

# Annual Report 2015



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## **1/ INTRODUCTION – SUMMARY OF 2015 HIGHLIGHTS**

The workplan we had foreseen for 2015 was fairly ambitious. Yet, the Platform team has succeeded to complete the majority of tasks successfully, as exemplified by several highlights in each of our three ‘work areas’ (pillars): biodiversity data, fostering biodiversity research, and fostering science-policy interactions.

As in previous years, the Platform strongly contributed to the strengthening of biodiversity e-infrastructures, most notably through the services it provides as national node to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). By the end of 2015, Belgium provided more than 10 million records from 85 datasets to the GBIF network. The Platform directly served more than 2 million records from 52 datasets (see also Annex II). In addition, several initiatives have been established to further promote the open publication and use of biodiversity data. The major highlight in this context was the organisation of our annual Platform conference “Empowering Biodiversity Research” attended by over 150 participants from a wide range of backgrounds, the hosting of several post-conference workshops, and contributions as (keynote) speaker/lecturer at national and international events. Moreover, the fact that a Belgian Trio won the first prize in the inaugural GBIF Ebbe Nielsen Challenge, including one of our Platform colleagues, nicely illustrates the impact of our efforts in promoting use and development of biodiversity standards and tools.

The activities of our Communities of Practice (CoPs), bringing together relevant knowledge holders and stakeholders around issues of topical interest, were also strongly reinforced during 2015. The activities in the ‘Belgium Ecosystem Services’ network (BEES), for example, have been revitalized through various topical working groups, interactions with similar initiatives across the EU, and networking events like the very successful BEES Christmas market organized last December (40 market stands, and over 200 participants!). Similarly, numerous initiatives have been established at regional, federal and European levels in which the expertise of the ‘Belgium Forum on Invasive Alien Species’ was instrumental. Highlights include the establishment of an expert registry which will serve as a basis for the identification and selection of experts within the framework of invasive alien species (IAS) developments in Belgium, including the Belgian implementation of the EU regulation. As regards the latter, the Platform also led a scientific working group in order to assess the implications at the Belgian level of the implementation of the new EU regulation on IAS, paving the way for a cooperation agreement, including the establishment of a National Secretariat on IAS. We also put substantial effort in further promoting the use of decision support tools (Harmonia+, ISEIA, ...) to underpin impact assessment of invasive alien species in science-policy initiatives at the federal, regional and European scale. Within the CoP on Biodiversity and Health (COPBH), we particularly note the various community building meetings allowing for cross-fertilization and initiation of new collaborative actions, both national and international (project proposals, forthcoming OneHealth meeting). Worth mentioning are also our contributions to the EU expert meeting in Vilm (Germany) and SBSTTA-19, piloting the dossier on Biodiversity & Health.

In 2015 – we also put further efforts in the identification of new topical and policy relevant issues in biodiversity research. For example, we further explored and promoted the Nature-Based Solutions concept at various occasions (incl. the publication of a peer-reviewed publication; and the organisation of a Green Week side event, together with the European Commission DG R&I); and are currently joining forces with UGMM/OD Nature of RBINS to organize a ‘North Sea’ conference

highlighting state-of-the-art knowledge, solutions and prospects to enlarge the scientific basis for an ecosystem-based management of the North Sea. We also drafted an internal document aiming to clarify the involvement of the Belgian Biodiversity Platform in horizon scanning exercises and to propose a list of possible future activities and deliverables. This will guide our work in 2016, and beyond.

During 2015, the Platform also further extended its activities in the EU science-policy arena. 2015 marked the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase for the BiodivERsA ERA-net in which we play an important role with regard to science-policy interfacing, mapping and foresight activities, communication on both the funded projects and the ERA-net itself, and coordination/governance. This year, together with UFZ and CEH, we were also successful in answering the call H2020-SC5-2015 on: “An EU support mechanism for evidence-based policy on biodiversity & ecosystems services” (project called: EKLIPSE). Besides co-managing the Secretariat, the platform will lead the work package related to developing research strategies and research priorities building on its expertise as Secretariat for the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategies (EPBRS). Also worth mentioning in the EU and international science-policy interfacing context are our efforts to reinforce the Belgian engagement in the International Union of Nature Conservation (IUCN), more specifically our role in the recently established EU Policy Advisory Group (EUPAG), our active participation in various IUCN fora, and our efforts to facilitate discussions with regard to the Belgium State membership.

As national focal point for the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), we have extensively contributed to the implementation of the 2014-2018 workplan, preparation of Plenary sessions, stakeholder engagement, awareness activities, and exchange of best practices both in Belgium and beyond. For example, we developed a website/forum to better connect national platforms working on IPBES-related issues in Europe (and Central Asia), providing a common space for sharing knowledge, resources, opinions and lessons learned. The political nature of the IPBES process (and similar processes like SBSTTA, CBD) 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 our involvement is clearly increasing already indicates the Platform’s effectiveness in these activities.

Over the past year, we also put quite some efforts in improving our internal and external communication, and in increasing our visibility. This was not without effect: the website attracted over 33,392 unique visitors. This is a ca. 19,9 % increase of unique visitors compared to 2014 for the same period, and a 44 % increase compared to 2013. This clearly shows an increasing interest in our websites, thanks to frequent updates (news and events), branded activities (conferences and markets) and regular newsflashes. Clearly, the Platform is considered a relevant and reliable source of information.

Last but not least, the Platform also made considerable steps forward in addressing some of the concerns from the 2012 evaluation panel with regard to its institutional arrangement and management. The transfer of the Platform support functions (IT and communication) to BELSPO/STIS was already completed last year, both administratively (May 2014) and physically (August 2015). 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, including the set-up of a Steering Committee. The signing of the agreement is nearly completed now

and we had a first meeting of our new Steering Committee. We have also elaborated on our Key Performance indicators (i.e. we now have KPIs for each of our 6 Operational Objectives, Communication, and Coordination/Management). Results will be presented in a separate document (2015 KPI Report).

Unfortunately, the complex Belgian context in combination with a difficult budgetary situation has had regrettable consequences as well, especially for our DEMNA partner. The renewal of personnel contracts was delayed for S. Vanderhoeven (three months unemployed) and the replacement of K. Articus has been extensively delayed – resulting in less manpower (1FTE). There were also some changes with our INBO partner: Florin Popa interrupted his job at the Platform in February (job at EC) and was replaced by a new colleague (Sander Jacobs) only in September.

Below, we describe the progress made within each work area of 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. 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. As for 2015, the 2016 Workplan will be presented as a separate document. As mentioned above, we now also have a separate report for the Key Performance Indicator analysis (first edition: 2015)

Annex I presents an overview of the deliverables initially foreseen in the 2015 Workplan, and the extent to which they have been achieved (83% completed/ongoing). Tasks that have been delayed or postponed (17%), are commented upon in this table (basically all due to contract issues). As will show from this report, quite a few more tasks (10+) have been taken up as opportunities arose, all of which make a good fit with our Strategic Plan; such activities are indicated in a footnote. Hereafter, Belgian Biodiversity Platform will be referred to as 'Platform'. Contributions of Platform colleagues are indicated by an abbreviation (cf. Section 2.) throughout the text.

## **2/ PLATFORM STAFF**

Biodiversity experts:

- ✓ Kristina Articus (**KrA**, Dr., DEMNA; 60% but on sick leave until May 2015; resigned soon after and has not yet been replaced)
- ✓ Estelle Balian (**EsB**, RBINS; 60% until November 2015, but 80% thereafter)
- ✓ Dimitri Brosens (**DiB**, INBO; 100%)
- ✓ Hilde Eggermont (**HiE**, Dr., RBINS; 100%)
- ✓ Hans Keune (**HaK**, Dr., INBO; 50%)
- ✓ Florin Popa (**FIP**, Dr., INBO; 50% until March 2015; not replaced until September 2015)
- ✓ Sander Jacobs (**SaJ**, Dr., INBO; 50% from September 2015, replacing FIP)
- ✓ Sonia Vanderhoeven (**SoV**, Dr., DEMNA; 100% but without contract from April to July 2015)

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 (**AvdP**, Dr., project coordinator, RBINS, 100 %; Pre-AntaBIS January to March but vERsO Brain from April-December) and Nabil Youdjou (**NaY**, IT developer for AntaBIS, RBINS, 100%; Pre-AntaBIS January to March but rest of year other projects: Southern Ocean Atlas, Total Foundation; Marine Atlas; Methanobase, ERANET)

### 3/ PROGRESS OF THE ACTIVITIES

#### 3.1. Platform management and operational structure

As in previous years, the management of the BBFP remained in the hands of Aline Van der Werf (**AvdW**; BELSPO), the scientific coordination was taken up by **HiE**, and the management of the IT team by **AnH**.

Following the political agreement, the current phase of the Platform runs from January 2013 until the end of 2016, with an annual budget of 700 000 EUR (i.e. conditions of 2013). The budget was renewed with a delay of two months (June instead of April) causing an interruption of the employment contracts of **SoV** and **KrA** of three months. In September, a new colleague (Maxime Coupremagne) was recruited to replace **KrA**, but due to administrative hurdles the contract is still not in place causing extensive delays for data acquisition in Wallonia.

In the 2013-2016 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. The transfer of the Platform support functions (IT and communication) to BELSPO/STIS was already completed last year, both administratively (May 2014) and physically (August 2015). 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, including the set-up of a Steering Committee. The signing of the agreement is nearly completed now and also the composition of the Steering Committee has been set. It includes as “full members” representatives of Ministries competent for science policy matters (1 for the Federal authority, 1 for each Region, and 1 for each Community), in addition to the Directors of the partner institutes. It also includes “permanent observer members”, being representatives of environmental administrations and, on an ad hoc basis, also representatives of other administrations. A first exploratory meeting of the Steering Committee already took place this year (18 December) and proved to be very useful.

To further respond to the suggestions put forward by the evaluation panel in October 2012, the Platform has further elaborated on its Key Performance indicators (KPIs). We have now developed 1-2 KPIs for each of our 6 Operational Objectives (hence, 2-4 KPIs per Strategic Goal), focusing on the

ones that are fairly straightforward to measure (preferably with some historic data already available), related to specific tasks and representative for the corresponding strategic goal. In addition, we developed a KPI for our Platform Outreach Activities, and one for Platform scientific coordination/management. Historical data have also been collected now – in most cases from 2013 onwards (i.e. from immediately after the 2012 evaluation). In support of the KPI implementation, an online (Survey Monkey) BBPF User Evaluation Survey was already set up in 2014 (accessible at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/bbpf2014>) and re-launched in February 2015, resulting in a total of 66 responses. We refer to our “2015 KPI report” for further details and (first) results.

Lastly, in 2015, substantial efforts have been directed to archive our Platform documents in a newly established document repository, and in preparing the necessary documents for the 2016 Platform Evaluation.

