

Workplan 2015



Biodiversity.be

Content

1/ Introduction (pg. 3)

2/ Platform staff for 2014 (pg. 3)

3/ Foreseen activities (highlights) (pg. 4)

3.1. Platform management and operational structure (pg.

3.2. Work Area 1: Strengthening biodiversity e-infrastructures (pg. 4)

3.2.1. – Objective 1: To foster and support the publication, accessibility, and use of biodiversity data through appropriate means (pg. 4)

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 (pg. 6)

3.3. Work Area 2: Fostering biodiversity research (pg. 7)

3.3.1. – Objective 3: Animation of Communities of Practice (CoPs) in topical areas in biodiversity research (pg. 7)

3.3.2. – Objective 4: To inventorize and analyse biodiversity related research and resources on topical issues in Belgium (pg. 10)

3.4. Work Area 3: Improving biodiversity science-policy interactions (pg. 11)

3.4.1. Objective 5: To interface between the Belgian biodiversity research community and relevant national and international scientific, policy organisations and initiatives (pg. 11)

3.4.2. Objective 6: To promote the engagement of Belgian experts in scientific and technical support activities of biodiversity-related conventions and initiatives (pg. 12)

3.5. Communication and diffusion of information (pg. 14)

3.6. Transversal activities offered by the Platform's IT team (pg. 15)

3.7. RASCI (Responsibility Assignment Matrix) (pg 15)

3.8. Platform task allocation for 2015 (pg. 17)

ANNEX I: List of objectives, Actions, Target dates, Deliverables and Actors for 2015

ANNEX II: Human resources for each objective/task by each member of the platform in 2015

ANNEX III: Concept note Update of Harmonia/Partnership between INBO and DEMNA

ANNEX IV: Role of Platform in IMMANA Proposal

1/ INTRODUCTION

As it clearly shows from our 2014 Annual report, the Platform has made substantial efforts to further meet the concerns of the evaluation panel (October 2012), both with regard to its organisational structure/management (for example: the completed transfer to the Platform support functions to STIS/BELSPO; the development of a first set of Key Performance Indicators and a Platform user evaluation survey allowing us to assess our services and impact), its core activities (for example: reinforcement of data publication activities; enhanced involvement of (young) scientists in policy processes; increased scientific support to national and EU policies) and outreach (for example: the productions of our Platform promotion movies and memos). With the ongoing developments in the European and international scene, we have an exciting year ahead. The Platform team looks forward to tackle the upcoming challenges, and to further position itself in the landscape. The below 2015 workplan focuses on the '**highlights**' (new developments/actions) within each work area of the strategic plan (2013-2016), with reference to the six major objectives, and with clear indication of deliverables and target dates (an overview is presented in **Annex I**). We also indicate those cases where follow-up of activities will be reorganised. As in the annual report, we note that categorization of tasks is not always straightforward. They may relate to more than one objective; and should be seen as interlinked and mutually supportive. Finally, we note that the implementation of our workplan will highly depend on the availability of personnel; we can only be successful if all colleagues are (and remain) on board.

Detailed **Concept Notes** for each of the new initiatives have been drafted, and can be provided upon request.

2/ PLATFORM STAFF FOR 2015

Biodiversity experts:

- ✓ Kristina Articus (KrA, Dr., DEMNA; 60%)
- ✓ Estelle Balian (EsB, RBINS; 60%)
- ✓ Dimitri Brosens (DiB, INBO; 100%)
- ✓ Hilde Eggermont (HiE, Dr., RBINS; 100%)
- ✓ Hans Keune (HaK, Dr., INBO; 50%)
- ✓ Florin Popa (FIP, Dr., INBO; 50% in January, and from August 2014 onwards)
- ✓ Sonia Vanderhoeven (SoV, Dr., DEMNA; 100%)

Communication officer:

- ✓ Pierre Huybrechts (PiH, RBINS; 100%)

IT support team:

- ✓ Julien Cigar (JuC, System Administrator, BELSPO STIS; 100%)
- ✓ André Heughebaert (AnH, IT engineer, BELSPO STIS; 100%)
- ✓ Nicolas Noé (NiN, IT developer, BELSPO STIS; 80%)

Spin-off projects:

- ✓ AntaBIS: Anton Van de Putte (AvP, Dr., project coordinator, RBINS; 100 %) and Nabil Youdjou (NaY, IT developer for AntaBIS; 100%)

3/ FORESEEN ACTIVITIES (HIGHLIGHTS)

3.1. Platform management and operational structure

The Platform will finalize the first set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) by the end of March. Mid 2015, we will also assess the need for developing a few more, i.e. for areas of work that may not be sufficiently covered by the existing KPIs. Finally, we will also wrap up a final report on the Platform user evaluation survey (February 2015), and try to optimally address the recommendations throughout the implementation of the 2015 Workplan.

