Workplan 2016

Compiled by H. Eggermont (h.eggermont@biodiversity.be) - BBPF Scientific Coordinator; January 2016

Content

1/ __INTRODUCTION__

As shown from our previous Annual Reports, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform (abbreviated as 'Platform' hereunder) has made substantial efforts to further meet the concerns of the evaluation panel (October 2012), both with regard to its organisational structure/management (including the physical move of secretariat functions to STIS/Belspo, and the development of a first set of Key Performance Indicators), its core activities (for example: reinforcement of data publication activities; enhanced involvement of (young) scientists in policy processes; increased scientific support to national and EU policies) and outreach (for example: the upgrade of the website, productions of Platform promotion movies and other communication products). With the forthcoming external evaluation of our Platform activities in spring 2016, and new developments in the European and international scene (e.g. the take off and implementation of EKLIPSE, and the set up of a multistakeholder platform for nature-based solutions – see 3.4.2), we have an exciting year ahead. The Platform team looks forward to tackle the upcoming challenges, engage in new projects and initiatives, and further position itself in the landscape. The below 2016 workplan focuses on the '**highlights**' (new developments/actions) within each work area of the strategic plan (2013-2016), with reference to the six major objectives, and with clear indication of deliverables and target dates (an overview is presented in **Annex I**); regular activities are not explicitly listed. As in the annual report, we note that categorization of tasks is not always straightforward. They may relate to more than one objective; and should be seen as interlinked and mutually supportive. Finally, we note that the implementation of our workplan will highly depend on the availability of personnel; we can only be successful if all colleagues are (and remain) on board.

Detailed **Concept Notes** for each of the new initiatives can be provided upon request.

2/ __PLATFORM STAFF FOR 2016__

Biodiversity experts:

- ✓ Maxime Coupremanne (MaC, DEMNA; 100% - but contract still not in place yet)
- ✓ Estelle Balian (EsB, RBINS; 80%)
- ✓ Dimitri Brosens (DiB, INBO; 100%)
- ✓ Hilde Eggermont (HiE, Dr., RBINS; 100%)
- ✓ Lise Goudeseune (LiG, RBINS; 100% from mid-March onwards for 7 months, payed by BiodivERsA project funding)
- ✓ Hans Keune (HaK, Dr., INBO; 50%)
- ✓ Sander Jacobs (SaJ, Dr. INBO; 50%)
- ✓ Sonia Vanderhoeven (SoV, Dr., DEMNA; 100%)

Communication officer:

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

IT support team:

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

✓ Nicolas Noé (NiN, IT developer, BELSPO STIS; 80%)

Spin-off projects:

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

3/   FORESEEN ACTIVITIES (HIGHLIGHTS)

3.1. Platform management and operational structure

One of the most crucial activities this year will be the external evaluation of the Platform activities, mandatory for future (financial) support. The evaluation will be intrusted to a group of three independent international experts chosen for their complementary competence in one of the three work areas. The evaluation will be a two-phase process: (1) an individual pre-evaluation by the experts on the basis of Platform background information (some of which will be specifically drafted for this purpose – e.g. a self-reflection document), to which we will provide written feedback (March-April); and (2) a face-to-face panel meeting at Belspo between the evaluators and the Platform team (May). Based on the recommendations received, we will draft a new Strategic Plan 2017-2021 by autumn.

The Platform will also elaborate on its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and try to optimally address recommendations from its target audiences/stakeholders throughout the implementation of the 2016 Workplan. Finally, the renewal of the annual budget is due end of March 2016; and a new 4-year contract for the Platform will need to be prepared by September.