#### **Meetings:**

- Board of Directors meetings: 03/02, 03/12 (**AvdW, HiE**)
- BBPF Steering Committee meeting: 18/12 (**AvdW, HiE**)
- KPI team meetings: 30/01 and dedicate CMs (**whole team**)
- Coordination meetings (10): 30/01, 26/02, 24/04, 15/06, 10/07, 21/08, 25/09, 30/10, 01/12, 21/12 (**whole team**)

### **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 and other means**

This task encompasses the Platform’s role as national node to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF – <http://www.gbif.org>). By the end of December 2015, Belgium provided more than 10 millions occurrence records from 74 datasets, 650.000 checklist records from 9 datasets and 40.000 sample-event records from 2 datasets to the GBIF network. This shows a steep increase compared to last year. The majority of these data are now directly published by their owner institution, however, the Platform still directly serves more than 2 millions of these records from 52 datasets. In addition to the Platform itself, twelve other Belgian institutions are officially part of the GBIF network as Data Publishers: DEMNA, INBO, Meise, Natuurpunt, RBINS, RMCA, ULB, UGent, ULg, UMons, VLIZ and Worms. 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). Some examples amongst the newly published datasets:

- A common plants survey of vascular plants in South Northumberland and Durham, United Kingdom, by Meise
- Broedvogels - Atlas of the breeding birds in Flanders 2000-2002, by INBO



- Epiphytic Bryozoa of *Posidonia oceanica* leaves and scales, by ULg

In Flanders (INBO), we managed to publish a few more major datasets on aquatic alien species to GBIF. These include data on the Chinese mitten crab, the American bullfrog and alien invertebrates. These efforts will continue in 2016. In addition to these new data resources, existing resources are regularly improved and updated in collaboration with the data owners. See Annex II for a complete list of Belgian datasets and publishers. Due to long absence of **KrA** (not active in 2015) and delays in recruiting her replacer, data acquisition at DEMNA has suffered extensive delays. We hope to improve the situation in the course of 2016. Finally, we also actively supported INBO to become an 'Open Research Institute' (i.e. all data published by INBO will be published under a CC0 waiver, as Open data). Similarly, the Platform facilitated the replacement of various data licenses (provided in legacy datasets) by the 3 possible GBIF licenses.

For our Platform annual conference "Empowering Biodiversity Research" and post-conference workshops, see Section 3.3.2.1.

#### Meetings

- EEA Eunis meeting and EEA Biodiversity data, Copenhagen, Denmark; 4-5/02 (**DiB**, on invitation)
- VLIZ Young Researchers day, Ostend, Belgium; 20/02 (**DiB**, **PIH** – Platform stand)
- Open Belgium, Namur, Belgium; 23/02 (**DiB**, keynote: (R)evolution towards an open research institute)
- Track Event, Belgium; 17/06 (**DiB**; presentation Open Data Day Track, soirée "I did it")
- Open Data Day, Flanders, Belgium; 19/06 (**DiB**: roundtable)
- Data Paper Workshop, Trondheim, Norway; 23-24/03 (**DiB**: organizer)
- Biodiversity Informatics Course (4hrs) in MSc1 Biology, Taxonomy & Evolution (**DiB**)
- Data Matters workshop, Brussels, Belgium; 7/12 (**DiB**: invited speaker)
- Empowering Biodiversity Research (EBR) Conference, Brussels, Belgium; 21/05 (**Platform conference**)
- Data Publication workshop (post-EBR) Brussels, Belgium; 9/11 (**DiB**, **AnH**: organizer)
- Data Carpentry workshop (post-EBR), Brussels, Belgium; 2-3/11 (**DiB**: contributor)
- Data Paper workshop (post-EBR), Brussels, Belgium; 13/11 (**AnH**, **DiB**: organizer)

#### Publications:

- Coquempot C., Drumont, A., **Brosens, D.** & V. Ghaté (2015) First interception of the cerambycid beetle *Stromatium longicorne* (Newman, 1842) in Belgium and distribution notes on other species of *Stromatium* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae: Cerambycinae). *Bulletin van de Koninklijke Belgische Vereniging voor Entomologie = Bulletin de la Société royale belge d'entomologie* 150: 201-206
- Goossens, B., **Brosens, D.**, Desmet, P. & Du Seuil, D. (2015) Open research data: het Instituut voor Natuur en Bosonderzoek. *META* 91/5: 11-13.
- **Brosens, D.**, Breine, J., Van Thuyne, G., Belpaire, C., Desmet, P. & Verreycken, H. (2015) VIS – A database on the distribution of fishes in inland and estuarine waters in Flanders, Belgium. *ZooKeys* 475: 119-145.
- Boets P., **Brosens D.**, Lock K., Adriaens T., Aelterman B., Mertens J., Goethals P (2016 forthcoming). Alien macroinvertebrates in Flanders (Belgium). *Aquatic Invasions* (Accepted)

#### 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

**Belgian Data Portal:** In regards to the renewal of our Belgian Data Portal, we investigated two potential open source solutions: Atlas of Living Australia (**ALA**) and **CKAN** from Open Knowledge Foundation. Both portal softwares have strong references, but the supporting technologies and learning curves are quite different. We mainly invested time into two pilot prototypes and darwin core archive import. The final choice for the framework of our Data portal will be made early next year.



**AntaBIF/AntaBIS (Antarctic Biodiversity Information Facility; see <http://www.biodiversity.be>):**

Due to unsettled budgetary issues, the work for AntaBIF and AntaBIS was very strenuous in 2015. Dedicated funding covered only 3 months of salary for both **AvdP** and **NaY**; hence, only minimal maintenance could be executed and new developments were limited. Similarly, the set up of a Memorandum of Understanding between AntaBIS and the Platform was postponed because of the unclear future of AntaBIS and ongoing developments of BEDIC within OD nature of RBINS.

**Meetings:**

- OBIS Steering Group Meeting, Ostend, Belgium; 10-12/02 (**AvdP**)
- Data enrichment Hackaton, Leiden The Netherlands; 17-21/03 (**NaY**)
- EU Polarnet meeting, Bremerhaven, Germany; 9-11/03 (**AvdP**)
- SCAR structure Review meeting, Cambridge, United Kingdom; 20-24/04 (**AvdP**, participation by teleconf)
- GBIF ALE Workshop, Paris, France; 4-5/05 (**NaY**)
- APECS World Summit "The Future of Polar Research", Sofia, Bulgaria; 6-7/06 (**AvdP**, invited expert)
- SOOS Data Management Subcommittee, Hobart, Australia; 9-11/06 (**AvdP**)
- SCAR Excom meeting, Tromsø, Norway; 26-28/08 (**AvdP**)
- ODIP 2 meeting, Paris, France; 28/09-01/10 (**NaY**)
- OBIS Environment workshop, Oostende, Belgium; 5-7/10 (**AvdP**)
- SCADM meeting & Polar Data Forum 2, Waterloo, Canada; 25-30/10 (**AvdP**)

**Publications:**

- E Kašparová, **A. Van de Putte**, C Marshall, K Janko (2015) Lifestyle and ice: the relationship between ecological specialization and response to Pleistocene climate change. *PloS one* 10 (11), e0138766
- Katharina Teschke, (...), **A. van de Putte**, (...) (2015). Scientific background document in support of the development of a CCAMLR MPA in the Weddell Sea (Antarctica)-Version 2015-Part A: General context of the establishment of MPAs and background information on the Weddell Sea MPA planning area. Working Group on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management, CCAMLR.

**BioFresh/FADA:** In correspondence with the Memorandum of Understanding established in 2014, we continued our support to [BioFresh data portal](#) and [FADA website](#)<sup>1</sup>. This involves:

- Hosting of the BioFresh data portal and FADA website on the Platform servers
- Offering technical ICT support to the BioFresh team at OD Nature (on databases, application deployment, GIS, GBIF tools...) to establish the data portal

**Saving Freshwater Biodiversity Data (SAFRED):** In 2015, we joined a consortium lead by RBINS (Koen Martens & Aaike De Wever) for a Belspo BRAIN Axis 6 Call (Management of Collections). The proposal was submitted end of February 2015 and got granted in autumn. The project "Saving Freshwater Biodiversity Data" (SAFRED) will focus on the publication (saving) of species occurrence data and supporting environmental data from freshwater sites. The Platform will be engaged as non-funded partner to help partners to mobilize and publish relevant biodiversity data (for more details, see our 2016 Workplan).

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<sup>1</sup> The development of the BioFresh data portal (<http://data.freshwaterbiodiversity.eu/>) was initiated during the EU-funded FP7 project [BioFresh](#) (Biodiversity of Freshwater Ecosystems: Status, Trends, Pressures, and Conservation Priorities). The Freshwater Animal Diversity Assessment ([FADA](#); <http://fada.biodiversity.be/>) database was developed and hosted by the Platform following a number of BelSPO funded workshops with taxonomic experts. [OD Nature](#) actively worked on extending the content of the FADA database in the framework of the BioFresh project, and adopted it as a taxonomical backbone for the BioFresh data portal.

**HARMONIA information system and invasive species impact assessment:** As during the last years, efforts were carried on to further promote the use of Harmonia<sup>2</sup> and related decision support tools (Harmonia+, ISEIA, ...) and to underpin impact assessment of invasive alien species in science-policy initiatives at the federal, regional and European scale (Vanderhoeven et al. 2015, see further). In particular, Harmonia was promoted in four elements international developments: (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), (3) the establishment of a list of invasive species of EU concern related to the new EU regulation instrument and the Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species (GRIIS) developed by IUCN (ISSG Specialist Group)

In particular, our risk assessment protocol *Harmonia*<sup>+</sup> was recognized as compliant with the EU minimum standards for the list of alien species of EU concern<sup>3</sup>, allowing Member States to use it to propose species to be considered for inclusion.

A substantial effort was also done to elaborate on how to foster data publishing on invasive species and the need for data in support of IAS research, policy and management. This task performed in collaboration with INBO and the Botanical Garden Meise resulted in a joint publication (Groom et al. 2015, see further).

Data mobilization on IAS to feed into the Harmonia Information system is an ongoing process and considerable progress has been done recently, mainly in collaboration with INBO, DEMNA and two important data holders: Natagora and Natuurpunt.

#### Publications :

- D'hondt B., **Vanderhoeven S.**, Roelandt S., Mayer F., Vereirst V., Adriaens T., Ducheyne E., San Martin G., Grégoire J.-C., Stiers I., Quoilin S., **Cigar J.**, **Heughebaert A.** & Branquart E. (2015) Harmonia+ and Pandora+: risk screening tools for potentially invasive plants, animals and their pathogens. *Biological Invasions* 17: 1869-1883.
- **Vanderhoeven S.**, Adriaens T., D'hondt B., Van Gossum H., Vandegehuchte M., Verreyken H., **Cigar J.** & Branquart E. (2015) A science-based approach to tackle invasive alien species in Belgium – the role of the ISEIA protocol and the harmonia information system as decision support tools. *Management of Biological Invasions* 6(2): 197-208
- Groom Q., Desmet P., **Vanderhoeven S.** & Adriaens T. (2015) The importance of open data for invasive alien species research, policy and management. *Management of Biological Invasions* 6(2): 119-125.
- Adriaens, T., Sutton-Croft, M., Owen, K., **Brosens, D.**, van Valkenburg, J., Kilbey, D., Groom, Q., Ehlig, C., Thürkow, F., Van Hende, P. & Schneider, K. (2015) Trying to engage the crowd in recording invasive alien species in Europe: experiences from two smartphone applications in northwest Europe. *Management of Biological Invasions* 6: 215–225.

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<sup>2</sup> Harmonia<sup>+</sup> and Pandora<sup>(+)</sup> were created as parts of the Alien Alert project, on horizon scanning for new pests and invasive species in Belgium and neighbouring areas. The Alien Alert project was performed by a consortium of eight Belgian scientific institutions. It was coordinated by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform and funded by the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO contract SD/CL/011).

<sup>3</sup> Roy et. al (2014) Invasive alien species – framework for the identification of invasive alien species of EU concern. EU report ENV. B.2/ETU/2013/0026.

### **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**

Part of the task of a GBIF node consists of contributing to the development of IT tools supporting the goals of GBIF. In 2015, the Platform actively took part of the Global Nodes training, in addition to testing new GBIF Tools. In that context, Larissa Smirnova (RMCA) and **NiN** were selected as trainers by GBIF Secretariat.

Our annual Platform Conference “Empowering Biodiversity Research” coupled with subsequent technical workshops (see Section 3.3.2.1.), was an excellent opportunity to further promote Open Data and Open Source tools to an audience that was not necessarily acquainted with GBIF activities.

