROPIMUNDO Erasmus course: Launch event, Brussels, Belgium, 17 December 2013 (**KrA** Oral presentation: Science Policy Interfaces & Biodiversity Research)
- European Citizen Science Association: ECSA Autumn Citizen Science Workshop, Brussels, Belgium, 22-23 October 2013 (**KrA**)

### ***3.3.2.2. TASK - Performing analyses of the effectiveness of biodiversity research and related policy tools in topical areas***

This task and the one related to the animation of the CoPs (3.3.2.1.) are highly intertwined. See above for specific contributions.

### ***3.3.2.3. TASK - Advice on biodiversity strategies, research priorities, and production of policy briefs***

Following a decision by the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Parties are requested to revise their National Biodiversity Strategy. The Belgian CBD National Focal

Point was in charge of the process that was finalized during 2013; the Platform was in charge of research-related aspects of the exercise. The updated strategy will be presented on occasion of the 2014 International Biodiversity Day (22<sup>nd</sup> of May).

The Platform also drafted and submitted three potential call topics for the BiodivERsA ERA-net: “Towards an optimal integration of *in situ* and *ex situ* biodiversity conservation”; “Biodiversity and Public Health” and “Strengthening the scientific support to the “Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS)”. They were presented during the GA of BiodivERsA in Almería, Spain (see 3.4.2.6). We furthermore advised on the prioritization of call topics in BiodivERsA’s rolling agenda (<http://www.biodiversa.org/70>); and helped drafting two policy briefs on BiodivERsA funded projects (see 3.4.2.6 for more details).

The Platform furthermore contributed to the qualitative assessment of the “Federal Plan for the integration of biodiversity in four federal key sectors’ (December 2013), and provided a written report to Belspo. It also assisted in the update of Belgium’s National Biodiversity 2020 Strategy (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/be/be-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>), coordinated by the CBD-NFP.

Finally, we actively contributed to several meetings discussing research priorities in the framework of the implementation of the EU Biodiversity 2020 Strategy (see also 3.4.2.1 and 3.4.2.6)

Meeting attended/organized:

- ALTER-Net Conference: Science underpinning the EU2020 Biodiversity Strategy, Ghent, Belgium, 15-18 April 2013 (**BrD, EsB, HiE, SoV and KrA**)
- Horizon 2020 stakeholder workshop on climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials, DG-RTD, Brussels, 19 April 2013 (**EsB**)
- EU Commission: Priorities for the Restoration of Ecosystems and their Services, Brussels, Belgium, 29-30 May 2013 (**KrA & SoV**)

### **3.4. Work Area 3: Improving biodiversity science-policy interactions**

#### **3.4.1. Objective 5: To interface between the Belgian biodiversity research community and relevant national and international scientific, policy organisations and initiatives**

##### **3.4.1.1. TASK - Participation in CCIEP steering group Biodiversity Convention and Nature**

During 2013, the Platform continued to contribute to the activities of the CCIEP steering group “Biodiversity” and several of its thematic consultation sub-groups (meetings attended by **HeS** and/or **AvdW**, Platform manager).

### **3.4.1.2. TASK - Serve as Belgian representative to GBIF (participation in GBIF governing board and regional meetings, BE position in GBIF GB etc); animate a contact group of stakeholders**

During 2013, the Platform further supported the development of Belgian positions on issues to be discussed at the GBIF Governing Board meetings by organizing relevant consultation meetings of a Belgian GBIF contact group. The Platform also represented the Belgian GBIF network at the European Nodes, and GBIF GB meetings. At the 20<sup>th</sup> Governing Board, **AnH** was elected as Representative for Europe to the Nodes Steering Committee. His role implies preparing and attending the Nodes Steering Committee meetings, bringing the voice of the European Nodes, and reporting to them.

Meetings organized/attended:

- GBIF European Nodes Meeting, Joensuu , Finland, 5-9 March 2013 (**AnH**: Node manager, **DiB**)
- 20th meeting of the GBIF Governing Board; global nodes meeting & workshops Berlin, Germany, 3-10 October 2013 (**AnH**: Node manager, **DiB**, **NiN**, **AVdP**)
- GBIF day France, 9 December 2013, Paris, France (**DiB**, **NiN**)

### **3.4.1.3. TASK - Act as national focal point for SMEBD and PESI**

The Platform is a non-funded participant (NFP) in the PESI project (A Pan-European Species directories infrastructure: <http://www.eu-nomen.eu>) enabling the correct use of species names and their classification, to more accurately manage information on animals and plants. Furthermore, the Platform supports the scientific community engaged in the production and publication of taxonomic standards through the Society for the Management of Electronic Biodiversity Databases, SMEBD (<http://www.smebd.eu>). SMEBD acts through collaborative initiatives such as Euro+Med Plantbase, FADA (see 3.2.1.2.), Fauna Europaea, ERMS and WoRMS. In this context, the Platform followed up related activities, contributed to website updates, and reports.

