STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2025

CONTENTS

1/ SCIENCE - POLICY INTERFACING

The world is moving at an unprecedented speed, with several planetary boundaries being exceeded and leading to crises that include biodiversity loss, human health, climate change and food chain security. This represents enormous pressure on science, policy and politics to deal with complex problems and deliver rapid solutions based on the best-available knowledge. A recurring challenge is that policy decisions that have consequences on the environment are often not based on scientific evidence. Likewise, environmental research is often not based on policy-relevant questions[1]

Time is short, challenges urgent, values in dispute, and stakes are high. Sound scientific evidence has the potential to inform policymaking and actions on the ground. Reinforcing the science-policy-practice interface on biodiversity requires[2]:

- A proper understanding of the ever-changing policy world by interacting more closely with policymakers and biodiversity stakeholders, allowing for benevolent exchanges;
- Co-creation: Interlinked collaborative approaches aimed to increase dialogue, trust, understanding of needs, diversity of input and later endorsement of decisions. Using transdisciplinary knowledge ensures the relevance and impact of evidence for the benefit of public policies and society;
- Breaking the silos that put science and policy in traditionally well-defined boxes, and instead bridging them to address complex and transversal societal issues. The complexity of biodiversity means that a multi-disciplinary approach is needed. Indeed, to solve 'wicked' challenges, we need to bridge the gap between a wide range of disciplines and policy fields;
- Effective knowledge management and exchange. Policymakers and stakeholders need to deal with the deluge of data, (mis)information and knowledge currently available. We therefore need to focus on tools (incl. decision-support systems), products and processes that enable effective knowledge management and exchange;
- Engagement in future-oriented activities, such as horizon scanning, foresight activities and trend analysis.

With many issues hotly contested, such as the interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change and health, science-policy interfaces sitting at the intersection of the knowledge and policy spheres are more important then ever.

[1] osner, S.M. and Cvitanovic, C., 2019. Evaluating the impacts of boundary-spanning activities at the interface of environmental science and policy: A review of progress and future research needs. Environmental science & policy, 92, pp.141-151. [2] Adapted from the 'Science for Policy Handbook' – Sucha Vladimir and Mara Sienkiewicz (2020) Eds,

2/ ABOUT THE BELGIAN BIODIVERSITY PLATFORM

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform (BBPF) is a science-policy interface body funded by the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO) and is supported by a Cooperation Agreement[3] between the federal and concerned federated authorities. Within the field of biodiversity, it acts as a broker between policy, science and practice. Biodiversity is a matter that falls under the competence of several different federated entities in Belgium. Therefore, it is dealt with by several decision-making processes that operate in parallel with a certain level of collaboration between entities. A large part of its management falls under the responsibility of the Regions as the implementation of nature and biodiversity conservation measures within Belgium is inherently territorial. On the other hand, the Federal level is involved in several ways:

- The external dimension of the biodiversity agreements;
- The coordination and preparation of Belgian positions at the international level;
- It has specific competences, such as the import, export and transit of protected (CITES) and non-protected exotic species;
- It is also responsible for the protection of the North Sea[4]

With the help of the cooperation agreement, the Platform can directly provide support on subjects related to the competences of the Federal State, as well as engage in fields related to competences of the regional and local authorities.

To carry out this work, the Platform has at its disposal a distributed team of biodiversity experts, supported by a team of IT experts and a communications officer, under the management of an executive secretary at BELSPO. In accordance with the Cooperation Agreement, the Platform's biodiversity experts are physically distributed over two Regional host institutes, the Service Public de Wallonie - Département d'Etude du Milieu Naturel et Agricole (SPW-DEMNA) and the Instituut voor Natuur en Bos Onderzoek (INBO) and one Federal host institute, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Science (RBINS). The scientific host Institutions (RBINS, SPW-DEMNA and INBO) are strategically chosen for their capacity to offer the most appropriate working environment for the Platform to fulfil its mandate and the activities.

In 2009, the Belgian federal government endorsed the Belgian Biodiversity Platform as a credible, relevant, and legitimate science-policy instrument by transforming it into a long-term initiative with a recurrent budget, depending on a four-year evaluation by international experts. Evaluations took place in 2012, 2016, and 2020.

