

D5.1 Concept note: Proposed collaboration approach with IPBES and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)



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What is Biodiversa+?

Biodiversa+ is the new European co-funded biodiversity partnership supporting excellent research on biodiversity with an impact for policy and society. It was jointly developed by BiodivERsA and the European Commission (DG Research & Innovation and DG Environment) and was officially launched on 1 October 2021.

Biodiversa+ is part of the [European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#) that aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. European Partnerships such as Biodiversa+ bring the European Commission and private and/or public partners together to address some of Europe's most pressing challenges through concerted research and innovation initiatives. They are a key implementation tool of Horizon Europe, and contribute significantly to achieving the EU's political priorities.

The Partnership aims to connect science, policy and practice for transformative change. It currently gathers 74 research programmers and funders and environmental policy actors from 36 European and associated countries to work on 5 main objectives:

1. Plan and support research and innovation on biodiversity through a shared strategy, annual joint calls for research projects and capacity building activities
2. Set up a network of harmonised schemes to improve monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services across Europe
3. Contribute to high-end knowledge for deploying Nature-based Solutions and valuation of biodiversity in the private sector
4. Ensure efficient science-based support for policy-making and implementation in Europe
5. Strengthen the relevance and impact of pan-European research on biodiversity in a global context

➤ For more information: <https://www.biodiversa.org/2>

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Glossary of Acronyms

AHTEG	Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CHM	Clearing-House Mechanism
COP	Conference of Parties
EMG	Environmental Management Group
GBF	Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
GPI	Global Peatlands Initiative
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
MaB	Man and Biosphere Programme
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
NbS	Nature-based solutions
PEDRR	Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technological and Technical Advice
SCBD	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
STRP	Scientific and Technical Review Panel
UDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDOALOS	United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea
WHC	World Heritage Convention

1 Background, scope and suggested approach

1.1 Previous MEAs-BiodivERsA and Biodiversa+ collaboration

To date, the engagement of BiodivERsA (the predecessor of the European Biodiversity Partnership Biodiversa+) with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) has been focusing on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It has been building upon the workshop report from the Horizon 2020 EKLIPSE project entitled “What needs to be done to better integrate research and knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services from the global to the European level, and vice versa?” (2018). Further progress as presented in this concept note takes into account recent developments in international and European biodiversity policies (e.g., the European Union Biodiversity Strategy and the upcoming Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework) as well as in the research landscape.

BiodivERsA published in 2018 a document exploring ways to improve policy relevance of research and to have effective science/policy interfacing activities in research projects, including in the landscape of biodiversity-relevant MEAs. Three types of relevant CBD scientific bodies were identified: the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) as well as *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Groups (AHTEGs). The guide advised to engage with the CBD through an approach focused on knowledge needs.¹

BiodivERsA, at the programme level, already collaborated with/contributed to the CBD, for example by participating to the Science-Policy Forum organized by the European Commission on nature-based solutions (NbS) at COP14 (Sharm el-Sheik, 2018).

At the national level, a large number of Biodiversa+ partners are involved in one or several MEAs: 17 out of 28 responses to the survey indicated that our organisations are taking part in international biodiversity-related processes.

BiodivERsA-funded projects also engage with the CBD and other MEAs in form of side-events or publications, according to the Analysis of the outputs of BiodivERsA funded projects (2014-2018)². For instance, a side-event at the CBD COP12 (Pyeongchang, 2014) presented the INVALUABLE project's outcomes to national and international delegations of policy-makers and multi-national businesses. The COP12 to the CBD represented a window of opportunity, since it addressed the market-based instruments issue covered by INVALUABLE. The relevance of a side-event at a CBD COP was also explored in 2012 by the CoForTips project (2011-2012 call). The FFII project co-developed with IUCN an information document for the SBSTTA 20th meeting: “Progress towards pathways prioritization in compliance to Aichi Target 9 – UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/5”³. In December 2021, the CBD Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) Co-chairs B. Van Havre and F. Ogwai also reported to the CBD Bureau on the BiodivScen Interim Project Conference and Webinars (that took place 27-28 October 2021) as a “recent accomplishment” in the context of the preparations of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

¹ Lemaitre F., Bridgewater P., Eggermont H., Gardner S., Hueso K., Niemelä J., Paloniemi R., Pereira Martins I., Thornton A. & Le Roux X. (2018). BiodivERsA guide on policy relevance of research and on effective science/policy interfacing in research proposals. BiodivERsA report, 80 pp.

² [Lemaitre F., Le Roux X. \(2021\) Analysis of the outputs of BiodivERsA funded projects: Projects completed over 2014-2018. BiodivERsA report, 90 pp.](#)

³ [CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/5: Progress toward pathways prioritization in compliance to Aichi Target 9.](#)

1.2 Previous IPBES-BiodivERsA and Biodiversa+ collaboration

BiodivERsA has initiated collaboration with IPBES in 2015, it is an **official observer** of the platform since 2016, and engages with the intergovernmental platform across its four functions.

Regarding the **assessment of knowledge**, BiodivERsA has developed factsheets on relevant projects' results funded by BiodivERsA that could feed into ongoing assessments. This was done for the IPBES regional assessment for Europe and Central Asia and was recognized by IPBES Secretariat as helpful contributions, who also highlighted the usefulness of the factsheet format.

Regarding the **policy support function** of IPBES, BiodivERsA has supported the work of the IPBES task force on policy support, at the time of the development of the IPBES policy tools gateway in which examples from BiodivERsA-funded projects were included (has been paused since then). Since improving the science-policy interface has also been at the heart of BiodivERsA activities since the programme's inception, some of its work is also *de facto* a contribution to IPBES work programme (e.g., [BiodivERsA Handbook on Scenarios](#), which as a gateway resource builds on IPBES methodological report on scenarios to further promote the use of scenarios in decision-making and in research projects to support decision-making).

Regarding the capacity-building function, BiodivERsA has been contributing to the IPBES fellowship programme through the training of early-career scientists. The module was based on [the BiodivERsA Guide on Policy Relevance of Research](#). Individual contributions by the BiodivERsA coordination team and operational team to the IPBES capacity building fora have also been made over the years, and same is happening under Biodiversa+ (e.g. Chair/Coordinator of Biodiversa+ invited as panelists in the 5th Capacity Building Forum (1 June 2022)).

The largest, most strategic area for collaboration with IPBES so far has been related to the Platform's function of **catalyzing the production of new knowledge**. In the 2017-2018 call implemented by BiodivERsA and the Belmont Forum on the topic of scenarios, BiodivERsA aimed to address, among others, the research priorities and knowledge gaps identified in IPBES methodological assessment on scenarios and modelling. To enhance bridges between IPBES, BiodivERsA and other key research funders and programmers in all regions, BiodivERsA has also successfully offered to host part of the IPBES technical support unit on Knowledge and Data, dedicated to the catalysis of new knowledge, since 2019.

