

Annual Report 2016



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1/ Introduction – Summary of 2016 Highlights

The workplan we had foreseen for 2016 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 December 2016, Belgium provided more than 11 millions occurrence records from 75 datasets, 800.000 checklist records from 9 datasets and 140.000 sample-event records from 7 datasets to the GBIF network. The GBIF Google Analytics and National Country reports show that with 2,366,452 additional occurrences in 2016, Belgium is in the top 10 of Data Mobilization countries which is impressive. In addition, several initiatives have been successfully accomplished to further promote the open publication and use of biodiversity data (‘data publication and use’ workshops, mentoring programmes etc). In 2016, we also launched our new Belgian Data Portal giving access to all datasets published by Belgian data publishers.

Our Communities of Practice (CoPs), bringing together relevant knowledge holders and stakeholders around issues of topical interest, were also very active during 2016. The activities in the ‘Belgium Ecosystem Services’ network (BEES) greatly gained speed. Highlights include the organization of a BEES Young Scientist day allowing for fruitful exchanges; the co-organisation of the Ecosystem Services Partnership Conference (ESP) in Antwerp; the drafting and implementation of a new BEES communication strategy; and the establishment of a BEES International Working Group. The latter was set up to facilitate the communication between Belgian stakeholders/contributors and several European and international processes in the biodiversity and ecosystem services arena. The working group also increases synergies between the different initiatives and reinforces the engagement of Belgian experts in initiatives like IPBES. The BEES year was closed with very successful BEES Christmas market organized last December (25 market stands, and over 130 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. For example, a substantial effort was done to elaborate on how to foster data publishing on invasive alien species and the need for data in support of IAS research, policy and management (including the organization of the Cost Action *Alien Change* workshop in February). It also organized a two-day dedicated to *EU Invasive alien species risk management*. Furthermore, the Platform helped paving the way for a cooperation agreement, including the establishment of a National Secretariat on IAS. We were also successful in obtaining Brain-Belspo funding for the TrIAS project (*Tracking Invasive Alien Species: Building a data-driven framework to inform policy*). We established an invasive species registry, and also put substantial effort in further promoting the use of decision support tools (Harmonia+, ISEIA a.o.) 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 organization of the European OneHealth/EcoHealth workshop, which was very successful in bringing together an excellent diversity of expertise and topics from natural/health/social science/policy/practice spheres. The conference also strongly

linked up with international developments and provided a good basis for building a European Community of Practice, as well as for various other community building initiatives which will allow for cross-fertilization.

In 2016 – 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 Wikipedia article and a vulgarizing paper; various keynotes; and the organization of an EKLIPSE-EPBRS-BiodivERsA workshop on nature-based solutions and social innovation). We also joined forces with OD Nature of RBINS to organize an international ‘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. Some 180 participants (Marine Scientists from various disciplines, policy makers and stakeholders involved in research and management of the North Sea) attended the meeting, and follow-up activities are currently being initiated.

During 2016, the Platform also further extended its activities in the EU science-policy arena. For example, this year was the kick-off year for EU project EKLIPSE (“An EU support mechanism for evidence-based policy on biodiversity & ecosystems services”). Besides co-managing the Secretariat, the platform is leading 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). Highlight was the hosting of the first EKLIPSE Annual Conference, and the organization of a joint EKLIPSE-EPBRS-BiodivERsA Workshop on “Social Innovation and Nature-based solutions” that attracted a large number of stakeholders from different nationalities and disciplines. As in previous years, the Platform also played a key role in the implementation of the BiodivERsA-ERA net activities. The Platform specifically focused on aspects of science-policy interfacing, mapping and foresight activities (including nearly doubling of the [BiodivERsA database](#)), communication on both the funded projects and the ERA-net itself, and coordination/governance (including the co-drafting of BiodivERsA’s Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda). 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 EU Policy Advisory Group (EUPAG), our active participation in various IUCN for a (e.g. on National and Regional Committee development), our coordinating role and participation in the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016, the set-up of a National Focal Point website, 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 also further 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 further established and extended the ECA network, connecting 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: this year alone, the website attracted over 38.500 unique visitors. This is a ca. 15.9 % increase of unique visitors compared to 2015 for the same period. The Platform mailing list was also boosted with some +50% new subscribers compared to last year. 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 successfully passed its four-year external evaluation. The evaluation panel concluded that the Platform is fulfilling its role in an outstanding way, bridging between science and policy in order to make research most useful to policy makers, and bringing to attention new issues and problems that might need further research. The Platform was also found to play an important role in connecting the different Belgian regions and facilitating the integration of joint positions, enabling joint learning processes and finding synergies in workflows. Further recommendations to improve our services and visibility were integrated in three new strategic documents that will guide our work for the next four years (2017-2021): a Management plan, Strategic Plan (including a data management plan) and Communication Plan. Regarding the political governance of the Platform, the new cooperation agreement between the federal and federated authorities has finally been signed for the development and follow-up of Platform activities.

Below, we describe the progress made within each work area of 2012-2016 strategic plan, with reference to the six major objectives and tasks (note that the new 2017-2021 Strategic Plan will be the basis for reporting from 2017 onwards). 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 2016, the 2017 Workplan will be presented as a separate document. We also have a separate report for the Key Performance Indicator analysis (second edition: 2016)

Annex I presents an overview of the deliverables initially foreseen in the 2016 Workplan, and the extent to which they have been achieved (85% completed/ongoing). Tasks that have been delayed or postponed (15%) are commented upon in this table. As will show from this report, a lot of tasks (about 10-15% of our total workload) have been taken up as opportunities arose, all of which make a good fit with our Strategic Plan. 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:

- Estelle Balian (**EsB**, RBINS; 80%)
- Dimitri Brosens (**DiB**, INBO; 100%)
- Maxime Coupremagne (MaC, DEMNA; 100%, since 11 august 2016)
- Hilde Eggermont (**HiE**, Dr., RBINS; 100%)
- Lise Goudeseune (**LiG**, 100% on BiodivERsA)
- Hans Keune (**HaK**, Dr., INBO; 60%)
- Sander Jacobs (**SaJ**, Dr., INBO; 40%)
- Sonia Vanderhoeven (**SoV**, Dr., DEMNA; 100%, 1 month of parental leave from 15/07/2016 to 15/08/2016)

Communication team:

- Pierre Huybrechts (**PiH**, RBINS; 100% of which 2 months on EKLIPSE)
- Angélique Berhault (**AnB**, RBINS: 100% from September 2016 as Communication Coordinator, returning after 2yr career break)

IT support team:

- Julien Cigar (**JuC**, System Administrator, BELSPO STIS; 100%)
- André Heughebaert (**AnH**, IT engineer, BELSPO STIS, 100%, then 80% since 1st September)
- Nicolas Noé (**NiN**, IT developer, BELSPO STIS; 80%)

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**. Already in September 2015, our new colleague (**MaC**) was recruited to replace **Kristina Articus** at DEMNA, but due to administrative hurdles the contract set in August 2016, causing extensive delays for data acquisition in Wallonia.

In the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan, an entire work package was dedicated to improving the operational structure of the Platform, in order to enhance its visibility, functioning and efficiency (i.e. following the recommendations of the 2012 Evaluation). In 2016, the last steps were taken: the new cooperation agreement between the federal and federated authorities was signed, and a Platform Steering Committee was set up. 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. In 2016, the Steering Committee met three times; meetings proved to be very useful and constructive.

In 2016, the Platform was also subjected to an external evaluation mandatory for future (financial) support. The evaluation was entrusted to a group of three independent international experts chosen for their complementary competence in one of the three Platform working areas. The evaluation was a two-phase process that required substantial efforts – especially from the Platform Manager and Coordinator: (1) a pre-evaluation by the experts on the basis of Platform background information (some of which was specifically drafted for this purpose), to which we provided written feedback; and (2) a face-to-face panel discussion between the evaluators and the Platform team. The evaluation panel advised on management/coordination matters, as well as on future directions for the Platform. It concluded that the Platform is fulfilling its role in an outstanding way, bridging between science and policy in order to make research most useful to policy makers, and bringing to attention new issues and problems that might need further research. The Platform was also found to play an important role in connecting the different Belgian regions and facilitating the integration of joint positions, enabling joint learning processes and finding synergies in workflows. Suggestions for improvement mainly related to increasing the financial stability of the Platform, enhancing the flexibility to take up new tasks, increasing our visibility and external communication, and reinforcing our role at the (national) science-policy interface.

During the last months of 2016, substantial efforts have been directed to draft three important strategic documents that will guide our work over the next four years, and that take into account comments made by the 2016 Evaluation panel:

- BBPF Management Plan 2017-2021
- BBPF Strategic Plan 2017-2021, incl. a data publication strategy
- BBPF Communication Plan 2017-2021

In addition, we organized several ‘internal’ meetings discussing how to improve our internal communication, collaboration, planning and workflow. This resulted in a set of concrete actions, including the use of new communication tools (Rocket.chat function, Ticketing service) and revised guidelines for organization of meetings - to name a few.

Lastly, we also assembled 2016 data for our Key Performance indicators (KPIs). As regards the latter, we have 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 (3-4 years), related to specific tasks and representative for the corresponding strategic goal. In addition, we have a KPI for our Platform Outreach Activities, and one for Platform scientific coordination/management. We refer to our “2016 KPI report” for further details. In 2017, the KPIs will be revised according to the new BBPF Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

Meetings:

- BBPF External Evaluation: 11-12/05 (**AvdW, HiE, SoV, AnH, EsB, HaK**)
- BBPF Steering Committee: 01/02, 12/05, 30/10 (**AvdW, HiE**)
- Coordination Meetings (10 CMs): 29/01; 18/03; 29/04; 25/05 (virtual); 29/06; 22/08; 23/09; 20/10: 30/11; 16/12 (**entire team**)
- Internal Brainstorming meetings to increase team performance: 14/11, 1/12 (**entire 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 2016, Belgium provided more than 11 millions occurrence records from 75 datasets, 800.000 checklist records from 9 datasets and 140.000 sample-event records from 7 datasets to the GBIF network. This shows a continuous increase compared to last year. The majority of these data are now directly published by their owner institution, however, the Platform still directly serves datasets for smaller institutions and/or partnerships. 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. A complete Data flow mapping, including non-GBIF actors, was on the workplan but due to lack of time is postponed to next year. The Platform also maintains the Belgian BIF, an infrastructure hosting a variety of biodiversity databases being published to GBIF through provider software (IPT, Tapir and, BioCase). Some examples amongst the newly published and republished datasets:

- [InboVeg - NICHE-Vlaanderen groundwater related vegetation relevés for Flanders](#), by INBO, Sampling event
- [AxIOM: Amphipod crustaceans from insular Posidonia oceanica seagrass meadows](#), by ULg, Sampling event
- [Waarnemingen.be - Butterfly occurrences in Flanders and the Brussels Capital Region](#), by INBO, Occurrences
- [Ghent university - Zoology Museum - Nematod Collection](#) by Ugent, Occurrences
- [Ghent University - Zoology Museum - Vertebrate collection](#) by Ugent, Occurrences
- [Ghent university - Zoology Museum - Nematod Collection](#) by Ugent, Occurrences

The Platform also facilitated the replacement of various data licenses (provided in legacy datasets) by the 3 possible GBIF licenses.