---

[3] Cooperation Agreement between the Federal State, Flemish Region, Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital Region, Flemish Community, French Community, and German Speaking Community – first phase 2015-2021; renewed in 2021. [4] North sea matters are shared competence between Federal and Flemish governments

A consistent observation was that the Platform performs its role in an outstanding way, not only "*serving as a facilitator between biodiversity researchers, policy and practice*" and "*improving the research process through innovative approaches*" but also "*playing an key role in connecting the different levels of governance in Belgium*"[5].

The 2020 evaluation panel[6] also proposed avenues to improve the role and impact of the Platform[7] . These can be summarized along five major lines:

- Better delineate the role and added value of the Platform in the biodiversity informatics landscape, to further increase the impact and profile in national and the European context;
- Further increase the synergies between data related activities and other science-policy programmes and initiatives in which the Platform is engaged;
- Achieve more visibility at the national level by connecting more directly to policymakers (government, relevant ministries), by engaging with relevant stakeholders that influence them (NGOs, lobby groups, business sectors) and by communicating to the wider scientific community beyond the Platform's core biodiversity research group;
- Carry out regular evaluation of whether and how the Platform should expand its work on new issues (such as biodiversity and climate change; transformative change etc.), taking into account the needs of the post-covid era;
- Consider embarking on activities related to business and biodiversity, citizen science and youth engagement, within the boundaries of the Platforms' mandate.

To accommodate those proposals, synchronize the evolution of the Platform's strategy with the evaluation cycle, and align with renewed needs in policy landscape we present a revised and updated strategic plan for the period 2021-2025.

---

[5] The '20 years of Belgian Biodiversity Platform" brochure expands on how the organization has evolved since its inception, and how it has enriched the landscape of biodiversity research and policy in Belgium and beyond. [6]BBPF Evaluation Report 2020, by Asa Norman, Peter Schalk and James Painter. [7]Recommendations specifically targeting management and communication issues are elaborated on, and dealt with in the Management Strategy 2021-2025 and Communication Strategy 2021-2025 respectively

3/ A CHANGING CONTEXT

This Strategy takes into account several new realities since the previous phase (2017-2021):

- Thanks to better and more monitoring, the volume of biodiversity data has exploded to Terrabytes of data produced per day. Reproducible science and shared data are slowing becoming the new normal. Many datasets are now automatically standardised and freely available through open/FAIR data aggregators such as Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) or other repositories. Data discovery and access are now available through human and machine readable interfaces. Data discovery is done by both standardized web services or via data search engines, which are available through human and machine-readable interfaces;

- The need for Open and Reproducible Science has been reinforced and supported by emerging initiatives such as the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). Several new biodiversity informatics initiatives are also on the rise, such as The Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DiSSCo);

- The Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was in its infancy some years ago, but has now become a full-fledged science-policy interface with an extensive work programme that needs proper follow-up and national coordination;

- The membership of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Belgium has been revitalized, with several new members and an increased role for the Platform within IUCN's governance;

- The EU legislation on Invasive Alien Species became a reality, with support from the Platform embedded in the Cooperation Agreement and resulting implementation initiatives (National Scientific Secretariat on IAS; Life RIPARIAS);

- As part of the European Green Deal, there is now a new EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 that requires reinforcement by science-policy interfaces;

- In 2021, the world will adopt the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework which will constitute the new strategic plan under the Convention for Biological Diversity (i.e., the so-called new Deal for Nature and People) and will need to be applied at regional and local levels;

- In the context of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030, a European co-funded partnership on Biodiversity[9] is emerging (as part of Horizon Europe), opening several new avenues for the Platform;

- Increased recognition of the interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change and health, and of the 'OneHealth' approach, especially in the era of covid

[8]FAIR data are data which meet principles of findability, accessibility, interoperability and reusability. [9]The European co-funded Partnership on Biodiversity will build on BiodivERsA. Tentative budget envelop of 550 M euro; Duration: 2022-2028

While the general objectives and mandate of the Platform largely remain the same as before, the definite activities will indeed be determined by the new context. This also includes a substantial focus on engaging the different Belgian actors (federal/regional) in the afore-mentioned initiatives and to facilitate the networking/dialogue/collaboration between them. We will also increasingly focus on further developing our activities in an adaptive manner and increase synergies amongst Platform activities rather than truly phasing out and moving on to entirely new topical areas (see also section 7).