For more details on the BiodivERsA-IPBES cooperation, see the booklet here: <https://www.biodiversa.org/1684/download>

1.3 Objectives of the collaboration between Biodiversa+, IPBES and the MEAs

Both fora (MEAs and science-policy platforms such as IPBES) deal with scientific and political issues related to biodiversity. However, their mandate is different: MEAs are legally-binding treaties whereas the science-policy platforms are intergovernmental processes that are policy relevant, yet not policy prescriptive. When it comes to bringing forward knowledge that can be used to support biodiversity policies (i.e. reinforcing the knowledge base for decision making on biodiversity issues), Biodiversa+ could collaborate with both types of fora.

Most notably, Biodiversa+ could be showcased as a source of excellent, policy-relevant knowledge through:

- Improving the uptake of Biodiversa+ research outcomes at relevant levels of decision making, both through their inclusion in IPBES deliverables (themselves used by MEAs) as well as directly through the engagement of Biodiversa+ with MEAs;
- Developing mutually beneficial collaborations between the Biodiversa+ Members (research policy actors and environmental policy actors), IPBES as well as MEAs;
- Improving the engagement of countries represented in Biodiversa+ within international processes (e.g., becoming a member of IPBES for the 4 countries represented in Biodiversa+ who are not member yet, technical support to get countries not actively involved on board e.g., in Plenary sessions, through Pan-European Stakeholder Consultations meetings)

In this regard, Biodiversa+ objectives are aligned with those called for in the call [HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01](#) “Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC”. The Partnership would align with the consortium in charge of implementing this project to share experience, organize joint activities and input into each other processes and deliverables when relevant, especially in terms of supporting European and associated countries’ expert input into IPBES.

This work could benefit Biodiversa+ activities in general, in particular those of Work Package 1 on the joint co-funded calls for research projects and of Work Package 4 on better connecting research and innovation programmes and projects to policy. It is anticipated that collaboration with IPBES and MEAs could increase the diversity and relevance of researchers participating in Biodiversa+ projects (WP1), through a higher visibility of the Partnership. Aligning Biodiversa+ programming and activities with international policy concerns (WP4) would demonstrate Biodiversa+ (and, by extension, European research) as a strategic hub anticipating key policy questions, to address the timing gap between the production of knowledge and the time when knowledge is needed. It could also help to further align efforts, attention and funding for biodiversity research topics by European funders, programmers, decision-makers and stakeholders.

1.4 Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to collaborate with: biodiversity-related conventions, Rio conventions and others?

At international level, biodiversity, ecosystem services and Nature-based Solutions (NBS) are addressed in many multilateral environmental agreements. The biodiversity-related conventions (“biodiversity cluster”) are gathering six MEAs directly linked to these issues: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its two protocols (Cartagena and Nagoya), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention as well as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

Besides this cluster, biodiversity is indirectly addressed in several multilateral agreements (e.g., the UN Convention to Combat Desertification UNCCD, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change UNFCCC). The Environmental Management Group (EMG)⁴, for example, is gathering all environment-related UN processes. Furthermore, MEAs also collaborate within thematic liaison groups, such as the Joint Liaison Group

⁴ EMG website: <https://unemg.org/about-emg/emg-members/>.

(JLG) between the three Rio Conventions or the Interagency Liaison Group (ILG) on biodiversity and health. These could also be an entry point for Biodiversa+ to address cross-cutting issues (e.g., Nature-based Solutions or health), and help to mainstream biodiversity concerns.

Considering the Biodiversa+ SRIA and two first flagship programmes launched in Year 1 (i.e., flagship programme 1 on protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, and flagship programme 2 on biodiversity monitoring), Biodiversa+ could consider collaboration with habitats and species-related conventions (CBD, Ramsar, CITES, CMS, Bern Convention at the Eurasian level) as well as with MEAs with strong biodiversity monitoring needs, such as the CBD (cf. the need to monitor progress towards the new targets of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework). The collaboration between Biodiversa+ and such MEAs will mainly be initiated in the framework of the subsidiary bodies providing scientific, technological and technical advice (e.g., CBD-SBSTTA, CMS-Scientific Council, CITES-Animals and Plants Committees, Ramsar-STRP).

Considering the multitude of international processes related to biodiversity, the Biodiversa+ Members expressed willingness to prioritize certain MEAs and to progress incrementally by first fostering collaboration with the most evident/most closely related MEAs (see Annex) and second, if successful, with other relevant ones.

The prioritization of MEAs proposed builds upon three elements: (i) MEAs that previous BiodivERsA projects identified in their scope (see Table 1), (ii) the input of the Partnership Members received through a dedicated session during the General Assembly on 21 February 2022, and (iii) a survey conducted in April 2022 about members' current involvement with MEAs and the collaboration they would like to be developed in the future years.

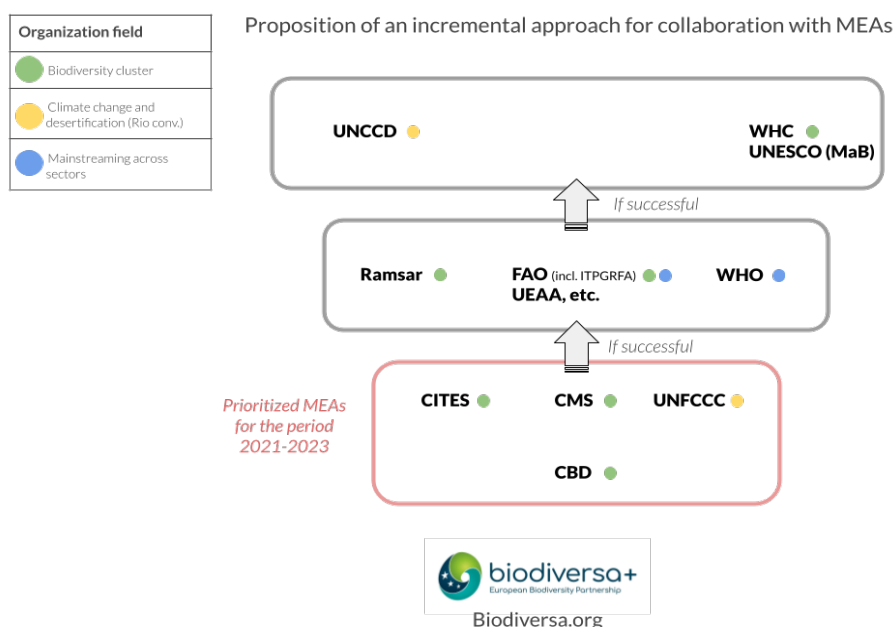
The mapping of previous and ongoing BiodivERsA projects show that these are primarily focusing on CBD (43% of projects referring to an international biodiversity-related process), SDGs, UNFCCC/IPCC as well as regional conventions (e.g., Arctic). However, a wide range of biodiversity-related international processes dealing with, for example agriculture or health-related ones, have thus far received less attention from BiodivERsA projects.

