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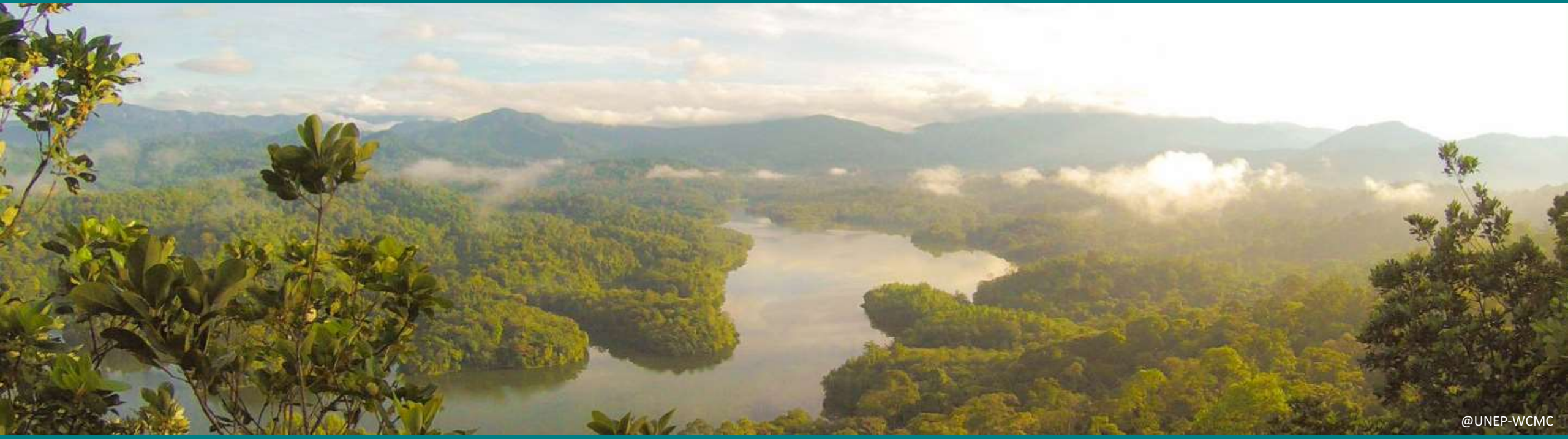
LESSONS LEARNED WORKSHOP

NATIONAL ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE



UN environment programme WCMC

UNDP

UNESCO

BESNet
Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network

Supported by:
Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
based on a decision of the German Bundestag

Introduction

Workshop Agenda

Session 1	What have we learned?
Session 2	Stakeholder Engagement
Session 3	Evaluation
Session 4	National Biodiversity Platforms
Session 5	Approval of national ecosystem assessments
Session 6	Celebrating national ecosystem assessments

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Session 4
National Biodiversity Platforms

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UFZ HELMHOLTZ Centre for Environmental Research

UN environment WCMC

Guidebook on
National Biodiversity Platforms: Connecting Nature & People

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NEA NATIONAL ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE

Lessons Learned Workshop, July 22, 2021

Project Background

Project title: Supporting decision making and building capacity to support IPBES through national ecosystem assessments.

This guidebook is being produced within the **UNEP-WCMC National Ecosystem Assessment Initiative**, as part of **UNDP's Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services Network.**

Supported by:
Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
based on a decision of the German Bundestag
INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE INITIATIVE (IKI)

Session Plan

12:20 - 12:30 **Introduction to the Guidebook on National Biodiversity Platforms** (NBPs)

12:30 - 12:45 **Introduction to the Checklist Tool of the NBP Guidebook**

12:45 – 13:30 **Interactive Exercise: Learning Lessons from your NEA Initiative Peers**

Breakout Group 1: Opportunities & obstacles
Breakout Group 2: Stakeholder Engagement
Breakout Group 3: Objectives, Mandate & Design Options
Breakout Group 4: Evaluation & Learning

13:30 – 13:40 **Report Back**

13:40 – 13:55 **Break**

13:55 – 14:45 **Panel Discussion with Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Colombia and Grenada**

14:45 – 14:55 **Closing Messages & Wrap Up**

14:55 – 15:00 **Next steps: Review of the NBP Guidebook**

National Biodiversity Platforms

Science-policy platforms which bring together stakeholders in collaborative relationships to consider the full value of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and their contributions to society and well-being, in decision-making.