The new cooperation agreement should be signed early 2015; and set up of the pilot committee completed. The renewal of the annual budget is due end of March 2015.

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

For many years, the Platform has been acting as the Belgian National node for the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and by doing so, it has responded to the request by the scientific community to offer a service of professional data management. This includes a variety of tasks including the animation of a Belgian BIF contact group, the mobilization of new datasets, the improvement of data quality/fitness-for-use of existing datasets, support to BRAIN.be projects with regard to biodiversity data publication, promotion of open data access and data use in Belgium, and attendance/organization of relevant meetings and workshops – to name a few. Both the direct political and scientific relevance of this activity are unequivocal. **2015 highlights include:**

- **Organisation of at least two Belgian GBIF seminars** (following our 1st 'GBIF day' at ULB in November 2014); in collaboration with universities/institutes in the Flemish and Walloon region; date still to be determined. The main aim of such workshops would be to explain to (early-career) scientists how to retrieve information from the new GBIF portal, to illustrate the added-value of GBIF data in the development of their research, and to highlight other options for data use. The GBIF days will be organized under the umbrella of our 'Empowering biodiversity research' biannual conference (see 3.2.2.)
- **The mobilisation of biodiversity data** (most likely IAS data) **from the Walloon region** will be intensified through continued collaboration with DEMNA. Additionally contacts to other data holders (e.g. at universities) in the Walloon region will be made. Meetings to clarify the collaboration on data will be held in the beginning of the year. University contacts will be built up during the entire year.

- **Belgian Observation Portal on Invasive Alien Species (IAS):** This portal could potentially include an early warning system, a dynamic register of alien species in Belgium, and distribution maps in Harmonia. This action will greatly support the implementation of the new EU regulation on the prevention and management of IAS, as getting a comprehensive and up-to-date view of (non-native) species occurrences in the Belgian territory is becoming a necessity. For details on the Rational and Implementation of this task, see **Annex III**. The first phase should be completed by the end of 2015.
- **COST Action Alien Challenge Workshop** ‘Training on biodiversity data inter-operability for invasive species’. This workshop was proposed to the COST management committee. The goal is to improve interoperability of invasive species databases through training, consensus building and communication of existing database standards to data managers to facilitate knowledge flow related to the needs of invasion biology. The workshop would be organized either in 2015 or 2016 in Brussels as a joined event between the Platform, Botanic Garden Meise and INBO. All financial aspects will be covered by the COST action. The decision of the management committee is still pending.
- **Implementation of the EU Horizon Scanning project ‘Invasive Alien Species – Prioritising prevention efforts through horizon scanning’** (ENV.B.2/ETU/2014/0016): Nov 2014 - Aug 2015. The main aim of this project is to develop a horizon scanning methodology to identify, screen and prioritize species that might become invasive in the EU. This should allow to assess whether species qualify as IAS of EU concern, and hence to prioritize IAS for risk assessment. More specifically, it included the following tasks: (1) To provide an inventory and review existing horizon scanning methodologies and exercises worldwide; (2) To provide an inventory and review appropriate global and local data sources on species and IAS; (3) To propose a horizon scanning methodology for the EU, including the retrieval of data from the above data sources, possibly through EASIN; (4) To review and validate the proposed approach with a workshop in May 2015 with relevant experts; and (5) To perform a horizon scanning in order to propose a list of up to 80-100 potentially most threatening IAS to Europe, ranked in order of priority, and have the result peer reviewed. The Platform will mainly be involved (as contributors, not lead experts) in tasks (1), (2) and (3); mainly ensuring that they make best use of the Harmonia+ protocol to perform Horizon scanning, and that databases used to perform horizon scanning are inter-operable.
- **Belgian Data Portal revamping, and using of new GBIF portal web services:** As our Belgian Data Portal is aging, we will take the opportunity of the new Global Portal to revamp our data portal (originally planned for 2014). The new Belgian Data Portal is expected to be launched by the end of 2015.
- The setup of a **MoU with the spin-off project AntaBIs** (March 2015) to clearly define the role of, and link with the Platform, as AntaBIS will likely be embedded in the BeDIC datacenter at RBINS. We will use the Biofresh-BBPf MOU set up in 2014 as a basis.
- Supporting the development of AntaBIS as a full-fledged **Belgian federal LifeWatch project** (end of 2015)

