

Workplan 2017



Biodiversity.be

1/ Introduction

As shown from our previous Annual Reports, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform (abbreviated as 'Platform' hereunder) has made substantial efforts to meet the requests from the 2012 Evaluation panel. It is now ready to enter its new four-year phase during which the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, Management Plan and Communication Plan will be implemented. These documents have been designed to further develop successful activities while also taking into account the concerns raised by the 2016 Evaluation panel. Hence, we have an exciting year ahead! The Platform looks forward to tackle the upcoming challenges, engage in new projects (like TrIAS, *Tracking Invasive Alien Species: Building a data-driven framework to inform policy*) and further position itself in an ever changing landscape. The below 2017 Workplan focuses on the 'highlights' (new developments/actions) within each of the four strategic objectives of the (new) 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. The list of '2017 Actions' is summarized in [Annex I](#). The latter table also specifies the target date, main actor (responsible), and deliverable, and also serves as RASCI (Responsibility Assignment Matrix). Day-to-day (regular) activities are not explicitly listed. As in the annual report, we note that categorization of '2017 Actions' is not always straightforward. They may relate to more than one objective/activity or task; and should be seen as interlinked and mutually supportive.

2/ Platform Staff for 2017

Biodiversity experts:

Estelle Balian (EsB, RBINS; 80%)

Dimitri Brosens (DiB, INBO; 100%)

Maxime Coupremagne (MaC, DEMNA; 100%)

Hilde Eggermont (HiE, Dr., RBINS; 100%)

Lise Goudeseune (LiG, RBINS; 100%, of which 1 month on BBPF and 11 months on BiodivERsA)

Hans Keune (HaK, Dr., INBO; 50-60%)

Sander Jacobs (SaJ, Dr. INBO; 40-50%)

Sonia Vanderhoeven (SoV, Dr., DEMNA; 100%)

Communication Team:

Angelique Berhault (AnB, RBINS; 100%, Communication Coordinator)

Pierre Huybrechts (PiH, RBINS; 100%, of which 4 months on BBPF and 8 months on EKLIPSE)

IT support team:

Julien Cigar (JuC, System Administrator, BELSPO STIS; 100%)

André Heughebaert (AnH, IT engineer, BELSPO STIS; 80%)

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

3/ FORESEEN (2017) ACTIONS

3.1. BBPF Management

Target 1: Improve the operational structure and management of the Platform

Task 1.1. To develop and implement an updated management plan for the Platform

- 2017 Action: Getting the updated 2017-2021 Management Plan (drafted end of 2016) approved by the Platform Steering Committee

Task 1.2. To clarify the role of the Platform Steering Committee (BBPF SC) with respect to strategic development, advisory functions, controlling and decision-making; and reinforce regular interactions

- 2017 Action: Getting the Terms of Reference for the BBPF SC approved by the BBPF SC. The BBPF SC is seen as a very important step to include important stakeholder groups, increase ownership, and add legitimacy to our work.

Task 1.3. To create a stable operational structure for the Platform

- 2017 Action: In May 2017, the Platform is entering a new 4-year phase. Therefore, the new 4-year contract needs to be established (signed by the State Secretary) early 2017, as well as the annual contracts with the host institutes. This should allow for a relatively stable operational structure and administrative context, ensuring continuous employment and an efficient follow-up of the recurrent annual budget.

Task 1.4. To provide an independent basis for annual monitoring and evaluating the Platform's progress towards the operational objectives

- 2017 Action: This year, we aim for at least two meetings with the BBPF SC, as such interactions will allow for efficient follow-up and guidance of Platform activities, and increase added-value for both parties.
- 2017 Action: Drafting and approval of the Platform's 2016 Annual report, and Key Performance Indicator report, essential for annual monitoring.
- 2017 Action: Drafting and approval of the Platform's 2017 Workplan (including a Responsibility Assignment Matrix)

- 2017 Action: End of last year, the Platform’s new Strategic Plan 2017-2021 was drafted and approved by the BBPF SC. The current set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) needs to be adapted to this new context, making sure all strategic objectives are sufficiently covered and appropriately monitored.

Task 1.5. To develop tools that can guide the sustainability of existing or new Platform initiatives

- 2017 Action: Publication of “success story cases” presenting a successful science-policy initiative by the Platform and its Communities of Practices (CoPs), in strong collaboration with the Communication Team. As part of the follow-up of the KPI for ‘Belgian Ecosystem Services’ (BEES), the user survey launched last year will be further digested and a list of concrete actions will be distilled from it to reinforce BEES activities and ambitions. Both activities provide open tools that can guide the sustainability of existing or new Platform initiatives such as activities performed within the CoPs.