3.2. Work Area 1: Strengthening biodiversity e-infrastructures

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

For many years, the Platform has been acting as the Belgian National node for the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and by doing so, it has responded to the request by the scientific community to offer a service of professional data management. This includes a variety of tasks including the animation of a Belgian BIF contact group, the mobilization of new datasets, the improvement of data quality/fitness-for-use of existing datasets, support to BRAIN.be projects with regard to biodiversity data publication, promotion of open data access and data use in Belgium, and attendance/organization of relevant meetings and workshops – to name a few. Both the direct political and scientific relevance of this activity are unequivocal. **2016 highlights include**:

- **Data mobilization:** In the past, our mobilization efforts were often driven by an opportunistic approach. Now that we have a strong basis of established data publishers, we have to tackle three very different audiences:

    ✓ **early adopters** are convinced and have the necessary skills and infrastructure to open up their data resources. E.g. RMCA, BCCM, RBINS UGent, Meise, or INBO (cf. open data policy)

    ✓ **new comers** are equally convinced but lack some skills and/or the

infrastructure   eg ULB, ULg, Natuurpunt or DEMNA

- ✓ **outreach** towards research institutions, NGOs, young scientists or citizen science groups that did not yet use GBIF to publish their biodiversity data.

This year, we will elaborate our new 2017-2021 Data Mobilization strategy and find appropriate actions for these three audiences.

The mobilisation of biodiversity data (most likely IAS data) from the Flemish region will be intensified through continued collaboration with INBO and Natuurpunt. We plan to publish occurrence datasets on "invasive summering geese and breeding birds from INBO" and "exotic species, fishes and plants from Natuurpunt". We will also investigate how we could publish sample based vegetation data originating from the INBOveg tool.

- **Data flow mapping**: In support of our data mobilization effort, we will draw a 'Data Flow' including all major Belgian biodiversity data owners (by June). This mapping will not only show the institutes that have already opened up their data, but also capture other key players that do not. Hence, this document will give an estimation of biodiversity data potentially reachable in Belgium. In case data are (being) published, the document will show through which means. When data are not yet published, the document will list the existing barriers to open access as perceived by the data owners. These barriers could be technical, political, financial, scientific (embargo), behavioral... to mention a few. Having such a data flow document will help us to define our 2017-2020 Data Strategy (autumn).

- **Organisation of at least two Belgian GBIF workshops on data publication and data papers** (following the Empowering Biodiversity Research conference and workshops) in collaboration with universities/institutes in the Flemish and Walloon region; date still to be determined. The main aim of such workshops would be to explain to scientists how to retrieve information from the new GBIF portal, to illustrate the added-value of GBIF data in the development of their research, and to highlight other options for data use. These workshops will build on the successful efforts (post-conference workshops) in 2015.

- **Belgian Data Portal:** In regards to the renewal of our Belgian Data Portal, we have already investigated two potential open source solutions: Atlas of Living Australia (**ALA**) and **CKAN** from Open Knowledge Foundation. The final choice for the framework of our Data portal will be made early next year, followed by the actual implementation (June).

- **Development and implementation of projects aiming at compiling, linking and integrating biodiversity topical data.** This covers our support to various (spin-off) projects, as appropriate:
    - o **Anta'BIS** (Antarctic Biodiversity Information Facility; http://www.biodiversity.aq): we will continue our technical/hosting support of this Antarctic spin-off project
    - o **SAFRED** (Saving Freshwater data, see 2015 Annual Report): This Belspo-funded project will focus on species occurrence data and supporting environmental data from freshwater sites. For standardising sample-based data, SAFRED will build on the ongoing developments (led by GBIF in the framework of the FP7 EU BON project) to improve the Darwin Core standard for this type of data. These biodiversity data will be incorporated in the occurrence database developed by RBINS, in the framework of

the FP7 BioFresh project (Biodiversity of Freshwater Ecosystems: Status, Trends, Pressures, and Conservation Priorities), which is hosted by the Platform. Together, the mobilised datasets will result in a long series of homogeneous data, which will support synthetic analyses at various scales. As non-funded partner of the SAFRED project, the Platform will help our partners to mobilize and publish relevant biodiversity data (through appropriate trainings, practical/technical support to data harmonisation and integration etc.). The Platform is committed to 6 man months over the next 2 years. The BioFresh and AquaRES website support will also be part of this task.