- Start of the development (i.e. setting up the interface) of a [Dynamic Biogeographic Atlas of the Southern Ocean](#) (April-June 2015). This initiative has been established under the aegis of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) to provide an up-to-date synthesis of Antarctic and sub-Antarctic biogeographic knowledge and to make available a new comprehensive online resource for visualisation, analysis and modelling of species distribution. It will constitute a major scientific output of CAML and SCAR-MarBIN as well as being a significant legacy of CoML and the International Polar Year to fulfil the needs of biogeographic information for science, conservation, monitoring and sustainable management of the changing Southern Ocean. It will be of direct benefit to the Antarctic Treaty and associated bodies such as the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.
- **Congo Basin Biodiversity Data:** The Platform will continue to update the underlying datasets and metadata upon request (Erik Verheyen and colleagues). These actions will also fit the work proposed by the SAFRED Brain proposal (see below).
- Support to the **SAFRED Brain proposal** as non-funded partner, to be submitted by February 2015 within Axis 6 ("New digital collections and data"): SAFRED ('Saving Freshwater Biodiversity Research data') represents a concerted effort towards systematic recovery and publication of data generated in freshwater research to feed into policy processes. The Platform will mainly be involved as non-funded partner to support data publication (advice on data mobilization and technical issues) and to provide related expertise where needed. By joining forces and exchanging expertise, partners will assemble datasets, document information on the generation of the data and its storage (metadata), standardize the data and publish it online along with an accompanying (meta)data paper, White Paper and/or synthetic scientific paper showcasing the value of open data. These biodiversity data will be incorporated in the occurrence database developed by RBINS in the framework of the FP7 BioFresh project which is hosted by the Platform.
- **Bio-GR phase 2:** Pending approval of the INTERREG V project proposal (to be submitted end of 2015), the Platform will continue its efforts to harmonize data and develop the Bio-GR portal.

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

As in previous years, this task will be implemented by supporting several relevant international initiatives such as GBIF (see also sections 3.2.1. and 3.4.2.), and by following up on TWDG standards evolution, among others. **Specific 2015 highlights** include:

- The organisation of our **next biannual Platform Conference ‘Empowering Biodiversity Research’**, focusing on the field of ‘biodiversity informatics’. The meeting will be a joined venture between relevant institutions within Belgium (INBO, VLIZ, RBINS, RMMCA, Botanic Garden Meise, UCL), and is scheduled for 21 May 2015 (Palace of Academies); see the 2014 Annual report for [further information](#).
- **Seminar on the Integrated Publishing Toolkit (IPT)** at the OD Nature (RBINS) to inform scientists how to facilitate the efficient publishing of biodiversity data on the Internet, using the GBIF network (March 2015).
- Further establishment of the Platform as ‘**Lifewatch Service Center**’, pending ERIC status. This task will involve further animation of a community of Lifewatch data providers in Belgium, and enhanced communication amongst Belgian stakeholders. We will also continue to facilitate the publication of Lifewatch related data.
- **To support the National Reference Centre (NRC) Biodiversity in EIONET / EEA** in order to stimulate coherence/standardisation/harmonisation, and subsequently improve Belgium’s reporting of its monitored data to EEA. Tasks will be performed on behalf of INBO/BBPf.

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 exchange knowledge amongst members of a community of stakeholders. At present, the Platform animates CoPs in three topical areas: “Ecosystem Services”, “Biodiversity and Health” and “Invasive Alien Species”. **2015 highlights include:**

...for the CoP on Ecosystem Services (national and international); BElgium Ecosystem Services (BEES):

- **BEES Working Groups:** The BEES coordination team will set up an evaluation of the BEES working groups in order to assess if the format is working as foreseen, which working groups seem viable, and which perhaps are less successful. As such, they will consider next steps for the working group strategy.
- **Belgian Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) Working Group:** Gilles Bertrand (FUNDP) and HaK will remain the Belgian representatives to the EU MAES working group in 2015, and will hence facilitate the connection between the Belgian

MAES-working Group and the developments at EU level. On the initiative of the Dutch MAES WG, a BENELUX MAES WG was established to better coordinate the MAES related activities of BENELUX countries. A first face-to-face meeting will be organized in the beginning of 2015, possibly back-to-back to an informal EU MAES meeting to discuss the coupling between ongoing MAES efforts and the IPBES regional and subregional assessments.