4 /OUR VALUES

We are convinced that it is through the following values that we will meet current national and international science policy challenges:

- Holistic thinking: A holistic approach refers to dealing with the whole of something rather than just a part of it. In the context of our work on biodiversity, we aim to look at all levels, drivers, disciplines and sectors related to biodiversity and address them together in a systemic way rather than through silos;
- Transdisciplinary: We believe that the issues related to biodiversity cannot be solved by one unique discipline or by scientific knowledge alone. By ensuring that biodiversity related issues are looked at from different perspectives including views of relevant stakeholders, through a diversity of disciplines, across different sectors, and by co-creating knowledge in a joint manner, we will be better prepared to address the challenges our society is currently facing. We can create new conceptual, theoretical, methodological innovations that integrate stakeholders' perspectives and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to address the common environmental issues that we are all facing;
- Trust: Nurturing trust among the different communities engaged in and/or depending on biodiversity (i.e., various scientific disciplines, policymakers, civil society, managers, private sectors etc.) is crucial. Trust allows for dialogue which leads to common understanding and therefore, to informed decisions at all levels;
- Open data, knowledge and science: We believe that open and free access to reliable biodiversity knowledge and data is key in responding to the challenges facing decision-making in terms of biodiversity. Extending the principles of openness to the whole research process entails a systemic change to the way science is done and used in practice, supporting mandatory scientific integrity.

5/ OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE BELGIAN BIODIVERSITY PLATFORM

'For science, policy and practice'

Rational: To fight biodiversity loss, different types of stakeholders need to work hand-in-hand, from public authorities to scientists, businesses, citizens, practitioners and many more. The Platform maintains privileged relations with scientists and policymakers, but our strategic partners are not restricted to these two communities. Indeed, science-policy interfacing (SPI) activities encompass broader interactions between knowledge holders and people involved in governance, decision-making and biodiversity management on the ground.

Our Mission
"Decision making on biodiversity issues is grounded on sound evidence and takes place through collaboration between actors"

The **Strategic Objectives** of the Platform:
- SO#1: 'To provide capacity and infrastructures on biodiversity science, policy and practice
- SO#2: 'To facilitate collaboration between regional and federal actors in support of biodiversity science-policy interfacing'.
- SO#3: 'To catalyse innovative approaches which improve the transdisciplinary evidence-base on biodiversity'

These three strategic objectives will be addressed through three non-mutually exclusive **Working Areas**, to accomplish our mission:

> » WA #1: Knowledge brokerage
> » WA #2: Foresight and Research Framing
> » WA #3: Open Evidence in support of Decision making (Open FAIR Data, knowledge and science)

Each of these is elaborated in section 6.

In the next quadrennium, the Platform will mainly focus on specific Topical Issues, which will be the entry points for stakeholders to interact and co-create the knowledge required to support decision making across the different Working Areas.

These are:

- Invasive Alien Species
- One Health
- Biodiversity & Climate Change
- Nature's Contributions to People
- Biodiversity Informatics

Most of these topics have been a focus within the Platform for many years, but with activities adjusted to shifting needs and interlinkages, from both policy and research. They are elaborated in section 7.

Solid IT support is the backbone of all our activities. This transversal support includes:

- Management of the Platform IT Infrastructure (hardware and open-source software) guaranteeing continued services within an affordable budget;
- Development and maintenance of Platform communication tools (main portal and sub-portals, expert registries, documents and software repositories, collaboration platform, mailing lists etc.);
- Development and maintenance of Platform decision support systems (e.g., the Harmonia+ risk assessment online tool);
- Development, maintenance and hosting of dedicated data portals for projects and/or partners.
- Staying at the vanguard of biodiversity informatics standards and tools through installation, prototyping and testing of specific emerging tools.