Following the analysis of past project proposals and the incremental approach outlined above, the present note will primarily focus on the CBD which the Biodiversa+ Members consider a central element in the Biodiversa+ internationalization, though it will also address collaboration with a wider range of relevant MEAs (see figure 1). Indeed, the CBD could also be considered as an “overarching” MEA as it is the only international treaty dealing with all aspects of biodiversity (e.g., agriculture, NbS, chemicals), thus enabling the Partnership to address biodiversity in a holistic manner, including mainstreaming.

Biodiversa+ members themselves also seem strongly involved in the CBD at the national level.

Table 1 : MEAs identified as relevant in previous BiodivERsA project proposals (2017-2021)

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) or international processes related to biodiversity	Number of references to MEAs in previous BiodivERsA project proposals	Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) or international processes related to biodiversity	Number of records used in previous BiodivERsA projects
CBD	64	Wetlands (e.g. Ramsar, GPI)	3
UNEP (e.g., SDGs, UNEA, Rio+20)	29	UNCLOS (e.g., BBNJ, ISA)	2
IPBES	18	Data and observations related processes (e.g., GBIF, GEO BON)	2
UNFCCC	17	Mountains related processes (e.g., GMBA)	1
Arctic (e.g., Arctic Council, AMAP, CAFF, AED, Arctic SDGs)	10	Development related processes (e.g., UNCTD)	1
IPCC	6	Air related processes (e.g., CLRTAP)	1
Ecosystem restoration (e.g., UN Decade, Bonn Challenge)	5	Forests related processes (e.g., New-York Declaration)	1
FAO (e.g., 4 per 1000 Initiative)	5	Primary sector related processes (e.g. IGF)	1
UNESCO (e.g., MaB Programme)	4	Total	173
WHO	3	Total Biodiversity Cluster	≈ 76
		Total Rio conventions	≈ 86
		Total mainstreaming	≈ 10

**Figure 1 : Proposition of an incremental approach for collaboration with MEAs (2021-2027)**

As a second step, the Biodiversa+ Members are interested in enhancing collaboration with MEAs that have already put forward requests to the IPBES, such as UNCCD and UNFCCC. The CITES and CMS – also part of the “Biodiversity Cluster” and of the “sectoral” conventions – are also perceived as relevant conventions to engage with (also noting that CMS, in the context of IPBES, might propose an assessment on ecological connectivity for consideration at IPBES-10).

The Biodiversa+ Members also expressed their interest in fostering collaboration with international processes focusing on agricultural issues. This is in line with the Biodiversa+ SRIA outlining the need to mainstream biodiversity considerations in pan-European research and innovation. There was little mention of such processes in previous BiodivERsA projects. The CBD itself has also established partnership agreements with the following global agricultural organizations (i.e., not necessarily MEAs), demonstrating their interest in issues at the interface between biodiversity and agriculture: [Agropolis International. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research](#) (CGIAR), [International Plan Protection Convention \(IPPC\)](#), [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#) (FAO) and its [International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture](#) (ITPGRFA). At European scale, the Partnership could collaborate with the [Union of European Academies for Science Applied to Agriculture, Food and Nature](#) (UEAA).

The Biodiversa+ flagship programmes to start in Year 2 will focus on the topics of societal transformation, as well as Nature-based Solutions (NbS). The flagship programme on societal transformation has a link with heritage issues, and the Biodiversa+ Members recommend to work primarily with the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MaB) programme, instead of the World Heritage Convention (WHC). The flagship programme on NbS could lead to a strengthened collaboration with the two Rio conventions, namely the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as well as the United Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). This flagship programme could also provide an opportunity to work with the Ramsar Convention (focusing on wetlands), and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).

1.5 A collaboration matching the four functions of IPBES

As explained above, the main focus of the collaboration with IPBES and CBD is to reinforce the knowledge base for decision making on biodiversity. Input to the CBD process could happen either directly, or through the IPBES (answering requests from the CBD).

The suggested collaboration combines an upstream, midstream and downstream approach of the international processes:

- Upstream approach: knowledge gaps and strategic priorities arising from IPBES assessments and MEAs, as inputs for the partnership and members’ strategic activities; international and policy momentum of thematic issues linked to IPBES assessments.
- Midstream approach: contributions of Biodiversa+ research outputs to the preparation of MEAs knowledge-based documents (e.g., CBD SBSTTA agenda items) and to IPBES assessments.
- Downstream approach: new knowledge generation and synthesis, development of decision-support tools, scientific foresight and strategic research and innovation planning, capacity-building activities.

The possible activities to be undertaken by Biodiversa+ with IPBES and MEAs are presented below. They align with the four main IPBES functions, which are also considered of relevance to collaboration with MEAs and the overall Biodiversa+ portfolio (see Figure 2): assessing knowledge, building capacity, catalyzing the new knowledge and supporting policies.

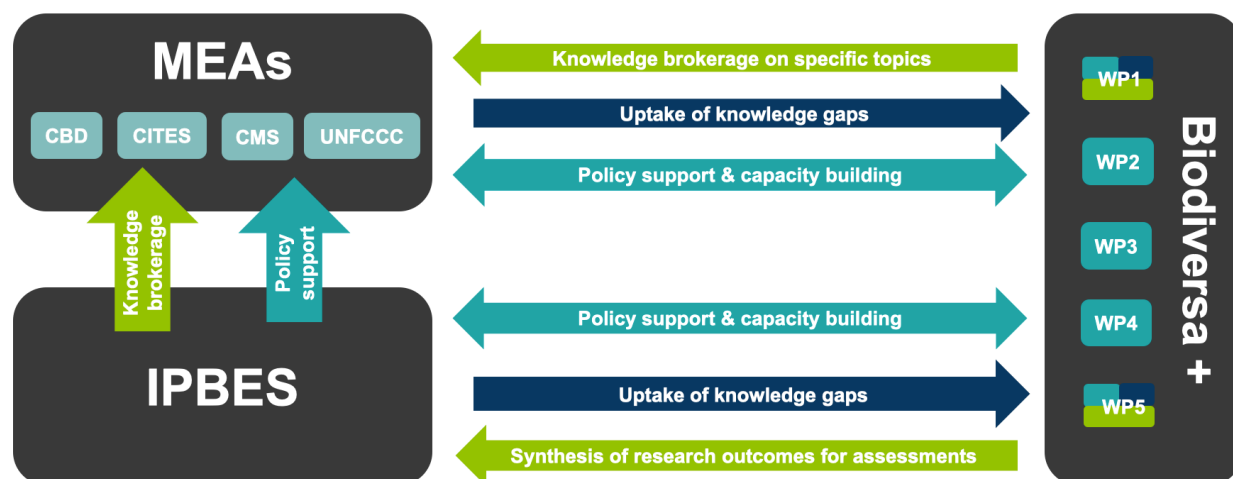


Figure 2 : Opportunities for collaboration between Biodiversa+ and IPBES, and links with other work packages in Biodiversa+.