- **Follow up 2014 BEES event:** On December 17th 2014, the BEES CoP organized a network event (the BEES Christmas market) to share knowledge and practices on ecosystem services. Early 2015, we will wrap up an evaluation and meeting report on this event. A movie is already available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTMMcBFyeBA>, made by the colleagues from Gembloux.
- **Contribution to the ECOPLAN meeting “Ecosysteemdiensten 2015 and Beyond”**, which will be organized on 4th May. Set up of the sessions currently under discussion. BEES will be involved in moderating the discussions and reporting in Plenary. The main idea is to discuss how the concept of Ecosystem Services can have implications beyond the traditional environmental/nature conservation.
- **BEES communication and website:** The BEES coordination group agreed on a more structured communication strategy for BEES, including an update website (i.e. make it more user-friendly and catching up on documentation uploads), and the creation of newsflashes and policy briefs.
- **Monitoring and evaluation of activities:** 2015 will mark the beginning of a more structured monitoring and evaluation of BEES activities and their impact on the target groups. This will be done through (i) online user surveys sent out to BEES members at least twice a year, and concerning the whole BEES activity or more targeted actions (e.g. communication, horizon scanning, science-policy interfaces); (ii) analysis of survey results (quantitative, qualitative); (iii) enrichment of previous analysis with user feedback from other sources (informal/spontaneous feedback, results from BBPf user surveys relating to BEES activities etc.) – to name a few. On this basis, we will draw some lessons and propose changes/adjustments to current and planned activities. This work will also feed into the Science-Policy Taskforce detailed below (see 3.4.1.)
- **Ecosystem Services Partnership Regional Chapter Europe incl. Russia & Turkey:** Together with the Dutch Community of Practice Ecosystem Services, BEES coordinates the Regional ESP Chapter Europe incl. Russia & Turkey of the Ecosystem Services Partnership. In 2015 we plan to get together with several interested parties to further develop ideas for organizing a regional European ESP conference in 2016. This idea has been popping up in several local or European communities and projects, and could alternate with the Global ESP Conference.
- **Ecosystem Services Partnership Thematic Working Group Value integration:** The BEES-coordinators co-coordinate the ESP Thematic Working Group Value integration, and organized a session at the 2014 ESP conference. As a follow-up, a special issue in Ecosystem Services is currently being prepared.

... for the CoP on Biodiversity and Health (national and international; COPBH)

- **COPBH Community building:** In 2015, further steps will be taken to revive the CoP by setting a few more coordination meetings to discuss new CoP activities and next steps. These will include the organisation of both smaller and bigger network events and the creation of topical working groups or series of workshops. As an idea for a bigger event, in the framework of the Belgian National Environmental Health Action Plan (NEHAP), two COPBH member policy representatives proposed to initiate preparations for a Belgian conference on the relation Biodiversity and Health with support from several Belgian policy institutions. The initiative was welcomed, but will demand further discussion in 2015. In 2014, ideas have also been developed concerning webbased activities in support of COPBH community building, e.g. an inventory/directory of members/experts and past and current projects, sharing data and maps. This will be further explored in 2015
- End of 2013, a **survey** was launched on **ecosystem services and human health - awareness and attitudes**. Due to limited resources/technical capacities of the responsible COPBH partner, the results have not yet been digested. We hope to remediate this situation in 2015 in order to gauge awareness and interest level in the topic, and to better understand the needs of those who aim to address links between ecosystems and human health within their fields of work. As such, we also hope to gain information on the barriers/needs/challenges for those who want to address these links. A similar survey is planned within the public health research, policy and practice community to investigate their openness for an ecosystem services perspective. Both the format and dates of the final reports remain undecided. Next steps (analysis, plans for reporting, dissemination) will be discussed by an international group of experts during the first half of 2015.
- **IMMANA proposal:** Our Platform IT team, together with the CoP on Biodiversity & Health (see also 3.3.1.) is collaborating in an [IMMANA](#) proposal (Innovative metrics and methods for agriculture and nutrition actions), lead by a research team at Ghent University (Dept. of Food safety & Food Quality, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering), and to be submitted by 20 February 2015. The main objective of this proposal (entitled: "*Tools for research in nutrition-agriculture-biodiversity linkages: creating an interoperable data system for the development of robust metrics and indicators*") is to facilitate new and large-scale interdisciplinary research into the area of nutrition-agricultural-biodiversity linkages, through the creation of an online space for interoperable data on the contribution and influence of biodiversity to the human diet. Linking nutrition (food intake) data with biodiversity (food source) data is rather innovative; it will not only allow to trace back food origin, but will also contribute to the linkage between biodiversity and health, as food is an important factor determining human health. The Platform contribution to the IMMANA project would concentrate on two aspects of the project: the Taxonomic backbone and the Biodiversity data sharing. For more details on our contribution, see Annex IV.
- **2014 BRAIN call Axis 1** (topic Generate new knowledge to tackle issues emerging at the intersection of health and biodiversity): Following the launch of the 2014 BRAIN call, the CoPBH has organized a brainstorm meeting for experts interested to contribute to a joint project proposal. We hope subsequent discussions on this topic in 2015 will lead to a successful proposal amongst COPBH members.