Key objectives of NBPs:

- Enhance knowledge-brokerage amongst science, policy, practice and society for informed and inclusive decision-making
- Build (responsive) networks, alliances and communities of practice for joint problem solving
- Support national and sub-national governmental processes
- Support and connect international and regional science-policy processes with the national context and local expert communities
- Build capacity and facilitate the creation of enabling environments for stakeholders to engage with each other
- Raise awareness of biodiversity topics of relevance for science, policy, practice and society

What is the guidebook about?

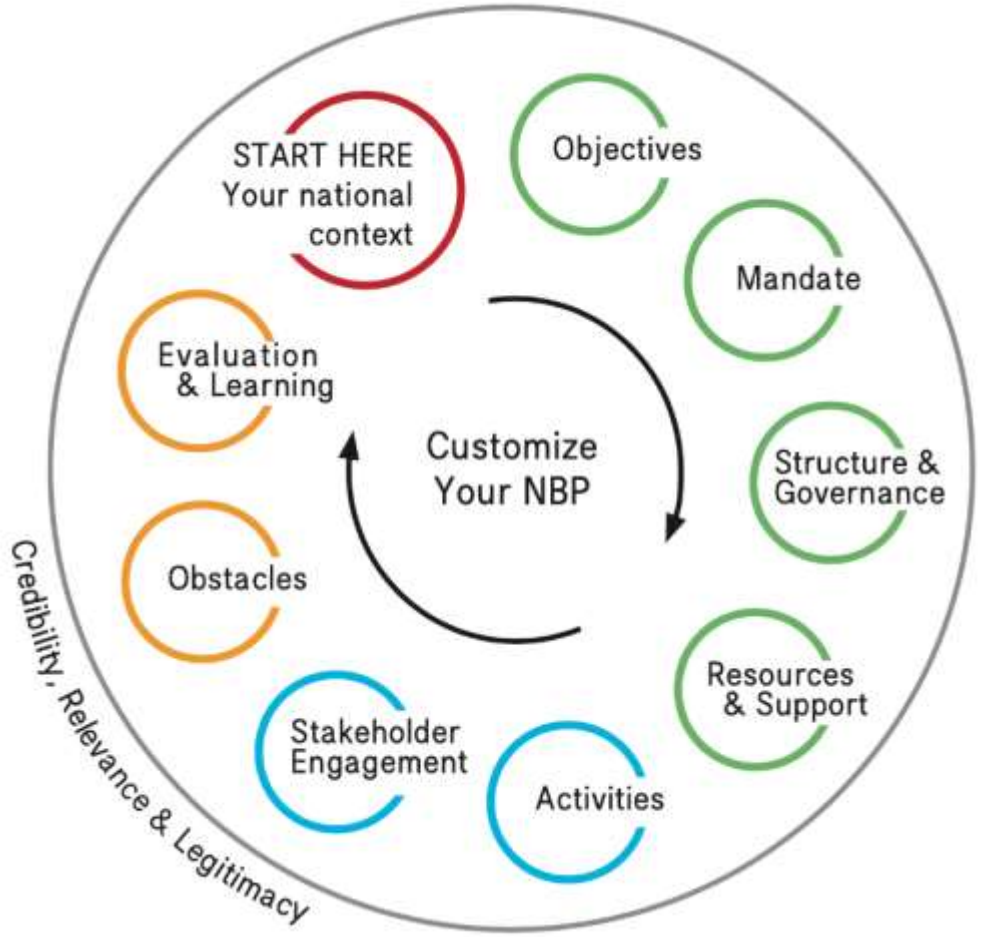

Figure designed by Miriam Brenck

Methodology for producing the Guidebook

- Based on the experience of National Biodiversity Platforms in **15 countries**: **Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Germany, Madagascar, Morocco, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Vietnam (+ others in process)**

- Semi-structured interviews with coordinators of NBPs + selected literature
  - **Design:** stated aims, realised functions, governance arrangements
  - **Management:** activities, stakeholder engagement, talent management, managing resources
  - **Effectiveness:** outcomes, impact, feedback from stakeholders
  - **Learning:** managing **credibility, relevance and legitimacy**