The following table gives an overview of the distribution of the Belgian datasets and records amongst the various publishing tools:

Name	#datasets	#records
INBO's IPT	26	9.247.022
Platform's IPT	38	1.850.174
Meise's IPT	2	48.183
Platform's Tapir	9	154.143
All others (BioCAsE, Digir, HTTP)	16	897.954

The content of the Afromoths, Gracillariidae and Fruitflies dedicated portals has been updated.

Finally, we also organized several data workshops. The aim of these workshops was to explain to scientists how to retrieve information from the new GBIF portal, how to clean their data, illustrate the added-value of GBIF data in the development of their research, and highlight other options for data use. These efforts built on the successful efforts (post-conference workshops) of 2016.

Meetings/Workshops:

- Biodiversity Data Workshop, ULB, Bruxelles; 12/05 (**AnH** as organizer)
- Data Publishing Meetings, UGent Tropical Lab; 26/05 (**DiB** as organizer)
- Data Cleaning Workshop, Antwerp Open-Data Belgium 2016; 15/01 (**DiB** as lecturer)
- Data Publishing Meetings, UGent (MvD-Nematodes); 10/09 (**DiB** as organizer)
- Data Publishing Meetings, VMM (MacroInvertebrates); 11/10 (**DiB** as organizer)
- Data Publishing Meetings, BEDIC-RBINS; 5/09 (**DiB**)
- Data Publishing Meetings, PIH_Antwerp(MacroInvertebrates); 22/10 (**DiB**)
- Data Publishing Meetings, UGent (Diatoms); 26/05 (**DiB** as organizer)

Publications:

- Boets P, **Brosens D**, Lock K, Adriaens T, Aelterman B, M. J. & G. P. (2016). Alien macroinvertebrates in Flanders (Belgium). Aquatic Invasions, 11. Retrieved from http://www.aquaticinvasions.net/2015/ACCEPTED/AI_2016_Boets_etal_correctedproof.pdf
- Maes, D., Vanreusel, W., Herremans, M., Vantieghem, P., **Brosens, D.**, Gielen, K., ... Natuurpunt, V. (2016). A database on the distribution of butterflies (Lepidoptera) in

northern Belgium (Flanders and the Brussels Capital Region). ZooKeys, 585(585), 143–56. <http://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.585.8019>

- Michel, L., Sturaro, N., **Heughebaert, A.**, & Lepoint, G. (2016). AxiOM: Amphipod crustaceans from insular *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass meadows. Biodiversity Data Journal 4: e10109, 4, e10109. <http://doi.org/10.3897/BDJ.4.E10109>

See also GBIF Mendeley Library for all peer-reviewed articles related to GBIF mediated data <https://www.mendeley.com/groups/1068301/gbif-public-library/>

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 (see <http://data.biodiversity.be>):

Our new *Belgian Data Portal*, based on CKAN (Open Knowledge Foundation), was launched in June 2016. The dataset metrics feature is derived from gbif-dataset-metrics (by Datafable) winner of the Ebbe Nielsen Challenge in 2015. All datasets published by Belgian Data Publishers are shown in this Portal. Furthermore, this solution offers possibility to publish non Darwin Core compliant datasets that might become adequate repository for multi-disciplinary data e.g Biodiversity and Health.

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

We continued our technical/hosting support of this Antarctic spin-off project.

SAFRED (Saving Freshwater Biodiversity Data;<http://odnature.naturalsciences.be/safred>)

This Belspo-funded project focuses on species occurrence data and supporting environmental data from freshwater sites. For standardizing 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 is helping our partners to mobilize and publish relevant biodiversity data (through appropriate trainings, practical/technical support to data harmonisation and integration etc.). Manscape data was identified as a pilot dataset to be published as sampling events. A proof of concept has been made is should be published early next year. The Platform is committed to max 6 person months over the next 2 years. The BioFresh and AquaRES website support are also part of this task.

Meetings/workshops:

- Several SAFRED project meetings, 25/02;13/05;10/09 (DiB, AnH)
- Other meetings see 3.2.1.1

HARMONIA information system (<http://ias.biodiversity.be/>):

A substantial effort was done to elaborate on how to foster data publishing on invasive alien 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 workshop with different partners involved in the Cost Action *Alien Challenge* in February 2016. Thirty invasive species specialists gathered at the Belgian Science Policy Office in Brussels to discuss these data issues and formulate recommendations for the handling of invasive species data. The goal was to improve interoperability in this fragmented data landscape, to ensure appropriate and better timed action against alien invasive species. This workshop was funded by the European Union through the Alien Challenge COST Action (TD1209). A joint publication "*How to make your invasive alien species data more useful: Reducing data sharing barriers*" has been written as a result of this workshop and accepted by the Topic editor of Frontiers in Applied Mathematics and Statistics, section Environmental Informatics. This manuscript will be submitted early January 2017.

Data mobilization on IAS to feed into GBIF and 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.

The (web) application behind the Harmonia+, Pandora+, and Pandora protocols is constantly improving. New features have been added like groups facilitation, enhanced permissions, customizable forms building, amelioration of PDF exports, etc. Beyond the standard use done by the Belgium Forum on Invasive Species, our goal is to build a tool which allows any user to develop his/her own protocol compliant with specific requirements.

The development of a national early warning system included in the Harmonia Information system foreseen for 2016 was discarded. Such development is of regional competence and the Regions do not seem willing to share resources on this topic.

Meetings/Workshops:

- Preparation of the Cost Action Alien Challenge Data workshop (SoV as co-organizer): 11/01 ; 11/02; 15/02
- Cost Alien Challenge workshop: 16-17/02 (SoV as co-organizer)
- Technical meetings on IAS data dissemination at DEMNA (SoV as co-organiser): 07/01; 19/01; 29/09; 23/10; 12/12

Publications:

- Groom et al. (in prep) How to make your invasive alien species data more useful: Reducing data sharing barriers.

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

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform is actively involved in the TDWG community (www.tdwg.org). The TDWG community's priority is the development of standards for the exchange of biological/biodiversity data. This year we promoted the use of several tools used for data cleaning, and we were actively involved in the process of changing the Darwin Core Standard for invasive species during the annual TDWG conference.

Meetings/Workshops:

- How to standardize a dataset to Darwin Core with OpenRefine. <http://slides.com/dimitribrosens/o-3#/> CTEC Santa Clara, Costa Rica, TDWG 2016 (**DiB**)
- Defining dataset specifications to communicate data quality characteristics, CTEC Santa Clara, Costa Rica, TDWG 2016 (**DiB**)

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 2016, the Platform actively took part of testing new GBIF Tools and did various translations in French for GBIF Secretariat.

In the context of [Biodiversity Information for Development](#) (BID), **NiN** was selected as trainers by GBIF Secretariat for the first BID Kigali workshop. Additionally, the Platform delivered two Data Publication workshops in the Philippines and Togo.

Finally, the Platform also coordinated a capacity enhancement documentation project with GBIF France, Portugal and Spain around **Atlas of Living Australia** technologies; see [Encounter Bay](#) project.

Meetings (see also Section 3.4.1.2.)

- BIFA Data Publication workshop, Tagaytay, Philippines; 20-24 June (**AnH, NiN** as trainers)
- BID Data Publication workshop, Kigali, Rwanda; 22-25 August (**NiN** as trainer)
- Data Publication and Use workshop, Lomé, Togo; 21-24 November (**AnH** as trainer)

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 former inventories on the subject. BioBEL was a BelSPO-funded initiative that started in 2007; content was maintained and updated directly by the biodiversity research community through a secured access. Since May 2012, BioBEL 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); a large part has now also been integrated in [BiodivERsA database](#) (see Section 3.4.2.6.). 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). This year IAS and Biodiversity and Health experts have been added to the database.

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

The Platform continued its support the Belgian LifeWatch contact group, at present consisting of experts of sponsored institutions (VLIZ, INBO, UCL, RBINS and RMCA). 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.

Meetings/Workshops:

- CoP meeting, VLIZ, 30/09 (**DiB**)

3.3. Work Area 2: Fostering biodiversity research

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

The CoPs are recognized tools to develop capacity and to build exchange knowledge amongst members of a community of stakeholders. At present, the Platform animates CoPs in three topical areas: "Ecosystem Services and Ecosystem Valuation" (by **SaJ**), "Biodiversity and

Health” (by **HaK**) and “Invasive Alien Species” (by **SoV**). Progress in each of these is specified below.

On 20 April, we organized a “CoP Infosession” explaining the purpose, set up and functioning of our CoPs to a wide range of stakeholders at regional and national level.

3.3.1.1. TASK - Animation of the CoP on “Ecosystem Services and Ecosystem valuation”, (i.e. Belgian Ecosystem Services BEES, and related expert groups)

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

2016 self-reflection on BEES activities: 2016 marked the beginning of a more structured monitoring and evaluation of BEES activities and their impact on the target groups. This was done through online user surveys sent out to BEES members, concerning both general and more targeted actions (BEES goals in general, young scientist day, BEES market). The analysis of the first survey gave input to a series of coordination meeting brainstorming for actions taken, and this will be repeated in 2017, enriched with the analysis of additional survey results and user feedback from other sources (informal/spontaneous feedback, results from BBP user surveys relating to BEES activities etc.) – to name a few. Results from now on also feed into our BEES Key Performance Indicators.

2016 BEES governance: based on an intensive series of meetings, we restructured and improved the BEES governance. Mailing lists were cleaned and this policy was clarified in mail footers. This improved transparency and accessibility of BEES as an informal working platform. Some changes include: (1) anyone receiving the newsletter is considered a ‘member’. People can easily (un)subscribe. (2) the ‘coordination four’ enlarges to a team, including the current active 10 people core group. coordination team members get ALL the mails, and are welcome to ALL meetings. (3) The working groups become teams and the temporary aspect is no problem per se. ‘membership’ of a team is via openly announced meetings and adding your mail to the team list, going out is by just announcing you are out. Further adaptations will be made and tested in 2017.