## **3.4.2. Objective 6: To Promote the engagement of Belgian experts in scientific and technical support activities of biodiversity-related conventions and initiatives**

### **3.4.2.1. TASK - Act as Belgian node, and secretariat for EPBRS**

The Platform acts as Belgian node for EPBR, assures the secretariat of the EPBRS and takes care of diffusion of relevant information through the website <http://www.epbrs.org> hosted by the Platform's IT team. The major activities conducted in 2013 include supplying support to:

- the organisation and reporting of the Workshop on "Investing in Innovative Research for Nature and our livelihoods: Strengthening the research strategy to reinforce the ERA on Biodiversity" held in Brussels on April 11-12 2013. The workshop was co-organised by DG-RTD
- the organisation and reporting of the Irish EPBRS meeting in Dublin held on May 15-17 2013 that aimed to discuss and prioritise the research needs required to implement the EU Biodiversity Research Strategy in the context of Horizon 2020 and other supporting mechanisms.

In addition, the EPBRS secretariat/the Platform was asked to support the IPBES Stakeholder Engagement Strategy development during 2013 and actively contributed to the drafting, reviewing and consultation activities including the co-facilitation of a consultation workshop held in Paris on April 29-30 2013. EPBRS secretariat also contributed to the organisation and facilitation of the Stakeholder days (7-8 December 2013) and the stakeholder consultation meetings during the second plenary of IPBES held in Antalya, Turkey (9-14 December 2013), see also Task 3.4.2.4.

Further discussions and informal meetings were organised to investigate the future of EPBRS in relation with current discussions on a possible EU Mechanism initiated by DG-RTD and DG Environment. A call for proposal has been published as part of Horizon 2020 on “An EU support mechanism for evidence-based policy on biodiversity & ecosystems services”. Activities are planned in 2014 to potentially engage EPBRS and the Platform in this proposal.

Publication:

- **Balian, E.**, 2013. Report of the Workshop on “Investing in Innovative Research for Nature and our livelihoods: Strengthening the research strategy to reinforce the ERA on Biodiversity, Brussels 11-12 April 2013, 20 pp.

Meetings organised/attended:

- Workshop on “Investing in Innovative Research for Nature and our livelihoods: Strengthening the research strategy to reinforce the ERA on Biodiversity”, Brussels, Belgium, 11-12 April 2013 (**EsB**: co-organiser, **HiE**, **SaR**: both facilitators)
- EPBRS meeting under Irish presidency on “research to support the implementation of the EU biodiversity strategy- Priorities for Horizon 2020”, Dublin, Ireland, 15-17 May 2013 (**EsB** co-organiser, **KrA**, **HiE**: both facilitators)
- Informal meeting on EPBRS future and a potential H2020 call for proposals for A EU support mechanism, Edinburgh, UK, 14-18 August 2013 (**EsB**)
- IPBES related meetings are listed under 3.4.2.4.

### **3.4.2.2. TASK - Act as Belgian node for DIVERSITAS**

The Platform acts as a Belgian node for DIVERSITAS, and is in charge of diffusion of information to, and feedback from the Belgian scientific community. DIVERSITAS is ending in 2014 and will be merged with other global change programmes (IGBP, IHDP, WCRP) under FUTURE EARTH<sup>3</sup>. No specific activities related to DIVERSITAS were carried out in 2013, except for organisation and facilitation of the Stakeholder days and Stakeholder consultation meetings at IPBES-2 (see 3.4.2.1. and 3.4.2.4)

### **3.4.2.3. TASK - Promote engagement of Belgian scientists in IUCN**

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.diversitas-international.org/activities/future-earth-1/future-earth-and-diversitas>



During 2013, the Platform has set up a format of a possible Belgian IUCN expert committee. It also established contacts with the new head in the IUCN office in Brussels (Dr. Luc Bas) and with IUCN's Head of Science and Technology (Dr. Thomas Brooks). The Platform's conference (Conservation Research Matters) significantly contributed to further consolidate these contacts.