Methodology for producing the Guidebook

- Based on the experience of **regional initiatives**:
  - West African Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (WABES)
  - Europe & Central Asia Network of. organisations engaging in IPBES
  - Pathways to a Regional Biodiversity Platform in Central Asia

- **Literature and expert knowledge** on science-policy interfaces within the biodiversity and other domains

Better inclusion of biodiversity considerations in decision-making to support sustainable development

Researchers

Support science communication within policy processes

Stimulate interactions between natural and social sciences disciplines

Policymakers

Access researchers & evidence-base for policy design

Communication of polcy questions to science community

Interacting with stakeholders directly affected by policies

Support in science-policy processes

Practitioners

Access to best-available knowledge to apply in their work

Channeling of their knowledge into policy processes

Private Sector

Assessing biodiversity benefits, risks & dependencies in supply chains

Understanding policy developments affecting sector & share best practices to inform policy design

Co-production of knowledge

Stakeholder Groups & Civil Society

Understanding policy developments & provide inputs into policy processes

Access to data for technical & advocacy work

Co-production of knowledge & collaboration on initiatives

Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities

Access to policy processes to share insights on biodiversity (e.g., resource management models) & social processes (e.g., cultural impacts of policies)

Co-production of knowledge with science community

Transparent, accountable, inclusive and meaningful engagement of actors in decision-making processes

Defining Objectives

Colombia: *"Our platform has been particularly helpful in discussions about how to* ***incorporate Indigenous and Local Knowledge into decision-making processes****."*

Madagascar: *"[We] contribute to the* ***implementation of international commitments and conventions*** *ratified by Madagascar on protected areas, different ecosystems, biodiversity, climate change…"*

Sweden: *"At least in Sweden, the natural scientists seldom meet environmental psychologists, for example. So they are happy to meet and discuss. So, we created a network that was not there before; a* ***transdisciplinary interest has been awoken****."*

France: *"We* ***support the science community in designing their research goals*** *to ensure policy and stakeholder relevant questions."*

Brazil: *"[We] helped to put the subject of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services more into the* ***evidence-base for policy-making****. We also triggered accelerated science-policy interface activities and since its establishment, other initiatives from actors involved in our work, have been established."*

Obtaining a Mandate

Cameroon: *"A clearly defined indicator **within the NBSAP II policy document** to achieve Target 2 (on scientific information), is to **establish 'an operational National Platform for Science Policy** on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (SPBES)'. It is based on this clear mandate that the National Platform for SPBES in Cameroon was established by a Decision of the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development in 2017."*

Democratic Republic of the Congo: *"The Bio-SE will be **established by an order, a legal mandate**. This form will guarantee the greatest possible legitimacy among decision-makers."*

Design Options

Evolution of the Brazilian Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (BPBES)

2015 → 2016 → 2017

Informal network of experts

At the First Authors Meeting of the IPBES Americas Regional Assessment, Brazilian experts are inspired to organise a National Ecosystem Assessment for Brazil.

National Ecosystem Assessment team

With support from the São Paulo Research Foundation's Program on Biodiversity and the Brazilian Foundation for Sustainable Development, the core group organises a meeting with the Ministry of the Environment to establish a Steering Committee and proposal for an NEA. The core group presents their proposal to the Ministry of Science, Technology & Innovation and secures additional institutional support and funding for the NEA.

Project/department within institution

The core group negotiates to establish a more permanent structure as a working group within Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science, which has recognition by experts in different disciplines and regions of Brazil, and critical experience working with policy actors.

Collaboration of Host Institutions

BPBES is launched with additional support from the Brazilian National Research Council. Additional experts are recruited for the NEA and thematic assessments are planned in partnership with the Brazilian Plant-Pollinator Interaction Network, Brazilian Limnology Association and the Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development.