- o **BID** (Biodiversity Information for development; http://www.gbif.org/programme/bid): The Platform is the Belgian partner of two proposals to BID first African Project call:
  - Capacity building and biodiversity data mobilization for conservation, sustainable use, and decision making in Africa and Madagascar
  - Strengthening the biodiversity stakeholders network in Togo

In the first proposal, the Platform will act as "Facilitator of access to bio collections in the royal botanical garden and other institutions holding bio collections in Belgium". In the later proposal, the Platform will be "Trainer/Advisor". We expect that at least one of the two proposals will be granted.

- **Belgian Observation Portal on Invasive Alien Species (IAS):** This portal could potentially include an **early warning system** (by the end of 2016), a dynamic **register of alien species** in Belgium (by June), and **distribution maps** in the Harmonia Information system. Getting a comprehensive and up-to-date view of non-native species occurrences in the Belgian territory is becoming a necessity. Moreover, this action will greatly support the implementation of the new EU regulation on the prevention and management of IAS. The dynamic register of alien species present in Belgium will have links to existing initiatives such as the Manual of the Alien Plants of Belgium (Botanic Garden Meise), the Non-native species of the Belgian part of the North Sea and neighboring estuaries (VLIZ), etc. The expert registry developed in 2015 will help to identify taxonomic experts needed for the group validation. Additionally, there is a need for a neutral portal for online recording of early warning species as well as species of EU/MS/regional concern under management that will be deployed at INBO and DEMNA (in parallel). As the whole system should be fit for purpose (i.e. to address the Belgian reporting requirements of the new EU regulation on IAS), developing a similar IT system can hold great added value in terms of efficiency and harmonization. The IT development will be offered by the Platform to both INBO, DEMNA and potentially Brussels Environment. Regional partners will take care of the content, in particular criteria linked to management follow-up. INBO will deliver support from a business analyst.

  Note: This task will be arranged/completed according to the agreements taken in the context of the Cooperation Agreement on IAS.

- **COST Action Alien Challenge Workshop** 'Data for invasive alien species research, policy making and management' (16-17 February 2016, Brussels). The goal is to examine ways to improve the interoperability, accessibility and openness of invasive species data for all its different uses. This includes examining aspects such as biodiversity informatics standards suitability for invasive species assessment; improving data flows; exploring ways to make

invasive species research more reproducible and ways to resolve the fragmentation of invasive species information. The meeting will be a joint venture with Botanical Garden Meise and INBO.

- **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 should allow to assess whether species qualify as IAS of EU concern, and hence to prioritize IAS for risk assessment. Based on the results of this project, a peer-reviewed publication is foreseen by June.

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

Highlights include:

- Further establishment of the Platform as '**Lifewatch Service Center**', pending ERIC status. This task will involve further animation of a community of Lifewatch data providers in Belgium, and enhancement of the communication amongst Belgian stakeholders. We will also continue to facilitate the publication of Lifewatch related data.

- **To support the National Reference Centre (NRC) Biodiversity in EIONET / EEA** in order to stimulate coherence/standardisation/harmonisation, and subsequently improve Belgium's reporting of its monitored data to EEA. Tasks will be performed on behalf of INBO/BBPF.

- We will continue our support in **GBIF Node trainings** and help **testing new GBIF tools**, as appropriate

3.3. Work Area 2: Fostering biodiversity research

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

The CoPs are recognized tools to develop capacity and to exchange knowledge amongst members of a community of stakeholders. At present, the Platform animates CoPs in three topical areas: "Ecosystem Services", "Biodiversity and Health" and "Invasive Alien Species". **2016 highlights[1] include**:

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[1] Please note that various CoP activities also feed into Objective 5

… for all CoPs

Organize an information session with policymakers in Belgium (regional/federal) during which the work of the different CoPs will be explained/illustrated. This feedback session should allow the CoPs to better feed actual policy needs.

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

- **Monitoring and evaluation of BEES activities:** 2016 will mark the beginning of a more structured monitoring and evaluation of BEES activities and their impact on the target groups. This will be done through (i) online user surveys sent out to BEES members, concerning both general and more targeted actions (e.g. communication, horizon scanning, science-policy interfaces); (ii) analysis of survey results (quantitative, qualitative); (iii) enrichment with user feedback from other sources (informal/spontaneous feedback, results from BBPf user surveys relating to BEES activities etc.) – to name a few. On this basis, we will draw some lessons and propose changes/adjustments to current and planned activities. Results will also feed into our BEES Key Performance Indicator.