#### **3.4.2.4. TASK - Host National Focal Point for IPBES**

Emerging from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment follow-up processes, IPBES was established in April 2012 in Panama to protect the planet's biodiversity, its ecosystems and the services they provide to humanity. It provides a mechanism recognized by both the scientific and policy communities to synthesize, review, assess and critically evaluate relevant information and knowledge generated worldwide by governments, academia, scientific organizations, non-governmental organizations and indigenous communities. By doing so, it aims to strengthen capacity for the effective use of science in decision-making at all levels. The Platform focuses on four areas of work:

- To identify and prioritise key scientific information needed for policymakers and to catalyse efforts to generate new knowledge
- To perform regular and timely assessments of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services and their linkages
- To support policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies
- To prioritise key capacity building needs to improve the science-policy interface, and to provide and call for financial and other support for the highest-priority needs related directly to its activities

In 2013, the first and second sessions of Plenary of IPBES were held respectively in Bonn, Germany (IPBES-1, January) and Antalya, Turkey (IPBES-2, December). The Platform coordinated the Belgian positions on issues discussed at these plenaries, and headed the Belgian delegation at these meetings. It also contributed to all related EU coordination and expert meetings.

Progress made during this two plenaries was substantial. During the first session of the Plenary (IPBES-1), delegates elected the IPBES Chair, the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP); adopted an initial budget; and agreed on steps towards the development of an initial IPBES work programme, 2014-2018. Other issues that were discussed but remained unresolved included the rules of procedures on the admission of observers, among others. During the second plenary (IPBES-2), concrete achievements included the adoption of the IPBES institutional arrangements between FAO, UNDP, UNEP and UNESCO; the IPBES conceptual framework; several items in the rules and procedures for the Platform's operation (including the regional structure of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, and MEP member selection), and the work programme 2014-2018 including a fast-track assessments. The IPBES Member Governments (currently 115) also demonstrated strong commitment to its implementation by already pledging more than half of the budget required for the implementation of its 2014-2018 work plan . Unresolved issues will be addressed in the intersessional period and at IPBES-3, tentatively scheduled for January 2015 in Bonn, Germany.

In further support of IPBES, the national biodiversity platforms of Germany, Belgium and France co-organised a pan-European stakeholder conference to support the intersessional process of IPBES. The consultation took place in Leipzig, Germany 16-18 July, 2013 and mainly focused on discussing the draft stakeholder engagement strategy (see also 3.4.2.1. for the Platform's role in IPBES Stakeholder participation). About 80 participants from 29 countries attended, including experts from ministries and administrative bodies, NGOs and civil society organisations, and scientific organisations. On this occasion, the German Biodiversity Platform (NeFo) and the Belgian Biodiversity Platform co-produced a video on "an ideal IPBES" by interviewing participants of the consultation and asking them to imagine they were in 2023.

Meetings organized/attended (not listing WPIEI meetings)

- IPBES Pan-European stakeholder consultation to support the intersessional process of IPBES, Leipzig, Germany, 16-18 July 2013 (co-organization NEFO – Netzwerk-Forum zur Biodiversitätsforschung Deutschland and Belgian Biodiversity Platform: **HeS, EsB, HiE and AnB**)
- 1st Plenary of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-1), Bonn, Germany, 20-26 January 2013 (**HeS, HiE, KrA and EsB**)
- 2nd Plenary of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-2), Antalya, Turkey, 9-14 December 2013 (**HeS, HiE, HaK and EsB**)
- EU Expert meeting on IPBES. Brussels, Belgium, 14 January 2013 (**HeS, HiE**)
- EU Expert meeting on IPBES. Brussels, Belgium, 13 November 2013 (**HeS, HiE**)
- Workshop on Drafting a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy for IPBES, Paris, France, 29-30 April 2013 (**EsB**)
- Stakeholder consultation before the second session of the IPBES Plenary, Antalya, Turkey, 7-8 December 2013 (**EsB, HiE**)

Reports:

- **Segers, H.** and pilots, 2013. First meeting of the plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-1), Bonn, Germany, 21-26 January 2013, Report of the Belgian Delegation, 8 pp.
- **Segers, H.** and pilots (**HiE & HaK**), 2013. Second meeting of the plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-2), Antalya, Turkey, 9-14 December 2013, Report of the Belgian Delegation, 11 pp.

Video:

- Video of an ideal IPBES (**AnB in production team**)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJxOq5DUmHE&list=UUU8LTdpFv0DTZmye02sK\\_Mg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJxOq5DUmHE&list=UUU8LTdpFv0DTZmye02sK_Mg)

#### **3.4.2.5. TASK - Host National Focal Point for SBSTTA**

Since 2008, the Platform hosts the national focal point of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Affairs (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity. During 2013, the NFP (HeS) has attended, as head of delegation, the XVIIth meeting of the SBSTTA and its preparatory meeting in Vilm. National positions on issues discussed during SBSTTA meetings were reached after consultation with other EU member states. These consultations have been organized during the meetings of the Working Party on International Environmental Issues – Biodiversity (WPIEI Biodiversity), held in Brussels.