Target 2: Improve the financial status of the Platform

- 2017 Action: As during the previous year, the Platform will try to engage in externally funded projects as opportunities arise, to supplement the ‘closed’ (inadequate) Platform budget envelop.
- 2017 Action: We will also assess to what extent it is feasible to deduce an annual budget report tailored to the Platform’s objectives and tasks (to be included in the general 2017 Annual report as annex). The latter will largely be based on time allocation of each colleague at ‘task’ level

3.2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The four strategic objectives of the Platform are:

<p>OBJECTIVE 1 – ANSWERING POLICY NEEDS: Activities with a policy-driven focus</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 2 – CATALYSING THE IMPROVEMENT OF RESEARCH PROCESSES: Activities with a research-driven focus</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 3 – KNOWLEDGE INTERFACING AND SHARING: Building mutual understanding & shared-knowledge</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 4 - ENABLING DATA PUBLICATION AND DATA USE: Activities and tools supporting research and SPI through the promotion of free and open access to biodiversity data</p>

OBJECTIVE 1 - ANSWERING POLICY NEEDS - Activities with a policy-driven focus

ACTIVITY 1.A: Serve as national focal point for global biodiversity initiatives

Task 1.A.1. Serve as National Focal Point (NFP) for the IUCN

Given the ongoing negotiations regarding the Belgian State Membership (fee), the position of the Platform as IUCN NFP is insecure. Depending on the outcome (i.e. whether or not the Platform's role is safeguarded), the following activities could be conducted:

- 2017 Action: As IUCN NFP, we will contribute to regular interactions and exchange of best practices within the 'Working Group of Regional and National Committees', and also contribute to the set-up of the 'Global Group for National and Regional Committee development' following a decision taken at the World Conservation Congress 2016. These exchanges should inspire our actions at national level (see mandate of the IUCN NFP: [here](#))
- 2017 Action: As IUCN NFP, we will further contribute to the EU Policy Advisory Group to advise the Director of the IUCN European Regional Office in Brussels on matters relating to EU policy (i.e. synthesizing IUCN science, knowledge products and standards into policy relevant positions and messages; advising on themes and priorities for events; and assisting in liaising with National Committees and IUCN Commissions).
- 2017 Action: This year, specific attention will be given to the update the IUCN NFP website such as the News and Events pages, ensuring that pages always have updated contents, resources and links page, especially when receiving updates from IUCN. This website will also be revamped in terms of layout in order to make it more attractive, and a system of automatic news send-out will be assessed (and if useful, set up) to ensure subscribers are updated on a regular basis.
- 2017 Action: Finally, this year we also hope to reinforce the engagement of Belgian experts in the six IUCN Commissions; various communication channels will be used for this purpose.
- 2017 Action: Like last year, we will also provide ad hoc support (logistical and communication support) for IUCN events.

Although the role of Regional Councillor West-Europe (HiE) is one in personal capacity, this position should also give more visibility to the successes of Belgian members, and result in an increased information flow.

Task 1.A.2. Serve as National Focal Point for the IPBES

- 2017 Action: The 5th IPBES Plenary will take place in Bonn (7-10 March 2017). As IPBES National Focal Point, the Platform will lead the Belgian Delegation and provide pilots for several dossiers. The preparations will likely involve an EU Expert meeting, several WPIEI meetings, and Belgian coordination meeting. The wrap up will be done by means of a Belgian Delegation report.
- 2017 Action: Like previous years, the Platform will organize an informal Belgian expert and stakeholder exchange session, allowing to exchange best practices, voice concerns

and suggestions for improvement with regard to the implementation of the IPBES work programme, and increase the general understanding of the usefulness of IPBES deliverables. Other IPBES meetings/events might be organized on an ad hoc basis, with support from the communication team.

- 2017 Action: The website of the IPBES NFP will be revamped giving our users a more ergonomic access to the information they are looking for. Also, special attention will be given to ensure the website is updated at all times by including news, events, and reports of latest events.
- 2017 Action: The website of the ECA-Network will be finalized in order to provide users with an updated layout and accurate information. The website will also be updated on a regular basis. Furthermore, a communication plan will be elaborated in order to think through how to expand the ECA-Network, and a logo will be created for the network.
- 2017 Action: To support the IPBES ECA assessment, an expert workshop on multiple conceptualisation of values review will be organized in cooperation with the valuation core group, the Technical Support Unit (TSU) on values, the IPBES secretariat and selected experts. A detailed review will improve quality of the ECA assessment, and be a test case for the global assessment on Values. Results will be presented at the global meeting of the TSU on values.
- 2017 Action: As for 2016, HaK and SaJ will contribute to the ECA Assessment as Lead Author for Chapter 2 and 1, respectively.

ACTIVITY 1.B: Provide scientific input to global biodiversity initiatives

Task 1.B.1. Organize the input by Belgian experts in SBSTTA and CBD Conference of the Parties

- 2017 Actions: Likely (depending on the expertise needed), the Platform will provide input as expert or pilot for SBSTTA-21. In addition, we will also communicate effectively on SBSTTA developments through appropriate channels.