2016 BEES event - the BEES Christmas market: On December 13th, the Platform organized the third edition of the BEES market, an event set up to share knowledge and practices on ecosystem services in a relaxed market setting. It was a joint venture with University of Ghent’s *Natural Capital Research Platform*, and organized back-to-back to the final [ECOPLAN project](#) event. The event attracted a wide diversity of participants and types of expertise (i.e. 25 market stands and some 130 registered participants; show-up rate of 110%). The participants represented a diversity of institutions and types of expertise, projects supported by the Flemish or Walloon authorities, several business stands, international and EU initiatives (IPBES, IUCN, LIFE), the Belgian community of researchers and practitioners on ecosystem services and biodiversity (INBO, Natuurpunt, Natagora, ULG, KUL, UCL, ULB, UGent, UA Antwerpen), regional and local policy makers, as well as participants from many administrations, agencies and

scientists presenting the progress on their projects and ecosystem assessments. Two training events were organized in parallel to the market. Funding contributions by BELSPO were completed by funds and contributions by UGent, UAntwerpen, INBO, ANB, SPW-DG03.

2016 BEES event - the BEES young scientists' day: In spring, BEES invited about 15 PhD students from different disciplines (ecology, biology, economy, law, architecture,...) to a day of exchange and mutual learning (@Belspo). After being familiarized with each others' research topic, a group discussion on science-policy was held followed by face-to-face exchanges. This event was experimentally organized and very well received by the participants. There is a clear need for facilitation of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary exchanges (as these are not enough stimulated by PhD students' research environments) which are expected to improve the quality and impact of research.

BEES international Working Group: The BEES MAES (Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services) working group, the Belgian IPBES stakeholder working group, the ESP (Ecosystem Services Partnership) national chapter, and the ESMERALDA stakeholder group were merged in the so-called '*BEES international working group*'. This group was set up to facilitate the connection and communication between Belgian stakeholders/contributors and several European and international processes in the biodiversity and ecosystem services arena. The working group also increases synergies between the different initiatives (e.g. BEES members were also present at the MAES working groups and thematic sessions, and delivered instrumental input in advance of these meetings), and reinforces the engagement of Belgian experts (e.g. IPBES).

Ecosystem Services Partnership: BEES (SaJ) is chairing the ESP steering committee together with Wieteke Willemsen from UTwente. 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 Regional Conference "Helping Nature to Help Us" in Antwerp 19-23 Sept 2016: 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) was part of the conference organisation team, and the scientific committee. BEES provided input and leverage for the conference theme ('helping nature help us'), operationalization, and practical implementation. Several scientific interventions (presentations and meetings) were realized. SaJ was also day chair at the final policy day of the conference.

ESP Thematic Working Group Value integration: BEES (SaJ) coordinates the ESP Thematic Working Group Value integration. This working group has realized several high impact publications and a special issue in 2016 (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/22120416/22/part/PB>)

In 2016, BEES (PiH, SaJ) has also developed a **new communication strategy** 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 helped to establish clear objectives,

target audiences, tools and messages to promote BEES in a more efficient way. For more information, see 3.5. Communication. The web site was updated, a BEESmap with local case studies on ecosystem services in Belgium was added and promoted, now containing about 30 case studies (and counting).

In February, we also resubmitted our **COST action proposal** 'Integrated valuation of ecosystem services: building a community of practice across Europe (IVES-com) through INBO (**SaJ**). For details on this proposal, we refer to the 2015 Workplan. Unfortunately, the proposal was not granted.

Through the BEES international working group, continued updates and suggestions were made towards the **KIP-INCA initiative**. After joining the workshop in 2015, these inputs have remained informal in 2016, although well appreciated. An invitation for continued workshop at EEA in Copenhagen was received only days in advance and declined. Further continuation in 2017 is expected.

Meetings/Workshops:

- Young Scientist Day, Belspo, Brussels: 10/06 (**HiE, SaJ, EsB, DiB, LiG**)
- BEES International Working Group meeting, Belspo, Brussels: 29/08 (**SaJ; HiE**)
- BEES Xmas market, Het Pand, Gent: 13/12 (**PiH, LiG, SaJ, EsB, HiE, MaC**)
- ESP Conference 'Helping Nature to help us', Antwerp: 19-23/09 (**HiE, EsB, HaK, SaJ**)
- BEES coordination and organization meetings 02/02, 14/03, 08/04, 18/04, 08/05, 26/05, 09/06, 07/07, 06/10, 25/10, 05/12 (**SaJ, PiH**)
- BEES legal meeting Brussels– exploring of options 16/11 (**SaJ**)
- BEES business meeting Brussels– exploring options 04/01 (**SaJ**)
- MAES international meeting Brussels 19/09 (**SaJ**)
- MAES Cultural Ecosystem Service meeting Brussels 13/09 (delegated as BEES Inge Liekens)
- PECS workshop Stockholm 10-15/10 (**SaJ**)
- Informal DG R&I meeting on NBS operational definition Brussels 20/12 (**SaJ**)
- ESP executive committee meetings Skype 23/06, 28/03, 07/11 (**SaJ**)
- ESP member meeting Antwerp 22/09 (**SaJ**)

Publications:

- **BEES newsletters:** <http://www.beescommunity.be/en/newsletters/>
- **Jacobs, S.**, Dendoncker, N., Martín-López, B., Nicholas Barton, D., Gomez-Baggethun, E., Boeraeve, F., ... Washbourn, C.-L. (2016). A new valuation school_ Integrating diverse values of nature in resource and land use decisions. *Ecosystem Services* <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2016.11.007>
- Phelan, A. (Any), & **Jacobs, S.** (2016). Facing the true cost of fracking ; social externalities and the role of integrated valuation. *Ecosystem Services*, (November), 1–11. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2016.11.006>

- Boerema, A., Peeters, A., Swolfs, S., Vandevenne, F., **Jacobs, S.**, Staes, J., & Meire, P. (2016). Soybean Trade: Balancing Environmental and Socio-Economic Impacts of an Intercontinental Market. *PLoS ONE*, 11(5), e0155222. <http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0155222>
- **Jacobs, S.**, Spanhove, T., De Smet, L., Van Daele, T., Van Reeth, W., Van Gossum, P., ... Peymen, J. (2016). The ecosystem service assessment challenge: Reflections from Flanders-REA. *Ecological Indicators*, 61, 715–727. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2015.10.023>
- Aragão, A., **Jacobs, S.**, & Cliquet, A. (2016). What's law got to do with it? Why environmental justice is essential to ecosystem service valuation. *Ecosystem Services*, 22, 221–227. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2016.09.012>
- Decler, K., Wouters, J., **Jacobs, S.**, Staes, J., Spanhove, T., Meire, P., & van Diggelen, R. (2016). Mapping wetland loss and restoration potential in Flanders (Belgium): an ecosystem service perspective. *Ecology and Society*, 21(4), art46. <http://doi.org/10.5751/ES-08964-210446>

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.)

European OneHealth/EcoHealth Workshop Brussels October 6&7 2016: The workshop was well attended by some 130 participants from science, policy and practice, from both Europe and beyond. The workshop was positively appreciated by most of the participants, as exemplified by both the formal evaluation and informal individual communications. Most presentations (ppts, videos of plenary presentations, session and discussion reports) are now published on the workshop website. First main findings are published in connection to a CBD INF doc for COP 13: Report of the European OneHealth/EcoHealth Workshop. As next steps for 2017, the following activities will be launched: compilation and publication of the final conference report on the website, investigation for a Special Issue building on workshop outcomes, 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”.

Belgian Biodiversity and Health state of the art review, Superior Health Council: because of the extensive organization and potential impact of the European OneHealth/EcoHealth workshop in Brussels, the plans for a Belgian High level “Biodiversity and Health conference” (2018) have been cancelled. Main focus will be on follow-up activities from the Brussels’ workshop and the Belgian biodiversity & health state of the art review proposed by the Belgian federal Superior Health Council. As regards the latter, the idea has been picked up by several organizations and gained good support. In 2017, the DGs of the Agency for Nature and Forest and the Research Institute for Nature and Forest will launch a formal request for such review.

CoPBH expert registry: In 2016, the CoPBH expert registry was launched with a few try-out registrations, followed by a more extensive call for experts to participate (published in English, French and Dutch). The work is mainly coordinated by a volunteer expert working for the COPBH, with support from the Platform's IT team. Progress has been made on the online visualization of experts, but more work needs to be done in 2017. 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.

Collaboration with Natuurpunt regarding nature & health: Building on previous efforts in 2015, we further established a sound collaboration with Natuurpunt. For example, the Natuurpunt nature & well-being market day (May 22nd 2016), **HaK** developed the brochure '*Natuur en gezondheid: veel potentieel, en veel werk aan de winkel!*' (*Nature and health: big potential and a lot still to be done*), in which an overview is presented of state of knowledge and challenges. **HaK** also collaborated in general preparations for the market day and in the panel discussion. For 2017 there are initial plans for a broad public awareness raising campaign.

Collaboration with the Province of Antwerp and the University of Antwerp regarding nature & health: This collaboration formally started in October 2016 with the project '*Licht op groen*' (*Green light*). This project investigates the potential for building bridges between nature and health, as a fundamental asset within the health sector. **HaK** collaborates closely with the general practice department of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences of the University of Antwerp and the Province of Antwerp. The project is closely supported by Prof. Hans Van Dyck (UCL) and Prof. Christine van Broeckhoven (UA) and aims to collaborate closely with a broad steering group in which representatives from both the nature and health sector will be represented.

Consultation Flemish Land Agency (VLM) regarding malaria risks in relation to wetlands: beginning of December, VLM asked **HaK** for information and expert contacts regarding this issue. Several COPBH experts with relevant expertise were contacted by **HaK** and relevant information was assembled. The idea was also proposed to organize an "infectious disease-information session" or series of sessions for VLM, which is now being considered internally.

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 several research projects related to Nature and Health, and participation to the Belgian delegation at international meetings. **HaK** also participated in the Belgian Superior Health Council expert committee on the influence of the use of neonicotinoids on biodiversity and human health which produced its end-report in 2016. **HaK** is also coordinating the section on health for Chapter 2 of the IPBES Regional Assessment for Europe and Central Asia. **HaK** was also chair of the program committee and member of the organizational committee of the European ESP-conference. For this conference the ESP working group on public health, co-coordinated by **HaK**, organized a very successful and well-attended session; the session report will be published online early 2017. **HaK** was also pilot on biodiversity & health for CBD-COP13. **HaK** is also one of the initiators of the survey '*Global Perspectives of National Policy Implementation Regarding Nature's Benefits*' targeting IPBES stakeholders (incl governments):

we are currently working on several publications building on the survey results. With the Paris Risk Group, an initiative on decision support tools for risk assessment was launched in 2016: this will be supported by a UK funded PhD. Finally, HaK also contributed to the Joint BfN/ENCA European Conference on “*Biodiversity and Health in the Face of Climate Change*” (27-29 June 2017, in Bonn/Germany) as discussion lead for the “*Linking Initiatives in Biodiversity, Health and Policy*”-session.

Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) Thematic Working Group Ecosystem service & Public health: the main activity in 2016 concerned the organization of a session at the European ESP-conference (see also above) and an update of the webpage of the working group. The session report is now finalized and follow-up networking activities are foreseen for 2017. This will also include 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.

Publications:

- **Keune H.** et al. (2016) Natuur en gezondheid: veel potentieel, en veel werk aan de winkel!, Natuurpunt.
- **Keune H.** et al. (2016) Report of the European OneHealth/EcoHealth Workshop; referenced in the CBD COP 13 INF doc COLLABORATIVE AND MAINSTREAMING ACTIVITIES ON BIODIVERSITY AND HUMAN HEALTH.
- Pascual U., ...**Keune H.** et al. (forthcoming 2017) Valuing Nature's Contributions to People: The IPBES Approach. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 23.
- Saarikoski, H., ... **Keune H.** et al. (2016) Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis and Cost-Benefit Analysis: Comparing alternative frameworks for integrated valuation of ecosystem services. *Ecosystem Services* 22: 238-249.
- Nesshöver C, ... **Keune H.** et al. (forthcoming 2017), Scientific concepts and practice in the delivery of Nature-based solutions - an interdisciplinary perspective, *Sci Total Environ* doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2016.11.106
- **Keune H.**, Van den Hazel P. and Boudier F. (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*, pg 203-224, Springer books
- Tinch R, ..., **Keune H.**, et al. (2016), Science-Policy Interfaces for Biodiversity: dynamic learning environments for successful impact. *Biodiversity Conservation* DOI 10.1007/s10531-016-1155-1
- Bela G., ..., **Keune H.**, et al. (2016), Learning and the transformative potential of citizen science. *Conservation Biology* DOI: 10.1111/cobi.12762
- Robert Fish, Eirini Saratsi, Mark Reed and **Hans Keune** (2016), Stakeholder participation in ecosystem service decision making, In: Marion Potschin, Roy Haines-Young, Robert Fish, R. Kerry Turner (Eds) (2016) *Routledge Handbook of Ecosystem Services*, Routledge.

Meetings (also including skypes):

- European OneHealth/EcoHealth Workshop COPBH organization meetings; 19/01, 05/02, 02/03, 04/03, 18/03, 21/03, 01/04, 11/04, 28/04, 02/05, 12/05, 13/05, 18/05, 26/05, 06/06, 07/06, 09/06, 17/06, 22/06, 24/06, 11/07, 12/07, 13/07, 05/08, 09/08, 10/08, 19/08, 22/08, 24/08, 29/08, 31/08, 13/09, 14/09, 22/09, 26/09, 27/09, 28/09, 03/10, 05/10, 10/10, 18/10, 19/10, 25/10, 27/10, 31/10, 01/11, 07/11, 10/11, 11/11, 14/11, 15/11, 22/11, 01/12, 05/12; Brussels/Antwerp/Melbourne Belgium, Skype (**HaK**)
- European OneHealth/EcoHealth Workshop 06-07/10; Brussels Belgium (**HaK**)
- Global OneHealth/EcoHealth Conference 03-07/12, poster about the European OneHealth/EcoHealth Workshop; Melbourne Australia (**HaK**)
- Flanders Annual Meeting of Ecology, presentation outcomes European OneHealth/EcoHealth Workshop 19/12: Ghent (**HaK**)
- BBPF CoP info session, presentation on COPBH 20/04: Brussels (**HaK**)
- Expert registry: preparatory meeting; 29/01, 12/02, 17/02, 22/04, 27/10; Brussels, Ghent, Skype Belgium (**HaK, AnH**)
- Superior Health Council Belgium: expert committee influence of neonicotinoids on biodiversity; 07/03; Brussels/ Belgium (**HaK**)
- Superior Health Council Belgium: proposal set-up expert committee review state of the art Biodiversity & Health Belgium: 10/03, 26/10, 04/11; Brussels/Antwerp Belgium (**HaK**)
- Natuurpunt Nature – health care market day; 22/05; Kapellen, Belgium (**HaK**)
- Natuurpunt Nature – health care collaboration meetings; 10/03, 18/04, 09/05, 22/05, 19/10; Mechelen, Belgium (**HaK**)
- Presentation Nature & health for Groen (discussion group with Groen members and parliamentarians); 21/04 Brussels (**HaK**)
- Collaboration orientation meeting nature – health VIGEZ 04/02, 04/03: Skype (**HaK**)
- IEEP The Health and Social Benefits of Nature and Biodiversity protection EU project workshop 26-27/01: co-lead parallel session discussion and rapporteur to the plenary; Brussels (**HaK**)
- Charleroi Hospital biodiversity & health conference 27/05, presentation biodiversity & health: Charleroi (**HaK**)
- PhD promoter commission UGhent Ghent Faculty of law – Nexus of the Right to Health and Nature Conservation': 30/06 (**HaK**)
- Survey 'Global Perspectives of National Policy Implementation Regarding Nature's Benefits' targeting IPBES stakeholders: 19/01, 19/02-01/03 (IPBES plenary), 25/05, 20/06, 12/07, 18/08; 27/09, 12/10, 02/11, 24/11, 21/12 Skype (**HaK**).
- European ESP conference (19-23/09): chair of the program committee, member organization committee; 12/2, 18/2, 11/3, 16/3, 17/3, 14/04, 10/05, 12/05, 22/06, 23/06, 14/07, 20/07, 26/08, 14/09, 15/09; Antwerp & Skype (**HaK**)
- European ESP conference health session (20/09): 12/08, 15/08, 29/08, 31/08, 13/09, 22/09, 17/10, 21/12; Antwerp & Skype (**HaK**)
- European ESP conference CoP session (20/09): Antwerp (**HaK**)
- Oxford Research Encyclopedia of environmental sciences – paper project Environmental Health complexity: 18/10, 27/10, 31/10, 01/12; Skype/Antwerp (**HaK**)
- Alternet paper project OneHealth/EcoHealth: 18/10, 27/10, 31/10, 01/12; Skype/Antwerp (**HaK**)
- Paris Risk Group steering group: 20/01; 17/02, 08/07, 26/09, 23/11, 12/12; telephone meetings (**HaK**)
- Paris Risk Group collaboration meeting with the Belgian Scientific Institute Public Health 18/07: Brussels (**HaK**)
- Paris Risk Group steering group workshop 02-03/06: Berlin (**HaK**)
- Society for Risk Analysis – BENELUX meeting 14/03: Brussels (**HaK**)

Meetings resulting from COPBH networking, but so far activities not directly paid by Platform budget (rather EV-INBO and UAntwerp):

- Collaboration Province and University of Antwerp: 7/01, 22/01, 13/04, 15/04, 13/05, 9/11, 24/11, 12/12, 14/12; Antwerp (**HaK**)
- INVEIDS SBO-FWO proposal: development and follow-up meetings; 12/02, 02/03, 03/03, 22/04, 03/05, 10/05; Ghent Belgium & Skype (**HaK**)
- NAMED BRAIN proposal: 10/06, 16/06, 27/06, 05/07, 20/07, 05/08, 11/08, 23/08, 24/08, 30/08, 01/09, 02/09; Brussels, Skype (**HaK**)
- H2020 Nature based solutions proposal meetings: 01/03, 03/03, 04/03, 09/03, 16/03, 17/03, 29/03, 18/04, 09/05, 12/05, 17/05, 18/05, 25/05, 07/06, 20/06, 23/06, 27/06, 14/07, 13/09, 22/09, 13/10, 19/10, 26/10, 03/11, 14/11, 21/11, 22/11, 28/11, 08/12, 14/12, 15/12, 16/12, 22/12; Skype (**HaK**)

Reviews:

- Review "Refocusing ecosystem services towards sustainability ". *Ecosystem Services* (**HaK**)
- Reviewer of health related submissions for the upcoming 2017 ESEE 2017 Conference Budapest (**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.)

Tools developed by the Forum in recent years have been considerably successful. During 2016, 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.

A major tool developed by 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. At the end of 2016, 55 experts from the scientific, policy and management spheres registered in the system.

The BFIS (**SoV, DiB**) has started working on the development of an Alien Species registry for Belgium in collaboration with INBO and Lifewatch-INBO. Our goal is to create an open, consolidated checklist of alien species in Belgium, by aggregating different source datasets. While working on this project, we discovered that creating such a checklist in a repeatable way is hindered severely by the fact that the source datasets are not published in a standardized format. We therefore tackled this in two steps: 1) create a first checklist via a non-repeatable

process. This should help us get a first consolidated list, meanwhile discovering and solving issues with taxonomy and standardization; 2) create a second checklist via a repeatable process, by publishing the source datasets as standardized Darwin Core Archives, and registering those with GBIF, from which the data can be queried and consolidated. Lessons learned in the first step should help us do this efficiently. This project was the start of a long-term initiative formalized through the TrIAS project (see hereunder).

Several members of the BFIS being involved in EU risk assessments of alien species identified the lack of coherence in the process surrounding risk assessments. The discussions facilitated by the platform (**SoV**) lead to a perspective paper entitled '*Beyond protocols: improving the reliability of expert based risk analysis underpinning invasive species policies*'. The manuscript was submitted in *Biological Invasions* and is currently under review. This work was presented at the Neobiota conference 2016 as oral communication in September 2016.

Considering the importance of data for supporting IAS policy (highlighted in section 3.2.1.2), **SoV** has facilitated the establishment of a consortium of 12 partners (JBM-PM; INBO; IRM-KMI; IRSNB-KBIN including BBPF; UGent; VITO; ILVO; VLIZ; ULg GxABT; UCL; SPW-DEMNA; CERVA-CODA) willing to improve the data workflow from science to policy. This consortium submitted an application to the Belspo Brain call entitled TrIAS: *Tracking Invasive Alien Species: Building a data-driven framework to inform policy*. The project lead by the Botanical garden Meise was selected for funding with a total budget of 720 619 EUR. 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. The platform will lead the work package dedicated to risk evaluation as well as another aiming at informing policy and stakeholders.

SoV took part to discussions on the need to establish a global community of practice on IAS. This work lead to a new international initiative, *Invasivesnet*, and the publication of a joint paper lead by CERIS (Ireland) published in *Management of Biological Invasions* entitled "*INVASIVESNET towards an International Association for Open Knowledge on Invasive Alien Species*".