Meetings organized/attended (not listing WPIEI meetings)

- European Expert Meeting in Preparation of the Seventeenth Meeting of SBSTTA (SBSTTA-17), Island of Vilm, Germany, 10-12 September, 2013 (HeS)
- 17th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Affairs of the Convention of Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada, 14-18 October 2013 (HeS)

Reports:

- **Segers, H.** and pilots, 2013. Belgian report on the 17th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montréal, Canada, 14-18 October 2013, 19 pp.

#### **3.4.2.6. TASK - Support the BelSPO engagement in the BiodivERsA ERA-net**

BiodivERsA is part of the European Research Area Network (ERA-NET) scheme of the European Commission's (EC) FP7. Now in its second four-year phase (2010-2014), BiodivERsA brings together a network of 21 funding organisations from 15 European countries to promote and coordinate effective pan-European research on the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity. In November 2013, European partners in the BiodivERsA/FACCE JPI network joined efforts to organize and fund a pan-European call for research projects on "Promoting synergies and reducing trade-offs between food supply, biodiversity and ecosystem services", with confirmed participation of 14 countries. The total provisional amount of the call is 8.5-9.7M€.

During this project phase, BelSPO is involved as partner in WP1 "Strengthening and expanding the network: integrating new partners and improving processes" and WP2 "The European biodiversity research landscape and science-policy integration", and it leads WP5 "Communication and outreach". The Platform hosts the BiodivERsA website (<http://www.biodiversa.org>) and database webportal (<http://data.biodiversa.org>) and carries out the following tasks on behalf of BelSPO:

***Supervision, updating and extension of the BiodivERsA database webportal (WP1) which compiles information about past and current funding programs on biodiversity in Europe, research organisations, and project leading researchers active in biodiversity research:*** This year, the BiodivERsA database (<http://data.biodiversa.org>) content has been further extended and

more improvements have been made following the recommendations from the partners and test users. The database was launched in November 2013 and currently holds information on 122 organisations that fund biodiversity research, 605 annual calls within 216 different funding programmes (including the biodiversity-relevant European FP6 and FP7 programmes, and BiodivERsA ERA-net calls), 6546 research projects, 2860 research organisations, and 5879 persons. Those data span the 2000-2014 time window, and currently cover 17 countries. In September 2013, we released the first database booklet presenting an analysis of the competitive funding landscape for biodiversity research and ecosystem services in Europe. The publication of the second database booklet is scheduled for halfway 2014, and will present an analysis of the type of research projects funded, the temporal trends and complementarities between countries, in particular by making a semantic analysis of the project abstracts available in the database.

***Analysis of research agendas and identification of knowledge gaps and research priorities (WP2):*** In March 2013, we published a report comparing and analysing the international and European policy and strategies in order to identify current main research orientations and needs. The documents selected for this analysis included: The Diversitas science plan (2002) and the Diversitas new vision 2012-2020; EPBRs's European Biodiversity Research Strategy 2010-2020; The CBD strategic plan 2011-2020 with its Aichi Targets; and the EC Communication on Biodiversity.

***Supervision of the communication strategy development and implementation (WP5), in collaboration with the Fondation de Recherche pour la Biodiversité (FRB):*** Major achievements over the past year include production of several major publications (newsletter and 2011-2012 call brochure); dissemination in various workshops and conferences (listed below); maintenance and continuous updates of the BiodivERsA website (~25,000 unique visitors per year); and the set up of an online collaborative platform (<http://wiki.biodiversa.org>) to foster communication between BiodivERsA partners (launched May 2013). The latter includes an archive for BiodivERsA partner documents (deliverables, reports, Executive Board and General Assembly documents); BiodivERsA funded projects (interim and final reports), Logos & Templates; and Communication products (newsletters, policy briefs, press articles, brochures). It also serves as discussion forum for ad hoc working groups.

Within the WP5, BiodivERsA also co-organised a joint activity with other European and international projects to raise biodiversity research in science-policy agendas (EU Parliament event of 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013, Brussels). The aim of this conference was to present and discuss the contributions of various actors (project leaders, institutions, administrators, businesses etc.) to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020, and allowed experience and knowledge sharing between policy-makers and stakeholders. During the debate "Linking biodiversity science to policy-making", BiodivERsA illustrated its role in promoting knowledge brokerage and dissemination of key results to policy makers and other stakeholders.