The fact that a Belgian Trio won the first prize in the inaugural GBIF Ebbe Nielsen Challenge, including one of our Platform colleagues (**NiN**), nicely illustrates the impact of our efforts in promoting use and development of biodiversity standards and tools. The granted project “GBIF dataset metrics” is a browser extension that provides at-a-glance insights about datasets available through GBIF.org. More information is available [here](#).

#### **Meetings** (see also Section 3.4.1.2.)

- GBIF Nodes Training, Antananarivo, Madagascar; 4-5/10 (**AnH, DiB, NiN**)
- GBIF Global Nodes meeting, Antananarivo, Madagascar; 6-7/10 (**AnH, DiB, NiN**)
- CeBios MRV Workshop, Brussels, Belgium; 28/09-2/10 (**AnH**)
- CeBios Conference ‘Capacities for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development: a global heritage, Brussels, Belgium; 26/11 (**AnH**: GBIF poster)

#### **3.2.2.2. TASK - Development and maintenance 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 formers 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 has no longer been 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).

### 3.2.2.3. TASK - Contribute to biodiversity (EU) e-infrastructures

During 2015, the Platform continued its support the Belgian LifeWatch contact group, at present consisting of experts of sponsored institutions (VLIZ, INBO, UCL, RBINS and MRAC). Since 2015, the Platform is also serving as the national 'Lifewatch Service Center' (LSC) which involves animating and promoting a community of Lifewatch data providers in Belgium (but not in coordinating the Lifewatch activities, as this role is taken up by VLIZ), and promoting communication amongst Belgian stakeholders. We also facilitate the publication of Lifewatch related data. Being appointed as national member to the LifeWatch communicator group (together with Stefanie de Keyser, VLIZ), the Platform (DiB) also ensured communication from the national level towards the other Lifewatch member countries.

For an extensive report on our 'Empowering Biodiversity Research Conference' and post-conference workshops, see Section 3.3.2.1.

## 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" (by **SaJ** and **HaK**), "Biodiversity and Health" (by **HaK**) and "Invasive Alien Species" (by **SoV**). 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)

**Web address:** <http://www.beescommunity.be>. Please note that various BEES activities (science-policy related) also feed into Objective 5 – Section 3.4.1.

**2015 BEES event - the BEES Christmas market<sup>4</sup>:** On December 15<sup>th</sup>, the Platform organised the second edition of the [BEES-MAES Christmas market](#), an event set up to share knowledge and practices on ecosystem services in a relaxed market setting. It was a joint venture with EU-Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services (MAES), and organized back-to-back to two other events: the Ecosystem Services mainstreaming workshop for Flemish administrations organized by the Flemish Environment, Nature and Energy Department, and the EU SBSTTA expert meeting on

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<sup>4</sup> This activity was not foreseen in the 2015 Workplan.

'mainstreaming biodiversity' held at Belspo (organised by the Dutch incoming presidency and the Belgian CBD-NFP, with support from the Platform). The event attracted a wide diversity of participants and types of expertise (i.e. 40 market stands and some 210 registered participants; show-up rate of 85%). The participants represented a diversity of institutions and types of expertise, including: DG ENV, JRC and DG R&I of the European Commission, EU-funded projects (OPENNESS, OPERAS, OPPLA, LANDMARK), projects supported by the Flemish or Walloon authorities (ECOPLAN, WALEES,...), several business stands, international and EU initiatives (IPBES, MAES), the Belgian community of researchers and practitioners on ecosystem services and biodiversity (INBO, Natuurpunt, Natagora, ULG, KUL, UCL, ULB), regional and local policy makers, as well as international participants from many administrations, agencies and scientists presenting the progress on their countries ecosystem assessments.

**Belgian Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services Working Group (BE MAES WG):** The Belgian representatives to the EU MAES working group are Gilles Bertrand (FUNDP) and HaK. On the Belgian level, the [Belgian MAES-working Group](#) (BE MAES WG) facilitates the connection between the EU process and the Belgian contributors. On 1 & 2 July 2015, several BE MAES WG and BEES members were present at the MAES MESEU economics of action workshop; SaJ also presented here. On September 10<sup>th</sup> 2015, the MAES BE WG held a meeting in preparation of the EU MAES working group meeting of 17 September, to discuss the agenda, to harmonize Belgian view points and to prepare Belgian contribution report (based on MESEU input earlier that year). A critical reflection on the scoping document for the 'Knowledge Innovation Project on an Integrated system for Natural Capital and ecosystem services Accounting (KIP-INCA)' agenda point was produced, presented at the MAES meeting and circulated amongst EU representatives present. The role of the Platform/BEES was instrumental in these interventions.

**MAES BENELUX:** On March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015, a MAES BENELUX workshop was organized at INBO (Brussel). During this workshop, policy and science representatives from the respective national ecosystem assessments shared experiences and best practices. During this meeting, we also presented IPBES (cf. link between MAES and the regional assessments) and our national focal point activities in this context (see Section 3.4.2.4.). Several meetings were subsequently organized to further brainstorm about future collaborations, including the development of a joint science-policy-practice project proposal. This collaboration will be extended in 2016.

**Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) Steering Committee:** BEES (SaJ) is co-chairing the ESP steering committee together with Joachim Maes from the European Commission. HaK is also member of the Steering Committee. This has provided excellent opportunities to promote the BEES work at the international level.

**Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) Regional Chapter Europe incl. Russia & Turkey:** BEES (HaK) coordinates the [Regional ESP Chapter Europe incl. Russia & Turkey](#) of the ESP. In 2015, a key activity was collecting national experiences for the overview of national and regional activities for the 2015 ESP conference in South Africa. For the 2016 ESP Europe conference this Chapter will take initiative to organize a *community of practice* session.

**Ecosystem Services Partnership Regional Conference in Antwerp 19-23 Sept 2016<sup>5</sup>:** One of the main achievements of the BEES members active in ESP was (after launching the idea in 2014) the establishment and concrete initiation of the cooperation and negotiation between ESP, OPENNESS, OPERAS and ECOPLAN projects to organise the 'regional ESP conference 2016' in Antwerp. BEES (SaJ, HaK) is part of the conference organisation team (two preparatory meetings so far), and the scientific committee (already a first meeting in 2015). The aim of BEES is to give input and provide leverage for the conference theme ('helping nature help us'), mainly on operationalization and practical implementation.

**ESP Thematic Working Group Value integration:** BEES coordinated the [ESP Thematic Working Group Value integration](#). As a follow-up from the 2014 conference, a special issue in [Ecosystem Services](#) is underway (publication was already scheduled for 2015, but deadline has been extended). The working group also organised a session at the 2015 ESP conference, that will also result in a publication (due 2016).

**BEES Working Group Evaluation:** Due to changes in personnel (leave of Florin Popa) – we have not been able to conduct this evaluation, as foreseen in 2015. This task will be re-taken in 2016.

#### Publications:

- Belgian MAES working group (2015) Reflection of the Belgian MAES working group on the KIP-INCA concept note (contributor: **SaJ, HaK**)
- **Keune, H.**, Dendoncker, N., **Popa, F.**, **Sander, J.**, Kampelmann, S., Boeraeve, F., Dufrêne, M., Bauler, T., Casaer, J., Cerulus, T., De Blust, G., Denayer, B., Janssens, L., Liekens, I., Panis, J., Scheppers, T., Simoens, I., Staes, J., Turkelboom, F., Ulenaers, P., Van der Biest, K., Verboven, J., 2015. Emerging ecosystem services governance issues in the Belgium ecosystem services community of practice. *Ecosyst. Serv.* 16, 212–219. doi:10.1016/j.ecoser.2015.06.001
- [BEES 2014 Xmas market video](#) (2015)
- Maes, J., **Jacobs, S.** (2015) Nature-Based Solutions for Europe's Sustainable Development. *Conservation Letters* n/a–n/a. doi:10.1111/conl.12216
- **Jacobs, S.**, Spanhove, T., De Smet, L., Van Daele, T., Van Reeth, W., Van Gossum, P., Stevens, M., Schneiders, A., Panis, J., Demolder, H., Michels, H., Thoonen, M., Simoens, I., Peymen, J., (2015) The ecosystem service assessment challenge: Reflections from Flanders-REA. *Ecological Indicators* : 61, 715–727. doi:10.1016/j.ecolind.2015.10.023
- Robert Fish, Eirini Saratsi, Mark Reed and **Hans Keune** (forthcoming 2016) Stakeholder participation in ecosystem service decision making, In: Marion Potschin, Roy Haines-Young, Robert Fish, R. Kerry Turner (Eds) (forthcoming 2016) Routledge Handbook of Ecosystem Services, Routledge – 2016

#### Meetings BEES:

- BEES WG agriculture: field visit at ILVO; 28/09 (**HaK**)
- BEES WG integrated valuation: three meetings; 22/01; 30/04; 11/05 (**SaJ, HaK**)
- BEES WG governance: several email/Skype conversations in preparation for next steps in 2016 (**HaK**)
- BEES WG business: meeting with Naturalogic CEO; 24/08 (**SaJ**)
- BEES WG legal issues: workshop preparation; 25/02 (**HaK**)
- BEES coordination meetings: 19/01; 01/06; 07/09; 26/10 (**SaJ, HaK, PiH**)
- BEES 2015 Xmas market (16/12): preparation meetings; 09/07; 25/11 (**SaJ, HaK, PiH, DiB**)

#### Meetings MAES:

- MAES-BE: preparation meetings before EU meetings; 24/2; 10/09 (**SaJ, HaK**)
- MAES BENELUX: collaborative and project preparation meetings; 22/01; 03/03; 19/03; 14/04; 12/05; 16/06; 07/07; 08/09; 14/09; 01/10; 09/10 (**HaK**)

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<sup>5</sup> This activity was not foreseen in the 2015 Workplan



- MAES EU: 06/03; 01-02/07; 16/09; 15-16/12 (**HaK, SaJ**)
- MAES EU soil pilot: working meeting; 20/03; 19/06 (**SaJ**)
- MAES MESEU economics of action workshop; 1-2/07 (**SaJ**)
- KIP-INCA workshop Copenhagen; 30/09-01/10 (**SaJ**)

**Meetings ESP:**

- EU Regional Chapter; 21/12 (**HaK**)
- ESP 2016 European conference OC & PC; 16/10; 16/11; 03/12 (**HaK, SaJ**)
- International Relations Committee; 27/07 (**HaK**)
- ESP-Germany start-up meeting; 27/04 (**HaK**)

**Other meetings:**

- Meetings MINA plan (Flemish Environment, Nature and Energy Department): Flemish administrations and agencies collaborate on ecosystem services; 06/02; 18/08 (**HaK, SaJ**)
- International expert workshop Ecosystem Services – Human Well Being; 23-28/03 (**HaK**)
- PECS workshop, Stockholm, Sweden; 27-31/01 (**SaJ**)

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

**Web address:** <http://www.biodiversity.be/health>. Please note that various CoPBH activities (science-policy related) also fit into Objective 5 (Section 3.4.1.)

**CoPBH meetings:** Following discussions at several CoPBH meetings, the CoPBH coordination team (incl. **HaK**) concluded that the CoP should focus on topical events in order to revitalize the community. A first CoPBH Workshop topic will be OneHealth (see below). In addition, the work of the CoPBH was promoted at several occasions, resulting in new collaborations. One example is the established collaboration with the Flemish Agency for Nature and Forest (ANB) and Natuurpunt, resulting in a [joint presentation](#) at the 2015 Alternet Nature Based Solutions conference (Gent, Belgium).