On the initiative of the Centre for Wildlife Management (Prof Peter Robertson, Newcastle University UK), the platform co-organized in Brussels a two-days workshop on 17-18/05 2016 dedicated to *EU Invasive alien species risk management*. This event gathered thirty experts of IAS management in Europe to prioritize alien species based on manageability criteria. A publication lead by GB Non-Native Species Secretariat presenting the results of this exercise is currently in preparation.

The COST Action: '*Alien Challenge, A European Information System for Alien Species*' is an *action* with 30 participating countries and an estimated overall budget of 116 Million €; **SoV** is the Belgian representative in the management committee and takes part to different actions of the working groups. In 2016, **SoV** was further involved in WP3 dedicated to impact assessment with a joint publication in preparation lead by CABI (UK) and EBD-CSIC (ES) and WP4 dedicated to IAS data (see section 3.2.1.2).

To the request of the CIE, **SoV** continued 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. This

work launched in 2015 resulted in the development of a cooperation agreement on IAS, including the establishment of a National Secretariat approved by the Ministers of Science and Environment in 2016.

SoV acts as Belgian representative to the EU Forum on IAS supporting the EU regulation. This work consisted in 2016 in reviewing 21 risk assessment provided by Member States for species inclusion in the list of EU concern. Additionally, we provided technical guidance on different issues such as management considerations, the definition of a scientific workflow and the identification of impact threshold.

There has been a heated debate in Central Europe on the invasiveness of alien trees, including species like Tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), Boxelder (*Acer negundo*), Northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*) and Black locust (*Robinia pseudoaccacia*). The discussion includes conservationists on the one hand, who argue that alien species are causing impacts on native ecosystems, and that they should not be cultivated. On the other hand, foresters make the point that these species are crucial for the economy, and that the impacts described by conservationists are not accurately addressed, and exaggerated. This debate has led to the planning of a book on "*Introduced tree species to European forests: challenges and opportunities*", which include contributions by academics and practitioners. Together with Etienne Branquart (SPW - DEMNA), Bram D'Hondt (Postdoc at Ghent University, Belgium) and Sabrina Kumschick (Stellenbosh University, South Africa), **SoV** contributed to this book, writing a chapter on how to assess impacts and risks, and how to use such data to make management decisions.

The Cost Action ES1304 *ParrotNet: European network on invasive parakeets: Understanding invasion dynamics and risks to agriculture and society* organized in Marseille a training school for young IAS scientists on 15-16/11 2016 entitled "*Making a difference in Invasion Biology: Improving links between research, policy and practice*". **SoV** was invited as trainer and organised a participatory exercise "*Matching supply with demand for IAS knowledge*".

The platform participated 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.

On 19/09, the BFIS welcomed Kylie Ireland, a postdoctoral research scientist at the CSIRO in Canberra (Australia) investigating "Pathways and Risk Assessment Framework for High Impact Species" (PRAFHIS) to present us her project supported by the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre (PB CRC). The PRAFHIS project aims to develop an empirically based and validated prioritization process for identifying future high impact pests of plant production in Australia New Zealand, by examining past pest incursions and analyzing the magnitude of pest impacts in relation to their biological traits and pathways. The meeting was an excellent

opportunity to exchange on risk assessment procedures in Belgium vs Australia and New Zealand.

Publications (see also 3.2.1.2.):

- Frances Lucy, Helen Roy, Annie Simpson, James T. Carlton, John Mark Hanson, Kit Magellan, Marnie L. Campbell, Mark J. Costello, Shyama Pagad, Chad L Hewitt, Justin McDonald, Phillip Cassey, Sidinei M Thomaz, Stelios Katsanevakis, Argyro Zenetos, Elena Tricarico, Angela Boggero, Quentin J Groom, Tim Adriaens, **Sonia Vanderhoeven**, Mark E. Torchin, Ruth A. Hufbauer, Pam Fuller, Mary R Carman, David Bruce Conn, Jean R. S. Vitule, João Canning-Clode, Bella S Galil, Henn Ojaveer, Sarah A Bailey, Thomas W Therriault, Renata Claudi, Anna Gazda, Jaimie T A Dick, Joe Caffrey, Arne Witt, Marc Kenis, Maiju Lehtiniemi, Harry Helmsaari, and Vadim E Panov (2016) INVASIVESNET towards an International Association for Open Knowledge on Invasive Alien Species. *Management of Biological Invasions* 7(2): 131-139. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3391/mbi.2016.7.2.01>
- Turbé Anne, Strubbe Diederik, Mori Emiliano Mori, Carrete Martina, Chiron François, Clergeau Philippe, González-Moreno Pablo, Le Louarn Marine, Luna Alvaro, Menchetti Mattia, Nentwig Wolfgang, Pârâu Liviu, Postigo Jose Luis, Rabitsch Wolfgang, Senar Juan Carlos, Tollington Simon, **Vanderhoeven Sonia**, Weiserb Anne, Swartz Assaf (2017) Assessing the assessments: evaluation of four impact assessment protocols for invasive alien species. *Diversity and Distribution*, in press.
- Etienne Branquart, Bram D'hondt, **Sonia Vanderhoeven** and Sabrina Kumschick (2016) From impact studies to management actions: practicing risk analysis of introduced trees. *In* Introduced tree species in European forests: opportunities and challenges. *In* Krumm, F. and Vítková, L. (eds) 2016. European Forest Institute. 423 pp.

Meetings:

- Steering Committee of the Biodiversa project DIARS, teleconference; 6/12 (**SoV**)
- WG Invasive species ICE/CIL mandate, 10 meetings, Brussels, Belgium: 11/01, 13/01, 14/01, 25/01, 22/02, 24/02, 07/03, 23/05, 07/09, 21/09.(SoV)
- Meeting of the EU Forum on IAS, Brussels, Belgium; 21/06, 06/10 (**SoV**)
- Meeting of IAS scientific council and National Committee : 22/09, 03/10, 1/09 (**SoV**)
- Workshop EU IAS management, Brussels, Belgium; 17-18/05 (**SoV**)
- Neobiota conference. Vianden Luxembourg; 14-16/09 (**SoV**)
- COST *Alien Challenge* management committee, Vianden Luxembourg; 12-13/09 (**SoV**)
- Steering Committee of the project *Pathways analysis* - ANB, Brussels, Belgium; 26/09, 07/11 (**SoV**)
- COST *Parrotnet* training school, Marseille, France: 15-16/11 (**SoV**)
- Meeting of the BFIS : Kylie Ireland and PRAFHIS. 19/09, Brussels (**SoV, MaC**)

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 years, we have further explored and promoted the NBS concept at various occasions. In particular with the drafting of a [Wikipedia article](#) on Nature-based solutions, several presentations on the concept at various occasions, a publication in the Belspo magazine, and the organisation of a joint foresight workshop EKLIPSE/EPBRS/biodivERsA on “Social Innovation and Nature-based solutions” in Brussels, 6-7 January. Most of this work was conducted in the context of our BiodivERsA ERA-net activities or EKLIPSE H2020 EU funded Coordination Action; see Section 3.4.2.6. for further details (meetings & publications).

Platform annual conference 2016 – Despite the organisation of a 2015 Platform conference, the Platform agreed to co-organize the “[North Sea Open Science Conference](#)” (7-10 November 2016): Some 180 participants (Marine Scientists from various disciplines, policy makers and stakeholders involved in research and management of the North Sea) gathered in the Thermae Palace in Ostend. This conference was co-organized with UGMM/OD Nature of RBINS (Steven Degraer, Vera Van Lancker and Sigrid Maebe). The conference focused on two main pillars with associated themes: (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. The platform (especially **EsB**, **DiB**, **PiH** and **HiE**) was in charge of the coordination of the preparatory activities, the management of registrations, the overseeing of the budget, the development of the participatory sessions, the development and implementation of the communication tools and support (website, flyers, sponsorship packages, abstract book etc.). This involvement was very demanding, and required much more time (human resources) than initially foreseen.

Biodiversity and the Sustainable Development Goals: In 2016, we had several exchanges with CIFAL Flanders and KMDA/Zoo Antwerp regarding the set up of an ‘Action Learning Day’ on the role of biodiversity for reaching the sustainable development goals (to be organized in 2017). CIFAL Flanders is part of UNITAR’s network of International Training Centers, dedicated to provide innovative training to strengthen the capacities of government and civil society leaders to advance sustainable development.

Meetings:

- “North Sea conference” organizing and Scientific committees meetings , Brussels, Belgium: 29/01, 15/03, 15/04,25/05, 1/07, 6-7/09, 25/09, 3/10, 27/10 (**HiE**, **EsB**, **PiH**, **DiB**)

- “North Sea Open Science Conference”, Ostend: 7-10 /11 (**HiE, EsB, PiH, DiB, LiG, NiN, MaC, AnB**)
- CIFAL Flanders, KMDA/Zoo Antwerp and BBPF workshop, Antwerp: 23/08 (**HiE**)

Publication:

- BELSPO Magazine n°50 (Speciaal Dossier : Klimaatsverandering) – in NL, FR, ENG: Natuurgebaseerde oplossingen : De natuur als oplossing voor maatschappelijke problemen, by **HiE**
- Nesshöver C, ... **Keune H.** et al. (forthcoming), Scientific concepts and practice in the delivery of Nature-based solutions - an interdisciplinary perspective, Sci Total Environ doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2016.11.106

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 review (by **HiE**) of the final projects of the 2010-2011 Call on ‘Biodiversity, Ecosystem services and their valuation’ (especially SMALLFOREST and INVALUABLE).

HiE also participated in the Steering Committee of several BRAIN projects – more specifically [PSI-CO](#) (*Innovation in the public sector through collaboration*) and [AFRIFORD](#) (*Genetic and paleoecological signatures of African rainforest dynamics: pre-adapted to change?*)

HaK was part of the Steering Committee of two BRAIN PROJECTS, namely GRESP-H and RESPIRIT.

Meetings:

- Steering Committee of the Biodiversa project DIARS, Leuven, Belgium: 6/12 (**SoV**)
- Follow-up BiodivERsA 2010-2011 Project, final reports, phone conference: 28/11 (**HiE**)
- AFRIFORD Steering Committee meeting, ULB, Brussels: 7/10 (**HiE** by written; **AvdW**)
- PSI-CO Steering Committee meeting, Belspo, Brussels: 10/10 (**HiE**)
- GRESP-H Steering Committee meeting, Brussels: 26/04 (**HaK**)
- RESPIRIT Steering Committee meeting, Brussels: 20/06 (**HaK**)

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

Within BiodivERsA (Section 3.4.2.6.), we completed 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 built on the work performed during BiodivERsA 2 for the deliverable 2.3. The analysis also fed into BiodivERsA's Strategic Research Agenda (SRIA) co-drafted by **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" published in 2016 (by **EsB, HiE**).