Finally, the Platform assisted in the drafting and revision of BiodivERsA's first two policy briefs (on the RACE and CLIMIT projects: <http://www.biodiversa.org/501>). These two policy briefs are part of a series of briefings produced in collaboration with IUCN, and aim to inform policy makers on key results of selected BiodivERsA funded projects, and to provide them with specific recommendations. They also illustrate the high pertinence of BiodivERsA's work, and of the research it funds across Europe. Expertise gained during this process will be used by the Platform to support its own policy brief writing (scheduled for 2014).

## Publications:

- **Eggermont H.**, Le Roux X., Heughebaert A., Balian E. and BiodivERsA partners 2013. The BiodivERsA database: Analysis of the competitive funding landscape for research on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe. BiodivERsA report 33 pp. (downloadable from <http://www.biodiversa.org/8>).
- **E. Balian** 2013: International and European Biodiversity policy and research strategies: an overview of priority research thematics for biodiversity research; BiodivERsA report, 13 pp. (downloadable from <http://www.biodiversa.org/63>)
- BiodivERsA 2011-2012 Project Call Brochure: Biodiversity Dynamics: Developing scenarios, identifying tipping points and improving resilience, 24 pp. (downloadable from <http://www.biodiversa.org/63>) (**HiE** in editorial team)
- BiodivERsA Newsletter August 2013 (<http://www.biodiversa.org/61>) (**HiE** in editorial team)
- BiodivERsA Policy Brief #1: Wildlife diseases on the increase: a serious threat for Europe's biodiversity (RACE project; <http://www.biodiversa.org/501>) (**HiE** in drafting team)
- BiodivERsA Policy Brief #2: Conservation of Threatened insects in Europe (CLIMIT project; <http://www.biodiversa.org/501>) (**HiE** in drafting team)

## Meetings organized/attended (only in-person meetings are listed)

- BiodivERsA WP4 Meeting: Future perspectives of BiodivERsA, The Hague, The Netherlands, 14-15 February 2013 (**HiE**)
- BiodivERsA Executive Board Meeting, General Assembly and 2011-2012 Project Kick-off meeting, Almeria, Spain, 12-14 June 2013 (**HiE, AvdW**)
- BiodivERsA Executive Board Meeting, Paris, France, 8 November 2013 (**HiE**)
- EU parliament event "Meeting the EU 2020 Biodiversity Targets: Mainstreaming Conservation", organized by DG-RTD and IUCN in the context of the conference of the European Parliament intergroup on "Climate change, biodiversity & sustainable development", Brussels, Belgium, 24<sup>th</sup> September (**HiE co-organizer, KrA**)
- SPIRAL workshop on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: A strategic dialogue between science and policy, Brussels, Belgium, 14-15 November 2013 (**HiE, EsB**)
- BiodivERsA Task Force meeting (preparing for the future, and discussion with NetBiome), Paris, France, 18-19 December 2013 (**HiE**)

### **3.4.2.7. TASK - Contribution to the Network of Knowledge (NoK; KNEU project)**

The overall objective of the Biodiversity Knowledge (KNEU) project (EU FP7 project "KNEU", 2011-2014, EC contribution to RBINS: € 20,116) is to develop a recommended design for a scientific biodiversity Network of Knowledge (NoK) to inform policy-makers and other societal actors. In this project, the Platform (RBINS) is leading WP1, Task 1.1: on mapping the knowledge landscape to identify the most influential knowledge hubs and to understand the current flows of knowledge within Europe and in WP1-Task 1-4 on reviewing technological approaches to implement self-sustaining tools providing access to knowledge hubs on biodiversity.

Although the WP1 deliverables were completed, an additional Net-mapping subproject (making use of the Netmapping interview based methodology) was initiated by the Platform in November 2012. This subproject aimed to map the landscape of biodiversity conservation knowledge holders and

stakeholders in Belgium and was carried out until May 2013. The identification of biodiversity experts for the Netmapping interviews was done in collaboration with the organisation of the 'Conservation Research Matters' conference and results of the Netmapping exercise were presented at the conference. A publication will be prepared during 2014.

In addition the Platform supported the organisation and facilitation of several KNEU workshops, the second BiodiversityKnowledge conference held in Berlin in September 2013 and a side event at the second session of the IPBES Plenary on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2013.