Finally, all our activities are supported by a dedicated Communication Strategy 2021-2025 to ensure the highest impact and reach of our activities
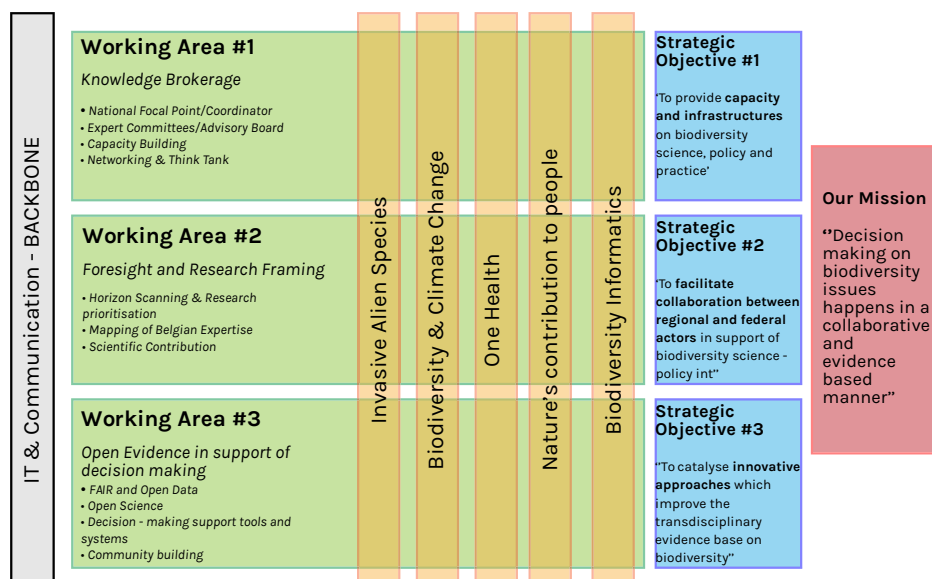

Fig 1: Visual overview of the Platform's mission, strategic objectives, working areas and topical areas

6 / WORKING AREAS

WORKING AREA #1 – KNOWLEDGE BROKERAGE

In its broadest sense, knowledge brokerage is defined as the full suite of activities required to support the interaction and engagement among researchers and end-users to enhance knowledge exchange, enable the use of scientific knowledge in decision-making processes, and strengthen research impact.

Within the BBPf portfolio, we distinguish between five broad sets of activities:

National Focal Point (NFP)/ Coordinator: The Platform acts as a knowledge broker by playing a prominent role (as coordinator, national focal point NFP, and/or supporting body) in key biodiversity related science-policy mechanisms at the national, European, and international level. As such, the Platform also creates the backbone of Belgian engagement in these initiatives, ensuring critical connections between the scientific and policy spheres. The initiatives include:

- Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES): as an IPBES NFP, we ensure proper follow-up and support to the implementation of the rolling Work Programme; provide support to capacity building activities; coordinate the Belgian position to Plenary meetings; exchange best practices with other NFP/national platforms through the coordination of the European and Central Asia Network of NFPs (ECA-network; and ensure link with the IPCC NFP. More information on our IPBES work can be found here);
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN): as an IUCN NFP, we ensure proper communication flow between IUCN members; exchange best practice with other NFPs and national committees; coordinate Belgian positions for the World Conservation Congress; help to engage experts in the six IUCN Commissions; organize dedicated events and chair the European Policy Advisory Group; and participate in the IUCN governance (Council). More information on our IUCN work can be found here;
- BiodivERsA/ The European co-funded on Biodiversity: We lead specific science-policy interfacing, and support open data and communication activities. We also contribute to the governance through our engagement in the coordination team (i.e. Vice Chair of BiodivERsA; Chair and coordinator of the European Biodiversity Partnership);
- EU Scientific Forum on Invasive Alien Species: We represent Belgium in the forum that provides advice to the Commission on any scientific questions related to the application of the Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 on Invasive Alien Species;

- EU Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services (MAES) working group, and as Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) national chapter;
- The Belgian Node for the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), contributing to the regional and global successes of this key Biodiversity Data Infrastructure for Research and Science Policy. The Platform will also continue its recurring collaborations with other European nodes through the Capacity Enhancement Support Programme but also abroad through Biodiversity Information for Development (BID) and/or Biodiversity Information Fund for Asia (BIFA). Seeking synergies with the IPBES NFP is also amongst our priorities.