Also within BiodivERsA, we led the Task on Policybrief writing (**HiE**). This involved the procurement of a professional knowledge broker (The Institute for European Environmental Policy, IEEP) and the drafting of two new policy briefs to be released early 2017. Both briefs will feed into the discussion on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Finally, **HiE** also provided input for Belspo regarding the Horizon2020 Societal Challenge 5, 2018-2019 Work Programme (3 topics on behalf of BiodivERsA).

Meetings:

- For BiodivERsA related meetings, see Section 3.4.2.6.

Publication:

- **Balian, Estelle**, Drius, Liza; **Eggermont, Hilde**; Livoreil, Barbara; Vandewalle, Marie; Vandewoestjine, Sofie; Wittmer, Heidi; Young, Juliette. 2016. Supporting evidence-based policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services: recommendations for effective policy briefs. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*, Volume 12, Number 3, August 2016, pp. 431-451(21)

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. 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 2016, the Platform (HiE) continued to contribute to the activities of the CCIEP steering group “Biodiversity” and “Nature”.

Meetings:

- SG Biodiversity RBINS, Brussels, Belgium: 01/02, 14/04, 15/09 (written input) (HiE)
- SG Nature SPW, Brussels, Belgium: 24/03, 17/06 (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 2016, the Platform further supported the development of Belgian positions on issues to be discussed at the GBIF Governing Board meetings by organizing relevant consultation meetings of a Belgian GBIF contact group. The Platform also represented the Belgian GBIF network at the European Nodes, and GBIF GB meetings. At 23rd Governing Board, **AnH** has been elected as Nodes Committee Chair for a period of two years.

Meetings:

- 8th GBIF European Nodes Meeting, Lisbon, Portugal; 19-21/05 (**AnH, DiB, NiN**)
- GBIF- 23nd Governing Board, Brasilia, Brazil; 24-28/10 (**AnH**)

3.4.1.3. TASK: Facilitation of Long-term Ecological Research (LTER) Belgium

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 May 2016 the Platform delivered the LTER-Belgium website. The site: <http://www.lter-belgium.be/> is now hosted and managed at INBO with the support of the Platform at INBO.

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) - and Co-coordinator of the EU Funded project 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 2016, EPBRs activities were embedded into the activities of the newly launched project [EKLIPSE](#).

EKLIPSE is a four years coordination action funded under the Horizon2020 funding stream that started on February 1st 2016. EKLIPSE aims to set up a self-sustaining EU Mechanism to provide timely evidence (knowledge synthesis) to decision-making needs in Europe based on calls for requests. It also explores emerging issues and knowledge needs to provide research strategies and recommendations (replacing EPBRs), and develop the Science-Society-Policy interface through activities and events to engage with the larger community of stakeholders and the wider public. All activities are building on the development of a network of networks in Europe for biodiversity and ecosystem services to engage appropriate experts and reach out to other sectors, disciplines and interests as well as build capacity of all actors. The goal is that the new mechanism will be sustained after the EKLIPSE project is finished so EKLIPSE will work with the wider community in developing a business plan. Its vision is to create and flexible, durable but innovative, challenging but ethical mechanism for evidence-informed decision-making affecting biodiversity and ecosystem services. Once fully established, the self-sustaining mechanism will be handed over to the wider community of institutions, knowledge holders and stakeholders.

Besides co-managing the Secretariat (**EsB**), the Platform leads the work package related to the identification of emerging issues and research priorities building on its expertise as EPBRs secretariat (**EsB & HiE**), and supports the communication activities of EKLIPSE (**PiH**).

As part of the Platform tasks in the EKLIPSE secretariat and knowledge coordination body (KCB), the Platform was involved in the evaluation of the experts for the first EKLIPSE working group on developing an impact evaluation framework for Nature-based solutions of climate resilience in cities (**EsB**), the evaluation of the new external members of the Knowledge Coordination body (**HiE**) and the evaluation of the request proposals received for the first call for request in September 2016 (**EsB**). Tasks for the EKLIPSE secretariat included the organisation of several meetings in Brussels including the support of the first EKLIPSE conference (7-8 December). As part of the Platform tasks in leading the Work Package 4 on emerging issues and research needs, the Platform was in charge of the organisation of a joint foresight workshop EKLIPSE/EPBRs/BiodivERsA on "*Social Innovation and Nature-based solutions*" (6-7 December), which included a summer consultation by email of relevant networks on the workshop scope, the management of a public procurement procedure for sub-contracting the workshop facilitation, and logistics and communication around the workshop .

EKLIPSE tasks also involved weekly skype calls plus ad-hoc calls on specific aspects (**EsB**, **HiE**, **PiH**) and a monthly lunch meetings with the DG R&I-EC (**EsB**).

Meetings:

- Coordination meeting, Brussels, Belgium: 12-14/01 (**EsB, HiE**)
- EKLIPSE Kick-off meeting, Brussels: 16-17/02 (**EsB, HiE**)
- Representation of EKLIPSE at the Workshop "Evidence based policy making for sustainable cities", Utrecht, The Netherlands: 31/05 (**EsB**)
- First interim Knowledge Coordination Body (KCB) meeting, Brussels, Belgium: 14/03 (**EsB**)
- Second meeting of the Expert Working Group on Nature-based solutions, Brussels, Belgium: 3-4/10 (**EsB**)
- EKLIPSE Strategic Advisory Board meeting, Brussels, Belgium: 21/10 (**EsB**)
- Joint foresight workshop EKLIPSE/EPBRs/BiodivERsA "Social Innovation and Nature-based Solutions", Brussels, Belgium: 6-7/12 (**EsB, PiH, HiE, MaC, NiN, AnB, LiG**)
- First EKLIPSE conference Science-Policy-Society, Brussels, Belgium: 7-8/12 (**EsB, PiH, HiE, MaC, NiN, AnB, LiG**)

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 contributes to several Future Earth activities, often (but not solely) in the context of our BiodivERsA activities (Section 3.4.2.6.). Yet, our investment will remain fairly modest until FUTURE EARTH's strategy becomes more clear (for now, it is still rather vague and overlapping with other initiatives), and as a consequence also the added-value for the Platform to actively engage.

The COST Action proposal "FESS – FuturE: SolutionS" (led by Finland) submitted last year was unfortunately not granted. The Action was set up to promote co-design of global change research to ensure the greatest possible usability and societal impact; it built on a network of 30 proposers representing more than 20 countries, all with emerging or already functioning national platforms for Future Earth or for general global change research. New opportunities to recycle to proposal are being investigated (**HiE**).

3.4.2.3. TASK - Promote engagement of Belgian scientists in IUCN

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 as [IUCN National Focal Point](#). More specifically:

- **EUPAG Member:** Since 2015, **HiE** is engaging in the newly established EU Policy Advisory Group 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). In 2016, meetings took place on a regular (2-month) basis, by digital means (GoToMeeting) or face-to-face (in Brussels, and at the World Conservation Congress 2016).

- Active exchanges with National Committees in Europe, especially through the **Working Group on National Committee Development**. In 2016, meetings took place on a regular (3-month) basis, by digital means (skype) or face-to-face (in Brussels, and at the World Conservation Congress 2016) allowing for exchange of best practices and guidance in the development of national and regional committees.
- Face-to-face meetings with **Belgian IUCN members (WWF-Belgium, KMDA/Zoo Antwerp, RLKM), and international IUCN members based in Brussels (IAF, FACE, EBCD)**, to get a better understanding of their concerns and needs.
- The building of an **IUCN National Focal Point Website (PiH, HiE)**, explaining the mandate of the NFP, the way to engage in the IUCN Commissions, the structure of IUCN in Belgium, forthcoming events etc.
- Facilitating discussions with regard to the **Belgian IUCN State Membership**, including the revision 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.
- Together with the IUCN EU Regional Office (Brussels), the Platform (**HiE, LiG**) co-organized the **Green Week event 'Making money through landscape restoration: How nature-based solutions can make the countryside thrive'** (webstory [here](#)). With this event, we aimed to highlight opportunities for investing in the restoration of ecosystems and developing new partnerships for action in Europe. The session showcased the multiple benefits of nature-based solutions and demonstrate how ecosystems provide the foundation for a sustainable economy and human well-being. The meeting was attended by a diverse audience, including representatives from EU institutions, NGOs and investors, national and sub-national governments, the scientific community and the business sector.
- HiE also presented a **keynote** at the ANB **Bosland Conference 'Passion for Nature'**, and was part of the **panel debate** discussing the outcomes of the World Conservation Congress for Europe (webstory [here](#)). We also co-staffed the IUCN booth at the BEES Xmas market (13 Dec).
- With input from experts (incl SG Nature, SG Biodiversity and SG North Sea), **HiE** drafted the Belgian positions for some 100 conservation and governance motions for the **World Conservation Congress 2016** (Hawai'i, US), and fed them into the General Assembly discussions.
- At the WCC, **HiE** was also elected as IUCN Regional Councillor West Europe which will also give more visibility to Belgian actors and the Platform.

Meetings:

- European Policy Advisory Group (EUPAG): 11/01 (GoToMeeting); 9/03 (GoToMeeting); 1/06 (Brussels); 4/09 (Hawai'i World Conservation Congress 2016); 14/12 (GoToMeeting) – **all HiE**
- National Committee of The Netherlands exchange, Amsterdam: 21/04 (**HiE**)
- IUCN Belgian Govern member meeting, Belspo, Brussels: 18/05 (**HiE, AvdW**)
- IUCN Green week event: 'Making money through landscape restoration: How nature-based solutions can make the countryside thrive', Belspo, Brussels: 31/05 (**HiE, LiG**)
- IUCN Working Group on National Committee Development (WGNCD): 1-2/06 (Brussels); 30/06 (Skype); 01/09 (Hawai'i World Conservation Congress 2016); 22/11 (Skype) – **all HiE**
- Meetings with Belgian IUCN Members, or IUCN Members based in Brussels: 8/06 (KMDA/Zoo Antwerp); 9/06 (EBCD); 28/07 (IAF); 5/07 (RLKM); 5/07 (FACE); 14/11 (WWF-Belgium) – **all HiE**
- ICE regarding BE State Membership, Brussels: 29/06 (**HiE**)
- IUCN World Conservation Congress, Hawai'i, US: 1-10/09 (**HiE**)
- Bosland Conferentie: Passion for Nature. Integrated Governance – Mainstreaming opportunities for Nature & Society, Vossemeren, Lommel, België. 13 Oct – Keynote: Working together with local and regional partnerships for people and biodiversity: IUCN, Belgium (**keynote by HiE**).
- 'Outcomes of the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 – what do they mean for Europe?' Event at the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU, Brussels: 7/11 (**HiE in panel debate**)

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 2016, the Platform was involved in:

- the implementation of the 2014-2018 Work Programme, by recruiting experts for completing deliverables (Global Assessment, and rescoping of the thematic assessment Sustainable Use) and revision of IPBES outcomes (e.g. First Order Drafts of the Regional Assessments; the Procedure for review of the effectiveness of the IPBES; draft scoping report of the sustainable use assessment; rolling plan for capacity building);
- advising (pilot) on the IPBES Pollination dossier (i.e. implications of the IPBES assessment on pollinators) for SBSTTA-20 and COP13;
- setting up, and contributing to various awareness events for Belgian Stakeholders (e.g. the 2nd Belgian IPBES expert and stakeholder exchange) 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. Report is available [here](#).