- **Belgian Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) Working Group:** In 2016, the Platform will remain one of the Belgian representatives to the EU MAES working group, and continue to facilitate the connection between the Belgian MAES-working Group and the developments at EU level (incl. BENELUX). We will also reinforce the linkage between the Belgian regional ecosystem assessments and the Knowledge Innovation Project on International Natural Capital Accounts (KIP-INCA), led by Jan-Erik Petersen from the European Environmental Agency (EEA).

    BEES will, concurrent with the CoP evaluation, develop a **new communication strategy** (by March) to enhance connection and communication between local practice and research and the ongoing international (research) networks such as PECS-Future Earth, IPBES, Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP), MAES etc. The communication strategy will also help to establish clear objectives, target audiences, tools and messages to promote BEES in a more efficient way. The team will, for instance, reflect on a potential social media strategy. Along with the communication strategy, the BEES website will be revamped and updated (by May).

- **Organisation of an annual BEES event,** following the successful BEES Christmas markets of 2014 and 2015. The format and timing of the event is not yet nailed down.

- **ESP Steering committee coordination:** together with Joachim Maes from the European Wommission, the Platform will continue to chair the ESP Steering Committee, making sure that experiences from the Belgian CoP are shared and communicated within this international community of practice.

- **Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) 2016 regional conference**: Following up on the idea that emerged in 2014 to have an ESP regional EU conference, the Platform has initiated cooperation between ESP, EU-FP7 projects Operas and Openness and the UAntwerp's

project Ecoplan to host this conference in Antwerp (19-23 September 2016). The Platform is part of the organizing committee, which will guarantee visibility of BEES, the Platform and the Belgian research community working on ecosystem services. Other ESP related activities by the Platform include the coordination of the 'Regional Chapter Europe' (incl. Russia & Turkey), and Thematic group 'Value Integration'; and the drafting of several peer-reviewed papers.

… for the CoP on Invasive Alien Species (national and international); Belgian Forum on Invasive Species (BFIS):

- In 2016, efforts will be carried on towards **data mobilization for the Belgian Observation Portal on IAS** (see 3.2.1.)

- Pending approval by the forth IPBES Plenary (February, Kuala Lumpur), IPBES may soon launch a call for experts to conduct the actual **thematic assessment on Invasive Alien Species** (expected first half 2016). We will inform and engage the BFIS through appropriate means (e-meetings, and informal discussions).

- A European **workshop on IAS risk management** is foreseen for May 2016. The BFIS will be co-organising the event together with INBO, Newcastle University (UK) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (UK).

- We aim to **assess the risk of several tree species** using the Harmonia+ protocol (by September): *Acer negundo, Ailathus altissima, Robinia pseudoaccacia, Quercus rubra* and *Prunus serotina*. This task will be done in collaboration the DEMNA, Ugent and Stellenbosh University (South Africa) and should be peer-reviewed.

- Other activities include a revamping of the **BFIS website** (by October), the digesting of results from the COST Alien Challenge activities (by September), the settlement of the new IAS Cooperation Agreement in support of the Belgian implementation of the EU legislation etc. (hopefully by end of 2016)

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

- **CoPBH 'One Health' workshop:** in 2016, we will organize regular networking events. A major highlight will be the organization of the first COPBH Workshop on 'OneHealth'. This two-day workshop (tentatively scheduled for October) will be organized in close collaboration with representatives from science, policy and practice (both national and international), and will make a nice fit with international events on this topic. '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 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.

- **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[2]) 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. For now, 2018 has been set as a potential target date (maybe 2019 is more feasible), but an extensive preparatory phase will be needed – including a careful check whether there is enough support (need) from the policy side to organize such an event. This will be done together with the Federal Public Service Health, Food chain safety and Environment – amongst others.