ACTIVITY 1.C: Contribute to (European) biodiversity initiatives and legislation

Task 1.C.1. Represent Belgium in the EU Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services (MAES) working group, [ESMERALDA](#) stakeholder group and as Ecosystem Services Partnership ([ESP](#)) National Chapter.

- 2017 Actions: Through the International Working Group of the Belgian Ecosystem Services (BEES) Community of Practice, scientific and policy recommendations, concerns and suggestions will be channeled to the European Commission working

group on Mapping and assessment of Ecosystem Services (MAES), and the stakeholder engagement process of the European project ESMERALDA on the same topic. BEES also functions as the national chapter for the European Ecosystem Service Partnership ESP. The platform (SaJ) has the role of co-chairing the steering committee of ESP, and will further coordinate the thematic working group on valuation. The connection of Belgian place based social-ecological research to the program on ecosystem change and society (PESC, a Future Earth program) will be further maintained and explored.

Task 1.C.2. To co-coordinate the BiodivERsA ERA-net, and support and manage Belspo's engagement in this ERA-net to strengthen the European Research Area on biodiversity, ecosystem services and nature-based solutions; and to promote collaboration of Belgian scientists in pan-European biodiversity research communities

- 2017 Actions, as Lead for BiodivERsA's WorkPackage 10 (WP10) on "science-society, science-policy, and science-business interaction and communication": The Platform will contribute to a series of tasks, including the update of the Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit; Policybrief writing with support for both content and layout (6 briefs to be expected by end of 2017); a Brochure on Societal impact and Academic Excellence 2010-2012 Projects; a scientist-stakeholder workshop; a business@biodiversity workshop; a concept note for a second so-called Principal Investigator clustering workshop (to be organized in 2018); the production of the BiodivERsA Newsletters; and a wiki for BiodivERsA project scientists. The BiodivERsA leaflet will also be revamped in order to integrate updated information and refresh the identity of the ERA-Net. In addition, folders and notepads will be created for BiodivERsA in line with the refreshed graphic identity of the leaflet. Additionally, a leaflet on new partner engagement will be created to allow potential new partners to be duly informed on advantages, rights and duties of organisations joining the ERA-Net. The organization of selected BiodivERsA meetings will be supported by the Platform communication team.
- 2017 Actions, as Lead for Task T3.1. on "mapping activities": The Platform will finish the update of the [BiodivERsA database](#), and conduct a new series of analysis of funding trends and type of research funded (brochures).
- 2017 Actions, as Contributor to Task T1.3. (links with EU bodies) and Task 1.4 (links with international bodies): The Platform will co-organize a joint event with EKLIPSE (still to be determined), and contribute to the ECA assessment (review, production of BiodivERsA project digest etc.)
- 2017 Actions, as Vice Chair (HiE) of the ERA-net: the Platform will engage in activities ensuring a sustainable future for the network (organization of a meeting to discuss the upgrade of BiodivERsA to a JPI-like tool etc), in co-drafting of the implementation plan for the Strategic Research Agenda, and in multiple coordination activities across the various workpackages.

Task 1.C.3. Represent Belgium in the EU Scientific Forum on Invasive Alien Species.

- 2017 Action: Advice on scientific questions related to the implementation of the Regulation is provided through a Scientific Forum with representatives of the scientific community appointed by the Member States. Specific tasks for the Platform are: 1) Assist the Commission in relation to the implementation of the Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014; 2) Assist the Commission in the preparation of delegated acts; 3) Coordinate with Member States, exchange of views; 4) Review risk assessments prepared by Member States for inclusion in the lists of EU concern.
- 2017 Action: In 2017, an additional support to the Commission will be provided by the Platform through the EU project EVB2ETU2016/0013 "*Study on Invasive Alien Species – Development of risk assessments to tackle priority species and enhance prevention*". The Platform will mainly contribute to the development of the list of species to be risk assessed and provide expertise on terrestrial and aquatic plant species.

Task 1.C.4. Support the National Scientific Secretariat on Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

- 2017 Actions: In January 2017, the new National Secretariat on Invasive Alien Species will be launched as a result of the cooperation agreement between the Federal, the Communities and the Regions in relation to the implementation of the Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014. This cooperation agreement recognizes the Platform as a key player for the implementation of the Regulation, in particular as regard to the Belgian Information system on IAS *Harmonia*, our risk assessment protocols and the Belgian Forum on Invasive Species for networking capacities. The platform will support the IAS Secretariat during the course of 2017.

Task 1.C.5. Co-coordinate the [EKLIPSE](#) project and the development of a long-term European Mechanism to strengthen the SPI for biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe.