- **Revitalization of ESP health related activities** aiming to involve a broader diversity of partners.
- Contribution to **SBSTTA-19** with regard to the agenda item “**Reports and Studies for Review: Biodiversity and Health**” (State of Knowledge review, cf. [Recommendation XVIII/14](#)) This will include an e-consultation within the COPBH community and active participation in the negotiations (i.e. preparatory meeting in Vilm and SBSTTA-19, end of 2015)

... for the CoP on Invasive Alien Species

- In 2015, major efforts will be directed towards **data mobilization for the Belgian Observation Portal on IAS** (see 3.2.1.)
- IPBES will soon issue a call for experts to ‘scope’ the thematic assessment on Invasive Alien Species (first quarter 2015), and in a subsequent phase (late 2015) to make the assessment itself. To ensure proper mobilization of Belgian experts, we will organize as **IPBES information session specifically targeting the CoP on IAS** (tentative date: March 2015).
- **Clustering workshop** for Belgian BiodivERsA-funded project researchers on IAS (Autumn 2015) to facilitate interaction and spur collaboration.
- We aim to publish a **Policy brief**, highlighting the policy relevance/implications of the Harmonia risk analysis tool (tentative date: June 2015); and a peer-reviewed paper presenting a **success story case** within the CoP on IAS (tentative date: March 2015). Both deliverables will feed into the Science-Policy task force.

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

- To further identify new and policy relevant issues in biodiversity research, the Platform will maintain its horizon scanning efforts **developing a concept note on possible activities**. The latter could be implemented end of 2015, or early 2016 – pending availability of human resources and emerging needs.
- **A peer-reviewed article on the results of the 2014 strategic foresight BiodivERsA workshop on Nature-based-solutions** will be finalised early 2015 and will feed into the upcoming AlterNet conference “Nature and Urban Wellbeing- Nature-Based Solutions to Societal Challenges” (18 - 20 May 2015, Ghent, Belgium).
- The next **2015 Platform conference** will take place in 2015 on ‘Empowering Biodiversity Research’, focusing on the field of ‘biodiversity informatics’ (See also 3.2.2)
- With regard to the **follow-up of the 2013 “Conservation Research Matters”**, we aim at a clear set of deliverables: (1) peer-reviewed publication on the approach and outcome (2) a

Dutch and a French publication reaching out to the diverse stakeholders (3) A series of seminars to present the outcomes of the conference in those institutions that participated in the survey or who showed interest in the follow-up of the event. The talk will allow for direct feedback to the people who made a large contribution to the e-survey, and it will stimulate further involvement in conservation-related work and discussions. In addition, the report on the Conservation Research Matters initiative will be spread more widely.

- Based on the concept note developed on “**Citizen Science**” in December 2014, a first set of activities may be identified to further investigate possible involvement of the Platform in promoting and supporting Citizen Science in Belgium. Possible initiatives could include a desk study/mapping activity of citizen science activities in Belgium (and beyond), and the subsequent organisation of an information session to **raise awareness** about the relevance of citizen science to the Belgian scientific community; and/or the development of a guide/brochure.
- In 2015, the Platform will be actively involved in the **follow-up committee of the selected BRAIN projects**. These include FORBIO Climate (Adaptation of biodiverse forests in the face of climate change; follow-up by **KrA**); AFRIFORD (Genetic and paleoecological signatures of African rainforest dynamics: pre-adapted to change; follow-up by **HiE**); and vERSO (Ecosystem Responses to Global Change: a multiscale approach in the Southern Ocean; follow-up by **HiE**).
- Given our involvement in BiodivERsA, we will be closely following up on BiodivERsA funded projects (**2012-2013 Call Interim reporting**). The Platform will also provide support in drafting the final text for the **next BiodivERsA call** (expected to be launched by mid-2015), focusing on the understanding and managing of biodiversity dynamics to improve ecosystem functioning and delivery of services in a global change context (the cases of soils/sediments; and land-river- and sea-scapes).

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

National level

At the Belgian level, the Communities of Practice (CoPs) bring together relevant knowledge holders and stakeholders around issues of topical interest in order to enhance the science-policy interface in Belgium (see 3.3.1). The main method used is to physically bring people together and promote interaction, apart from other means such as common (sub)projects, electronic consultations, contact lists etc.. In 2015, the Platform will assess the different methods and means that have been used so far, and when possible, measure the impacts these have had on the uptake of advice in policy processes (see the **science-policy task force** described below).

In 2015, a first set of activities for the **early-career scientist network** will be kicked off (see the 2014 Annual report for background information). The network will mobilise early-career scientists to attend Platform events (e.g. the Platform's biannual conference) and to contribute to international early-career scientists activities (IPBES, IUCN, GBIF, BSPIN, Communication – see further). Specific early-career scientists' trainings are foreseen in the field of communication and data publication throughout the year.