- co-coordination and set-up of the so-called 'ECA network' to better connect European national platforms/national focal points (<http://www.eca-ipbesnetwork.org/>). 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. This collaboration already resulted in a best practices paper (Marquard et al. 2016, see publications). See also 3.5. Communication.
- participation in meetings of the Working Party on International Environmental Issues (WPIEI) and Western European and Others Group (WEOG) in preparation of the 4th IPBES Plenaries (IPBES-4);
- leading the Belgian delegation for IPBES-4 (22-28 January, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
- The co-organisation of the third Pan-European stakeholder consultation meeting in Leipzig (Germany), together with the national biodiversity platforms of Switzerland, Germany, UK and France. Besides the co-organisation, we also help in the facilitation of working groups and gave a keynote on the ECA-network.

In addition, several contributions as scientific experts were made, such as lead authorship in Chapter 1 of the ECA assessment (**SaJ**), mentoring young fellowship author (**SaJ**), lead authorship in Chapter 2 of the ECA assessment (**HaK**), liason person for Chapter 6 (**HaK**) and the initiation of a *valuation task force* to screen and revise value concepts throughout the ECA assessment in coordination with the valuation core group, the IPBES secretariat and bureau, and the values Technical Support Unit (**SaJ**). Finally, **HaK** is also contributing to the Valuation expert group.

Meetings:

- IPBES EU Expert Meeting in preparation of IPBES-4 (Dutch Presidency), Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 5-6/01 (**HiE, HaK**)
- Belgian Expert meeting in preparation of IPBES-4, Belspo, Brussels: 20/01 (**HiE, HaK**)
- 4th IPBES Plenary meeting, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; 22-28/02 (**HiE** as HoD; **HaK**)
- Western European and Others Group (WEOG) GoToMeetings to follow-up on inter-plenary matters: 14/01; 9/05; 29/11 (**HiE**)
- Working Party on International Environmental Issues (WPIEI), Brussels, Belgium: 18/01; 12/02; 21/03; 19/10 (**HiE**)
- Pan-European Stakeholder Consultation PESC3, Leipzig; 14-16 June (co-organization by **HiE, EsB, DiB**)

- 2nd Belgian IPBES Expert & Stakeholder exchange, Belspo, Brussels: 21/11 (**HaK, SaJ, AnB, HiE**)
- IPBES RA ECA ILK meeting 10-13/01: Paris (**HaK**)
- IPBES RA ECA author meeting 05-09/09: Zadar-Croatia (**HaK; SaJ**)
- IPBES RA ECA author meetings: 08/01, 15/01, 17/01, 02/02, 04/02, 08/02, 10/02, 17/02, 03/03, 15/03, 16/03, 31/03, 27/04, 21/09, 11/10, 17/10, 19/10, 03/11, 11/11, 18/11, 28/11, 29/11, 15/12, 21/12, 22/12; Skype (**HaK**)
- IPBES Valuation expert group: 22/03, 07/09, 15/12; Skype (**HaK**)
- Valuation liaison team meeting 01/12 Skype (**SaJ**)

Reports:

- **A. Berhault & H. Eggermont** (2016). [Report](#) on the Second Belgian expert meeting to exchange best practices (held in Belspo, Brussels, Belgium; 21/11)
- **H. Eggermont and pilots** (2015) Belgian Delegation Report IPBES-4 plenary 22-28/01, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.
- E. Marquard, **E. Balian, H. Eggermont**, P.E. Guillain, A. Hallosserie, K. Heubach, **P. Huybrechts**, E. Hyvärinen, **H. Keune**, D. Mortimer, C. Neßhöver, J. Niemelä, I. Sousa Pinto, E. Spehn & M. Timpte, 2016. European National Biodiversity Platforms as Partners for the Implementation of the IPBES Work Programme – Opportunities and Challenges. Report edited by the German Network-Forum for Biodiversity Research (NeFo).

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

The Platform was involved in SBSTTA-20 (25-30 April, Montreal) and COP13 (2-17 December, Cancun Mexico) piloting the dossier on Biodiversity and Health (**HaK**) and the dossier on the implications of the IPBES assessment on pollinators (**HiE**). We did, however, not participate in the meeting itself but dossiers were followed up remotely.

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 21 European countries (i.e. a substantial expansion compared to BiodivERsA1 and 2). As during previous years, the Platform (**HiE, LiG, EsB, PiH, AnH, JuC**) 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). Since 2015, **HiE** is also 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 2016, and refer to dedicated BiodivERsA reports for further details.

Mapping Activities (LiG, 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 the framework of BiodivERsA3 mapping activities, we screened and analysed a series of documents of European and international relevance to identify gaps, priorities, and emerging issues in the biodiversity and ecosystem services research landscape. We build up on previous analysis made during BiodivERsA2 and completed the analysis with more recently published sources. With the use of keywords and labels referring to research areas, we managed to assemble specific and general priorities in groups and provide a short analysis of the importance attributed to each research area. The results have been gathered into a report that has been circulated for comments and approval in December.
- **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). The data received was checked, screened, namely with the use of specific keywords, and formatted to fit in the export file. All the databases were then uploaded on the online (draft version of the) website and will soon be transferred to the online website. The update was quite substantial as the total number of projects listed doubled (from 6521 to 13367). A first update of analyses was done mid-2016 and presented at the General Assembly, while the detailed analysis of funding trends, and of the type of research funded over time is currently ongoing.

Foresight Activities (EsB, HiE, LiG) – 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) concept through the development of a wikipedia article in cooperation with IUCN, and the joint organisation of a foresight workshop with EKLIPSE and EPBRs on “Social Innovation and Nature-Based solutions” 6-7 Dec 2016 in Brussels. We also gave several presentations on the NBS topic for various audiences (e.g. Ghent University, UNESCO-Man and Biosphere).

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, **HiE** was heavily involved in the preparation of the next BiodivERsA Call (to be launched in 2017) which will be a joint call with the Belmont Forum; and also participated in the JPI Annual Conference. **HiE** was also the main link between BiodivERsA and EKLIPSE, as the Platform is heavily engaged in both projects; see also 3.4.2.1. Finally, we (**HiE, EsB, SaJ**) were

also part of a CSA proposal submitted to the Call H2020-SC5-10-2016 for a 'Multistakeholder dialogue Platform to promote innovation with nature to address societal challenges', led by ECNC (submitted in March). 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). Unfortunately, the proposal was not granted. Yet, we will still represent BiodivERsA in the granted proposal (THINKNATURE) as linkage with the ERA-net was mandatory, but time investment will be kept as low as possible (no resources).

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 research at global scale and including biodiversity in their broad agenda, in particular The Belmont Forum (see above), Future Earth (see earlier) and IPBES in order to pave the way for collaborative synergies and joint funding of shared priorities. With regard to IPBES, we (**HiE**) co-drafted several reports summarizing the main outcomes of BiodivERsA-funded projects, to feed the European and Central Asia (ECA) assessments. These digests were proven to be very useful.

Science-society/science-policy/science-business interactions and communication (HiE, LiG) - 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 2016, we mainly focused on:

- **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. For specific actions, see above and 3.4.2.1.
- **Engagement with IPBES (T10.2)**. For specific actions, see above.
- **Policy brief production (T10.2/T10.3)**. For specific actions, see 3.4.2.1.
- **Communication products**: We maintained the necessary web-interfaces (in particular BiodivERsA3 website, and BiodivERsA database), managed the Twitter Account (@BiodivERsA3), co-drafted the summer newsletter (July edition editions), and provided input for the website update. We also participated at various events (e.g. BiodivERsA booth at the ESP Conference in Antwerp)

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. In 2016, most efforts were directed to the co-drafting of the BiodivERsA Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (draft [here](#)); and the drafting of a strategic document explaining the need for an upgrade towards a JPI-like tool. To ensure smooth collaboration within the BiodivERsA Coordination team, we also had monthly (or in some cases) two-weekly skype calls (**HiE**; Xavier Le Roux – France; and Henrik Lange - Sweden)

Meetings (skypes not included)

- Joint foresight workshop EKLIPSE/EPBRS/BiodivERsA “Social Innovation and Nature-based Solutions”, Brussels, Belgium, 6-7/12 (**EsB, PiH, HiE, MaC, NiN, AnB, LiG**)
- Executive Board meetings: 18-19/01 (Paris), 17/02 (phone), 14-15/03 Madrid; 19/05 (phone); 20/06 (Budapest); 14/09; 8/11 (phone); 15/12 (Paris) (**HiE, LiG**)
- BiodivERsA Roadmap Workshop, Den Haag: 31/03-01/04 (**HiE**)
- Boosting Biodiversity Research Cooperation – A Netbiome Roadmap for European (sub)Tropical Overseas – Conference debate at European Parliament, Brussels: 06/04 (**HiE**)
- Advisory Board Meeting, Paris: 23-24/05 (**HiE**)
- General Assembly Budapest, Hungary: 21-22/06 (**LiG, HiE, AvdW**)
- Belmont Forum Call preparatory meeting, Paris: 6-7/07 (**HiE**)
- INGSA (International Network for Government Science Advice) 2016 Conference “Science and Policy-making: Towards a new dialogue”, Brussels: 29-30/09 (**EsB**)
- UNESCO-MAB Paris, Presentation on Nature-Based Solutions, Paris: 17/11 (**HiE**)
- JPI Annual Conference, Brussels: 22-23/11 (**HiE**)

Publication:

- **Wikipedia article on Nature-Based Solutions:** draft version available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature_Based_Solutions

3.5. Communication and diffusion of information (PiH, AnB)

The 2016 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 5 newsflashes in 2016 (bringing the total to 71) and monthly CM reports. Two dedicated BEES newsletters have also been sent in [April](#) and [July](#) 2016. The web statistics of 2016 (see KPI report) shows a stable increase of the number of users on our website. However, this number has increased dramatically in August en September 2016 (from an overage of 2700 unique visitors per month to +7000), possibly linked to the election of HiE as IUCN Regional Councillor (website mentioned in various election promotion documents sent out worldwide). Google Analytics tool has been installed to do a more in-depth screening of our website statistics. In 2016, 38.733 unique visitors have been visiting our main portal, www.biodiversity.be. This represents a 15.9 % increase compared to 2015.