The results of the survey conducted among Biodiversa+ Members regarding their existing involvement in IPBES and in MEAs were used to design and prioritize potential collaborative activities across these 4 functions. The survey aimed to identify strong points to reinforce and weak points to address in order to support Biodiversa+ partners in their engagement with IPBES and MEAs. The survey identified, among others, partners who are acting as IPBES or MEAs National Focal Points or closely collaborating with them. 28 responses were received within the 3 week opening of the survey, with a good balance between Eastern and Western European countries (respectively 12 and 16 responses). While the total number of respondents is less than half of the total number of Biodiversa+ partners, the balance between European sub-regions, institution type and main area of work (research or environment) indicates that respondents are a representative sample of the whole Partnership. Responses to the survey informed the development of this concept note. Beneficiaries are identified for each activity along those three categories: researchers (participating or having participated in BiodivERsA or Biodiversa+ projects), decision-makers (national authorities in countries involved in Biodiversa+) and stakeholders (members of Biodiversa+ Enlarged Stakeholder Board) (see figure 3).

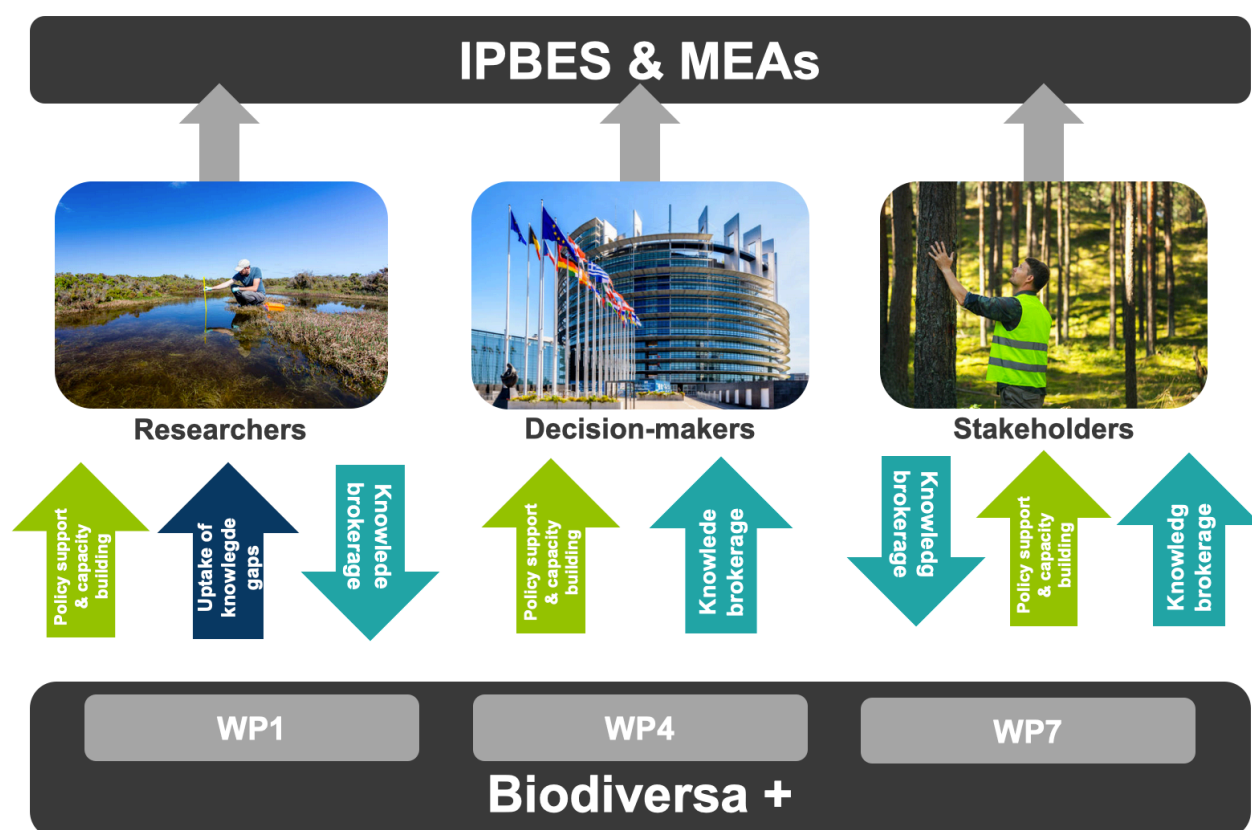


Figure 3: Main beneficiaries of Biodiversa+ activities with IPBES and MEAs.

2 Overview of possible collaborations

2.1 Supporting policies and decision-making

This area of work was ranked first as priority to explore by respondents to the survey, either from the research or from the environment field. The main goal of this area of work is to improve links between the research communities and the decision-makers involved in MEAs and IPBES.

Biodiversa+ has a working area dedicated to supporting policies (WP4) that can inspire and benefit from the collaboration with IPBES and MEAs. Indeed, at the European level, the Member states' biodiversity policies will be greatly influenced by global frameworks (e.g., post-2020 global biodiversity framework). For this activity (and capacity-building ones, see below) in particular, Biodiversa+ has the benefit of being closer than IPBES to the community of researchers, through its funding of research through open calls, but also to European stakeholders and decision-makers, through its science-policy-society interface. Some of this target audience may already interact directly with IPBES and MEAs but most of them also struggle to enter its complex

processes and procedures, or to use their outputs which are perceived as too far away from their daily concerns⁵.

2.1.1 Complementary needs from the research and the environment fields

Most Biodiversa+ partners responding to the survey, who indicated that they do not yet have collaboration with IPBES and MEAs are research organisations. Their main priorities for collaborating with IPBES and MEAs is to enhance the uptake of international processes and priorities in European research, to increase uptake of European research results in international work and to improve coordination between European and national actors to participate in international processes.

Biodiversa+ partners responding to the survey and indicating that they already engage in IPBES are involved in environment organisations, while members already engaged with MEAs are involved equally in environment or research organisations. The main priorities of respondents for collaborating with IPBES and MEAs is to improve coordination between European and national actors to participate in international processes and to increase uptake of European research results in international work.

The need to improve coordination between actors is identified by both communities. It reveals the opportunity for Biodiversa+ to support the dialogue between researchers and decision-makers, for them to be able to participate more effectively in international fora. Activities to be undertaken by Biodiversa+ are explored below, while increasing uptake of European research results in international work is covered in the capacity-building section (see 2.4 below) and enhancing the uptake of international processes and priorities in European research is covered in the catalyzing new knowledge section (see 2.2 below).

2.1.2 Connecting researchers and decision-makers to prepare for international meetings

At the European level, the Expert Meeting in Preparation of SBSTTA (also known as “Vilm meeting”) is taking place yearly in Germany, on the isle of Vilm, and is gathering national biodiversity experts (including SBSTTA national focal points) to discuss agenda items of the CBD SBSTTA and to develop a coordinated approach at the European level. 4 out of 16 respondents to the survey involved in the CBD took part in these meetings and could provide Biodiversa+ with further information regarding the opportunity and modalities to engage in such a forum.