European and International levels

At the 20th Governing Board of the **Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)**, André Heughebaert (Head of the IT team - AnH) was elected as Representative for Europe to the Nodes Steering Committee. As such (and similar to 2014), the Platform will be actively involved in GBIF, especially within the EU Nodes Steering Committee. AnH will be the spokesperson of the European Nodes, and subsequently report to them at various occasions. In this context, a major 2015 highlight will be the **European Node Meeting co-organised by the Platform** at the Natural History Museum in Paris from 5 to 7 May 2015; and the **co-drafting of the 2017-2021 EU GBIF Strategy**.

The Platform has been involved in many national and European science policy initiatives providing support for the elaboration of research priorities; it also resulted in the production of policy documents for European institutions and the organisation of meetings using participatory approaches – to name a few. In 2014 it was decided to set up a '**Science-Policy**' **task force** to take stock of the Platform best practices in terms of Science-policy work and to assess the impacts its activities, approaches and tools. The overall objective for the Platform would be to build on its own experience, and for other science-policy initiatives to benefit from our best practices. **The SPI concept note** drafted to this extent should be finalized early 2015. It will aim to clarify the involvement of the Belgian Biodiversity Platform in SPIs, and to propose a list of guiding principles and steps forward aiming to increase the efficacy of the Platform as an SPI for biodiversity research in Belgium. Specific (2015) outcomes could include:

- A « **success story case-study paper** » presenting a successful science-policy interface led by the Platform at national level; e.g. outcomes of one/ some of our CoP(s). Please note that such an activity is already scheduled for the CoP on IAS (3.3.1)
- A guidelines document on the goals and expected impacts of the Platform CoPs and advice on how to reach these goals (i.e. **a best practices guide**). This could be based on user feedback survey, as also foreseen within BEES (see 3.3.1)
- The development of a series of Platform **policy-briefs** highlighting outcomes of the CoPs and presenting policy recommendations useful to Belgian and European/ international policy makers. Please note that such an activity is already scheduled for the CoP on IAS (3.3.1). If sufficient expertise in policy brief writing can be gained throughout this process, we could consider – in a later phase - to organise a **communication workshop** for Belgian scientists to guide them in the process of policy brief writing (see also 3.5.). Please note that a *Memo on how to write a policy brief* has been produced by the Platform in 2014. A very useful tool has also been produced in the framework of [BiodivERsA's Stakeholder Engagement Handbook](http://www.biodiversa.org/712/download) (see <http://www.biodiversa.org/712/download>)

Finally, in the framework of the implementation of the EU regulation on IAS (ICE/CIL Mandate), legal and scientific analyses are being conducted to check on the need for a cooperation agreement (end of January 2015). Pending the outcome of the analyses, the necessity to establish a cooperation agreement will be approved by the Minister of Environment (beginning of February) and a first draft of proposal should be ready presented to the Ministers (end of June); this will also include the set up of a national coordinating structure which will likely include a substantial role by the Platform)

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

In 2015, several actions will be developed to strengthen our involvement as scientific advisor at the decision-making and policy developing levels:

European level:

- As **EPBRS Secretariat**, the Platform will be involved in finalising the development of a proposal answering the call H2020-SC5-2015 on: “*An EU support mechanism for evidence-based policy on biodiversity & ecosystems services*” (Proposal to be submitted end of April 2015). Additional EPBRS activities might relate to the IPBES stakeholder engagement process in which the EPBRS secretariat has been already involved (see IPBES initiatives specified below). An EPBRS Steering Committee meeting is also scheduled in March 2015 in Brussels and might generate some other tasks.
- For **KNEU/Network of Knowledge**, the Platform will contribute to the KNEU Special Feature for Ecology and Society participating to one article “Mapping knowledge flows in Europe” (April 2015).
- 2015 will see the launch of **BiodivERsA3** for which the Platform (on behalf of Belspo) will be leading the work package on “Promoting the science-society and science-policy interfacing throughout the BiodivERsA research development process” (including communication and general awareness on BiodivERsA activities), and the task on “mapping and foresight activities”. It will also be more closely involved in the governance (**HiE** as vice chair). Other 2015 highlights for BiodivERsA, in which various Platform colleagues will be involved, include: (i) an update of the communication strategy (**PiH**); (ii) link up of the Netbiome & Biodiversa databases (**AnH & HiE**) and mobilization of updated records for the BiodivERsA database (**HiE**); (iii) update of the analysis of national, European & international biodiversity agendas (**EsB, HiE**); (iv) the organisation of a clustering workshop of IAS projects PI (2012-2013 Call) (**EsB/SoV/HiE**); (v) Regular Communication tasks as before (newsflashes, brochures, website updates, Twitter etc.) (**HiE, PiH**); and (vi) actions to upgrade BiodivERsA to a JPI-like tool; interactions with IPBES, Belmont forum etc. (**HiE**)

International level:

- The **collaboration with IUCN** will be intensified. In February, the Platform will bring together the Belgian IUCN partners (paying members) to further reflect on the establishment of a national IUCN committee. The Platform will also continue the bilateral exchange with the Brussels IUCN office (and IUCN HQ, as appropriate). The early-career scientists’ network will

receive information on the IUCN commissions to stimulate their engagement in the international science-policy agenda.