Meetings organised/attended:

- Workshops WP4 & WP3 (Case study Agriculture), FRB, Paris, France, 16-18 January 2013 (**EsB**)
- International Workshop "Nested Networks: Between wishful thinking, empirical evidence, and practical relevance", UFZ, Leipzig, Germany, 22-24 May 2013 (**EsB**)
- KNEU Client Dialogue Group Meeting, Helmholtz Association office, Brussels, 9 September 2013 (**EsB**)
- Workshop on WP3, WP4, WP5, Helmholtz Association office, Brussels, 10 September 2013 (**EsB**)
- KNEU/ BiodiversityKnowledge Second Conference, Belspo, Berlin 23-26 September, 2013 (**EsB**)
- Side event at the Second Plenary meeting of IPBES: "How to engage stakeholders in support of IPBES, a practical recipe for success in communication, outreach and programme delivery, Antalya, Turkey, 9 December 2013 (**EsB**)
- Interviews for Belgian Netmapping: several face-to-face interviews in January and February 2013 (**SaR**)
- Meeting on Netmapping, Leipzig, Germany, 20-24 March 2013 (**SaR**)

### **3.5. Communication and diffusion of information**

**The day-to-day 2013 communication activities** included a regular update of the Platform website (contents wise), regular news update (on a weekly basis), and creation of newsflashes. The web statistics of 2013 show that the revamp of the website – requested by the evaluators and mainly conducted in 2012 - led to a sensitive increase of the number of users on our website: by April 2013, the number of visits/visitors was already 3 times higher than in 2012. Throughout 2013, we had a total of 24.063 unique visitors (see 3.6). This is a ca.50 % increase of unique visitors compared to 2012. This clearly shows an increasing interest in our websites (and activities).

**New communication tools for Platform branding:** In addition, the communication officer (**AnB**) created as set of new communication tools to increase the visibility of the Platform including: Platform business cards for its personnel; Platform "with compliments" cards; Platform folder; Platform notepad; Platform powerpoint presentation; and Platform leaflet (contents, layout and print; downloadable from <http://www.biodiversity.be/2197/download/inline>).

**Support to the Platform's biodiversity experts:** A series of 2013 communication activities focused specifically on the objectives 3 and 4 of the Communication Plan by providing support to Platform biodiversity experts. These included:

- Support to the Biodiversity and Public Health Community of Practice (editing of documents; new website design; creation of contents for the website; creation of the logo of the CoP)
- Support to EPBRS communication towards European science-policy makers (production of a video highlighting the importance of stakeholders involvement in IPBES; in collaboration with UFZ Germany)
- Support to the Invasive Alien Species CoP (update of the mailing list, design of the AlienAlert logo, layout of the Alien Alert leaflet)
- Support to the BEES CoP (BEES announcement layout, design of the BEES website and contents, update of news and contents)
- Support to BiodivERsA (layout of the database brochure)

**Organisation of Events :** This included support to the 2013 Belgian Biodiversity Platform conference "Conservation Research Matters", in organising the logistics, assisting in content matters, and editing and laying out of conference documents.

Based on the experience of the 2013 Platform conference organisation, the communication officer produced an "How to organise a Platform conference" memo in order to ease the organisation of future Platform events.

**Administrative tasks and trainings:** Substantial administrative support was provided by the communication officer to the Platform with CM reports, reports of ad-hoc meetings, participation in ad-hoc strategic discussion, draft of concept notes and other administrative documents.

Part of the working hours of the communication officer are allocated to training (evening classes of graphic design, and weekly class of Dutch).

Publications (meeting reports and project specific deliverables not listed)

- Belgian Biodiversity Platform Newsflashes 49 to 54, year 2013 (**AnB** and Platform colleagues)
- Annual Conference Guidelines (version 2013), 13 pp. (**AnB**)

Video:

- Video of an ideal IPBES (**AnB in production team**)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJxOq5DUmHE&list=UUU8LTdpFv0DTZmye02sK\\_Mg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJxOq5DUmHE&list=UUU8LTdpFv0DTZmye02sK_Mg)

### **3.6. Transversal activities offered by the Platform's IT team**

Besides providing support to core activities (e.g. tools for CoPs; Platform mailing lists), spin-off projects (e.g. BiodivERsA mailing lists) and external projects (e.g. technical advice for Biofresh), the IT team also greatly facilitates the Platform's communication and networking activities. Most importantly, the IT team is hosting and managing several websites, as listed below. Web use statistics are listed in Table 1.