**2016 OneHealth Workshop preparation:** OneHealth is a new integrating concept that is internationally well recognized to bridge nature and health expertise, policy and practice. The [CBD](#), [WHO](#) and [SBSTTA](#) explicitly promote the application of this concept in the Member States. The objectives of this 2016 workshop, to be organized at Belspo in October 2016, are: 1/ To clarify some conceptual definitions/overlaps/specificities of One Health, EcoHealth, Planetary health, Global health, Biodiversity & Health, concepts; 2/ Starting from Belgian and neighbour countries' expertise and experience, to create an overview of the state of the art regarding One Health/EcoHealth in the North and the South, as well as inter-linkages; 3/ To build connections and experience sharing between concerned participants working on related issues in science, practice, and policy; 4/ To focus on the challenge of putting concepts into practice; 5/ To serve as inputs for international and European agendas on related issues (e.g. CBD, Sustainable Development Goals, ...); and 6/ to elaborate recommendations for better implementation of the One Health/EcoHealth concept. Several (brainstorm) meetings have already been organized in 2015 to prepare for this major event, with participation from science, policy and practice representatives from several countries (Belgium, Netherlands, France and UK). This resulted in a first list of ideas and potentially interested participants, and the set up of a *Local Organization Committee* (CoPBH experts and others) and an international *Science-Policy-Practice-Program-Committee*.



**Belgian High level Biodiversity and Health conference:** in the framework of the Belgian National Environmental Health Action Plan (NEHAP), the idea has been proposed to organise a (second<sup>6</sup>) Belgian conference on Biodiversity and Health, with support from several Belgian policy institutions. The major aim would be to attract greater interest from policy communities for Biodiversity & Health issues. Given that this will require extensive preparations, 2018 has been set as tentative target date. As a way to prepare for this event, a 'state of knowledge (in Belgium) review' has been proposed. **HaK** presented the idea to the Superior Health Council in 2015, and it was very much appreciated. The details of the (feasibility of the) implementation is currently further explored, together with the Federal Public Service Health, Food chain safety and Environment – amongst others.

**CoPBH expert registry:** This year, we started the preparations for a CoPBH expert registry. Similar to our expert registry for Invasive Alien Species (see further), the idea would be to get a good overview of the available expertise in Belgium on biodiversity & health related matters, to reinforce capacity building, knowledge sharing, networking, gap analysis, and conference preparation (cf. high level event 2018). We aim to further elaborate this expert registry in 2016.

**Project collaboration/proposals:** In 2014, Ghent University (Department of food safety and food quality) approached the CoPBH to work out an [IMMANA](#) project proposal on the connection between nutrition (food intake) data and biodiversity (food source) data. Unfortunately, the project was not granted but new funding sources are being sought. The CoPBH also submitted a project proposal called 'INVEIDS' to the 2014 [BRAIN](#) call (Belspo). The project focused on risk assessments and policy decision support for international trade related emerging infectious diseases in Belgium, but was not granted. Other funding opportunities for this proposal will be investigated in 2016.

**CoPBH representation in Belgian and international initiatives:** **HaK** represented the CoPBH in a substantial number of Belgian and international initiatives. These include follow-up committees of research projects related to Nature and Health, and participation to the Belgian delegation at international meetings. A few specific examples include participation to the Belgian Superior Health Council expert committee on the influence of the use of neonicotinoids on biodiversity and human health, the expert review panel of the EU project [The Health and Social Benefits of Nature and Biodiversity protection](#), being Vice Chair of the 2015 Alternet conference [Nature and Urban Wellbeing](#), being founding and steering group member of the [Paris Risk Group](#), and being co-coordinator of the [Ecosystem Services Partnership Thematic Working Group Ecosystem service & Public health](#). In addition, **HaK** was also lead for the Biodiversity & Health topic at the Vilm Expert meeting (in preparation of SBSTTA-19), and pilot for this dossier at SBSTTA-19 (see Section 3.4.2.5.)

**Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) Thematic Working Group Ecosystem service & Public health:** End of 2013, a survey on Ecosystem services and human health - awareness and attitudes was launched. The aim of this survey was to gain a clearer view to what extent human health issues have been dealt with by people working in the field of ecosystem services research, policy and practice (what we call the "ecosystem services community"); and to assess needs and challenges. Due to technical difficulties with the data analysis and time constraints, the analysis of responses got severely delayed. Yet, end of 2015, the [first results of the analysis](#) were presented on the ESP

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<sup>6</sup> Report of the 2011 Belgian Biodiversity – Public Health Conference (organized by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform) downloadable here: <http://www.biodiversity.be/1888>

website. Further communication will follow after the main results have been published in a peer reviewed paper (work in progress).

#### Publications:

- ESP- thematic working group ecosystem services – health (2015). [First results report ESP- health survey](#) (HaK)
- White PCL, ..., **Keune H.** et al. (forthcoming 2016) Integrative policy development for healthier people and natural environments. *Environmental Health Perspectives*: Submitted.
- **Keune H.** et al. (forthcoming 2016) Biodiversity ecosystems and human health a complicated but important science policy challenge, In: Serge Morand, Rojchai Satrawaha & David Woodruff (Eds) - Biodiversity: challenges in a changing Southeast Asia environment, Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, northern Thailand. Submitted

#### Meetings:

- Coordination meetings, Brussels Belgium; 05/03; 06/07 (HaK)
- INVEIDS BRAIN proposal: development and follow-up meetings; 19/01; 05/02; 06/02; 12/02; 13/02; 18/02; 12/11; Brussels Belgium & Skype (HaK)
- Alternet NBS conference (18-20/05): vice chair of the Scientific-policy committee; 02/03; 28/04; Ghent Belgium (HaK)
- Flemish Agency Nature & forest – Natuurpunt - COPBH:
  - Collaboration meetings; 31/03; 12/05 ; Brussels/Antwerp Belgium (HaK)
  - [Joint presentation](#) Alternet conference; 20/05; Ghent Belgium (HaK)
- Natuurpunt Nature – health care meeting; 23/04; Dilbeek, Belgium (HaK)
- IEEP The Health and Social Benefits of Nature and Biodiversity protection EU project: expert review committee; 29/04; 06/08; Skype (HaK)
- EU wildlife - health meeting; 05/05; Brussels Belgium (HaK)
- Province of Antwerp: discussions on potential collaboration nature – health; 16/07; 08/09; 09/10; Antwerp Belgium (HaK)
- Avia-Gis: discussions on potential collaboration nature – health; 30/06; Zoersel Belgium (HaK)
- UGent lecture biodiversity & health: 26/11; Ghent Belgium (HaK)
- GRESP-BRAIN project follow up committee meeting: 21/05; Brussels Belgium (HaK)
- Phenotype EU project nature- health: presentation final results; 17/12; Brussels Belgium (HaK)
- OneHealth/EcoHealth Workshop COPBH : preparatory meetings; 17/07; 14/09; 20/10; 26/10; 18/11; 19/11; 30/11; 03/12; 14/12; Brussels/Antwerp Belgium, Skype (HaK)
- Expert registry: preparatory meeting; 07/08; Brussels Belgium (HaK, AnH)
- Superior Health Council Belgium: expert committee influence of neonicotinoids on biodiversity; 08/01; 02/02; 02/03; 29/04; 01/05; 04/05; 15/06; Brussels/Antwerp Belgium (HaK)
- Superior Health Council Belgium: proposal set-up expert committee review state of the art Biodiversity & Health Belgium; 05/10; 06/10; Brussels Belgium (HaK)
- Paris Risk Group: several steering group meetings and the “A problem solving turn in environment and health expertise: examples of a change in practice (expert elicitation, transdisciplinarity) and focus (nature based solutions), and integrating opportunities and challenges ahead” presentation at the 2015 Paris Risk Group meeting “Evidence based innovation, quality of information and its use in risk assessment and risk management” in Bilthoven; 18-19/06; Bilthoven The Netherlands, telephone meetings (HaK)
- ESP- thematic working group ecosystem services – health: coordination meetings combined with analysis of the survey; 26/01; 11/02; 07/05; 22/05; 28/05; 03/06; 13/07; 17/07; 03/08; 28/09; 02/10; 16/11; 01/12; Skype (HaK)
- For Vilm and SBSTTA-19 meetings, see Section 3.4.2.5.

#### Reviews:

- Review "Integrating human and ecosystem health through ecosystem services frameworks". *EcoHealth*: December 2015, Volume 12, [Issue 4](#), pp 660-671 (HaK)
- Review "first draft report The Health and Social Benefits of Nature and Biodiversity protection" (EU project)
- Review "Assessing ecosystem impacts on health: A tool review" Ecosystem Services (HaK)
- Review "Encyclopedia of Environmental Health 2nd ed" Elsevier (HaK)

#### 3.3.1.3. TASK - Animation of the CoP on Invasive Alien Species (Belgian Forum on Invasive Species; BFIS)

**Web address:** <http://ias.biodiversity.be/>; see also Section 3.2.1.2. on Harmonia; Please note that various IAS activities (science-policy related) also fit into Objective 5 (Section 3.4.1.)

A major tool developed in 2015 by the BFIS is the Expert Registry: <http://ias.biodiversity.be/registry/index>. This registry allows keeping track of the expert community active on invasive alien species (IAS) in Belgium. It also serves as a basis for the identification and selection of experts within the framework of IAS developments in Belgium, including the Belgian implementation of the EU regulation. Additionally, the registry aims to bring together management expertise on specific species (nature reserve managers, people from governmental bodies or private companies, social economy etc. working in IAS eradication and control). This way, the register serves to bridge the gap between science, policy and management in the field.

Tools developed by the Forum in recent years have been considerably successful. During 2015, numerous initiatives were implemented at regional, national and European levels in which the expertise of the forum was instrumental. **SoV** ensured the consistent and coherent use of BFIS data and tools amongst different initiatives:

- 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 and takes part to different actions of the working groups.
- 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 was to develop a horizon scanning methodology to identify, screen and prioritize species that might become invasive in the EU. This allowed 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. The Platform (**SoV**) was mainly involved as contributor in tasks (1),

(2) and (3); mainly ensuring the best use of the *Harmonia+* protocol to perform Horizon scanning.

- To the request of the CIE, **SoV** was asked to lead a scientific working group in order to assess the implications at the Belgian level of the implementation of the new EU regulation on IAS. The final report merging the scientific and legal aspects was sent to the Ministers by the beginning of 2015. As a result of this analysis, the Ministers requested the scientific and legal working groups to further collaborate on the development of a cooperation agreement on IAS, including the establishment of a National Secretariat.
- **SoV** was selected by the Ministers as the Belgian representative to the EU Forum on IAS supporting the EU regulation.

Lastly, the BFIS was also involved in the electronic scoping exercise for the IAS assessment for IPBES, following an information session organised on 2 March at Belspo ("What's up on IAS"; see also Section 3.3.1.3) The latter meeting was also a great opportunity to bring together Belgian scientists involved in projects granted by the BiodiVERsA 2012-2013 Call on Invasive Species, and allow them to present their results.

#### Publications (see also 3.2.1.2.)

- Essl F., Bacher S., Blackburn T., Booy O., Brundu G., Brunel S., Cardoso A.C., Eschen R., Gallard B., Galil B., García-Berthou E., Genovesi P., Groom Q., Harrower C., Hulme P., Katsanevakis S., Kenis M., Kühn I., Kumschick S., Martinou A.F., Nentwig W., O'Flynn C., Pagad S., Pergl J., Pyšek P., Rabitsch W., Richardson D.R., Roques A., Roy H.E., Scalera R., Schindler S., Seebens H., **Vanderhoeven S.**, Vilà M., Wilson J.R.U., Azenetos & Jeschke J. (forthcoming 2016) Crossing frontiers in tackling pathways of biological invasions. *Bioscience*: in press doi: 10.1093/biosci/biv082
- Roy, H.E., Adriaens, T., Aldridge, D.C., Bacher, S., Bishop, J.D.D., Blackburn, T.M., Branquart, E., Brodie, J., Carboneras, C., Cook, E.J., Copp, G.H., Dean, H.J., Eilenberg, J., Essl, F., Gallardo, B., Garcia, M., García-Berthou, E., Genovesi, P., Hulme, P.E., Kenis, M., Kerckhof, F., Kettunen, M., Minchin, D., Nentwig, W., Nieto, A., Pergl, J., Pescott, O., Peyton, J., Preda, C., Rabitsch, W., Roques, A., Rorke, S., Scalera, R., Schindler, S., Schönrogge, K., Sewell, J., Solarz, W., Stewart, A., Tricarico, E., **Vanderhoeven, S.**, van der Velde, G., Vilà, M., Wood, C.A., Zenetos, A. (2015) Invasive Alien Species - Prioritising prevention efforts through horizon scanning ENV.B.2/ETU/2014/0016. European Commission.