- **CoPBH expert registry***:* Similar to our expert registry for Invasive Alien Species (see 2015 Annual report), 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). The expert registry has been initiated last year, and will be further elaborated this year (launching of the registry expected by December). We will also assess the feasibility to set up a 'data' inventory – providing access to major (national) publications/key documents.

- **Ecosystem Services Partnership Thematic Working Group Ecosystem service & Public health***:* In 2016 we will finalize analysis of the results from the survey on Ecosystem services and human health - awareness and attitudes. This will be published by means of a peer reviewed paper. For the 2016 ESP Europe conference (cf. above), this thematic working group will take initiative to organize a 'health session'.

- **Other activities** include exploration of new grants (project collaboration) and representation of CoPBH in various Belgian and international initiatives.

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

- **CoP Experts Registries:** Experts Registry will be (further) developed for the BFIS and CoPBH (see 3.3.1.). Experts will be offered to describe their profile using an appropriate form. The CoP website will offer a dedicated query to discover/query/visualize the Belgian Experts Registry. In parallel, the data will also enrich the more generic BeCRIS database/website**.**

- The next **2016 Platform conference** will be co-organized with OD Nature (Steven Degraer and Vera Van Lancker) and will be an '**Open Science conference on the North Sea'**. It will

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[2] Report of the 2011 Belgian Biodiversity – Public Health Conference (organized by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform) downloadable here: http://www.biodiversity.be/1888

take place in Ostend on 7-10 November 2016. There will be two main pillars with associated themes to structure the content of the conference: (1) Scientific fundament, comprising spatio-temporal patterns and marine ecosystem processes; and (2) Science for management and policy, comprising ecosystem assessment, assessment tools, and socio-economic relevance. This conference thus aims at highlighting state-of-the-art knowledge, solutions and prospects to enlarge the scientific basis for an ecosystem-based management of the North Sea. The event will be open to fundamental and applied research, lessons-learnt from both successes and failures in marine management, and innovative measurement and data handling concepts from within and beyond the North Sea. The conference will equally cover biodiversity and physico-chemical environmental aspects of the North Sea, and particularly welcomes integration of different disciplines. We anticipate attracting ~300 scientists from North Sea-bordering countries and beyond. The platform will be responsible for supporting the organization, the communication and the facilitation during the event.

- An **EU-wide horizon scanning exercise related to Nature-based solutions** will be organized by the Platform as part of our activities for the EKLIPSE project (cf. call H2020-SC5-2015 on: "An EU support mechanism for evidence-based policy on biodiversity & ecosystems services") by the end of the year; see also Section 3.4.2. The specific scope of the workshop still needs to be negotiated with the project partners. If possible, we may integrate a specific activity at Belgium level to engage the scientific, policy and practice communities.

- Finalization of the **article on policy briefs** for the special issue "Advancing evidence-based sustainable development policies" in "Evidence & Policy" (by April). This could possibly lead to the development of a communication training workshop.

- Within BiodivERsA, we will complete our work on Milestone 3.2. on an **Analysis of the gaps and priorities for European research on biodiversity and ecosystem services** based on a mapping exercise (see Section 3.4.2.)

- **Others**: The Platform will stay actively involved in the **follow-up committee** of the selected BRAIN projects and BiodivERsA funded research, as appropriate. In addition, we will also do a **strategic exploration of upcoming calls and potential collaborations** (internal report by December 2016).

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

At the Belgian level, the Communities of Practice (CoPs) bring together relevant knowledge holders and stakeholders around issues of topical interest in order to enhance the science-policy interface in Belgium. Hence, activities of 3.3.1., 3.4.1. and 3.4.2. are highly intertwined. As for previous years, we will further develop **success story case-study papers** (see 2015 Annual report for examples),

assessing the various methods and means that have been used so far, and when possible, measuring the impacts these have had on the uptake of advise in policy processes.

Other highlights in this context include:
- In support of the national implementation of the EU legislation on IAS, we will contribute to the **development of a cooperation agreement** including the establishment of a National Secretariat on IAS.
- The Belgian partners of **LTER (Long-Term Ecological Research)** asked the Platform to developed and hosted their website (LTER.be), expected to be launched by February 2016.