- 2017 Actions, related to promotional/communication activities: Following EKLIPSE's Foresight workshop on 6-7 december 2016 and first joint science-policy-society conference on 7-8 december 2016, a short movie relating the outcomes of the events shall be developed. An overall presentation of EKLIPSE shall be included in the movie as well. Due to the high cost of such a video, the communication officers will produce this video internally, with the available recordings of the events. The time estimate for such a task is yet uncertain for this is the first time a movie will be produced entirely by Platform members. Moreover, promotional tools will be developed to ensure sufficient visibility of the Science Café and the Science-Society Forum. Efforts will also be made in ensuring that EKLIPSE partners are promoting EKLIPSE in the right way on their own communication supports, especially their websites. The report and related communication products on the joint foresight workshop on "Social Innovation and Nature-based solutions will be finalized and largely disseminated. Similarly, the product/report of the first expert working group on the impact evaluation framework of Nature-based solutions for climate resilience in cities will be finalized and largely disseminated and promoted.

- 2017 Action, as part of the EKLIPSE secretariat and Knowledge Coordination member: the Platform will ensure the follow up on the expert working group working on business regulations in Europe and support the launch and management of the second call for request in March-April 2017.
- 2017 Action, as leader of the work package 4 on emerging issues and research needs: the Platform will carry the scoping of the request on “impacts of electromagnetic radiations on invertebrates and wildlife”. This scoping will lead to the development of a foresight activity such as an e-conference OR a horizon scanning exercise that will be implemented through a sub-contract managed by a public procurement procedure.
- 2017 Actions in support of other WPs: A capacity building workshop will be jointly organised in Brussels in April 2015 with EKLIPSE work Package 5 partners and the EU funded project ECO-POTENTIAL on how to communicate uncertainty in modelling. The Platform will also support the development and implementation of the EKLIPSE Forum and the organisation of a second Society engagement event (Science café in a large sense) on the values of biodiversity for citizens.

Task 1.C.6. Support [LTER](#) (Long-Term Ecological Research) Belgium

- 2017 Actions: upon request from INBO, we can support further website (earlier developed by the Platform but now hosted by INBO) and national meetings.

ACTIVITY 1.D: Contribute to national coordination activities

Task 1.D.1. Active involvement in the CCIEP steering groups Biodiversity Convention and Nature

- 2017 Action: Active participation to meetings of the Steering Groups (preparations plenary sessions/Conference of the Parties of Conventions and others).

Task 1.D.2. Active involvement in the National Scientific Council on IAS and observer in the National Committee on IAS

- 2017 Actions: As a result of the cooperation agreement between the Federal, the Communities and the Regions in relation to the implementation of the Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 on IAS, the Platform will be active member of the National Scientific Council and observer in the National Committee. The Platform will co-organize with INBO an exercise dedicated to assess the manageability of IAS based on a manageability assessment protocol used in UK and our online facilitation tool developed for *Harmonia*⁺. Moreover, the Platform will continue its participation in the Steering Committee of the "Pathways analysis for EU IAS species". The project is funded by ANB. According to article 13 of the Regulation Member States have to identify and prioritize introductory pathways for IAS to their countries and develop

actions to prevent further introductions. The envisioned deliverables of the project are: 1) An identification and prioritization of IAS pathways for Belgium; 2) Developing draft action plans for pathway interventions at Belgian scale. The project duration is nine months. These deliverables are the basis for obligations by the Member States that have to be fulfilled by January 2018.

Task 1.D.3. Support to the UNESCO-MAB NFP

- 2017 Action: The Platform will identify the process for Biosphere reserve designation in Belgium, to support the UNESCO-MAP National Focal Point (hosted by Belspo).

OBJECTIVE 2 – CATALYSING THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROCESSES

Activities with a research-driven focus

Activity 2.A: Provide capacity building to scientists

Task 2.A.1. Provide visibility to Belgian scientists' fields of expertise and current projects related to biodiversity.

- 2017 Action: From time to time, we will conduct interviews with selected scientists (focusing on their research, their field of interest, some key results etc.), practitioners, or policymakers – to be published in the Platform Newsflashes.

Task 2.A.2. Provide relevant information to the Belgian scientific community

- 2017 Actions: Relevant information will be provided to the Belgian scientific community through the news section of our website, through our Newsflashes, via the Twitter account of the Platform and our mailing lists (e.g. the invasive-species@biodiversity.be mailing list of the Belgian Forum on Invasive Species). Along with a review of the Biodiversity Newsflash (described in Communication Task 1), the BEES seasonal newsletter will continue to be published on a 3 month basis. The possibility to develop also a seasonal COPBH/EU-COP-OHEH Newsletter will be discussed between the COPBH Coordinator and Communication officers.

Task 2.A.3. Provide networking opportunities through the organisation of informal and formal meetings, workshops and trainings for scientists

- 2017 Actions related to the BEES CoP: Based on evaluation and suggestions of the 2016 event, another BEES young scientists day will be organized. Based on evaluation and suggestions of the 2014, 2015 and 2016 events, another BEES-

market will be organized to connect between disciplines, projects and decision makers from different regions.