#### Meetings:

- Steering Committee of the Biodiversa project DIARS, Leuven, Belgium; 6/10 (**SoV**)
- IAS meeting with the Belspo project CORDEX, Brussels, Belgium; 2/09 (**SoV**)
- Meeting Natuurpunt, Mechelen, Belgium; 08/01 (**SoV**)
- Meeting Natagora, Gembloux, Belgium; 25/11 (**SoV**)
- WG Invasive species ICE/CIL mandate, 7 meetings, Brussels, Belgium: 7/01, 27/04, 1/06, 24/06, 14/07, 16/11, 10/12 (**SoV**)
- Meeting of the EU Forum on IAS, Brussels, Belgium; 11/02 (**SoV**)
- Bilateral meeting with the EU Commission, Brussels, Belgium; 23/03 (**SoV**)
- What's up with IAS? BFIS meeting, Belspo, Brussels, Belgium; 02/04 (**SoV, HiE**)
- Workshop EU horizon scanning, Brussels, Belgium; 16-17/05 (**SoV**)
- COST *Alien Challenge* workshop and management committee, Sevilla, Spain; 16-17/09 (**SoV**)
- COST *Parotnet* workshop, Paris, France: 2-3/03 (**SoV**)
- IAS Stakeholder meeting, Brussels, Belgium (**SoV, PiH**, facilitation of the round table)

### **3.3.2. – Objective 4: To inventorise 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**

**Nature-Based Solutions (NBS):** Following up on our activities from last year, we have further explored and promoted the NBS concept at various occasions. Yet, most of this work was conducted in the context of our BiodivERsA ERA-net activities; see Section 3.4.2.6. for further details (meetings & publications).

**Co-organisation of the CeBioS 2015 Conference<sup>7</sup>:** The Platform has been involved in the co-organization (conference committee; communication and development of the abstract book) of the [CeBioS](#) (Capacities for Biodiversity and Sustainable development) conference on 'Biodiversity and development, a global heritage', organized on 26 November at the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences. The conference day was well attended (over 150 participants including teachers in science, students and researchers, businesses active in countries of the South, actors in development cooperation, policymakers). We also contributed to this meeting with various posters (GBIF, IPBES)

#### **Meetings**

- CeBioS Conference 'Capacities for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development: a global heritage, Brussels, Belgium; 26/11 (AvdW, HiE, PiH, EsB; co-organizing)

**Concept note on Horizon Scanning Activities:** In 2015, we drafted an internal document (concept note) aiming to clarify the involvement of the Belgian Biodiversity Platform in horizon scanning exercises (HS) and to propose a list of possible future HS activities and deliverables. This will guide our work in 2016, and beyond.

**Platform annual conference 2015 – “Empowering Biodiversity Research” (EBR Conference):** On May 21st 2015, some 150 participants (biodiversity researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders) gathered in the Palace of the Academies, in the center of Brussels for the “Empowering Biodiversity Research” conference. This conference was co-organized by several key institutes and universities in the field of Biodiversity Informatics, with the aim to inform on ongoing Biodiversity Informatics initiatives in Belgium and reinforce further collaboration amongst actors. Three keynotes kicked off the meeting. During the first keynote, an introduction to the Belgian [Biodiversity Informatics landscape](#) was given by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform (HiE). After that, Vince Smith of the Natural

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<sup>7</sup> This task was not foreseen in the 2015 Workplan

History Museum in London impressed us with a talk on the [Future of Biodiversity Informatics](#), not only illustrating the current power of Biodiversity Informatics but also its future potential. Finally, the third keynote by Pieter Colpaert on the [Controversy within publishing Open Data on the web](#) was very convincing on the benefits of Open (biodiversity) Data. After a small panel discussion with the keynote speakers, the audience prepared for the Biodiversity Informatics Fair, set up as some kind of a market place where several key Biodiversity Informatics initiatives were presented. The poster session organized during this fair was also well appreciated by the attendees. Very impressive during the fair was the [Belgian Lifewatch](#) stand and the stand of the [Botanic garden Meise](#), even decorated with living plants. Together with other stands from the [Africamuseum](#), [RBINS](#), [Avia-Gis](#), [the Platform](#) and the [Belgian Open Knowledge foundation](#), they gave a pretty good picture of ongoing Biodiversity Informatics initiatives in Belgium. Similarly, initiatives like [CETAF](#), [Synthesis](#), [GBIF](#), [TDWG](#) and many others were all put in the spotlights. There was also a possibility to further explore these stands over lunch. The last session of the Plenary was an information session on the post conference [workshops](#) to be organized by the different partners on selected topics (see further). Last but not least, there were five Belgian Biodiversity Informatics showcases: i.e. on [Bird tracking](#), [remote sensing](#), the [Lifewatch taxonomic backbone](#), [Antarctic biodiversity](#) and [legacy literature](#) which all gave very insightful views on the power of Biodiversity Informatics. All the presentations are available on our [conference website](#)

**Post-EBR Conference workshops:** In the aftermath of the conference a series of workshops were organized (Platform as main organizer, or co-organizer). These workshops were (mainly) intended for persons who attended the "Empowering Biodiversity Research" conference. Detailed information can be retrieved [here](#). Below, we only highlight the workshops to which the Platform contributed as co-organizer, or keynote speaker:

- *Data Carpentry Workshop, 2-3/11, Belspo, Brussels (by Botanic Garden Meise):* Data Carpentry is a non-profit organization whose members teach researchers basic software skills. The goal of this course was to make researchers more effective and productive in handling data, and applying powerful statistical techniques.
- *Data Cleaning and Data Publication workshop, 9/11, Belspo, Brussels (by the Platform, INBO, RBINS & RMCA):* During this hands-on workshop the process of data cleaning by using OpenRefine and the publication of biodiversity data on the GBIF network was showed. We also focused on the recent developments on publishing sample based data through the IPT. Why we should publish under CC0 (Creative commons Open data waiver) and the importance of metadata in biodiversity datasets was also handled.
- *Data Paper workshop, 13/11, Belspo, Brussels (by the Platform and INBO).* This workshop focused on issues like writing a data paper, use of the Pensoft writing tool, use of Github and google.doc for datapapers – among others.

**North Sea Conference 2016<sup>8</sup> (Platform annual conference):** In 2016, the Platform will co-organize an International open science conference on the North Sea in collaboration with UGMM/OD Nature of RBINS (Steven Degraer and Vera Vanlancker). This conference aims at highlighting state-of-the-art

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<sup>8</sup> This task was not foreseen in our initial 2015 Workplan

knowledge, solutions and prospects to enlarge the scientific basis for an ecosystem-based management of the North Sea (for details, see 2016 Workplan). In 2015, we already had two preparatory meetings and the development of a timeline and some communication material. This North Sea conference 2016 will be considered as one of the (bi)annual Platform conferences.

**Meetings:** "North Sea conference" organisation committee meetings, Brussels, Belgium: 8/10; 20/11 (**HiE, EsB, PiH**)

### **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 (3.3.1.) are highly intertwined. See above for specific contributions.

In addition – given our involvement in BiodivERsA (see Section 3.4.2.6), we are also closely following up on BiodivERsA funded projects. This year, particular attention was paid to 2012-2013 Call projects on Invasive Alien Species (by **SoV, HiE**) including the organisation of a clustering workshop for Belgian Scientists involved in these projects (2 March: What's up on IAS, see Section 3.3.1.3)

This year, we did not receive any specific requests for the follow-up of BRAIN projects (FORBIO, AFRIFORD, vERSO)

**Meetings:**

- Steering Committee of the Biodiversa project DIARS, Leuven, Belgium; 6/10 (**SoV**)
- What's up with IAS? BFIS meeting, Belspo, Brussels, Belgium; 02/04 (**SoV, HiE**)

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

Within BiodivERsA (Section 3.4.2.6.), we started to work on the Milestone 3.2 on an Analysis of the gaps and priorities for European research on biodiversity & ecosystem services based on a mapping exercise. This completed the work performed during BiodivERsA 2 for the deliverable 2.3. This analysis will be continued in 2016 and feed into the BiodivERsA's rolling agenda (<http://www.biodiversa.org/70>) (**EsB & HiE**).

As the Platform has been developing some expertise on policy briefs through BiodivERsA activities (Section 3.4.2.6.), we compiled lessons learned and good practices in a peer review article submitted to a special issue on "Advancing evidence-based sustainable development policies" in the "Journal Evidence & Policy". It is currently in review and will be published in 2016.

**Meetings:**

- For BiodivERsA related meetings, see Section 3.4.2.6.

**Publication**

- **Estelle Balian**, Lynn Dicks, **Hilde Eggermont**, Barbara Livoreil, Marie Vandewalle, Heidi Wittmer, Sofie Vandewoestjine, Juliette Young (forthcoming 2016). The fashionable policy brief: why, how to make, and how to use



policy briefs to support evidence-based policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services? In special issue on "Advancing evidence-based sustainable development policies". *Evidence & Policy*: in review

### **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**

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform is involved in several Science-Policy Interfacing activities according to its approved strategic plan for 2013-2016. At the Belgian level, many of these activities are initiated, supported and developed by the CoPs (see section 3.3.1); in many cases, these activities also extend beyond the national level (European and international scale). The CoPs use a variety of means such as meetings; workshops; animation of working group; initiation of joint projects; electronic consultations etc., in order to facilitate networking, exchange of expertise and social learning. Due to contract issues (**FIP, SoV**), the drafting of a true best practices guide for the CoP has not yet been initiated, though several success stories have already been published (see e.g. 3.3.1.3). As shown from previous annual reports, the Platform has also been very active at European and international level through its engagement in a diversity of initiatives (see also 3.4.2.), e.g. through the elaboration of research priorities and policy documents for European institutions, the organisation of information and training meetings using participatory approaches – among others. **Activities of 3.3.1., 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 are hence highly intertwined.**

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

During 2015, the Platform (**HiE**) continued to contribute to the activities of the CCIEP steering group "Biodiversity" and "Nature".

##### **Meetings:**

- SG Biodiversity RBINS, Brussels, Belgium; 2/06 (excused but written input, **HiE; AvdW**); 12/10 (**HiE, AvdW**)
- SG Nature SPW, Brussels, Belgium; 15/03 (excused but written input **HiE**)
- CCIM Stakeholder Dialogue XXIV on Biodiversity, Brussels, Belgium; 9/06 (**HiE**)

##### **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 2015, 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. In 2014, **AnH** acted as Regional Node representative for GBIF European Nodes. His role implied preparing and attending the Nodes Steering Committee meetings, bringing the voice of the European Nodes, and reporting to them. He was replaced by Anne-Sophie Archambeau in 2015, but **AnH** closely assisted her in this transition phase. The Platform was in charge of co-organizing the 7th EU GBIF Node Meeting Meetings; and co-drafting of the GBIF EU 2017-2020 strategy.