The Vilm meeting could be a relevant forum for national focal points to exchange with researchers involved in the Partnership or Biodiversa+ representatives. For instance, Biodiversa+ research outcomes and their policy relevance could be presented when addressing an issue on the next SBSTTA meeting’s agenda. Policy briefs on items on CBD SBSTTA and IPBES plenaries agendas could also be produced and promoted to decision-makers. Furthermore, the involvement of Biodiversa+ in the Vilm meeting could enable the partnership to establish contacts with the CBD secretariat, as it takes part in the workshop as an observer.

The Trondheim Conferences on Biodiversity, being held every 3-4 years in Norway, are also international informal meetings of relevance for the Partnership, as they are giving “an opportunity to policy-makers, managers and scientists to have an open and constructive dialogue and to provide a transparent and scientifically sound basis for key issues being discussed under the CBD”. The conferences are organized by

⁵ See *Results of the stakeholder analysis survey conducted by IPBES in 2016*: <https://ipbes.net/resource-file/7303>; *Review of the first work programme of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*: <https://ipbes.net/resource-file/25170>

the Secretariat of the CBD, the UNEP and the Norwegian Government (Norway being a Partner of Biodiversa+). Biodiversa+ researchers or representatives could attend an upcoming event as an organization, or as an invited speaker. The ninth Trondheim Conference is expected to take place in 2022 or 2023.

Other fora may also be relevant events to present Biodiversa+ research outcomes, such as the Science-Policy Forum for Biodiversity, which is co-organized by the Secretariat of the CBD, or CBD regional or thematic workshops ahead of future CBD meetings. The Convention is indeed organizing regional capacity-building events, in partnership with international organizations or countries (on an irregular basis).

At the national level, further informal fora could contribute improving the science-policy interface in view of an upcoming CBD meeting. In France, for instance, the conference series “Biodiversity Platform” organized by the IDDRI think tank and the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB, being a partner of Biodiversa+) is gathering both decision-makers and researchers to discuss further developments of the MEA. The Biodiversa+ Partners could carry out an informal mapping of such events throughout the duration of the Partnership.

Beside national delegates, the convention secretariats are also stakeholders with whom it might be relevant – but likely more challenging – to collaborate. By selecting, compiling and provisioning scientific knowledge to diverse processes (e.g., COP, SBSTTA, AHTEG), the staff members of the convention secretariats are playing a key – and relatively unknown – role in the science-policy interface. Biodiversa+ could engage with staff members of the “Biodiversity Science, Policy and Governance Unit” of the Secretariat of the CBD and try to get European researchers involved in networks of experts for the “peer-review” of documents.⁶ Contacts with the Secretariat of the CBD could be developed or strengthened per e-mail, through bilateral meetings or events (e.g., side-events).

For IPBES, there is no equivalent of formal preparatory meetings (SBSTTA) or informal preparatory meetings (Vilm meetings), though there is an increasing demand by the European Commission and the European member states to get expert input on IPBES documents ahead of Plenaries or during consultations with IPBES Members and stakeholders⁷. This expert input is provided either in writing or through *ad hoc* meetings organized for example back-to-back with a WPIEI meeting. Biodiversa+ could similarly highlight relevant project outcomes that can inform decision-makers on IPBES agenda items. Opportunities are also to be explored through the [ECA Network](#), in which several partners, including leader of Task 5.2, are already active.

For the activities presented in this section 2.2.2, there may be important synergies to create with the projects [HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01](#) and [HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10](#) if granted.

2.1.3 Supporting countries’ involvement in international fora

Finally, Biodiversa+ can play a role in promoting the participation of countries who are represented in the Partnership but who are not yet members of IPBES to formally join the platform, or to be more active in it if not so. Biodiversa+ could ultimately support the set-up of national biodiversity platforms⁸, which could be relevant for countries to engage in Biodiversa+ activities (e.g., national hubs, in coordination with WP8) and with IPBES

⁶ Koetz, T., Bridgewater, P., Van den Hove, S., Siebenhüner, B. (2008) The role of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to the Convention on Biological Diversity as science-policy interface. *Environmental Science & Policy*: 11. 505-516pp.

⁷ Ventocilla, J., Wittmer, H., Watt, A.D., Young, J.C. (2018). What needs to be done to better integrate research and knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services from the global to the European level, and vice-versa? A report of the EKLIPSE project. https://eklipse.eu/wp-content/uploads/website_db/Request/Global_to_EU/Global_to_EU_Report.pdf

⁸ See Marquard et al. 2016. European National Biodiversity Platforms as Partners for the Implementation of the IPBES Work Programme <http://www.eca-ipbesnetwork.org/2203>

and MEAs. Such activity can be facilitated through the existing hosting or close collaboration of Biodiversa+ partners with IPBES national focal points (9 out of 14 responses to the survey indicated that such a link existed between the relevant institutions). For example, Biodiversa+ is currently using its network (current and possible new partners) in an attempt to mobilize countries which are not members of IPBES yet to become IPBES members.

Although almost all countries involved in Biodiversa+ have ratified global biodiversity-related conventions, for some of them, there is still a room for improving their involvement in MEAs⁹ regarding scientific issues. A greater participation would enable the wider range of European biodiversity concerns (e.g., Mediterranean ones) to be properly reflected in multilateral negotiations. Biodiversa+ could provide these countries with workshops on MEAs scientific issues on the agenda and facilitate participation in Vilm or CBD SBSTTA meetings, for instance.

2.2 Catalyzing new knowledge

Catalyzing the generation of new knowledge through increasing uptake of international processes and priorities in European research was identified as the second main priority area for respondents to the survey. Biodiversa+ has been engaged in a collaboration with IPBES on that aspect, especially since 2019 through the hosting of the dedicated part of the IPBES technical support unit on Knowledge and Data, focusing on the catalyzing of new knowledge.

2.2.1 Hosting of the IPBES technical support unit on catalyzing new knowledge

Hosted by the French Foundation for Research on Biodiversity on behalf of Biodiversa+, the technical support unit implements activities as agreed by IPBES Plenary as part of the Platform's work programme, under the supervision of IPBES Secretariat. The technical support unit's main functions are to:

- Support the authors of IPBES assessments to identify knowledge gaps based on their work;
- Facilitate dialogue around those knowledge gaps with research programmers and funders
- Monitor the impact of IPBES in catalyzing the generation of new knowledge.

Biodiversa+ brings in the technical support unit its expertise in biodiversity research joint programming and funding, as well as a regional reliable network of programmers and funders for IPBES to engage with. This collaboration benefits Biodiversa+ through an enlarged community of experts to discuss on knowledge gaps that can inspire the Partnership's activities, a better structuration of the knowledge gaps in IPBES outputs, easier to take up at the regional level (see priority identified in 2.2.1 above), and opportunities to collaborate with research programming and funding networks beyond Europe.

The hosting of the IPBES technical support unit by Biodiversa+ is expected to be renewed mid-2023 for a 2-year duration to keep this collaboration developing. The first regional dialogue meeting with IPBES experts and European programmers and funders, corresponding to most Biodiversa+ partners, is scheduled in September 2022.

⁹ For instance, some European countries which are partners of Biodiversa+ did not take part in the three previous Vilm meetings, or not on a regular basis (2018 SBSTTA-22, 2019 SBSTTA-23, 2020-2021 SBSTTA-24).