- 2017 Actions related to other CoPs and projects: As part of EKLIPSE, several opportunities will be open to Belgian scientists from various disciplines to join workshops, e-conferences and trainings. We will also organize COPBH and IAS network events when there is a need/opportunity.

Activity 2.B: Identify the most pressing emerging issues in national and european biodiversity research

Task 2.B.1 Identify the most pressing emerging issues in Belgian and European biodiversity research, conservation and policy for the short, medium and long term (through CoPs, BiodivERsA and EKLIPSE/EPBRS activities)

- 2017 Actions: As leader of the EKLIPSE work package 4 on emerging issues and research need, the Platform will carry the scoping of the request on “impacts of electromagnetic radiations on invertebrates and wildlife”. This scoping will lead to the development of a foresight activity such as an e-conference or a knowledge gap analysis that will be implemented through a sub-contract managed by a public procurement procedure. In the context of EKLIPSE, there is some flexibility/unknown in the planning of activities that will be implemented in 2017, as these will respond to requests submitted to EKLIPSE calls. It is likely that a horizon scanning exercise might be organized on a specific theme in 2017. Finally, we will also contribute to Foresight activities through our Communities of Practice, and through our engagement in BiodivERsA (see C.1.2). As regards the latter, we will also feed the Horizon2020 Programme Committee (Belspo).

Activity 2.C: Raise awareness for update of research by policymakers

Task 2.C.1. Share research results with decision makers, highlighting the scientific evidence underlying them as well as the infrastructures, governance and other necessary means in order to properly tackle identified priorities and results

- 2017 Actions: The Platform will elaborate a list of contacts of policy-makers in order to have on-hand email addresses to whom policybriefs and other relevant science-policy interface materials can be sent. We will also help selected projects to draft policybriefs, e.g. Belgian Team working within the BiodivERsA (and Belspo)-funded [SIGNAL](#) project.

Activity 2.D: Initiate and support network activities on knowledge-needs and emerging issues

Task 2.D.1. Initiate brainstormings, new CoPs, ad hoc events and surveys to address emerging issues

- 2017 Actions: An internal Platform brainstorm will be organized on the identification of emerging issues to ensure that the Conference to be organized in 2018 will address a hot topic related to biodiversity. Also, the revamped website will ensure that past initiatives organized by the Platform and tackling emerging issues will be more visible for potential uptake (e.g. results of the “Positive Visions for Biodiversity” conference, videos on the importance of biodiversity research, etc.).

OBJECTIVE 3: KNOWLEDGE INTERFACING AND SHARING - Building mutual understanding and shared knowledge

Activity 3.A.: Facilitate Cops on policy-relevant issues in biodiversity research

Task 3.A.1. Coordinate and facilitate activities of CoPs on policy-relevant issues in biodiversity research

- 2017 Actions related to the CoP Belgian Ecosystem Service Community (BEES): The BEES community is steadily growing: it is gaining a critical mass in administrations, policy and science (with representation of a large variety of disciplines). Next to organizing a BEES young scientist day and BEES market (see Task 2.A.3.), as well as continued improvement of the communication, topical meetings will be organized and facilitated, and organization of working groups and ad-hoc initiatives will be continued.
- 2017 Actions related to the Belgian Forum on Invasive Species (BFIS): Tools developed by the Forum in recent years have been considerably successful. Numerous initiatives were implemented at regional, national and European levels in which the expertise of the forum was instrumental. Throughout 2017, the Platform will ensure the consistent and coherent use of BFIS data and tools amongst different initiatives. A major tool developed 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. 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.
- 2017 Actions related to the CoP Biodiversity & Health (COPBH): As next steps building on the European OneHealth/EcoHealth Workshop (Brussels October 6&7 2016) for 2017, the following activities will be launched:
 - o compilation and publication of the final conference report on the website,
 - o investigation for a Special Issue building on workshop outcomes,

- o investigation for initiation of a European OneHealth/EcoHealth Community of Practice with potential working groups focusing on “Education and capacity building”; “Social science contribution” (for which in 2016 a brainstorm survey was launched); and “Micro-biome science – policy interface”.
- o Support to the organization of a Belgian biodiversity & health state of the art review by the Belgian federal Superior Health Council will be another potentially important activity for 2017. This will be coordinated as much as possible in conjunction with and complementary to other related activities, such as the collaborations with the Province of Antwerp/university of Antwerp and Natuurpunt.
- o In 2017, the CoPBH expert registry needs further development, mainly coordinated by a volunteer expert working for the COPBH, with support from the Platform’s IT team. Further progress is needed on the online visualization of experts. This will need careful attention as the topical field of biodiversity & health is rather broad and complex. Also the dimension of the potential European OneHealth/EcoHealth Community of Practice may have to align with this activity.
- o The work of the Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) Thematic Working Group Ecosystem service & Public health will be further developed, including an update of the survey on Ecosystem services and human health - awareness and attitudes, which was launched earlier. The update will allow prioritization of other activities for mainstreaming public health with the Ecosystem Services field.
- o The COPBH furthermore will also keep supporting other relevant Belgian and international initiatives.