#### Meetings

- 7th GBIF European Nodes Meeting, Paris, France; 5-7/05 (**AnH, DiB, NiN**)
- GBIF- 22nd Governing Board, Antananarivo, Madagascar; 8-10/10 (**AnH, DiB, NiN**)

#### 3.4.1.3. TASK: Facilitation of Longterm Ecological Research (LTER) Belgium<sup>9</sup>

Long-Term Ecosystem Research ([LTER](#)) is an essential component of world-wide efforts to better understand ecosystems. This comprises their structure, functions, and long-term response to environmental, societal and economic drivers. LTER contributes to the knowledge base informing policy and to the development of management options in response to the Grand Challenges under Global Change. In 2015, the Platform facilitated the set-up of an LTER Belgium (led by INBO) – mainly through mapping of potential LTER sites/contributors, and facilitation of two Belgian LTER meetings. This resulted in a total of 27 sites currently proposed by the LTER-Belgium partners; a memorandum of understanding is currently being set up by iNBO. Our support to LTER will continue in 2016, for example by creating and hosting the LTER website.

#### Meetings:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Annual LTER Belgium meeting, Brussels, Belgium; 29/05 (**DiB, HiE**)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> LTER Belgium meeting, Belspo Brussels, Belgium, 28/09 (**DiB, HiE**)

#### 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 the European Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (EPBRs) - EKLIPSE

The Platform acts as Belgian node for EPBRs, 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. In 2015, EPBRs activities were reduced due to the focus on developing a proposal answering the call H2020-SC5-2015 on: "An EU support mechanism for evidence-based policy on biodiversity & ecosystems services". This is now referred to as the EKLIPSE Project. The Platform actively contributed as co-coordinator (together with CEH and UFZ) to the development of the

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<sup>9</sup> This task was not foreseen in the 2015 Workplan

proposal and participated to several Skype call conferences and to a preparation meeting held in Berlin in January 2015 (**EsB & HiE**). The proposal got granted end of this year and will take off early 2016. More specifically, EKLIPSE will build a EU Mechanism to provide timely evidence to decision-making needs in Europe, explore emerging issues and knowledge gaps to provide research strategies and recommendations (replacing EPBRS<sup>10</sup>), develop the Science-Society-Policy interface through activities and events to engage with the larger community of stakeholders, and network knowledge holders to create a network of networks in Europe for biodiversity and ecosystem services. Besides co-managing the Secretariat, the platform will lead the work package related to developing research strategies and research priorities building on its expertise as EPBRS secretariat.

As EPBRS secretariat, the Platform (**EsB, PiH**) also facilitated the stakeholder days organized before the 3<sup>rd</sup> plenary meeting of IPBES taking place in Bonn in January 2015 (see Section 3.4.2.4.)

#### Meetings:

- Stakeholder Days (10-11/01) and related activities at IPBES-3 (12-17/01), Bonn, Germany (**EsB, PiH**)
- EU Mechanism Network meeting, Berlin, Germany; 28-29/01 (**EsB, HiE**)
- Representation of EPBRS/Future EKLIPSE at BESAFE-BIOMOT International Conference on Motivations and arguments to act for biodiversity Alternative ways to inspire innovative policy making, Brussels, Belgium ; 10-11/06 (**EsB**)
- Representation of EPBRS/Future EKLIPSE at ICCB: 27th International Congress for Conservation Biology- 4th European Congress for Conservation Biology, Montpellier, France ; 3-5/8 (**EsB**)

#### 3.4.2.2. TASK – Involvement in Future Earth

The Platform acted as a Belgian node for DIVERSITAS but in 2014, the programme was merged with other global change programmes (IGBP, IHDP, WCRP) under FUTURE EARTH. The Platform actively contributed to several Future Earth meetings, often (but not solely) in the context of our BiodivERsA activities (Section 3.4.2.6.). Besides concrete input in the Strategic Research Agenda of Future Earth Europe, and exchange on best practices on stakeholder engagement, this also resulted in a common COST Action proposal “FESS – FuturE: SolutionS” (led by Finland); decision expected in 2016. The Action promotes co- design of global change research to ensure the greatest possible usability and societal impact. It will enhance evidence-based decision-making and science-based innovation in Europe, thus strengthening Europe as a global actor and conveying European values of inclusiveness, excellence, equality, and equity beyond its borders. The network of proposers includes 30 proposers representing more than 20 countries, all with emerging or already functioning national platforms for Future Earth or for general global change research.

#### Meetings:

- Cross community workshop on Extreme Events and Environments from Climate to Society (E3S), Berlin, Germany; 18/03 (**HiE**, oral presentation on Stakeholder Engagement in BiodivERsA funded research)
- Skype calls E3S Community, 16 April 2015 and 15 June 2015 (**HiE**)
- Skype call for COST Action proposal, 26 August 2015 (**HiE**)
- European Regional Workshop for Future Earth and Annual Meeting of the European Alliance, Innsbruck, Austria; 5-6/11 (**HiE**, oral presentation on Stakeholder Engagement in BiodivERsA funded research; **EsB**)

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<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the Network of Knowledge (KNEU project) is no longer ongoing but integrated in EKLIPSE

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

In December 2014, the Platform invited the IUCN Brussels office, the head of IUCN Science and knowledge of the IUCN headquarter, and the Belgian government agency members to a first meeting to discuss the possible set-up and added-value of an IUCN national committee (internal report finalized early 2015). Although the IUCN landscape in Belgium is complex and further complicated by lack of funding to safeguard the Belgium State Membership, the Platform tried to keep momentum<sup>11</sup>. More specifically:

- **EUPAG Member** : From September onwards, we engaged in the newly established EU Policy Advisory Group (**HiE** as Belgian EUPAG member) to advise the Director of the IUCN European Regional Office in Brussels on matters relating to EU policy (i.e. it synthesizes IUCN science, knowledge products and standards into policy relevant positions and messages; it advises on themes and priorities for events; and assists in liaising with National Committees and IUCN Commissions)
- Active participation to the **IUCN EU Member Meeting in Brussels**, and **IUCN's Regional Conservation Forum in Helsinki** serving as a platform for members to discuss the EU policy priority areas for IUCN European Programme 2017-2017, in preparation of the World Congress 2016 (Hawaii). This also provided great opportunities to exchange best practices with national committees (mainly those of France & the Netherlands)
- **Facilitating discussions with regard to the Belgian IUCN State Membership**, and the subsequent drafting of a **note** aiming to clarify the relevance of IUCN to Belgium and its Development Cooperation partners; the landscape of competences involved in a decision on the Belgium state membership of IUCN; and the rules regarding IUCN membership and voting. The note intended to provide neutral background information to underpin the reflection on possible, sustainable and pragmatic solutions for Belgium's engagement in IUCN
- **Exploration of the future role of the Platform as IUCN National Focal Point focusing on:**  
**1/** a more structured communication amongst Belgian members, and with IUCN; **2/** reinforcement of the engagement of the Belgian scientist community in IUCN's work. It is currently suggested that the development of coordinated Belgian positions for IUCN's Members assembly would be undertaken through the Steering Group Nature. Discussions on this matter will continue in 2016.

#### Meetings:

- EUPAG online conferences : 03/09, 16/11 (**HiE**)
- IUCN Belgian Member Meeting in Brussels, Belgium; 10/07 (**AvdW, HiE**)
- IUCN EU Member Meeting in Brussels, Belgium ; 12/10 (**HiE**)
- IUCN Regional Conservation Forum, Helsinki, Finland ; 14-16/12 (**HiE**)

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<sup>11</sup> Most tasks were not foreseen in the 2015 Workplan

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

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform is taking a leading role in coordinating IPBES-related tasks for Belgium (one of the founding members of IPBES). It hosts the IPBES National Focal Point (**HiE**) and animates several Belgian scientific networks in support of the IPBES work (see CoPs, section 3.3.1). In 2015, the Platform was involved in (1) the implementation of the 2014-2018 Work Programme, by recruiting experts for 5 different deliverables, the capacity building forum and young scientist programme (another 9 Belgian experts have been nominated by IPBES), and by reviewing various draft deliverables<sup>12</sup>; (2) interaction between IPBES and CBD by advising on the IPBES dossier at SBSTTA-19; (3) setting up, and contributing to various awareness events for Belgian Stakeholders (see Meetings below) to allow them to better understand IPBES's objectives, governance and procedure, and the wider policy landscape in which it will evolve. Such activities should also allow Belgian scientists and policy makers to better evaluate their role in implementing the 2014-2018 IPBES Work Programme, and to make good use of the outcomes; (4) clarifying the IPBES governance structure in Belgium for the CCIEP steering group Biodiversity Convention and Nature, and BBPF Steering Committee (internal document); (5) setting up a website to better connect European national platforms/national focal points (demo on: <http://home.bebif.be/ipbes>). The main purpose of this platform is to link national platforms working on IPBES-related issues in Europe (and Central Asia). Through this Pan-European network, they merge their long-term experience in the IPBES and related processes, and provide a common space for sharing knowledge, resources, opinions and lessons learned regarding IPBES; (6) participation in meetings of the Working Party on International Environmental Issues (WPIEI) and Western European and Others Group (WEOG) in preparation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> IPBES Plenaries (IPBES-3 and IPBES-4); (7) heading the Belgian delegation to IPBES-3 (12-17 January 2015, Bonn, Germany); (8) supporting stakeholder engagement sessions at IPBES-3.

In addition, together with two international colleagues, **HaK** set up the "IPBES survey Global Perspectives on National Policy-Implementation Regarding Nature's Benefits".<sup>13</sup> The aim of this survey is to provide a stock-take of where Ecosystem Services (ES) is currently being incorporated in national government policies and how these policies are being implemented through programs. It should also shed light on the needs, gaps, challenges and opportunities that nations face regarding "ES national policy implementation". This aim is in line with the IPBES work program "to enhance the enabling environment and strengthen the knowledge policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem

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<sup>12</sup> Detailed track record of all IPBES NFP actions available upon request (cf. KPI IPBES). Two Platform colleagues (**HaK** and **SaJ**) have also been involved as Lead Authors for the regional Assessment Europe & Central Asia. **HaK** is also resource person and co-author Deliverable 3(d) Scoping for the methodological assessment on the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits, including biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services; and reviewer for the Fast-track methodological assessment on scenarios and models

<sup>13</sup> Not foreseen in the original 2015 Workplan

services, and the communication and evaluation of Platform activities”. The analysis of the first set of responses (from approx. 35 member states) was initiated end of 2015.

The co-organisation of the third Pan-European stakeholder consultation meeting (likely again together with the national biodiversity platforms of Switzerland, Germany, UK and France) has been postponed until after the 4<sup>th</sup> Plenary session of IPBES (now scheduled for June 2016, in Leipzig Germany).

#### Meetings:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> IPBES Plenary meeting, Bonn, Germany; 12-17/01 (Belgian delegation: **HaK, HiE**)
- WPIEI Biodiversity, Brussels, Belgium; 21/01 and 14/12 for IPBES matters (**HiE**)
- WEOG Online meetings: 01/07; 15/09; 3/12 (**HiE**)
- IPBES Information Session at Federal Public Service Health, Food chain safety and Environment, Brussels, Belgium; 17/02 (**HiE**)
- What's up on IAS, BFIS meeting (incl. IPBES info session), Brussels, Belspo; 2/04 (**SoV, HiE**)
- First informal Belgian expert meeting to exchange best practices, Belspo, Brussels, Belgium; 30/10 (**HiE, HaK, PiH, SaJ, EsB**)
- CeBios Conference 'Capacities for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development: a global heritage, Brussels, Belgium, 26 November 2015 (**HiE, HaK, PiH**: IPBES poster)
- BEES 2015 Xmas market, Brussels, Belgium; 16/12 (**HaK, PiH**: IPBES poster)
- Resource person and co-author Deliverable 3(d) Scoping for the methodological assessment on the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits, including biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services; 08-11/06 (**HaK**)
- Lead author RA ECA CH2: 31/08-04/09; 08/10; 05/11; 20/11 (**SaJ, HaK**)
- PhD on IPBES governance: expert interview; 13/11 (**HaK**)
- IPBES Governance survey: 04/03; 10/04; 13/05; 30/06; 04/08; 07/09; 28/10; 24/11; 21/12 (**HaK**)

#### Reports:

- **H. Eggermont** (2015). Report on the First informal Belgian expert meeting to exchange best practices (held in Belspo, Brussels, Belgium; 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015)
- **H. Eggermont and pilots** (2015) Belgian Delegation Report IPBES-3 plenary 12-17 January Bonn, Germany
- Sandra Myrna Díaz, ... **Hans Keune**, ... et al. (2015). Preliminary guide regarding diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits, including biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, IPBES Technical Report
- IPBES Regional Assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Europe and Central Asia Zero Order Draft (ZOD) (**HaK, SaJ**)

### 3.4.2.5. TASK – Supporting the National Focal Point for SBSTTA and CBD

The Platform was actively involved in SBSTTA-19 (2-5 November 2015), piloting the dossier on Biodiversity and Health (**HaK**) and expert for the IPBES dossier (**HiE**). HaK was also lead for the topic on Biodiversity & Health at its preparatory meeting in Vilm (22-24 September 2015).