- Platform website: <http://www.biodiversity.be>; and platform conference website <http://www.biodiversity.be/conservation>
- Forum websites:
  - BEES community website (<http://www.beescommunity.be>)
  - Website on Invasive Alien Species in Belgium (<http://ias.biodiversity.be>) and Portal of the NOBANIS mapping project (<http://ias.biodiversity.be/nobanis/>)
  - Community of Practice Biodiversity – Public Health (<http://www.biodiversity.be/health>)
  - EPBRS website (Web pages for Danish EPBRS meeting; Positive Visions for Biodiversity web portal) (<http://www.epbrs.org/> and [www.positivevisionsforbiodiversity.org](http://www.positivevisionsforbiodiversity.org))
- Information portals:
  - African Moths (<http://www.afromoths.net/>)
  - Belgian Data portal (<http://data.biodiversity.be/>)
  - BeCRIS website (<http://biobel.biodiversity.be>)
  - Global taxonomic database of Gracillariidae (Lepidoptera) (<http://www.gracillariidae.net>)
- Project websites:
  - BiodivERsA database (<http://data.biodiversa.org>)
  - AntaBIF (<http://www.biodiversity.aq/>)
  - FADA (<http://fada.biodiversity.be/>)
  - Bio-GR (<http://www.bio-gr.eu/>)
  - Belgian IFBL portal (<http://projects.biodiversity.be/ifbl>)
  - Saproxyllic beetles from Belgium (<http://projects.biodiversity.be/beetles>)