Activity 3.B. Act as a knowledge-broker for biodiversity research

Task 3.B.1. Communicate on research results to specific target audiences (e.g. elaboration of policy briefs, digests, decision-support tools)

- 2017 Actions related to general communication matters: see Task 2.C.1.
- 2017 Actions related to EKLIPSE and BiodivERsA: see Task 1.C.5 and Task 1.C.2, respectively

ACTIVITY 3.C. Build the capacity of key stakeholders and mainstream biodiversity across sectors

Task 3.C.1. Organise and facilitate trainings and workshops for capacity building and for knowledge sharing. This would include integrating new developments and linking up with new agendas

- 2017 Action related to general Platform matters: In 2017, the Platform will link up with CIFAL Flanders and KMDA (Zoo Antwerp) for the organization of an Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Action Learning Day. The idea would be to make different stakeholders understand the importance of biodiversity in reaching the 2030 SDG Agenda.
- 2017 Actions related to EKLIPSE and BiodivERsA: see Task 1.C.5 and Task 1.C.2, respectively.

Activitiy 3.D. Act as pioneer in the science field by sharing best practices and tools

Task 3.D.1. Share BBPF best practices and tools (e.g. transdisciplinarity, participatory approaches etc) in different science fields

- 2017 Actions: Several Platform memo's have been developed by the Platform Communication coordinator for internal use, such as:
 - Memo on how to organise a conference
 - Memo on how to use participatory approaches in scientific meetings
 - Memo on how to communicate with the press

These will be edited in order to make them public, and thus available for external use. Furthermore, a training workshop on how to communicate scientific results will be organized for BRAIN projects (Belspo-funded projects) in order to provide insight to Belgian scientists on how to communicate the impact of their research and the key results of their findings to diverse audiences such as decision-makers.

OBJECTIVE 4 - ENABLING DATA PUBLICATION AND DATA USE - Activities and tools supporting *Research and SPI* through the promotion of free and open access to biodiversity data

Activity 4.A. publish relevant biodiversity data and enable data use

Task 4.A.1. Support Belgian data providers in publishing their biodiversity data (upon request/through digitization calls) and data papers

- 2017 Action, Support Data Providers: Offer IPT hosting, helpdesk for IPT users, support IPT installation/configuration. Help Data providers to publish their datasets and datapapers. Specific attention will be paid to move forward the publication of databases owned by DEMNA, respecting the restrictive data sharing rules. In the same light, we will closely follow up on and participate in the data sharing policy process at DEMNA.
- 2017 Action, Promote the relevance of GBIF: Organize appropriate trainings and GBIF Days info sessions. A set of messages will be developed in collaboration between the IT team and the Communication Coordinator for the use of the revamped Platform website

and for communication materials to be used in Universities and research institutes focusing on highlighting the benefits of data publication (including information on data cleaning, data papers, IPT...).

- 2017 Actions, Contact potential donors for Digit Calls: Since the previous digitization calls funded by the Platform have been interrupted in the past years due to lack of funding, the Platform Communication Coordinator will meet with private foundations and companies to receive external funding for the launch of new digitization calls. Information on digitization services will also be added on the Platform website in order to ensure that scientific institutes interested in receiving support for the digitization of their data are provided with key information.

Task 4.A.2. Building a data-driven framework to inform policy on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) : TrIAS

- 2017 Actions, related to the TrIAS project (Tracking Invasive Alien Species: Building a data-driven framework to inform policy): The TrIAS project was developed by a consortium of 12 partners including the Platform. It has recently been granted by Belspo through the Brain call for 4 years. It will be built on two components: 1) The establishment of an automated data mobilization framework for alien species data from diverse data sources and 2) the development of data-driven procedures for risk evaluation based on risk modeling, risk mapping and risk assessment. We will use facilities from GBIF, standards from Biodiversity Information Standards organization (TDWG) and expertise from Lifewatch to create and facilitate a systematic workflow. Alien species data will be gathered from a large set of regional, national and international initiatives, including citizen science with a wide taxonomic scope from marine, terrestrial and freshwater environments. Observation data will be funneled in repeatable ways to GBIF. In parallel, a Belgian checklist of alien species will be established, benefiting from various taxonomic and project-based checklists foreseen for GBIF publication. The combination of the observation data and the checklist will feed indicators for the identification of emerging species; their level of invasion in Belgium; changes in their invasion status and the identification of areas and species of concern that could be impacted upon by bioinvasions. Data-driven risk evaluation of identified emerging species will be supported by niche modelling and results from climate modelling and consequent risk mapping using critical climatic variables for the current and projected future climate periods at high resolution. The resulting risk maps will complement risk assessments performed with the recently developed Harmonia+ protocol to assess risks posed by emergent species to biodiversity, human health, plant health and animal health.