- By hosting the **National Focal Point for IPBES**, the Platform will be involved in (1) heading the Belgian Delegation for the third IPBES-3 Plenary, and related reporting; (2) the implementation of the 2014-2018 Work Programme, most notably by recruiting experts for the various task forces, thematic and regional assessments; and review of deliverables; (3) reporting, participating in EU expert meetings and meetings of the Working Party on International Environmental Issues (WPIEI); (4) production of a Belgian National Focal Point information brochure, and organisation of at least two IPBES information sessions for targeted audiences (likely the IAS Forum; and FPS Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment) to better understand its objectives, governance and procedure, and the wider policy landscape in which it will evolve. This will also allow Belgian scientists to better evaluate their role in implementing the 2014-2018 IPBES Work Programme.

In addition, our team will be strongly involved in **IPBES stakeholder participation** and related events – most notably: (1) co-organisation of the third Pan-European Stakeholder Engagement meeting (PESC-3) which will likely take place in Lisbon (winter 2015) in preparation of the fourth IPBES plenary (scheduled early 2016); (2) supporting the set-up of the Open-Ended Stakeholder Engagement Forum, which follows from the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy approved at IPBES-3 in Bonn; and (3) getting actively engaged in the Biodiversity Science-Policy Interface Network (BSPIN) established by NeFo in 2013 to support the engagement of early career scientists in IPBES related activities. Discussions with BSPIN are currently ongoing, opening up great opportunities for collaboration between the German and Belgian early career scientist events.

Finally, together with a few other National Biodiversity Platforms (NeFo Germany; Swiss Biodiversity Platform, FRB, Portugal & JNCC), we will set up an informal network to connect the **IPBES-NFP in the various EU countries** and to exchange best practices. In a first phase, this will be done by setting up information templates to be filled in by the respective IPBES NFP, and by hosting a website (by the Platform) compiling the information on the IPBES NFPs and their organisation/functionalities.

- Supporting the **National Focal Point for SBSTTA**, the Platform will engage the Belgian research community in the preparation for SBSTTA-19 (November 2015), especially with regard to the Agenda item on Biodiversity & Health (see 3.3.1)

3.5. Communication and diffusion of information

As highlighted in the evaluation report, outreach is crucial for providing access to the services of the Platform, and for disseminating information and results of our activities. The following communication tasks are foreseen for 2015:

Platform website: The main portal of the Platform will undergo a second phase of revamping, taking into consideration the recommendations formulated by the evaluators and ensuring an improved user-friendly interface. This will include: (1) homepage modifications: layout updates; and contents updates

(direct links to the Communities of Practice websites; multiple entries for target audiences); (2) sub-pages modifications: interactivity of the think-tank page; visual improvement of the News and Events pages; (3) development of e-training services for the platform users (data section); (4) general layout improvement, with lighter structure and navigation. The contents will also be updated (pages contents and weekly news).

Pan-European IPBES NFP network/website (see also 3.4.2.) The communication officer will facilitate the creation of a pan-European platform for IPBES National Focal Points, by creating a webpage including all the NFP's information, a common agenda and valuable news items. The network wishes to foster closer collaboration between European national focal points to IPBES. Hence a common tool to enhance collaboration, networking and exchange of best practices will be needed.

Communication trainings: Tailor-made training will be developed for the members of the Platform and for early career scientists. The training will be organised by the communication officer (**PiH**). Focus will be set on presentation skills, message maps and the elevator pitch. Advanced training could be organised on demand: (1) deepening the knowledge of the Belgian media landscape; (2) tips and tricks for an interview; (3) handling difficult questions in front of a camera.

Support to the team: The communication officer will provide logistical support in the organisation of the 2015 events (i.e.: annual conference in May). Promotion activities, layouting, communication advice and logistics will be provided. The communication officer will keep on responding to the ad-hoc needs of each biodiversity expert of the Platform throughout 2015 (e.g. the development of a revised Communication Strategy for BiodivERsA, see 3.4.2). Finally, all recurring activities will be dealt with, such as a weekly newsfeed, a regular newsflash and material maintenance.