#### Meetings:

- European Expert Meeting in Preparation of the Nineteenth Meeting of SBSTTA (SBSTTA-19), Island of Vilm, Germany ; 22-24/09 (**HaK**; lead for Biodiversity & Health)
- 19th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Affairs of the Convention of Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada; 2-5/11 (**HaK**; pilot of Biodiversity & Health)

#### Reports:

- Segers, H. and pilots (2015) Belgian report on the 19th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montréal, Canada, 2-5 November 2015.

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

[BiodivERsA](#) is a network of national and regional funding organisations promoting pan-European research on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and offering innovative opportunities for the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity. In 2015, BiodivERsA started its third phase (2015-2019), funded under the Horizon2020 ERA-Net Cofund Scheme (EC). It now brings together 32 partner organisations from 19 European countries (i.e. a substantial expansion compared to BiodivERsA1 and 2). As during previous years, the Platform (**HiE**, **EsB**, **PiH**) represents BelSPO in tasks and work packages related to mapping activities, science-society/science-policy interfacing, and communication (WP leader; Task leader; or Task contributor). From 2015 onwards, **HiE** has also been more strongly involved in the coordination of the network (as Vice Chair). The Platform also hosts the BiodivERsA website (<http://www.biodiversa.org>) and database webportal (<http://www.biodiversa.org/database>). We highlight our major activities conducted/completed in 2015, and refer to dedicated BiodivERsA reports for further details. Main people involved in these tasks are **HiE**, **EsB**, and **PiH**. AnH and JuC are also involved for database management, web-applications and other IT support.

**Mapping Activities (EsB, HiE)** - cf. BiodivERsA Task T3.1: Mapping Activities, lead by the Platform/Belspo. This year, we mainly focused on:

- **Analysis research agendas and identify knowledge gaps and research priorities:** In complement of the analysis performed for BiodivERsA2, we started a mapping exercise of key documents at European and International level including: JPIs strategic agendas, an evaluation study of the fitness check of the Nature directives, Sutherland's horizon scanning 2014, SBSTTA 17,18 and 19 reports, and documents relevant to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. A first analysis was performed and will be discussed in a working session on 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2016. The results of this analysis will feed into the BiodivERsA rolling agenda.
- **Updating of the BiodivERsA database, and connection with the NETBIOME database from overseas partners:** This year, quite some effort was put in mobilizing partners to update their information in the BiodivERsA database (i.e. for old partners, from 2011 onwards ; for new partners, from 2004 onwards). This is a tedious and ongoing process, which we hope to complete mid-2016.

**Meetings:**

- Skype meetings with NETBIOME partners, to discuss database connection, 8 July 2015 and 22 September 2015 (**HiE**)
- Skype meeting NWO Netherlands, to discuss database connection, 9 July 2015 (**HiE**, **AnH**)

**Foresight Activities (EsB, HiE, Hak)** – cf. BiodivERsA Task T3.2.: Foresight Activities, in which Platform/Belspo is task contributor. This year, further explored and promoted the Nature-based solutions (NBS<sup>14</sup>) concept at various occasions (see Meetings below), including the organisation of a

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<sup>14</sup> NBS refer to the use of nature for tackling challenges such as climate change, water and food security, public health provision, and disaster risk management, encompassing a wider definition of how to conserve and use biodiversity in a sustainable manner. By going beyond the threshold of many traditional biodiversity conservation principles, this concept intends to additionally integrate societal factors such as poverty alleviation, socio-economic development and efficient governance principles



[Green Week side event](#) at Belspo<sup>15</sup>. The latter event was a joint venture with DG R&I, and explored how the European Research Area could contribute to bridge the gap between research and innovation focusing on NBS as a tool. It brought together 40+ representatives of programmers and funders of research from the Commission and Member States, experts, business, and relevant networks. In addition, following our 2014 BiodivERsA foresight workshop, we finalised a peer-reviewed paper on the NBS concept (Eggermont et al. (2015) – *GAIA Ecological Perspectives*). The paper aims to sharpen the term, in particular by proposing a typology of NBS, and reflect on its added-value with respect to existing terms and concepts, its possible drawbacks in case of misuse, and perceived future challenges for research and management. As such, we hope to spur further discussion, and contribute to sharpening the term allowing for a better evaluation of its true potential.

#### Meetings:

- AlterNet International Conference, Ghent, Brussels, 18-20/05 2015 (**HaK** co-organizer, **EsB**, **HiE** oral presentation)
- Green Week Side Event 'Nature-Based Solutions: Bridging the gap between research and innovation on biodiversity and ecosystem services', Belspo, Brussels, Belgium; 2/06 (organizer: **HiE**)

#### Publication:

- **H. Eggermont, E. Balian**, J.M.N. Azevedo, V. Beumer, T. Brodin, J. Claudet, B. Fady, M. Grube, **H. Keune**, P. Lamarque, K. Reuter, M. Smith, C. van Ham, W.W. Weisser, X. Le Roux. (2015) Nature-based Solutions: New Influence for Environmental Management and Research in Europe. *GAIA Ecological Perspectives*, 24/4: 243-248

**Developing links with key European bodies in charge of research programming and funding (HiE)** - cf. BiodivERsA Task T1.3: Developing links with key European bodies in charge of research programming and funding, led by NWO, in which Platform/Belspo is task contributor. The objective of this task is to explore new forms of research cooperation between key European initiatives that largely or partly address biodiversity and ecosystem services issues. This year, on behalf of BiodivERsA, we helped to approach Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs) Oceans and Climate, mainly to evaluate the capacity to create synergies, avoid redundancy and pave the way for future cooperation. We also established further contacts with The Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union (OCTA).

#### Meetings:

- Skype with JPI Oceans Secretariat (Katherine Angell-Hansen, Wendy Bonne), 14/04 (**HiE**)
- 1<sup>st</sup> JPI Oceans Conference, Brussels, Belgium; 7/05 (**HiE**)
- JPI Climate Workshop 'Improving the knowledge-base for decision making', Brussels, Belgium; 21-22/04 2015 (**HiE**)
- The Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union (OCTA) Infoday, Brussels, Belgium; 20 October 2015 (**HiE**)

**Links with other international bodies (HiE)** - cf. BiodivERsA Task T1.4: Links with other international bodies, led by FCT, in which Platform/Belspo is task contributor. The objective of this task is to explore links with other international initiatives addressing the coordination and funding of

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<sup>15</sup> This task was not foreseen in our 2015 Workplan

research at global scale and including biodiversity in their broad agenda, in particular The Belmont Forum and Future Earth, in order to pave the way for collaborative synergies and joint funding of shared priorities. This year, on behalf of BiodivERsA, we helped to raise awareness on BiodivERsA3 activities (and more specifically on stakeholder engagement practices – see various keynotes) within these international initiatives and tried to engage them for collaborative efforts (COST Action proposal “FESS – FuturE: SolutionS”), see Section 3.4.2.2.

**Science-society/science-policy/science-business interactions and communication (HiE, EsB, PiH)** - cf. BiodivERsA WP10 (Science-society/science-policy/science-business interactions and communication), lead by the Platform/Belspo. We are also task contributor for T10.1 (Promoting science-society and science-business interaction, led by FRB); task leader for T10.2 (Promoting science-policy interfacing); task leader for T10.3 (Survey and promotion of outputs and outcomes of funded projects); and task leader contributor for T10.4 (Increasing general awareness of the BiodivERsA3 activities, led by FRB). In 2015, we mainly focused on:

- **Promotion of Stakeholder Engagement (T10.1):** we gave oral presentations at various occasions on the principles and methods to help individual projects develop their strategy for stakeholder engagement (see Meetings). We also helped to launch an [e-consultation](#) on the existing stakeholder engagement handbook/toolkit (results will be analysed early 2016) ; and produced a [stakeholder engagement handbook digest](#)
- **Production of a BiodivERsA strategy for science-society and science-policy interfacing (T10.1).** We co-drafted the BiodivERsA Strategy for SSI-SPI, to be applied throughout BiodivERsA3.
- **Engagement with the EU support mechanism/EKLIPSE (T10.2)** to promote the use of BiodivERsA research projects results in reviews and evidence based answers to policy requests, while ensuring a tight collaboration to identify remaining knowledge gaps (see section 2). To this extent, we participated to the networking event in Berlin; see also 3.4.2.1.
- **Engagement with IPBES (T10.2)** We drafted a proposal to get BiodivERsA accepted as “observer” at the IPBES-4 Plenary in Kuala Lumpur (successful)
- **Policy brief production (T10.2/T10.3)** primarily targeting European policies and policy makers. We organised a BiodivERsA clustering workshop on “Improving the Science Policy Interface of BiodivERsA funded projects: how to develop relevant “clustered policy briefs” and other potential collaborations among projects” on 23-24 June 2015. The goal was to discuss with project researchers and policy makers relevant topics for policy briefs that would bring together results from several BiodivERsA funded projects. We produced a report compiling these possible topics that would be further elaborated in a policy brief with the support of a knowledge broker in 2016. For more details and full report, see <http://www.biodiversa.org/859>. We also organised an internal interpreters workshop amongst partners of the policy brief working group to discuss the implementation strategy of this task and role of various parties.
- **Revision of a document presenting the scientific and societal impacts of the BiodivERsA funded projects.** We revised the first brochure based on the projects funded by the 2008 call, made by our FRB partner, downloadable [here](#).
- **Communication strategy, and products:** Together with FRB, we wrapped up a new Communication Strategy for BiodivERsA3, maintained the necessary web-interfaces (in

particular BiodivERsA3 website, and BiodivERsA database), produced a [revamped leaflet](#), set-up a Twitter Account (@BiodivERsA3), co-drafted two newsletters (January & October editions), and a brochure presenting the 2013-2014 funded projects. We also participated at various events (e.g. BiodivERsA booth at the Green Week, and BEES Xmas market)

#### Meetings

- EU Mechanism Network meeting, Berlin, Germany; 28-29/01 (**EsB, HiE**)
- Cross community workshop on Extreme Events and Environments from Climate to Society (E3S), Berlin, Germany; 18/03 (**HiE**, oral presentation on Stakeholder Engagement in BiodivERsA funded research)
- European Regional Workshop for Future Earth and Annual Meeting of the European Alliance, Innsbruck, Austria; 5-6/11 (**HiE**, oral presentation on Stakeholder Engagement in BiodivERsA funded research; **EsB**)
- Skype meeting on SSI-SPI Strategy ; 24/04 (**HiE**)
- Clustering Workshop on "Improving the Science Policy Interface of BiodivERsA funded projects: how to develop relevant "clustered policy briefs" and other potential collaborations among projects", Brussels, Belgium ; 23-24 June (**EsB, HiE, PiH, SoV**); and Internal interpreters Meeting; 24 June (**HiE**)
- Presentation on stakeholder engagement (based on the BiodivERsA Handbook) as a mean to prevent conservation conflicts, workshop on long-term environmental conflicts, Chemin-Dessus, Switzerland; 20-23/10 (**EsB**)
- Green Week BiodivERsA Stand, Brussels, Belgium; 3-5 June 2015 (**HiE, PiH**)
- Communication Strategy meeting, FRB, Paris, France; 9 March 2015 (**HiE, PiH**)
- Skype Call on Communication issues, 13 October 2015 (**HiE, PiH**)

#### Reports/Strategies:

- **Balian E. & Eggermont H.** (2015) Outputs of the Clustering Workshop „Improving the Science-Policy Interface of BiodivERsA funded projects: how to develop relevant clustered policy briefs and other potential collaborations among projects", Brussels June 23-24, Belspo. BiodivERsA report, 29 pp. (downloadable [here](#))
- F. Lemaître, **H. Eggermont**, X. Le Roux (2015) BiodivERsA3 strategy for science-society, science-policy interfacing. BiodivERsA report, 7 pp.
- **P. Huybrechts, H. Eggermont**, C. Bléry, F. Lemaître, X. Leroux (2015). Communication Strategy for BiodivERsA3, BiodivERsA Deliverable 10.1 ; 34 pp.