Task 4.A.3. Understand Natura2000 data flows

- 2017 Action: We will contact appropriate actors and develop a graph of data flows (who have data, where does this data go, who are the intermediaries, any barriers).

Task 4.A.4. Elaborate a mapping of Belgian biodiversity data owners

- 2017 Action: We will develop a graph of Belgian biodiversity data owners (who have data, where does this data go, who are the intermediaries).

Activity 4.B. Fill data gaps

Task 4.B.1. Data gap analysis

- 2017 Action: we will conduct a temporal, taxonomic, and geographic data gap analysis, and produce a visual (graph) and recommendations

Task 4.B.2. Publish data based on gap analysis

- 2017 Action: Based on graph 4.B.1, we will develop appropriate tools to mobilize missing data identified by gap analysis.

Activity 4.C. Improving data quality and access

Task 4.C.1. Develop appropriate Darwin Core recipes

- 2017 Action: We will develop or adapt DarwinCore recipes (or guidelines) to cover various thematics or use cases – e.g. Freshwater, Invasive Alien Species etc.

Task 4.C.2. Develop a Communication Hub on Biodiversity Informatics tools and Standards

- 2017 Action: We will set up a 'Biodiversity Informatics communication platform' (e.g. Rocket chat) to serve as basic communication channel for all members of this Community of Practice (network). This Community hub will start with the participants of the *Empowering Biodiversity Research conference* held on 21 May 2015. This hub will allow for informal exchanges of information and tools among members and interested parties. Based on the results of the 2015 conference, communication materials will be elaborated and communicated to the hub and the public at large. Small-scale meetings could also be organized in this context, if relevant and upon request of the members of the hub. The 'Biodiversity Informatics communication' hub would also encompass our role as LifeWatch Service center, i.e. 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 Lifewatch stakeholders. The EU Lifewatch Implementation plan is currently being finalized, so we should have a clearer view on the needs soonish.

- Clearly, this task is also strongly related to Objective 3.

Task 4.C.3. Revamp and republish existing datasets into high-quality format

- 2017 Action: We will republish existing datasets with recent tools/standards. This is an excellent opportunity to improve Data Quality and Data Description (metadata). Appropriate communication actions, e.g. through our social media, will also be taken care of.

Activity 4.D. Empower the local network

Task 4.D.1. Provide IPT hosting solutions

- 2017 Actions: We will offer IPT hosting to Belgian institutions, Spin-off project and GBIF participants, whenever needed. In addition, we will also develop sets of messages on the benefits of IPT hosting solutions (based on GBIF sets of messages) for the use of regional institutions, Universities and others.

Task 4.D.2. Developing and hosting of dedicated data portals

- 2017 Actions: Throughout 2017, we will build and host new dedicated portal, whenever appropriate. The current dedicated data portals will be maintained. The Communication Coordinator will also look into options to enhance the visibility of the Platform through the harmonization of the different dedicated data portals. Furthermore, a listing of all the dedicated data portals and other websites the Platform is managing will be listed under a repertory on the main Platform website.

Task 4.D.3. Develop new local partnerships

- 2017 Action: A graph will be developed to highlight the current partnerships the Platform has in comparison with the list of all institutions working on biodiversity in Belgium to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the Platform collaboration.
- This task is complementary to Task 4.A.4.

Task 4.D.4. Maintain a dedicated biodiversity data portal (Belgian GBIF portal)

- 2017 Action: We will further improve and promote our light-weighted, CKAN based, data portal.

Activity 4.E. Participate to the global network

Task 4.E.1. Engage in the GBIF Work Programme

- 2017 Actions: We will contribute to GBIF WP as proposed (see GBIF 2017 WP for more details). We will also act as mentors within the Biodiversity Information for Development (BID) programme, led by GBIF and funded by the European Union.

Task 4.E.2. Develop partnerships with Democratic Republic Congo (DRC) node

- 2017 Action: We aim to transfer DRC datasets hosting to the DRC node and offer support to GBIF DRC Node, whenever appropriate.

Task 4.E.3. Reinforce existing collaboration with European Nodes or abroad

- 2017 Action: Collaboration will be evaluated at 9th European Nodes meeting, Spring 2017

Task 4.E.4. Play an active role in one of the GBIF Committees

- 2017 Action: This action refers to chairing the Nodes Committee as AnH was elected NC Chair at GB23 for two years.