Figure designed by Sabina J. Khan

Design Options

Germany: *An Advisory Board could have helped with giving NeFo a stronger standing, position and recognition (and through this,* ***legitimacy), via ownership and responsibility amongst various stakeholders****."*

France: *"The key is to have a* ***strong network of committed people, reaching out to the 3 circles****: policy (through several ministries), research (through the main research institutions) and practitioners (building on existing networks interested in biodiversity) to fulfil the various functions of an NBP"*

Brazil: *"There is a lot of jealousy amongst science institutions across the regions and states in Brazil. To manage this, we worked through* ***a national umbrella organisation and with other boundary organisations****, in order* ***to build high representation and legitimacy*** *from various parts of the country. It was much easier to contact other experts and improve participation. But* ***being independent from government*** *is not always the best option. While there is enormous flexibility (e.g., to get the best results, bringing in the right people, etc.), you will need to find a means of* ***getting your conclusions up to policy-makers****."*

Common strategies for building credibility, relevance and legitimacy (based on van der Hel & Biermann 2017)

Credibility: adequacy of people, methods, outputs	**Relevance:** usefulness in responding to societal needs	**Legitimacy:** fairness, transparency & inclusiveness
Peer Review: procedures for review of knowledge products	**Integration:** synthesize best available knowledge, produce comprehensive & integrated knowledge products	**Representation:** include diverse knowledge systems, disciplines, genders, geographies
Credentials: engage knowledge holders with credibility & legitimacy	**Fit for purpose:** provide timely & applicable inputs to decision-making processes	**Recognition:** mandate, institutionalized role in governance mechanisms
Community of practice: harness combined expertise of knowledge holders	**Solutions**: develop approaches and tools to aid in problem-solving and decision-making	**Participation:** co-design & co-implementation arrangements with stakeholders

Credibility ⇅ **Relevance** ⇅ **Legitimacy** ⇅

Depends on science-policy context
Depends on perception of stakeholders

aim to maximise (synergies), but there are trade-offs

Managing credibility, relevance, legitimacy

France: *"The **quality of the work** of the NBP, especially in preparation of the agenda items for IPBES plenaries, was acknowledged and **strengthens the presence of the NBP in the policy-making landscapes**."*

Brazil: *"You need to have credibility, relevance and legitimacy **within the scientific community**, [The NBP] needs **representation of scientists from different regions, genders and expertise**, and support of the most important societies in the country."*

Switzerland: *"**Aim to be an independent institution, so as not to be seen as public relations instrument** of a university or other organization."*

Belgium: *"It is both the **mandate from government** and this **flexibility in the team to propose initiatives ourselves** in our workplan, which allows us to engage in activities that at first sight may look risky or irrelevant."*

Swizterland: *"It's difficult to **ensure high scientific quality with short times to turn around outputs [for policy-making deadline]**. To manage this, the NBP works with the rhythm of certain policy cycles: e.g., agriculture department revises policy every 4-years, therefore we know to prepare in advance to deliver inputs into this process"*

Overarching Goals: social learning, behaviour change, incorporation of biodiversity considerations into decision-making	
Objectives / Strategies	**Activities & Outputs**
Knowledge-brokerage between sectors & stakeholders	Mobilize data: Create, host and maintain databases Coordinate dialogue processes Create decision-making tools
Build responsive networks, alliances & communities of practice	Identify and mobilise key actors and sectors Identify common ground and coordinated strategies
Support & connect international, national & sub-national governmental processes	Streamline reporting mechanisms Support or collaborate with National Focal Points
Capacity-building & facilitating enabling environments	Support stakeholders in participating in science-policy processes Train scientists in science communication, IPBES assessments
Raise awareness of biodiversity topics	Develop targeted communications tools

Activities and outputs

France: *"we focus on* ***solution-oriented findings from IPBES to propose more operational recommendations [to the private sector]****, rather than just providing research results. For example, when the IPBES methodological assessment on scenarios was released, a luxury goods group wanted to learn how to use scenarios on biodiversity change and climate change interactions to determine implications on business activities (e.g., production of fabrics)."*

Colombia: *"If an NGO or university wants to conduct an assessment with IPBES guidance, then* ***the NBP teaches the IPBES conceptual framework and methodologies****."*

Brazil: *"We were consulted by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, re: the* ***design of a national science and technology policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services****."*

Switzerland: ***"****We use a variety of strategies to access local knowledge, e.g., grey literature, unpublished thesis, conservation magazines, etc. grey literature, unpublished thesis, conservation magazines, etc. This is stored and made available in our archive [****Information Service for Biodiversity in Switzerland****]. We also put out* ***calls for [research] questions and answers on practical nature conservation knowledge*** *on [Marketplace for Research Questions from Nature Conservation Practice]."*

Talent and resource management

Belgium: *"You need **different types of skills within a platform** -- those suited for desk work and those suited for engaging others. Our NBP was lucky to have a staff member extremely experienced and **skilled in facilitation** who trained others within our NBP."*