At the global level, our active participation to the **GBIF Governing Board** in Brazil (25-26 October) is worth highlighting.

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

In 2016, several actions will be developed to strengthen our involvement as scientific advisor at the decision-making and policy developing levels:

European level:
- Our **EPBRS** related activities will be embedded in the work for the project **EKLIPSE** that will start in February 2016 (call H2020-SC5-2015 on: *"An EU support mechanism for evidence-based policy on biodiversity & ecosystems services").* The Platform is co-coordinator and in charge of the workpackage 4 on *"Jointly identifying research priorities and emerging issues" .* A coordination meeting is already planned for 13-14 January and the kick-off meeting will take place on 15-17 February 2016. We foreseen a horizon scanning event related to Nature-based solutions in the course of 2016, possibly connected to the national horizon scanning exercise (see Section 3.3.2). Other activities will include support to the coordination and communication tasks, as well as support to other ad hoc activities as the project develops.

- For **BiodivERsA3**, the Platform (on behalf of Belspo) is leading the work package on "Promoting the science-society and science-policy interfacing throughout the BiodivERsA research development process" (including communication and general awareness on BiodivERsA activities), and the task on "mapping and foresight activities". It will also be closely involved in the BiodivERsA governance (Platform memberas vice chair) and several other tasks. In this context, 2016 highlights include: (i) the procurement of a knowledge broker (call for tender by March) and development of 2-3 BiodivERsA clustered policy briefs as follow up of the 2015 workshop; (ii) mobilization of updated records for the BiodivERsA database and a subsequent analysis (by the summer); (iii) update of the analysis of national, European & international agendas documents to identify current research priorities (by April); (iv) a meeting between BiodivERsA and EKLIPSE to avoid duplication and increase synergies; (v) Production of a BiodivERsA partner engagement leaflet (by May) explaining the application procedure, implications and benefits arising from active partnership; (vi) Regular Communication tasks as before (upgrades newsflashes, brochures, website updates, Twitter;

etc.); and (vii) actions to upgrade BiodivERsA to a JPI-like tool; interactions with IPBES, Belmont forum; co-drafting of the new BiodivERsA roadmap etc.

- Resubmission (23 February) of our **COST action proposal 'Integrated valuation of ecosystem services: building a community of practice across Europe' (IVES-com)**; this proposal will be submitted through INBO. The main aim of this proposal (13 countries + EC) is to: (1) harmonize integrated valuation methodologies and findings from current EU-FP7 projects, networks and scientific domains; (2) build capacity among communities of practice and stimulate establishment of new networks by intensively engaging policy, business and civil society stakeholders; (3) develop a virtual knowledge center linking the existing portals on ecosystem services to centralize and compare results; and (4) propose guidelines and transfer knowledge to multiple decision making levels. This project contributes to the EU Biodiversity strategy to 2020 (target 2, action 5), links to the upcoming IPBES assessments, Horizon 2020 (challenges 5 and 6) and formulation of Post-2015 sustainable development goals and targets.

- Engagement – through INBO - in a proposal (led by ECNC and Prospex) to the recently launched Call H2020-SC5-10-2016 (**CSA**; Societal Challenges) for a **'Multi-stakeholder dialogue platform to promote innovation with nature to address societal challenges'** (published: 14 Oct 2015; deadline 8 March 2016). The main aim would be to provide an integrated evidence base and a European reference framework on nature-based solutions (NBS) and to promote the co-design, testing and deployment of improved and innovative nature-based solutions in an integrated way and at multiple scales and levels (from European to national, regional and local). The NBS multistakeholder platform will build on a strong dialogue between science, policy, business and society to mainstream both the available knowledge into policy making and practice, and the needs of policy makers and practitioners into research and innovation policy and agendas. For this reason - it is also explictly mentioned in the call text that this Platform should create synergies with other highly relevant ongoing such as Biodiversa and EKLIPSE (i.e. EU Mechanism for Biodiversity and Ecosystem services). We propose to engage in two WPs:

WP1 – Community of Practice: outreach and engagement on NBS from local to global levels, participating in the Task T1.2. on 'Learn from others: screening/analyzing existing networks and platforms' – building on our experiences from the BEES CoP. In this WP, the BBPf would act on its own behalf.

