



EM/2017/5

13 February 2017

Dear IPBES National Focal Points and other government representatives,

We are now entering an important and exciting period in the preparation of the four regional assessments and the land degradation assessment. The experts have been working very hard and will soon have completed the second-order drafts of the full reports and the first-order drafts of the Summaries for Policymakers (SPM), which will be available for both expert and Government review as outlined in the Plenary-approved Rules of Procedures (NB: The review period for the regional assessments from Europe and Central Asia, Asia Pacific, Africa and the land degradation and restoration assessment is 1 May – 26 June 2017; for the Americas regional assessment, it is 29 May – 24 July 2017).

We would like to encourage Governments to provide written comments on the relevant assessment for their respective region as well as on the land degradation assessment, and take advantage of, and encourage active participation in the three-step approach outlined below, which has been designed to strengthen the science-policy interface and facilitate Governments taking ownership of these assessments.

Unfortunately, less than 10 Governments submitted review comments on either the pollination or scenarios assessments, and in each case only one non-WEOG Government. It is vital to have solid government reviews on the second order drafts of the full reports and the first-order drafts of the Summaries for Policymakers, which will be reviewed and approved line-by-line during IPBES-6 in March 2018. Government reviews will give credibility and legitimacy to the assessments, as well as increase their ownership by Governments. This review process will allow Governments to express concerns or request changes while it is still possible to make changes, rather than wait for the Plenary.

The proposed following three step-approach, which is a modification of that proposed in the capacity-building information document (IPBES/5/3 para 32) has been developed in consultation with the co-chairs of the capacity building task force, and of the regional and land degradation assessments.

1. Presentation and discussions at the Regional meetings ahead of IPBES-5 (Monday 6 March 2017)

Bureau members, supported by MEP members if regions agree, will offer to hold presentations and discussions on the second order draft process with national delegates during the regional meetings in Bonn prior to IPBES-5, and if deemed feasible and needed also during one evening in the margins

of the Plenary sessions (Tuesday 7 March to Friday 10 March). The presentations and discussions are intended to familiarize delegates, and in particular the National Focal Points, with the structure of the assessments (chapters, chapter key findings and SPMs), the review process, and how Governments may wish to organize themselves during the review period to collect comments. The presentations will summarize a number of the different processes Governments have used for the IPBES pollination and scenarios assessments and similar assessments, e.g., IPCC. The discussions will also solicit views on possible barriers to Government participation in IPBES review processes.

2. Webinars

Webinars on the assessments themselves (draft chapter key messages and Summaries for Policymakers) are suggested to be held at the beginning of the review period. These will provide National Focal Points the opportunity to ask questions to the experts who prepared the assessments.

3. Regional dialogue meetings of National Focal Points (NFPs) and assessment experts (July/August 2017)

A two-day regional dialogue meeting in all four regions between NFPs and/or their representatives, and representatives from the assessment author teams (co-chairs and coordinating lead authors), including experts on land degradation and restoration will be held on the following days:

Africa:	3-4 August 2017
Americas:	3-4 August 2017
Asia Pacific:	20-21 July 2017
Europe and Central Asia:	20-21 July 2017

The regional dialogue meetings are intended to sensitize assessment teams on how the Second Order Drafts are perceived by Governments, and will help experts address the written review comments during the third author meetings. These meetings also aim at developing capacities within Governments to review and approve the Summaries for Policy Makers of the assessments at IPBES-6 in 2018.

The regional dialogue meetings will be discussed in more detail during the regional meetings ahead of IPBES-5 (6 March). We would, however, like to ask you to **please save the relevant date for your region.**

Support for participation of the IPBES focal point from all developing countries will be provided through the IPBES capacity-building budget.

We look forward to further collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Watson (Chair) and Anne Larigauderie Executive Secretary