Expert committees/ Advisory Boards: In addition, we act as expert in subsidiary bodies and advisory boards of biodiversity-related initiatives including amongst others CBD-SBSSTA, the National Scientific Secretariat on Invasive Alien Species, GBIF-related bodies and EOSC FAIR .

Communication and outreach: We also provide specific knowledge brokerage services, including the dissemination of research results to specific audiences (e.g. drafting of policy briefs) and information sharing (E.g., through our newsflashes and social media).

Capacity building: We also provide the capacity to scientists to do knowledge brokerage themselves. This includes training on science communication, open science and the development and use of specific tools and guidance notes (e.g. stakeholder engagement, ensuring policy relevance, promoting the inclusion of a citizen science component in research projects, support to Data Management Plans etc).

Networking and Think-thank: Finally, we enable direct dialogues (networking) and think-thank activities between scientists, decision-makers and practitioners on topical issues (see section 7.). These activities are extremely important to nurture trust among the different communities so they better understand each other's objectives and challenges, and to ensure trans- and interdisciplinarity. Engagement of young scientists in these activities will be a specific focus of our activities.

WORKING AREA #2 – FORESIGHT AND RESEARCH FRAMING

Foresight activities explore the future of scientific and technological achievements and their potential impacts on society. It aims to identify the areas of scientific research and technological development most likely to bring about change and drive economic, environmental and social benefits for the future. Methods used for this are highly participatory, engaging different types of stakeholders and experts from different backgrounds. They also include a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods and are generally applied to identify plausible futures to allow organizations to be better prepared for future changes, identify key drivers of change and trends, evaluate the need for action in support of policy changes and identify key questions for targeted research.

Horizon Scanning and research prioritization: The foresight activities of the Platform mainly focus on the identification of knowledge gaps and research needs (often referred to as 'Horizon Scanning') to feed national and European research programming and funding. Knowledge gaps and needs are identified through ad-hoc consultations with the Belgian scientific community at large, as well as through national and international initiatives such as IPBES and BiodivERsA/The European co-funded Partnership on Biodiversity.

Mapping of Belgian expertise: The Platform is building expert registries for topical issues, and identifies strengths/weaknesses in the knowledge community.

Scientific contribution: Other Platform activities under this working area include our involvement in science and scientific papers, which goes beyond a 'simple' aid to the presentation of research results. Because of our intermediate position between science and policy, we witness the needs of both communities and try to bridge. This includes, amongst others: framing a (more) policy relevant research question or paper outline; strengthening the policy context of scientific papers, providing input from an applied/policy perspective; facilitate the understanding of new concepts; focus on science-policy interfacing processes; communication tools; and foresight activities/inventories. In addition, we develop technical tools for decision support that are unique in Belgium and more widely. This expertise, although applied and aimed at policy relevance, is subject to the same quality checks (peer review and validation process) as fundamental research. These 'scientific' engagements of the Platform also contributes to the legitimacy and credibility of our activities.

WORKING AREA #3 – OPEN EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF DECISION MAKING (OPEN FAIR DATA, KNOWLEDGE AND SCIENCE)

This working area deals with supporting decision-making processes for data and knowledge, support tools and research processes, which allow for transparency and reproducibility.

The Platform aims to play a central role in the biodiversity informatics landscape, by facilitating the connection of, and information flow between biodiversity informatics actors, projects and initiatives in Belgium and ensuring up-to-standard practices. As such, we aim to animate a vivid Belgian Biodiversity informatics community, gathering providers and users' inputs and feedbacks. The Platform will also ensure an aggregated view on the biodiversity informatics scene, and correct identification of the needs of the scientific community with respect to tools and services.