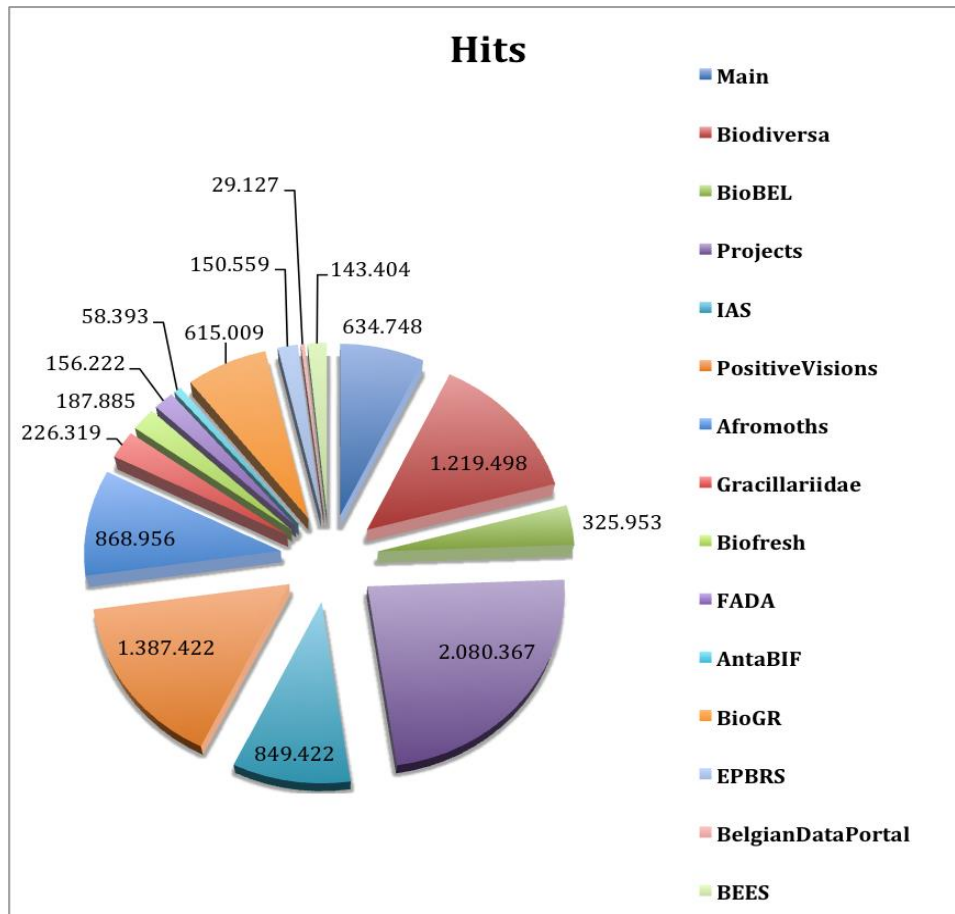
**Table 1: Web usage statistics**

2013 Statistics	Unique visitors	Visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Main (*)	24.063	64.853	344.236	634.748	115.85 Go
Biodiversa	30.958	68.391	331.208	1.219.498	105.91 Go
BioBEL	5.743	24.023	294.947	325.953	2.23 Go
Projects (**)	24.539	55.557	703.493	2.080.367	117.56 Go
IAS	17.971	29.020	164.522	849.422	41.20 Go
PositiveVisions	57.343	199.628	1.341.273	1.387.422	25.84 Go
Afromoths	13.663	63.205	676.096	868.956	13.65 Go
Gracillariidae	7.673	22.494	166.152	226.319	3.45 Go
Biofresh	6.716	13.123	67.177	187.885	10.13 Go
FADA	6.069	12.277	41.913	156.222	19.36 Go
AntaBIF	2.920	5.734	15.432	58.393	1.00 Go
BioGR	4.063	9.711	276.870	615.009	8.80 Go
EPBRS	8.173	19.166	48.744	150.559	59.49 Go
BelgianDataPortal	1.551	3.459	10.357	29.127	508.99 Mo
BEES	22.608	35.630	120.936	143.404	2.31 Go
<b>Total</b>	<b>211.445</b>	<b>590.641</b>	<b>4.482.420</b>	<b>8.789.880</b>	<b>524,98 Go</b>



(\*) including the Biodiversity –Public Health website; (\*\*) including the Saproxylic beetles website

**Figure 1:** Visualisation of the number of hits for websites hosted and managed by the Platform



### 3.7. Core Platform task allocation

Estimation of time allocated to each objective/task by each member of the platform is presented in ANNEX III-a. ANNEX III-b visualizes investments in tasks according to human resources (FTE), taking into account the fact that not all colleagues are 100% FTE (full time equivalent); and that some have been engaged only partim, or for a few months only (see Section 2). The full staff has been taken into account to produce this graph (i.e. human resources from spin-off projects BiodivERsA, AntaBIF and Alien Alert have also been considered).

### 3.8. Scientific services rendered by Platform personnel

(scientific publications not listed here, but available upon request)

- Member of the Editorial Board for the journals “Dataset papers in Ecology” (**SoV**)
- Course “Biodiversity Informatics”, 1e Master Biology Ugent. (4hrs) (**DiB**)
- Lecture “Scuba diving and citizen science, GBIF day France, 9 December 2013 (**DiB**)
- Lecture and tutoring for the AlterNet Summer school 2013 on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Peyresq, France, 4-14 September 2013 (**EsB**)
- Branch editor for “Belgian Journal of Zoology” (**HiE**)
- Co-Advisor PhD Gijs de Cort (Patterns and causes of East African hydroclimate variability over the past 2000 years: a multi-proxy analysis of the climate archive preserved in lake sediments), Research Group Limnology UGent (2012-2016); Co-Advisor Chironomid-based applications Els Ryken/Dirk Verschuren/Yoeri Torsy, Research Group Limnology (**HiE**)
- Positioning Academic Heritage. Challenges for Universities, Museums and Society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Ghent, Belgium, 18-20 November 2013 (**HeS**, Member of the International Organizing Committee, international expert on academic collections)
- Study visit to Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai (Dr. P. Pholpunthin), 21-28 March 2013 (**HeS**, on invitation; seminar, training of students).
- Study visit to Hanyang University, Seoul, Rep. of Korea (Prof. Dr. Wonchoel Lee), 24 April – 1 May 2013 (**HeS**, on invitation; seminar, training of students).
- Co-advisor of the PhD study of Mr Mau Trinh Dang: “Biodiversity of freshwater Rotifera in Central Viet Nam” (2012-), Promoter Prof. Dr L. Sanoamuang, Applied Taxonomy Centre, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand (**HeS**)
- Co-advisor of the PhD study of Mrs Pha-nee Sa-artrit, project: “Diversity in selected species groups in Rotifera Monogononta” (2012-), Promoter Prof. Dr P. Pholpunthin, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Songkla, Thailand. (**HeS**)
- Co-advisor of the PhD study of Mr Phuripong Meksuwan, project: “Phylogeny and taxonomy of sessile rotifers (Monogononta, Rotifera)” (2011-), Promoter Prof. Dr P. Pholpunthin, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Songkla, Thailand (**HeS**)
- Advisor of the PhD study of Mrs Luo Yongting, project: “Taxonomy and biogeography of Rotifera of the Congo River basin” (2011-2013), Promoter Prof. G. Wang, College of Life and Environment Sciences, Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai, PR China (**HeS**)
- Member of the steering committee of the Zoology Museum of Ghent University, 2002 onwards) (**HeS**)
- Member of the Advisory Board of the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Natural History Museum of Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Thailand, 2010 onwards) (**HeS**)

- Associate Editor of the European Register of Marine Species for the Rotifera (see <http://erms.biol.soton.ac.uk/>), 2004 onwards (**HeS**)
- Subject editor for “Rotifera” for the journal Zootaxa (2009 onwards) (**HeS**)
- Subject editor for “Rotifera” for the journal Zookeys (2011 onwards) (**HeS**)
- Member of the Editorial board of the journal "ISRN Zoology" (2010 -2013) (**HeS**)