***BiodivERsA Consortium Coordination & Preparing BiodivERsA's future (HiE)*** - cf. WP11 (Coordination and Management, led by FRB) in which the Platform/Belspo is task contributor. The coordination of the project includes facilitating the operation of the partnership and supervising the organisation of all necessary events and activities to support the overall coherence of the network's activities. It is also a driving force for the activities of the partnership as a whole.

#### Meetings:

- Virtual (skype) coordination team meetings: 22/01; 17/04; 1/07; 8/9; 7/10; 13/10; 21/12 (**HiE**)
- DG Research & Innovation Biodiversa coordination team meeting: 20/03 (**HiE**)
- Executive Board meetings: 20/02 (phone call), 26/03 (Paris, France), 27/04 (Paris, France), 26/06 (phone call), 21-22/9 (Paris, France), 9/12 (phone call) (**EsB, HiE**)
- General Assembly & Project Kick-off: 28-29/04 (Paris, France) (**EsB, AvdW, PiH, HiE**)
- WP Leader – BiodivERsA coordinator skypes: 2/02; 25/02; 5/03; 24/04; 12/05; 26/05; 3/06; 4/11; 22/12 (**HiE**)

### 3.5. Communication and diffusion of information (PiH)

***The 2015 daily communication activities:*** They included a regular update of the Platform website (contents wise), regular news and events update (on a weekly basis), and creation of 6 [newsflashes](#) in 2015 (bringing the total to 65) and monthly CM reports. This year, a [special GBIF Newsflash](#) was published, due to the first prize awarded to **Nicolas Noé** at the GBIF Ebbe Nielsen Challenge. The web statistics of 2015 show that the weekly update of the website led to a sensitive increase of the number of users on our website: From January to December 2015, we had a total of 33,392 unique visitors. This is a ca. 19,9 % increase of unique visitors compared to 2014 for the same period, and a 44 % increase compared to 2013. This clearly shows an increasing interest in our websites, thanks to frequent updates (news and events), branded activities (conferences and markets) and regular

newsflashes. The above ensured the Platform to be considered as a relevant and reliable source of information.

**New communication tools for Platform branding:** The [Belgian Biodiversity Platform leaflet](#) was updated and printed mid 2015; it has already been spread at various events/occasions (BEES Xmas market, CeBios Event, VLIZ Jongerendag etc.). Also, two A0 posters presenting IPBES and GBIF were elaborated and printed at the occasion of the Cebios event (“Biodiversity and Development; a global heritage”) end of 2015 (see Section 3.3.2.1.) They are to be displayed during future conferences and workshops. The format used allows for the re-use of the posters for several years.

The Communication Officer also created a mapping of all biodiversity-related institutions (and associated people) in Belgium, ranging from institutional to academics, NGO’s, networks etc. <sup>16</sup> The purpose of this mapping is twofold:

- Fostering the current Biodiversity Newsflash list by asking all these new potential contacts to join the list
- Creating a target list of early career scientists for future Young Scientists initiatives

This mapping is a living initiative, as academics contacts are always evolving. Last version was updated end 2015.

Due to the unexpected drop out of KrA who was in charge of Young Scientist activities, we have not been able to establish any other, new initiatives. Yet, the Young Scientist concept note was refined (re-written by the Communication Officer) and engagement of young scientists reinforced in data related activities (see our Empowering Biodiversity Research Conference and post-conference workshops, Section 3.3.2.1.)

**Communication support to BiodivERsA:** The support of the Communication Officer to the implementation of the BiodivERsA communication strategy was instrumental, see the various productions in Section 3.4.2.6.

**Support to the Platform’s biodiversity experts:** Highlight activities include (1) the set-up of the new pan-European network of national platforms engaging in IPBES and related website (see Section 3.4.2.4.) (2) Extensive support to the set-up, facilitation, communication of the BEES Xmas market (see Section 3.3.1.1.); (3) facilitation support to the IAS Stakeholder Meetings (see Section 3.3.1.3.); and (4) extensive communication support to the CeBioS event (e.g. creation of the Abstract book; see Section 3.3.2.1.) – to name a few.

**Other:** Dutch Test, article 9 and 11. The Communication Officer successfully undertook written, audition, listening and oral tests in Dutch throughout 2015 (article 9 & 11; i.e. the highest level for Belgian administrations)

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

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<sup>16</sup> This task was not foreseen in the initial 2015 Workplan

Besides providing support to core activities (e.g. tools for CoPs; Platform mailing lists; BiodivERsA communication), spin-off projects (e.g. AntaBIS support) 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. In addition, we also decided to open source all IT tools that the Platform has developed so far.

Platform main website (<http://www.biodiversity.be>)

Forum websites:

- BEES community website (<http://www.beescommunity.be>)
- Website on Invasive Alien Species in Belgium (<http://ias.biodiversity.be>) including Harmonia; and Alien Alert (Harmonia+, Pandora, Pandora+)
- Community of Practice Biodiversity – Health (<http://www.biodiversity.be/health>)
- IPBES National Focal Point website (<http://www.biodiversity.be/IPBES>)
- EPBRS website (<http://www.epbrs.org/>)
- IPBES Pan-European Platform (demo: <http://home.bebif.be/ipbes>; permanent URL will be: [www.eca-ipbesnetwork.org](http://www.eca-ipbesnetwork.org))

Conferences related:

- 2015 Empowering Biodiversity Research (<http://www.biodiversity.be/conference2015/>)
- 2013 Conservation Research Matters ([www.biodiversity.be/conservation](http://www.biodiversity.be/conservation))
- 2011 Biodiversity and Public Health (<http://www.biodiversity.be/health/>)
- 2010 Positive Vision for Biodiversity (<http://www.epbrs.org/event/show/28>)

Information portals:

- Belgian Data portal (<http://data.biodiversity.be/>)
- BeCRIS website (<http://biobel.biodiversity.be/>)

Project websites and dedicated portals:

- BiodivERsA website (<http://www.biodiversa.org>) and database (<http://www.biodiversa.org/database>)
- AntaBIS (<http://www.biodiversity.aq/>)
- FADA (<http://fada.biodiversity.be/>)
- Bio-GR (<http://www.bio-gr.eu/>)
- Belgian IFBL portal (<http://projects.biodiversity.be/ifbl>)
- Saproxylic beetles from Belgium (<http://projects.biodiversity.be/beetles>)
- Ants of Paraguay (<http://projects.biodiversity.be/ants>)
- African Rodentia (<http://projects.biodiversity.be/africanrodentia>)
- AfricanMothsA (<http://www.afromoths.net/>)
- Gracillarridae (Lepidoptera) (<http://www.gracillarridae.net>)
- ENBI (4 projects, 6 websites) (<http://projects.bebif.be/enbi/>)

- Pictorial beetles collection of RBINS (<http://projects.biodiversity.be/openuprbins>)
- CongoRiver Expedition 2010 (<http://home.bebif.be/cr/>)

More technical:

- GIT repositories
- Data Provider Software: IPT, Tapir, BioCASE
- MailMan mailing lists: GBIF Europe, BiodivERsA, BelgianBIF, EarlyCareerScientists, IAS, Newsflash, IPBES
- Track ticketing (Bugs/Improvements tracking)
- Redmine (project management)
- Statistics

### 3.7. Scientific services rendered by Platform personnel

- Member of the Editorial Board for the journals “Dataset papers in Ecology” (**SoV**)
- Branch editor for “Belgian Journal of Zoology” (**HiE**)
- Co-Advisor Chironomid-based applications and Cladocera research Els Ryken/Dirk Verschuren/Yoeri Torsy, Research Group Limnology (**HiE**)
- Job experience exchange at ALUMNI event Ugent, Gent, Belgium; 9/03 (**HiE**)
- Presentation on “Biodiversity for food security and nutrition”, LNE Seminar at Belgian Pavilion, Milano, Italy; 8/06 (**HiE**)
- RBINS representative at Conseil de Bruxelles (**HiE**)
- Course on “Nature Based Solutions” at Ecosystem Management & Services Ma2- Global Change Ecology, Ugent, Belgium; 19/11 (**HiE**)
- Subject editor One Ecosystem - Ecology and Sustainability Data Journal (**HaK**)
- Speaker and teacher at the 10th AlterNet Summer School, Peresq, France; 2-12/09 (**EsB**)
- Facilitation KOWI Workshop: “Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation in the EU: finding solutions through linking biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development », Brussels, Belgium ; 30/09 (**EsB**)
- Presentation on “Science Policy Interfaces” at the Plan Bleu Inception Workshop “Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean: strengthening the science policy interface”, Sophia Antipolis, France ; 15-16/12 (**EsB**)
- Django 2015 Conference, Cardiff, UK, 31/05-5/06 (**NiN**)
- Support to the Belgian Science Policy Office (**PiH**) The Communication officer developed messages; letters and press releases to highlight BELSPO’s importance in the context of the Government Agreement, stipulating the entity would be restructured. This was a direct demand from BELSPO’s former president Philippe Mettens. Interested journalists have been targeted and various media interviews have been organized during a period ranging from January 2015 to April 2015. The Communication Officer managed to get in contact with the

Cabinet of Secretary of State Elke Sleurs during this period. Parliamentary questions were also developed. Two of these questions were put forward during a session at the Belgian Senate in March.

#### Scientific Publications:

- **H. Eggermont, E. Balian**, J.M.N. Azevedo, V. Beumer, T. Brodin, J. Claudet, B. Fady, M. Grube, H. Keune, P. Lamarque, K. Reuter, M. Smith, C. van Ham, W.W. Weisser, X. Le Roux. 2015. Nature-based Solutions: New Influence for Environmental Management and Research in Europe. *GAIA Ecological Perspectives*, 24/4: 243-248
- J.H. Habel, M. Teucher, B. Hornetz, R. Jätzold, S. Kasili, J.N. Kimatu, Z. Mairura, R.K. Mulwa, **H. Eggermont**, W.W. Weisser & L. Lens (2015) Real-world complexity of food security and biodiversity conservation. *Biodiversity & Conservation* DOI 10.1007/s10531-015.0866-z
- **Keune H.**, Van den Hazel P. and Boudier F. (forthcoming 2016) Unmasking environmental health Zorros: the need for involvement of real risk communication experts for two-way & problem solving communication approaches. In: Pacyna J. (Eds) *Environmental Determinants of Human Health*, Springer books

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