Over the past few years, the platform has played a key role in promoting and making Belgian biodiversity a great example for open data. An increasing number of Belgian partner actors have adopted this approach and now have expertise and a certain degree of autonomy in the area of open data publication. While continuing to publish data, it is now time to optimise the use of this data and knowledge, which is now widely accessible, to meet the challenges facing biodiversity, both for monitoring purposes and to support decision-making processes.

FAIR and Open data: Considering the current expertise of other Belgian partners regarding open data publication, we aim to move to a more democratic and inclusive wiki-like paradigm where the content is initiated and annotated by the Data Community, and at the same time, validated and moderated by the Platform. Our data mobilization efforts on occurrence data, checklists and associated metadata will mainly be driven by actual usage of biodiversity data in the policy context. Our priority will thus be to focus on biodiversity data relevant to environmental decision-making and regional/national/international monitoring and reporting mechanisms.
Using the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) to make such information publicly available is not only our mandate, but it is also the best solution to ease data flow between all involved actors. This includes but is not limited to threatened species, protected areas, protected habitats and invasive species.

Along with this user driven approach, the opportunistic data mobilization of specimen data and scientific sampling, we will continue to embrace all potential stakeholders (including institutions, NGOs, individual scientists and practitioners), in particular those that will help to fill pre-identified data gaps (in terms of taxonomy, geography, time and/or data types).

Earlier datasets can also be revamped/republished to reach state-of-the-art quality and completeness. This can be achieved by developing Darwin Core recipes that capture information for required or strongly recommended fields and describe final pre-publication data-quality checks. Additionally, investments will be made to try to better balance data publication across Belgium.

Beyond data publication, the platform continues to offer IT Support for data publishers (individuals and organisations), through appropriate services: consultancy, help desk, IPT hosting solutions, customized web portals (pending dedicated resources), installation, specific IT support, and help with data papers.

Open Science: Enlarging the panel of its activities related to data alone, it seems relevant to us to refocus several initiatives that we have carried out in recent years around wider open science and research process. Removing the barriers for sharing any kind of output, resources, knowledge, methods or tools, at any stage of the process. In addition to open access to data, this includes advocating on open access to publications, open source software, sound data management plans, open collaboration, open peer review, and open citizen science.

Decision-making support tools and systems: We will continue our efforts in developing and encouraging the use of decision making support tools and systems, most notably to inform policy on Invasive Alien Species. This includes the mobilization framework for alien species data (occurrences, and checklists) from diverse data sources; and resulting data-driven procedures for risk evaluation. A new system will be established through the Life RIPARIAS project supporting the decision process dealing with management of IAS in the field. This is a concrete example of decision support linked to practice rather than the more traditional policy.

Community building: The platform will foster community building between all Biodiversity Informatics actors in Belgium. This will be done by coordinating a 'Biodiversity Informatics hub' (see section 7). Participants of the first Empowering Biodiversity Research conference (2015) will be the nucleus of this Community of Practice, exchanging views on topics such as Biodiversity Data Exchange Standards through TDWG, Biodiversity data publication and the use of software (IPT, RGBIF etc.,). Innovative data-driven pathways will be developed to tackle specific problems (IAS, Zoonotic diseases, sustainable agriculture). There will also be collaborations and exchanges between different Biodiversity Informatics initiatives like DiSSCo and Lifewatch. Within this new community, advocating Open FAIR data practices will remain an important activity.

7 /TOPICAL ISSUES

Cross-cutting these three afore-mentioned Working Areas, are a set of specific Topical issues which will be promoted/covered through different, non-mutually exclusive types of 'Communities of Practice' (CoP) depending on the topic and level of maturity through previous Platform activities/initiatives.