WP3 – Supporting society & policy: Harmonising NBS knowledge with societal challenges and policy needs, leading task T3.3 on 'Development of a comprehensive database on Nature-Based Solutions (researchers and stakeholders)'; and participating in T3.3. 'Co-creation of a roadmap for future research and innovation which supports the uptake of marketable NBS'. Clearly, both tasks would build on our engagement in BiodivERsA. Thus, in this WP, the BBPf would act on behalf of BiodivERsA.

International level:

- The **collaboration with IUCN** will be intensified through (1) participation in EU Policy Advisory Group (EUPAG); (2) establishment of the Platform as national focal point for IUCN. The latter will involve a more structured communication amongst Belgian members, and with IUCN; 2/ reinforcement of the engagement of the Belgian scientist community in IUCN's work. To that end, we will develop a national focal point website, and targeted mailing list (April – May). The website will show the functioning and involvement of Belgian's institution in IUCN, the role of the Platform, general objectives and presentation of IUCN, and finally highlight news and events. This work will be similar as the IPBES NFP-website revamp (see below).

- Hosting the **National Focal Point for IPBES**, the Platform will be involved in (1) heading the Belgian Delegation for the third IPBES-4 Plenary (22-28 February, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), and related reporting; (2) the implementation of the 2014-2018 Work Programme, most notably by recruiting experts for the various task forces/assessments; and review of deliverables; (3) participating in EU expert meetings and meetings of the Working Party on International Environmental Issues (WPIEI); (4) production of a Belgian National Focal Point information brochure, and organisation of at least two IPBES information sessions for targeted audiences. The IPBES-NFP website will also be revamped, making it easier to navigate and search for information; texts will be updated and a new design will help to attract more users.

  In addition, our team will be strongly involved in the actual assessments (two colleagues as contributing lead authors), and in the co-organisation of the third Pan-European Stakeholder Engagement meeting (PESC-3) which will likely take place in Leipzig (June). Finally, the communication officer will finalize the creation of a pan-European platform for IPBES National Focal Points, by finalizing the new website (www.eca-ipbesnetwork.org) and fostering interaction. The website includes all the NFP's information, a common agenda and valuable news items. The network wishes to foster closer collaboration between European national focal points to IPBES, and exchange of best practices.

- Support to **SBSTTA-20** and **CBD-COP13**, for the dossiers 'biodiversity & health', and linkage between 'IPBES & CBD'.

- Participation to the **PESC-Future Earth** (Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society) conference, and representation of Belgian case studies (December 2016)

3.5. Communication and diffusion of information

As highlighted at various occassions, outreach is crucial for providing access to the services of the Platform, and for disseminating information and results of our activities. Besides the communication tasks listed in previous sections (targeted communication for the CoPs, revamp of websites, outreach support for projects like BiodivERsA and EKLIPSE etc.), the communication officer will be in charge of:

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

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

- **The Biodiversity Newsflash** will undergo changes in style and distribution. A new free tool will be used (MailChimp), allowing the communication officer to put the content immediately in the mail's body (not only in a mail's attachment) and offering new layout possibilities. A mapping has also allowed identifying new potential Newsflash subscribers. An invitation addressing these target audiences will be sent, offering them to subscribe. The annual number of Biodiversity Newsflashes should stay at a rate of 6 (one every 2 months).

- The Communication Officer will provide **logistical & graphical help in any biodiversity-related event the Platform organizes or co-organizes.** This involves providing communication advice and furnishing technical help. In 2016, registration websites will be created (e.g. for the BEES Christmas Market or for the North Sea Conference 2016), along with leaflets, flyers, posters and a serial of practicalities (catering needs, stand-installation, transport of material, prints, badges…). The communication officer will keep on responding to the ad-hoc needs of each biodiversity expert of the Platform throughout 2016. Finally, all recurring activities will be dealt with, such as a weekly newsfeed, a regular newsflash and material maintenance.