2.2.2 Enhancing the uptake of international processes and priorities in Biodiversa+ calls for projects

The work of the technical support unit (see 2.3.1 above) should allow Biodiversa+ to consider addressing some knowledge gaps identified by IPBES through its WP1 and WP8 activities. Data gaps could be relevant material for the work of WP2, and policy gaps for the work of WP4. There is no established similar process in MEAs but there could be *ad hoc* mappings done by Biodiversa+, similar as the one conducted in 2019 by the Institute for Biodiversity Network (Germany). The latest study¹⁰ released in 2019 may be relevant for the first half of the Partnership's duration. Since MEAs also submit requests to IPBES programme of work, Biodiversa+ could consider the proposals submitted to IPBES, which are publicly available, to learn about the needs identified by the conference of parties of MEAs. Similarly, conferences of parties of MEAs increasingly consider IPBES outputs that are relevant to their work. They may underline in such agenda items some knowledge gaps highlighted by IPBES that are priority to them.

CBD SBSTTA also keeps a list that is regularly updated on new and emerging issues that are of relevance to CBD work. This list may be relevant for consideration in Biodiversa+ activities on research programming and funding. Policy briefs could also be produced on the specific agenda item of new and emerging issues, that could be state-of-the-art of existing knowledge on a given issue. Such policy briefs could be used by the CBD secretariat and SBSTTA negotiators but also by the research communities for their work to better fill the knowledge gaps.

Retroactively, Biodiversa+ could identify what knowledge gaps were addressed by previous BiodivERsA calls. This activity is planned as part of the dialogues between IPBES and programmers and funders (see 2.3.1 above).

As previously mentioned, Biodiversa+ already developed direct interactions with international institutions. Namely, the Secretariat of the CBD provided feedbacks in the development of the Strategic Innovation and Research Agenda. It would be relevant to further involve the secretariat in such targeted and high-strategic processes, such as in the Partnership's call steering committees or call evaluation committees. By doing so, international stakeholders would be aware of Biodiversa+ activities and more likely to make use of its future knowledge products. Projects kick-off, mid-term and final meetings and stakeholder workshops for the funded projects could be opened more widely to international stakeholders.

A side-event at a next CBD SBSTTA meeting (SBSTTA-25) could provide the opportunity to present the Partnership and to promote the policy-relevance of its set of activities.

Moreover, an observer status of Biodiversa+ at upcoming CBD meetings is not considered relevant for the General Assembly considering the negative balance between benefits and time investment. The Partnership could continue the engagement through existing partners directly involved in CBD, while avoiding interference with national and European positions. 16 out of 17 responses to the survey indicated that such a participation in CBD was taking place at the state level.

Beside the indirect interactions with MEAs, the participation of Biodiversa+ members in events convened by targeted MEAs or with their representatives as panel members should allow the partnership to better understand how to consider these processes and their priorities in the partnership activities and, by doing so,

¹⁰ Institute for Biodiversity, A. Paulsch (2019). CBD research needs. <https://biodiv.de/en/biodiversitaet-infos/forschungsbedarf-der-cbd.html> (consulted on 14/02/2022).

to increase the uptake. Such information could be reported to the WP5 and T5.3 leaders and the General Assembly, and used timely in the drafting of Biodiversa+ calls (i.e., within the call steering committees).

2.3 Supporting the assessment of knowledge

There is a clear win-win opportunity to interact around the knowledge production by Biodiversa+ and the assessment of knowledge by IPBES, both processes feeding into each other. Biodiversa+ research provides content for IPBES assessments and IPBES assessments identify knowledge gaps that can be addressed by Biodiversa+ research.

2.3.1 Facilitating uptake of Biodiversa+ research outcomes through the production of synthesis

Experience from BiodivERsA 3 has demonstrated that the production of synthesis of project results or factsheets on topics that are relevant for an IPBES assessment are efficient ways to support their inclusion in an IPBES assessment. The factsheets are handed over to the assessment's technical support unit or to relevant authors.

Similar synthesis could be relevant to support the work of MEAs, especially for information documents of the conference of the parties or for flagship publications (e.g., the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* produced by CBD or the *World Ocean Assessment* by UNDOALOS).

Communicating these knowledge products in a timely manner to international stakeholders (especially to the CBD SBSTTA) is a key lever to increase uptake of Biodiversa+ outcomes. International initiatives are identified as key collaborators according to Biodiversa+ Communication Strategy but are not currently defined. Such an activity requires to identify the relevant MEAs milestones, either internal or external (e.g., meeting, document preparation), and to coordinate Biodiversa+ communication with them while avoiding a time-consuming promotion.

2.3.2 Facilitating uptake of Biodiversa+ research results through the involvement of experts

One of the most efficient ways to include knowledge in international processes is for experts to actively participate in the groups, such as IPBES assessments or CBD AHTEGs. This can be addressed through building the capacity of researchers involved in Biodiversa+ projects to apply to calls for nominations and to participate in external reviews and consultations (see 2.5 below).

2.3.3 Promoting a higher collaboration on the topic of biodiversity and climate change at the international level

As underlined throughout Biodiversa+ Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, through the topic of Nature-based Solutions, among others, addressing biodiversity loss and climate change simultaneously is critical in research and policies. Therefore, several of these activities on supporting the assessment of knowledge could be extended to IPCC processes when relevant (e.g., as part of its 7th assessment cycle). They could build, among other, on the outcomes of the BiodivClim programme funded by BiodivERsA in 2019-2020. Biodiversa+ will not engage actively with IPCC due to many barriers (no existing entry point through the partners, acknowledged difficulty to “enter” IPCC processes). Since IPBES Plenary mandated the Platform to work with

IPCC on potential collaborations, Biodiversa+ will rather support ongoing international efforts in that direction through IPBES (e.g., working with the national focal points, mobilizing the research community).

MEAs are also addressing joint biodiversity-land-climate issue, for instance in the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) which comprises the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC. The activities of the ILG are not primarily focused on scientific research aspects. However, the Liaison Group has a mandate to “provide information on interlinkages” and to “develop technical papers to clarify and elaborate on specific policy and technical issues”. Furthermore, since 2010, the Rio Conventions Pavilion is convening at the COPs to the three MEAs and organizing events gathering national and international mainly policy-makers, but also research organizations (e.g., iDiv, Strathclyde University). The Pavilion is meant to be “a platform for raising awareness and sharing information about the latest practices and scientific outcomes on the co-benefits that can be realized through the implementation of the Rio conventions”. The European Commission was partnering the Pavilion during its first two years. Biodiversa+ researchers or stakeholders could apply for participation in these meetings in order to present relevant research outcomes.