- **Hub** – CoPs that connect people with knowledge content; the primary value is to inform the organisation around the topic of practice and feed the learning process.
- **Platform** – CoPs where members collaborate to produce new knowledge; the primary value is discussion and collaboration around the topic of practice.
- **Service** – CoPs that provide a service; the primary value is to deliver value and cooperate with the rest of the organisation in the achievement of its goals. Yet, it also includes the functions adhering to a hub, and Platform (all inclusive)
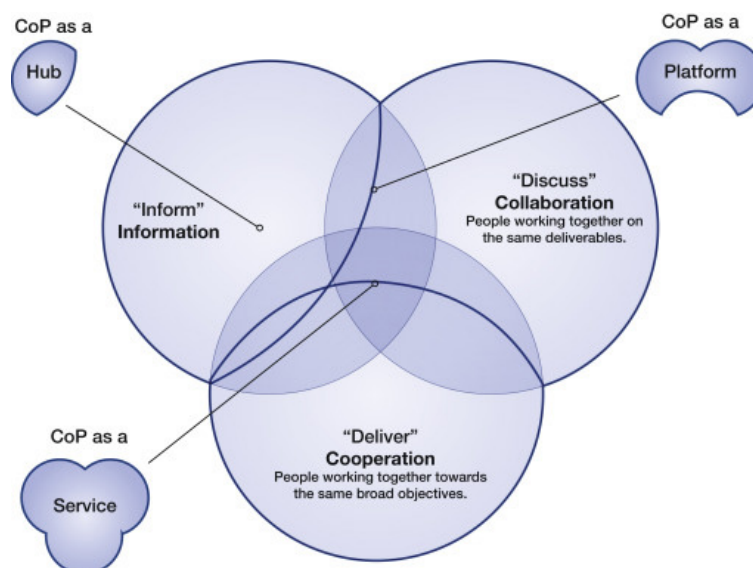

Fig. 2: Typology of Communities of Practice (types are non-mutually exclusive) – Catana 2020

Nature's Contribution to People (CoP as 'Service'): This Topical Issue will build on the former BEES (Belgian Ecosystems & Society) community with as general objective to provide science-based support to national and regional processes (such as EU Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services, MAES) and global initiatives such as IPBES, and to create additional capacity to contribute to these initiatives (see section 6 – Working Area #1)

Invasive Alien Species (CoP as 'Service'): This Topical Issue will build on the current Belgian Forum on Invasive Species (BFIS) whose focus is now highly demand-driven from the EU legislation on Invasive Alien Species. The role of the Platform is now clearly determined in the context of a dedicated Cooperation Agreement between competent authorities for IAS (read here). Over the past four years, several members of the forum have come together in a consortium to develop the TrIAS project, the results of which aim to develop and put into practice a data-driven approach to support decision making. These tools will now become an integral part of the decision support tools offered by the platform. The BFIS will also support the implementation of the LIFE RIPARIAS project (see section 6.)

One Health (CoP as 'Service'): This Topical Issue will build on the former 'Biodiversity & Health Community of Practice (COPBH)' which has extensively evolved since its inception in 2011. Over the last 4 years, several networks have emerged - for example the Flanders network focusing on positive aspects of biodiversity ('Netwerk Natuur en Gezondheid') and the Federal Belgian One Health network (BEOH) more focusing on OneHealth, and therefore more on holistic and interdisciplinary approaches that work with the human-animal-environment interface to promote an integrated perspective on human, animal, plant and ecosystem health. The Platform has remained part of the core team of each, ensuring mentoring/facilitation/networking - but individual members have increasingly become more active in running the different activities and setting up events. The platform especially continues to have a core co-coordination function in BEOH, also relevant in the context of pandemics .

Biodiversity Informatics (CoP as 'Hub'): This Topical Issue will build on the Biodiversity and Informatics Conference 'Empowering Biodiversity Research' held on 21 May 2015. It will not only centre on capacity building and information sharing between projects and research infrastructures related to biodiversity informatics tools and standards, but also with science-policy interfacing platforms building on and using biodiversity data such as IPBES (see section 6 WA#3).

Biodiversity & Climate Change (CoP as 'Platform'): This Topical Issue will focus on a recent set of activities that we hope to further expand over the next quadrennium including mainly information sharing between biodiversity and climate change scientists, and awareness raising activities on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change. In addition, this topical issue is also relevant in the context of global initiatives such as the Intergovernmental Platform on Climate Change (IPCC) and its links with IPBES.