- Communication training on '**How to communicate with the press'** (second half 2016). Young scientists will be specifically targeted.

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

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

By offering some hardware redundancy, we do expect to increase up time of Platform servers. This will not only increase the availability of Platform wide services but also enhance the support to spin-off projects for our partners.

3.7. RASCI (Responsibility Assignment Matrix; RAM)

ANNEX I presents an overview of our objectives, planned actions, target dates, deliverables and principal actors for 2016.

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

	R	A	S	C	I

Platform management	AvdW	Belspo; BPF steering committee	HiE, AnH, EsB, SoV	CM	Host institutes
Scientific coordination	HiE	Belspo; BBPF steering committee	AvdW, EsB, SoV, AnH	CM	Host institutes
Work Area 1					
Objective 1 (data publication)	AnH	CM	JuC, NiN, DiB, MaC, SoV	CM	BBPF steering committee
Objective 2 (biodiv e-infrastructures/standards – but excluding our biannual conf)	DiB	CM	IT team	institutes working on Lifewatch, EU bon, pro I biosphere,..	BBPF steering committee
Spinoff projects:					
• AntaBIS	AvdP	RBINS; Belspo	NaY	CM; BelSPO Antartica Programme manager; Int. Steering Committee; SCAR; LifeWatch	
Work Area 2					
Objective 3 (Biodiversity & Public Health)	HaK	CM	HiE	HiE (SBSTTA/CBD)	BBPF steering committee
Objective 3 (Belgian Ecosystem Services)	HaK/SaJ	CM	EsB	HiE (IPBES)	BBPF steering committee
Objective 3 (Invasive Alien Species)	SoV	CM	AnH, JuC	HiE (IPBES)	BBPF steering committee and other relevant parties
Objective 4 (Conservation)	HiE	CM	PiH	IUCN science contact group	BBPF steering committee; SG Nature & Biodiversity
Objective 4 (Horizon Scanning)	EsB/SaJ	CM	LiG, HiE		BBPF steering committee
Objective 4 (2016 North Sea Conf)	EsB	CM	PiH, HiE, and colleagues	Scientific Advisory Board; RBINS OD Nature	BBPF steering committee

Objective 4 (Follow-up committee projects)	HiE	CM	DiB, SoV		BBPF steering committee
Work Area 3					
Objective 5 (Steering group biodiversity/nature)	HiE	CM	AvDW		
Objective 5 (GBIF)	FrG	CM	AnH	Belgian GBIF contact group; GBIF	BBPF steering committee
Objective 5 (Early Career Scientist)	PiH	CM			BBPF steering committee
Objective 5 (LTER)	DiB	CM; INBO	ITteam; HiE	Belgian LTER partners	BBPF steering committee
Objective 6 (EKLIPSE)	EsB	CM; RBINS	HiE	Project coordinators	BBPF steering committee
Objective 6 (BiodivERsA)	HiE, LiG	BelSPO; RBINS; CM	EsB , AnH, PiH, JuC, LiG	Project coordinator	BBPF steering committee
Objective 6 (Multistakeholder NBS platform)	SaJ	CM; INBO	EsB, LiG, DiB, HiE	BiodivERsA partners; BEES CoP	BBPF steering committee
Objective 6 (COST IVEScom)	SaJ	CM; INBO	HaK, HiE		BBPF steering committee
Objective 6 (IUCN internat.)	HiE	CM; BelSPO	LiG, PiH	CCIM biodiversity/ CCIM Nature	BBPF steering committee,
Objective 6 (IPBES)	HiE	BelSPO	HaK	EsB; HeS (RBINS CBD); CCIM biodiversity & Nature; BBPf Steering committee	BBPF steering committee
Objective 6 (CBD SBSTTA)	RBINS (HeS) as SBSTTA NFP	CM	CBD NFP; Platform team (for scientific consultations)	CCIM biodiversity	BBPF steering committee
Transversal activities					
IT support	AnH	CM	NiN, JuC		

Communication	PiH	CM	Platform team		

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

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

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

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

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

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