2.4 Building capacities

Biodiversa+ capacity-building activities span across all its work packages, for audiences as diverse as research communities, decision-makers and stakeholders. This is well aligned with IPBES capacity-building activities that can inspire and benefit from Biodiversa+ work. While more than half of the respondents to the survey indicated that they are involved in nominating or supporting the nomination of their national experts in IPBES, several respondents, including national focal points, indicated lacking resources to do so. For the research communities, involvement in international fora such as IPBES and the MEAs may be hindered by a lack of knowledge on their actual purposes and work, and by complex procedures, in relation to the political sphere from which they may be disconnected (see 2.2.2 above). In 2010 (i.e., before the establishment of IPBES), the following finding was outlined by the CBD: “the absence of, or difficulties in, accessing scientific information as well as limited awareness of biodiversity issues, are identified by most [...] Parties as being an obstacle to the protection of biodiversity.”¹¹.

Biodiversa+ could build capacities both of researchers and of decision-makers to better participate in those processes. It would build on existing work from the pan-European network on IPBES¹² and collaborate with project [HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10](#) if granted. Biodiversa+ could also build on the work of BiodivClim, the joint call launched by BiodivERsA in 2019-2020 on the topic of biodiversity and climate change. BiodivClim includes the development of a knowledge hub to bring together researchers from the climate and the biodiversity field. BiodivClim also includes capacity-building activities for experts to engage with IPBES and the IPCC.

All those activities could be extended to strategic partner countries and regions, such as Africa.

2.4.1 Supporting the nomination of Biodiversa+ experts in international work

Biodiversa+ could support experts in applying and decision-makers in nominating experts to participate in CBD expert groups (e.g., AHTEGs), IPBES expert groups (e.g., assessment authors) or task forces. The activities

¹¹ CBD (2010). Implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan and Progress Towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/8). <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-10/official/cop-10-08-en.pdf>.

¹² <http://www.eca-ipbesnetwork.org/>

would be dedicated to experts involved in past or current Biodiversa projects, as a way to “reward” experts for their involvement in Biodiversa, by opening up new opportunities for them to work at the international level, while also supporting the function of promoting the use of Biodiversa research outcomes in IPBES or CBD technical work.

The survey among Biodiversa partners identified a need to focus on building capacities of:

- experts in the humanities and social science. This activity could build on the recently established IPBES social sciences and humanities community of practice¹³.
- non-academic experts (stakeholders and practitioners). This activity could build on the existing pan-European stakeholder consultation events¹⁴.

Activities could include workshops (preferred channel identified in the survey among Biodiversa+ partners) and webinars targeting researchers to clarify the scientific mandate of MEAs and the functioning of IPBES, and present possible ways to get involved. Workshops or webinars targeting decision-makers could be organized to support their coordination of national biodiversity hubs and for sharing experience within the region to enhance their national nomination processes.

2.4.2 Supporting the participation of Biodiversa+ experts in external reviews of international documents

Due to a growing politicization of their scientific bodies and to avoid difficult and long-lasting negotiations, the MEAs are increasingly consulting with stakeholders (i.e., CBD national focal points, SBSTTA focal points and relevant organisations) before publishing a working document. Within the framework of the CBD, many peer-reviews of documents in preparation of a SBSTTA meeting (e.g., action or strategic plans) are run by the secretariat. The Partnership could informally contribute to such peer-review rounds by working through the Biodiversa+ Partners, or in a formal way by being identified as a relevant partner of the Secretariat of the CBD. Such action would also contribute to policy support (see 2.2.2 above).

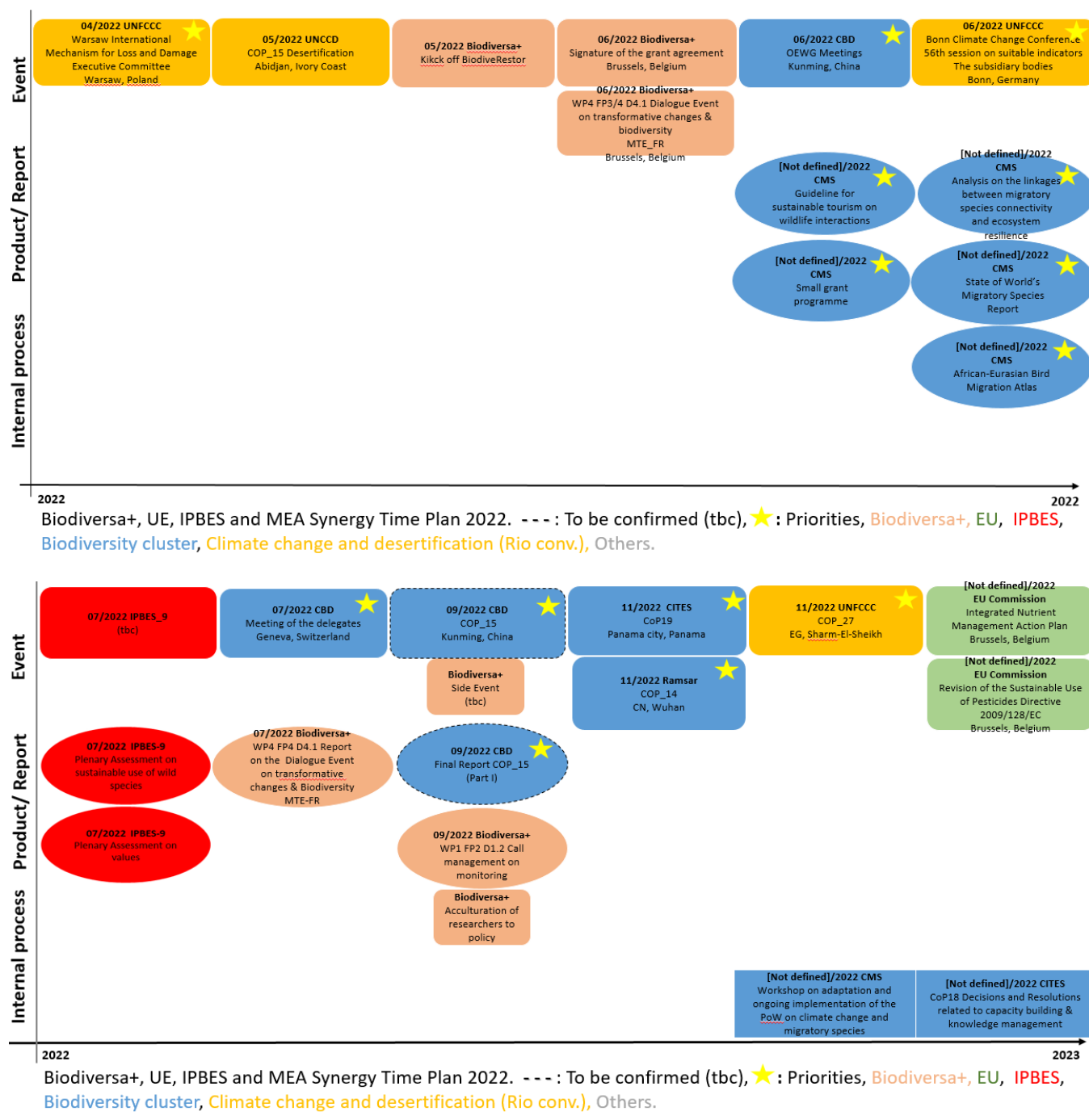
As for IPBES, the platform includes in its procedures one or several external reviews for the production of its deliverables. Those reviews are conducted by peers and Governments and observers. While the scientific community is accustomed to such review processes, participation of European experts, acting in isolation or within a process coordinated at the national level by a focal point, remains limited, especially when considering the size of assessments and their broad coverage of topics. National and regional experiences at the European level, as shared and organised within the Europe and Central Asia network of organisations engaging in IPBES (ECA-Network)¹⁴, demonstrated that review workshops support a broader engagement of expert reviewers. This activity could be implemented by the Partnership, in collaboration with the ECA-Network when possible, with a focus on countries with lower mobilization capacity. This would also support policy functions as described in section 2.2.2 above through the involvement of national focal points to this activity.