8/ ENGAGEMENT IN NEW INITIATIVES

In order to successfully fulfil its functions and strategic objectives, the Platform maintains its forward-looking attitude by identifying new and emerging issues and initiatives in biodiversity research, often in collaboration with the BBPf Steering Committee. A workflow is used to identify, assess and implement new issues/initiatives brought to the Platform. Flexibility is essential for the Platform in this area.

All new initiatives taken up by the platform are presented on a bi-yearly basis to the Platform Steering Committee which guides the Platform in its priorities ensuring that all work that is being done falls under the mandate of the core Platform strategic objectives
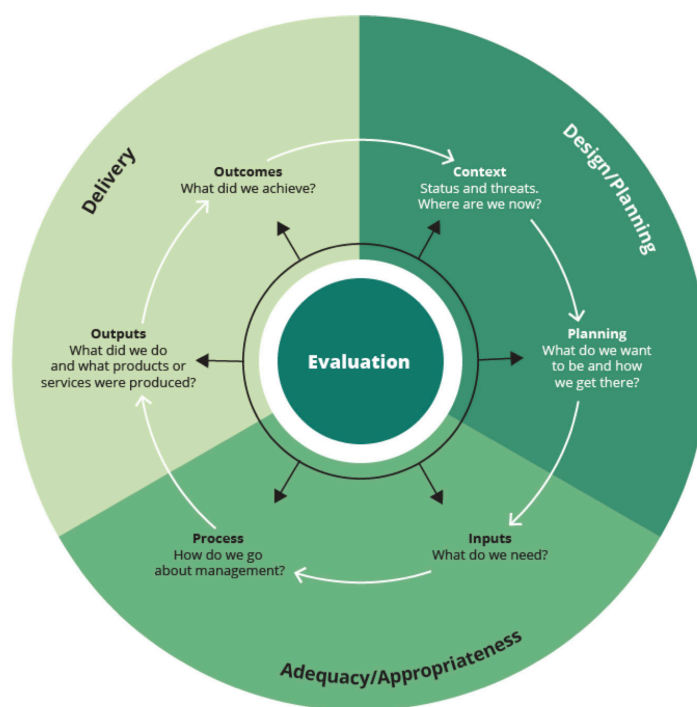
9/ EVALUATION

Fig. 3: Steps in the BBPf evaluation cycle

- Design/Planning: Implementation of this strategic plan proceeds through annual workplans approved by the BBPF Steering Committee, with clear description of activities and tasks within each working area, deliverables, due dates and person responsibility;
- Adequacy/appropriateness: adequacy and appropriateness is evaluated through monthly coordination meetings with the entire team;
- Delivery: Follow-up/monitoring of the annual workplan will proceed through a 6-monthly evaluation, annual reporting (internal reporting, and external highlights report, KPI reporting) approved by the BBPf Steering Committee. Every 4 years, the BBPf is also subject to an external evaluation. Activities will subsequently be adjusted, reinforced, diversified or discontinued – if objectives are not met.

--- END OF DOCUMENT --

ANNEX I: List of subsidiary bodies and advisory boards where we act as expert in biodiversity-related initiatives (status November 2020)
- Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to the Convention on Biological Diversity (SBSTTA), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) itself
- Vlaamse UNESCO Commissie – Working group Geoparks & Biosphere
- The Steering Group Biodiversity and Nature of the Coordination Committee for International Environmental Policy
- The National Scientific Secretariat on Invasive Alien Species (IAS): the Platform supports the Belgian implementation of the EU regulation on Invasive Species (EU) No 1143/2014 in accordance with the tasks appointed to the Platform in article 22 and 23 of the Cooperation Agreement between the Federal State, the Communities and the Regions on the prevention and control of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.
- Implementation framework of the EU IAS regulation: National Scientific Secretariat on IAS, the National Scientific Council on IAS, and the National Committee on IAS
- Steering Committees of projects funded under the Belspo – BRAIN programme
- GBIF Nodes Committee (Chair), Nodes Steering Group (Chair) and Executive Committee (Member)
- EOSC FAIR workgroup (Member)