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

The IT team will continue their support to the whole Platform. We would, however, like to highlight that maintaining the extensive list of websites and data portals (see Annual Report 2013 and 2014) is a significant task for the team.

3.7. RASCI (Responsibility Assignment Matrix; RAM)

ANNEX I presents an overview of our objectives, planned actions, target dates, deliverables and principal actors for 2015.

The responsibility assignment matrix for each of the **Platform "initiatives"** (and legend) is mentioned below.

	R	A	S	C	I
Platform management	AvdW	BoD	HiE, AnH, EsB, SoV	CM	BoD
Scientific coordination	HiE	CM	AvdW, EsB, SoV, AnH	CM	BoD

Work Area 1					
Objective 1 (data publication)	AnH	CM	JuC, NiN, DiB, KrA, SoV	CM	
Objective 2 (biodiv e-infrastructures/standards – but excluding our biannual conf)	DiB	BelSPO	IT team	institutes working on Lifewatch, EU bon, pro I biosphere	
Spinoff projects:					
• AntaBIS	AvdP	RBINS	NaY	CM; BelSPO Antartica Programme manager; Int. Steering Committee; SCAR; LifeWatch	
Work Area 2					
Objective 3 (Biodiversity & Public Health)	HaK	CM	HiE	HiE (SBSTTA)	
Objective 3 (Belgian Ecosystem Services)	HaK/FIP	CM	EsB	HiE (IPBES)	
Objective 3 (Invasive Alien Species)	SoV	CM	AnH, JuC	HiE (IPBES)	
Objective 4 (Conservation)	KrA	CM	SoV, PiH	IUCN science contact group	
Objective 4 (Horizon Scanning)	EsB/FIP	CM	KrA, HiE		
Objective 4 (2015 Bi-annual Conf on biodiversity e infrastructures)	DiB	CM	Whole Team & Partner institutes		
Objective 4 (Citizen Science)	KrA	CM	EsB	FIP	
Objective 4 (Follow-up committee projects)	HiE	CM	KrA, SoV		
Work Area 3					
Objective 5 (Steering group biodiversity)	HiE	CM	AvDW		
Objective 5 (GBIF)	FrG	BelSPO	AnH	Belgian GBIF contact group; GBIF	
Objective 5 (Early Career Scientist)	KrA	CM	PiH		
Objective 5 (SPI Task Force)	FIP	CM	SoV, HaK, PiH, EsB, HiE		
Objective 6 (EPBRs)	EsB	CM	HaK, HiE, FIP	EPBRs steering committee	
Objective 6 (EU Mechanism Proposal (incl former KNEU))	EsB	RBINS	HiE, FIP		
Objective 6 (BiodivERsA)	HiE	BelSPO; RBINS	EsB, AnH, PiH, JuC, SoV	CM, Project coordinator	

Objective 6 (IUCN internat.)	KrA	CM	SoV, HiE, PiH		
Objective 6 (IPBES)	HiE	BeISPO	HaK	EsB (EU Mechanism & Stakeholder Eng); KrA (Early Career scientist & Stakeholder Eng); HeS (RBINS CBD); CCIM biodiversity	
Objective 6 (CBD SBSTTA)	RBINS (HeS) as SBSTTA NFP	CM	CBD NFP; Platform team (for scientific consultations)	CCIM biodiversity	
Transversal activities					
IT support	AnH	CM	NiN, JuC		
Communication	PiH	CM	Platform team		

Responsible: Those who do the work to achieve the task. There is typically one role with a participation type of *Responsible*, although others can be delegated to assist in the work required (see also *RASCI* below for separately identifying those who participate in a supporting role). In the Platform, this is understood as the person in charge of the activity or project, and who reports on it.

Accountable (also *Approver* or final *Approving Authority*): The one ultimately answerable for the correct and thorough completion of the deliverable or task, and the one from whom *Responsible* is delegated the work. In other words, an *Accountable* must sign off (Approve) on work that *Responsible* provides. There **must** be only one *Accountable* specified for each task or deliverable. In the Platform, this is either the Board of Directors (BoD) for overarching matters, or the Coordination Meeting (CM) for day-to-day Platform functioning.

Support: Resources allocated to *Responsible*. Unlike *Consulted*, who may provide input to the task, *Support* will assist in completing the task.

Consulted (sometimes *Counsel*): Those whose opinions are sought, typically subject matter experts; and with whom there is two-way communication

Informed: Those who are kept up-to-date on progress, often only on completion of the task or deliverable; and with whom there is just one-way communication.

3.8. Platform task allocation for 2015

An estimation of human resources for each of the objectives/tasks (expressed in FTE) is presented in **ANNEX II**.