Mexico: *"Some 60-70% of CONABIO's budget comes from federal funds; the remainder originates from external sources, some of which are of international origin. **All funds are deposited in a private trust**, an arrangement that has played a fundamental role along the years in the performance of the Commission **by enabling a smooth, efficient and transparent use of the resources** available to it." (CONABIO 2012)*

France: *"We can operate our basic activities as NBP. **When a specific increase in activities is requested, the requester is expected to finance it,** with extra dedicated funding."*

Brazil: *"We are currently **fundraising by engagement with the embassies** of countries that usually support environmental activities, e.g., Germany, Norway, etc."*

Stakeholder Engagement

Switzerland: *"We have **established a relationship with the Parliament's Environment Secretariat**, who informs us about upcoming issues in the Parliament which gives us an opportunity to present positions on new laws within consultation process."*

Germany: *"it would greatly benefit any platform to **make links to different jurisdictional levels** and especially implementation at the **local and regional level**."*

Brazil: *"participation is from the stage of **co-developing the research questions** -- we changed the way we worked to co-production of results."*

Stakeholder Engagement

Colombia: *"**Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities** have said "we want to be independent and from our independence we can support all that you are doing; if we are on a committee we may not be as independent as we want to be." So instead, they prefer to work close with the Committees, which helps them **maintain credibility amongst their members**. They have their own communication approach within their communities and associations."*

Switzerland: *"We reach out to stakeholders with **different worldviews**. The churches have their own network working on climate change, therefore we proactively approached them on biodiversity issues and they were open for engagement. We write articles for each other in our magazines and maybe a workshop will be organised."*

Adaptive Management and Overcoming Obstacles

Belgium: *"The BBPF team sets up an* ***annual workplan based on user needs and horizon scanning****. We develop a strategy on a 4-year basis, looking at the international landscape - the current context and what we expect in the next few years - to ensure that what we do will be relevant.*

South Africa: *"In times of* ***economic crises and severe austerity measures****, the research function is the first to be cut. Hence, an* ***NBP would need to reinvent itself such that it finds relevance in the immediate national priorities****… focus on local implementation rather than international commitments and negotiations. Unforeseen impacts associated with the [CoVid-19] pandemic have resulted in aligning the work of the science-policy interface towards the Biodiversity Economy."*

Brazil: *"To manage this situation [sustainability amidst of a change in government], we are continuing to* ***work with technical staff [in government] while we wait for a policy change****, since they are the ones who are continuously involved in such decision-making processes."*

INTRODUCING BREAKOUT ROOMS

Group 1: Opportunities and Obstacles - **Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia**

Group 2: Stakeholder Engagement - **Cambodia, Thailand, Viet Nam**

Group 3: Objectives, Mandates and Design Options - **Cameroon, Ethiopia, Malawi**

Group 4: [will stay in PLENARY] Learning and reflecting - **Dominican Republic, Grenada**

Group 5: Observers

Breakout Group Activity

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BREAK
@UNEP-WCMC

Closing Messages and Wrap-Up

- There is no one “right” approach to a National Biodiversity Platform – customize to be credible, relevant and legitimate (effective) within your national science-policy context
- Meaningful stakeholder engagement is a core activity: ensure you have the in-house competencies (or at least within your networks) and a well thought-out plan to engage with the diversities of knowledges, worldviews, etc.
- Ensure continuous improvement by building in mechanisms for continuous evaluation, learning and reflection

Next Steps – Review of draft of guidebook

Review of draft of guidebook:
August-September 2021

To provide feedback in general and / or give an indication of your interest to review a semi-final draft of the guidebook:

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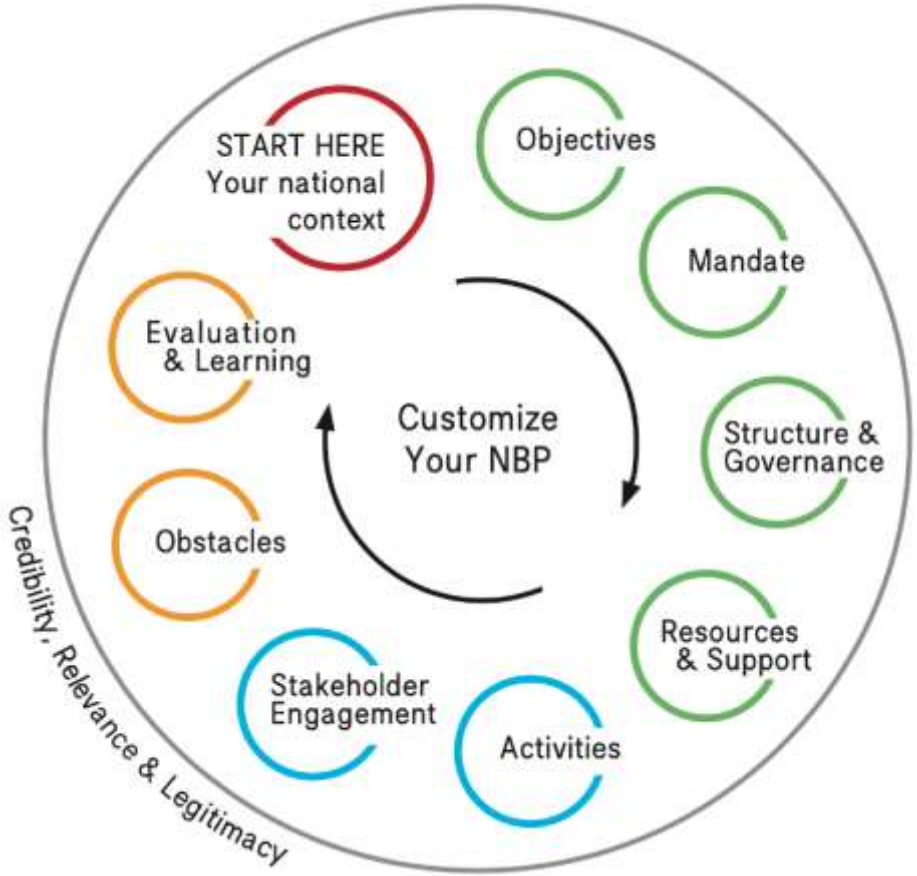

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Take-Home Messages

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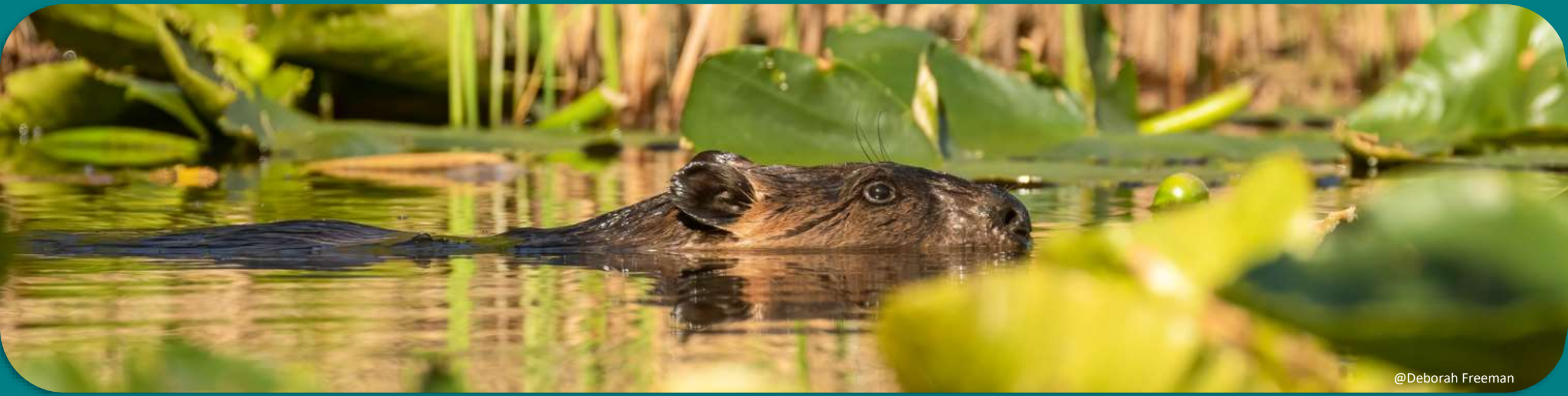

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What's next?

Session 5 on Approval

➥ Wednesday 28 July at 12pm BST

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Thank you!

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