Annex – First opportunities for collaboration between IPBES and MEAs

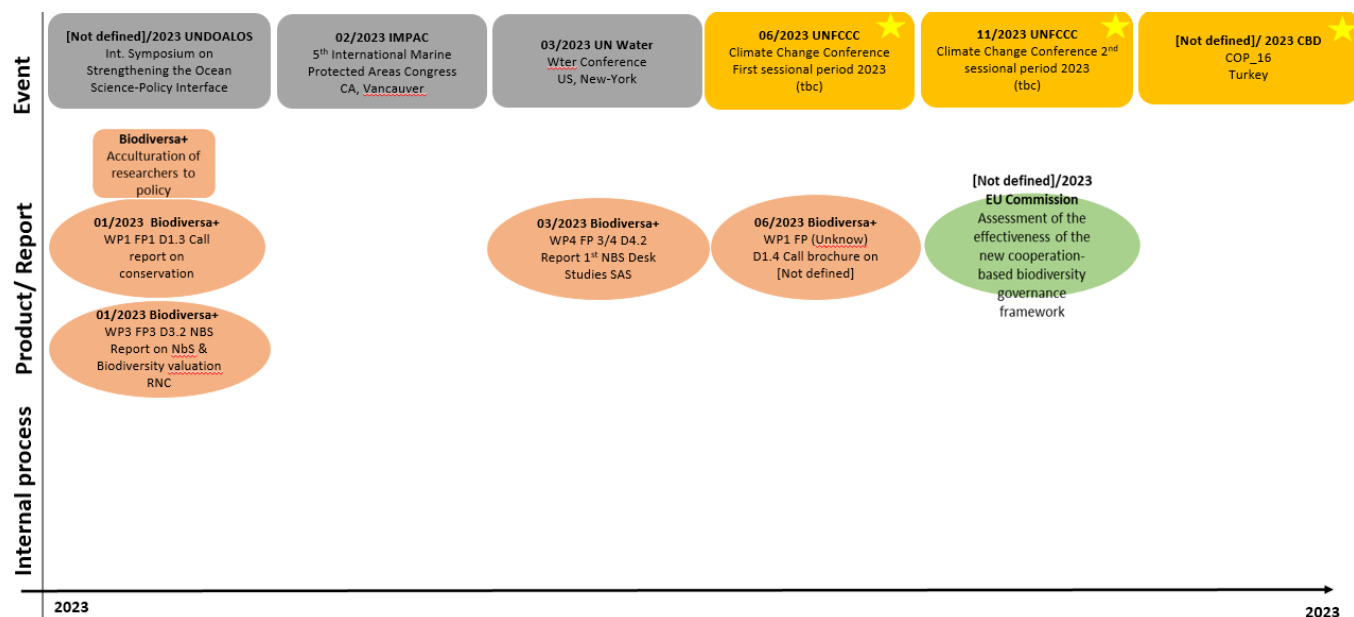
¹³ See Håkon B. Stokland, Marie Stenseke & Marla R. Emery (2022) A network to enhance the contributions from the social sciences and humanities to IPBES, *Ecosystems and People*, 18:1, 95-98, DOI: 10.1080/26395916.2022.2034971

¹⁴ <http://www.eca-ipbesnetwork.org/2176>

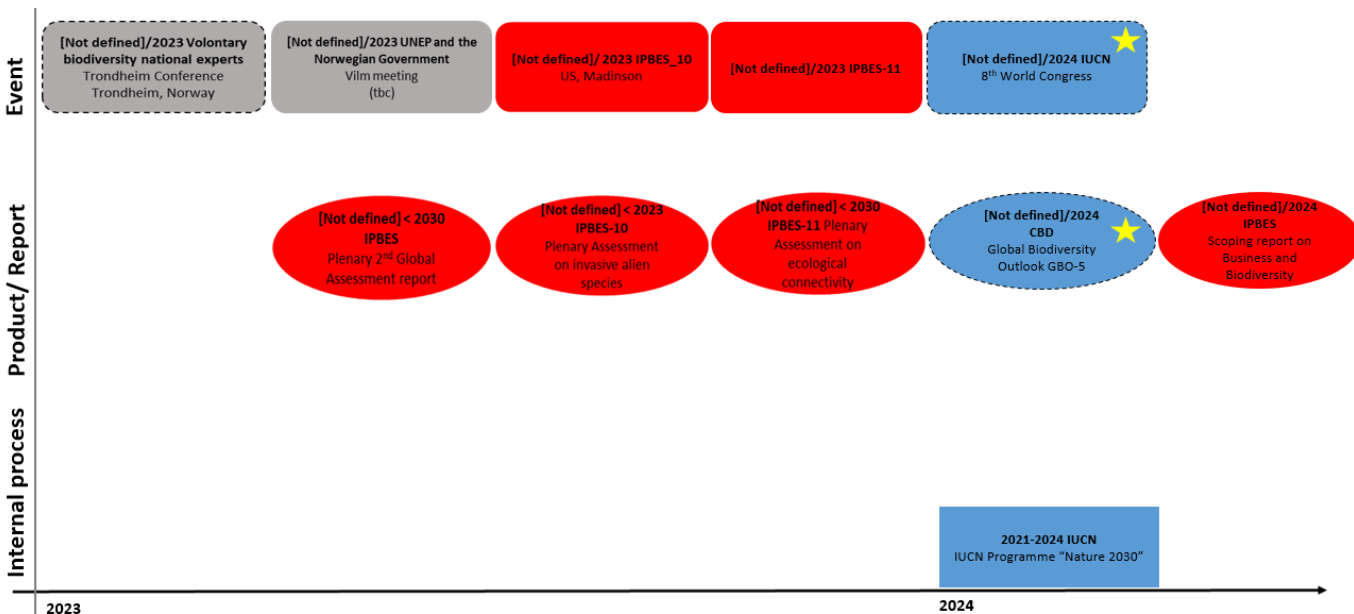
Living Timeline to be updated as international agendas are set up – 2022



D5.1: Concept note: Proposed collaboration approach with IPBES and MEAs



Biodiversa+, UE, IPBES and MEA Synergy Time Plan 2023-2024. --- : To be confirmed (tbc), ★ : Priorities, Biodiversa+, EU, IPBES, Biodiversity cluster, Climate change and desertification (Rio conv.), Others.



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