Belgian biodiversity actors mapping (PiH): PiH conducted a mapping of the Belgian biodiversity landscape (several types of actors/stakeholders). The purpose of such an exercise was to identify potential Newsflash subscribers. An invitation addressing these target audiences has been sent, offering them to subscribe. A month after the invitations have been sent, the newsflash list had increased (+8 %), bringing the total to 3400 people. End 2016, the list contains 4.666 contacts, representing a rise of +50.51% compared to end 2015. The Biodiversity Newsflash mailing list is now sent to a representative and up-to-date audience covering the Belgian biodiversity landscape. Subscribers can be divided in following groups: Scientists (55 %), Academics (20 %), Networks & NGO's (15%), Policymakers (10%).

ECA website; IUCN websites (PiH, AnB): The creation of a pan-European platform for IPBES National Focal Points has been finalized, by setting up the new website (www.eca-ipbesnetwork.org) in collaboration with the IT team. 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. In April 2016, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform was asked by Agnes Hallosserie, Scientific secretary at international interfaces (FRB), to create a mirror-website in french language. After showing the online platform to the members of the French Committee for IPBES, they expressed a strong interest for this tool and asked whether the Belgian Biodiversity Platform would consider having a French speaking version of the website. The Science Communication Officer and the IT Team developed such a mirror website. This can now be used as a resource for all French speaking stakeholders involved in IPBES, including the African countries that have little resources and material available to support them engaging with IPBES. Translations are provided by FRB. End 2016, a revamp of the website layout has been made by the Communication Coordinator. Earlier in the year, the website of the Belgian IUCN National Focal Point had been created as well: www.biodiversity.be/iucn/.

Logistical & graphical help (PiH) has been provided regarding several events organized by the Platform. An event website has been created for the [European OneHealth / EcoHealth Workshop](#), the [North Sea Open Science Conference](#) and the [BEES Christmas Market](#). Additional communication work has been provided through the creation of leaflets, flyers and posters. Logistic services were also provided, such as catering, stand-installation, transport of material, prints, badge creation...) for the same events listed above and the EKLIPSE/EPBRS/BiodivERsA foresight workshop and EKLIPSE joint conference. The communication officer kept on responding to the ad-hoc needs of biodiversity experts of the Platform throughout 2016.

BEES Communication Strategy (PiH): Following the success of the 2015 BEES Christmas Market, a BEES Communication Strategy has been set up. The BEES coordination team gathered early 2016 to reflect on various communication-related items, such as: key-messages, target audiences, communication channels. The outcomes were multiple:

1. Complete update of the BEES website's content. Many pages have been updated or deleted and new content has been written.
2. A [BEESmap](#) has been put online and has since been filled up with projects. Videos of previous BEES Christmas Markets have also been put online.

3. A BEES seasonal newsletter was created: Spring and Summer edition have been sent. Fall edition has been encompassed in a general reminder regarding the BEES Christmas Market.
4. A BEES PhD day has been organised on 10th of June. PhD students and young post-docs from biology, ecology, economy, architecture and law exchanged their ideas on ecosystem service research, and especially on how to improve links to policy and between each other. BEES organized 12 exciting short talks, followed by a speed dating event in the garden at Belspo. Exchanges between PhD students from totally different fields were very exciting, and all agreed that this initiative should be repeated. On the spot, the decision was made to mount a working group, and several engaged to organize a similar event together in 2017.

The Communication Officer developed a [Communication Strategy](#) for EKLIPSE, in collaboration with the EKLIPSE coordination team. The main result of this communication strategy is the Message-Map, explaining how to deal with identified target audiences and how to explain EKLIPSE answering two simple questions:

- Message 1: What is EKLIPSE and what does it do?
- Message 2: What's in it for you ?

The target audiences are: (1) Policymakers involved in Biodiversity; (2) Biodiversity scientists; (3) Non biodiversity scientist or policymaker; (4) citizens. As a conclusion of this exercise, it was decided that a promotional video of EKLIPSE should be created in order to explain the project in an understandable way. The foresight workshop and joint conference have been targeted in this context, to take benefit of such events for interviews of the team and graphical ideas. Unfortunately, after handling with production companies, it appeared that price of such a task would be too high. The communication officer filmed and interviewed varied people during these events, and will make his best to provide a creative movie in 2017 using his own movie-making competencies.

Support to various strategic Platform actions (AnB): From September to December 2016, the Communication Coordinator (**AnB**) worked in collaboration with the team to identify communication issues by organizing a brainstorm on 14 November 2016 which resulted in a mind map and the elaboration of a Communication Plan for the period 2017-2021. The Communication Coordinator also provided support to the Coordination cell on the elaboration of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan by providing input to the contents of the document, and by elaborating visuals of the logical framework intending to visually translate the Strategic Plan. A concept graph was also elaborated in order to summarize the new Strategy of the Platform. Support was also provided to the Coordination cell on the elaboration of the 2017-2021 Management Plan.

In addition, several communication actions took place from September to December such as the elaboration of a press release on the election of HiE as IUCN Regional Councillor, the update of the ECA-Network website, the update of the Platform website, the elaboration of an abstracts book for the OneHealth conference, the elaboration of a Communication Implementation Plan based on individual meetings with the team, the organisation of an internal communication brainstorm on 14 November to identify structural and internal communication issues faced by Platform staff, followed by a follow-up meeting to identify solutions to issues pertaining to

internal communication issues on 1st December 2016. Logistical support was also provided for events that took place at the end of the year.

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

Besides providing support to core activities (e.g. tools for CoPs; Platform mailing lists; BiodivERsA communication), spin-off projects (e.g. AntaBIS and SAFRED support), 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>)
- IUCN National Focal Point website (<http://www.biodiversity.be/IUCN>)
- EPBRS website (<http://www.epbrs.org/>)
- IPBES Pan-European Platform (demo: <http://home.bebif.be/ipbes>; permanent URL will be: www.eca-ipbesnetwork.org)

Conferences related:

- 2016 EKLIPSE's first joint science-policy-society conference (<http://www.biodiversity.be/EKLIPSEconference>)
- 2016 EKLIPSE's foresight workshop (<http://www.biodiversity.be/jointforesightworkshop>)
- 2015 Empowering Biodiversity Research (<http://www.biodiversity.be/conference2015/>)
- 2013 Conservation Research Matters (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>)
- Saproxylid 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:

- Gitlab (repositories, ticketing, etc)
- Automatic deployment system (SaltStack)
- Redundancy (CARP, HAProxy)
- Rocketchat (internal communication tool)
- Data Provider Software: IPT, Tapir, BioCAsE
- MailMan mailing lists:
- GBIF Europe, BiodivERsA, BelgianBIF, EarlyCareerScientists, IAS, Newsflash, IPBES
- Statistics (awstats, google analytics)

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**)
- RBINS representative at Conseil de Bruxelles (**HiE**)
- Course on “Nature Based Solutions” at Ecosystem Management & Services Ma2- Global Change Ecology, Ugent (Prof M. Hoffmann), Belgium; 1/12 (**HiE**)
- UGent lecture biodiversity & health: 17/11; Ghent Belgium (**HaK**)
- Participation to a cycle of workshops on “long-term environmental conflicts” to build a European community of practice on environmental conflict management, Aberdeen, UK-Scotland, 20-23/06 (**EsB**)
- “Sensitivity of Mt Kenya lakes to climate warming: comparison of historical and modern-day communities of chironomid larvae”, MSc Nina Daniels, thesis defence, Limnology UGent: 29/01 (**HiE** jury)
- “Holocene climate reconstruction in East Africa, based on multi-proxy analysis of lake sediments”, PhD Gijs De Cort, PhD defence, Limnology UGent: 27.05 and 17.06 (**HiE** jury)
- “Relationship between landscape context and home range characterisation of Parus major”, MSc Siebe Verholle, thesis defence, Terrestrial Ecology Ugent: 24/06 (**HiE** jury)
- “The Use of Cereal winter food plots by threatened yellow hammer”, MSc Sander Ostyn, thesis defence, Terrestrial Ecology Ugent: 15/09 (**HiE** jury)
- “Long-term dynamics of Daphnia communities in tropical cold-water lakes on Mount Kenya”, MSc Alba Iglesias Gonzalez, thesis defence, Oceans and Lakes (**HiE** jury)

Scientific Publications:

- Carsten Nesshöver, Marie Vandewalle, Heidi Wittmer, **Estelle V. Balian**, Esther Carmen, Ilse R. Geijzendorffer, Christoph Görg, Rob Jongman, Barbara Livorei, ILuis Santamaria, Stefan Schindler, Josef Settele, Isabel Sousa Pinto, Katalin Török, Jiska van Dijk, Allan D. Wat, Juliette C. Young, Klaus Peter Zulka, the KNEU Project Team. 2016. The Network of Knowledge approach: improving the science and society dialogue on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe. *Biodivers Conserv* (2016) 25: 1215. doi:10.1007/s10531-016-1127-5
- **Balian, Estelle**, Drius, Liza; **Eggermont, Hilde**; Livoreil, Barbara; Vandewalle, Marie; Vandewoestjine, Sofie; Wittmer, Heidi; Young, Juliette. 2016. Supporting evidence-based policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services: recommendations for effective policy briefs. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*, Volume 12, Number 3, August 2016, pp. 431-451(21)
- Rob Tinch, **Estelle Balian**, Dave Carss, Driss Ezzine de Blas, Nicoleta Adriana Geamana, Ulrich Heink, **Hans Keune**, Carsten Nesshöver, Jari Niemelä, Simo Sarkki, Maxime Thibon, Johannes Timaeus, Angheluta Vadineanu, Sybille van den Hove, Allan Watt, Kerry A. Waylen, Heidi Wittmer, Juliette C. Young. 2016. Science-policy interfaces for biodiversity: dynamic learning environments for successful impact. *Biodiversity and Conservation* (2016). 1-24.
- J.C. Habel, M. Teucher, R.K. Mulwa, W. Haber, **H. Eggermont**, L. Lens, 2016. Nature Conservation on the Edge. *Biodiversity & Conservation* 25: 791-799.
- J.C. Habel, L. Lens, **H. Eggermont**, M. Githiru, R.K. Mulwa, H.S. Shauri, T.M. Lewinsohn, W.W. Weisser, T. Schmitt, 2016. More topics from the tropic: additional thoughts to Mammides et al. *Biodiversity & Conservation* DOI 10.1007/s10531-016-1236-1

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