Task 4.E.5. Act as Lifewatch Service Center

- 2017 Action: See Task 4.C.2

Task 4.E.6. Improve accessibility of biodiversity research infrastructures

- 2017 Action: This year, we aim to map the different research infrastructures that are currently at hand of BE research community, and identify any barriers for access.

3.3. TRANSVERSAL ACTIVITIES - IT Support

IT Task 1: Develop and maintain the Platform communication tools

- 2017 Action: we will configure/deploy appropriate tools, and investigate new ones.

IT Task 2: Provide punctual support to biodiversity data project kernels and coaching related to database and portal needs of Platform spin-off data projects

- 2017 Actions: Give appropriate support, whenever necessary; and phase out Bio-GR hosting and support.

IT Task 3: Maintain IT infrastructure in adequacy with the support of Platform services

- 2017 Action: This will involve hardware and software maintenance.

3.4. TRANSVERSAL ACTIVITIES - Communication

Communication Task 1: Elaborate and implement a revised communication strategy 2017-2020

2017 Actions: A revised communication strategy was elaborated by the end of the year 2016 and will be approved by the Steering Committee by mid-January 2016. This revised strategy intends to provide guidelines on how the visibility of the Platform can be improved towards scientists, policy-makers and practitioners. It also focuses on finding pathways to ensure that the services provided for the Platform are in line with our target audiences are needed and that these services are well communicated. The Strategy therefore provides a context in which the Platform evolves (including a force field analysis), a vision, communication objectives, communication policy, values the Platform stands for, communication tools used by the Platform to communicate with its audiences, the identification of target audiences, a communication implementation plan, and elements on how to evaluate the impact of communication activities.

Furthermore, several concrete general communication tasks will be performed in 2017:

- All contacts of Platform staff will be centralized into a unique tool so that all emails or newsletters sent to different contact lists of Platform staff benefit from an harmonized layout whereby the Platform gets visibility.
- A document will be elaborated to explain the policy on the visibility of the Platform when co-organizing events with other partners. This will ensure that the Platform remains a key strategic partner when co-organizing events and remains visible throughout the event.
- The format of the Newsflash will be reviewed to ensure the contents are readable within the body text of the email rather than as a PDF attached file. An attempt to include short interviews of scientists/practioners/policy makers will be made.
- The contents of the Platform leaflet will also be updated, while a Platform powerpoint template will be created, and the contents of the Platform video will be assessed for potential review.
- A phase-out strategy will be developed so that Platform staff are provided with guidelines on how to proceed to communicate to external parties when a project is reaching its end.

The Communication Coordinator will also ensure that the internal communication is enhanced by following-up with brainstorm meetings held at the end of 2016. The main identified issues were mainly the lack of planning and detailed information when Platform staff requests support from the supporting team. Tools such as Git-Lab (ticketing service tool) and Rocket-Chat (internal discussions tool) will therefore be tried for a period by the staff and the communication coordinator will be responsible for enforcing these new practices. Furthermore, Platform staff will be asked to report more frequently to the communication team on the activities they are performing. This will thus allow for a more comprehensive internal and external communication. Also, internal communication tools such as the memo on how to organise a Platform conference will be updated. The Platform google calendar will also serve as a tool of internal communication to communicate more actively on the planning of the communication team.

Communication Task 2: Revamp the Platform website

2017 Actions: The Platform website biodiversity.be will undergo a revamp in early 2017 to address the comments of the external evaluators as listed in the 2016 evaluation and the feedback from Platform staff as listed during a brainstorm on Platform communication issues held on 14 November 2016. The website revamp will participate in the development of a new public image for the Platform by ensuring that the structure of the website is simplified, that the contents are up to date, that a clear visibility is given to current activities, and that a clear information is provided on the services we offer. The main messages will focus on background information on biodiversity, the services that the Platform offers for the different types of audiences, and the results of events organised by the Platform. The layout will provide ergonomic comfort to the users by ensuring that the interface is more modern, clear, and interactive.

Communication Task 3: Publish relevant information on a regular basis

2017 Actions: The Platform website will be updated on a weekly basis with news items and events announcements. Furthermore, the use of the Twitter account allows for the wide spread of key activities of the Platform and relevant news to the Platform target audiences.

Communication Task 4: Organize, in collaboration with Platform and other experts, events to enhance the capacity of Belgian scientists in national and international science and science-policy initiatives

2017 Actions: As expounded in the text above under the sections of the Strategic Objectives 1 to 4, communication and logistical support will be provided to Platform experts for the organisation of events when relevant.

Communication Task 5: Provide communication support to Platform experts

2017 Actions: As expounded in the text above under the sections of the Strategic Objectives 1 to 4, communication support will be provided to Platform experts when relevant. Furthermore,

an information session on the Platform will be organized in the premises of the host institutions in order to present the roles and functions as well as the services provided by the Platform.

ANNEX I: List of objectives, Actions, Target dates, Deliverables and Actors for 2017

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