



STATE OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY PLATFORMS

(2007-2009)

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SUMMARY

The National Biodiversity Platforms are created with the objective to improve the effectiveness and relevance of European biodiversity research, contribute to European Research Area for Biodiversity and promote the dissemination of current best practices and information regarding the scientific understanding of biodiversity conservation, at a national and international level.

Some NBPs¹ were created in the frame of the EU Fifth Framework Programme (FP5) thematic network project BioPlatform² that ended in April 2005. At that time, 22 countries have reported the existence of a National Biodiversity Platform.

Since the National Biodiversity Platforms were found to have a significant impact on each country's biodiversity research and conservation policy, a new project designed and funded under the EU Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) - BioStrat³ - to support the further development of a European Biodiversity Research Strategy included some support for the establishment of new NBPs⁴ and the improvement of the existent NBPs.

BioStrat work package 5 (Integrate EU Member States and Candidate Countries into the European Research Area (ERA) for Biodiversity) addressed Target 8 (Promoting the establishment of, and support existing National Platforms on Biodiversity where needed) and Target 9 (Assessing and monitoring of national biodiversity research activities - research reviews).

According to BioStrat description of work⁵ these national biodiversity platforms are the core of the further development of the EU Biodiversity Research Strategy, and BioStrat would support those platforms in their national and international activities through three tasks:

- Task 5.1: Support of National Biodiversity Platforms. The support took the form of a benchmarking and reviewing process on the development of the NBPs, documented in the annual reports on the state of NBPs. This task leads to an identification of best practices for NBPs.
- Task 5.2: Organisation of a workshop for NBPs representatives, to exchange best practices and to promote national involvement in the ERA of biodiversity.
- Task 5.3: Review of ongoing research activities and their results by National Biodiversity Platforms (Topics of those research reviews depended on the topics chosen for the EPBRS⁶ meetings). The reviews from each country were combined and edited in a single document for presentation at the EPBRS meetings.

In order to address task 5.1 a questionnaire was prepared and sent to the EPBRS and BioStrat national contact point (Appendix 1 – NBP 2009 Questionnaire).

¹ NBP – National Biodiversity Platform

² BioPlatform - European Platform for Biodiversity (<http://www.bioplatform.info/>)

³ BioStrat - Developing the EU Biodiversity Research Strategy (<http://www.biostrat.org/>)

⁴ NBP – National Biodiversity Platform

⁵ BioStrat – Annex I - Description of Work (http://www.biostrat.org/Biostrat%20DOW-changed_052007.pdf)

⁶ EPBRS - European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (<http://www.epbrs.org/>)

The present report is the result of the assessment of the answers received on the present status of NBPs and will constitute the Deliverable 5.3.

The NBP 2009 questionnaire has three parts:

- I – Background and functioning (questions 1 to 6)
- II – Activities of the NBP (questions 7 to 13)
- III – Development and futures prospects (questions 14 to 17)

In case that the country does not have a formal National Biodiversity Platform of any kind, the respondent was invited to answer the questions relevant for his national biodiversity community and also question 18 of the questionnaire. In these cases, we are aiming to have an idea of how the national biodiversity communities are structured.

The main objectives of this NBP assessment are:

- Assess the present state of the NBPs.
- Assess the evolution of the National Biodiversity Platforms since 2007, when a similar questionnaire was sent to the EPBRS and BioStrat national contact point (NBP 2007 questionnaire).
- Verify progress regarding the implementation of new NBPs and the development of the existent NBPs.
- Identify best practices and produce recommendations for NBPs.

15 of the NBPs were created during the BioPlatform project that started in 2002 and ended in 2005. Of those, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Spain consider the EU funds crucial for the establishment of their NBP.

Between 2006 and 2009, we verify that no platform was created. However, we must point out three cases:

- France – alteration of the IFB to FRB in 2008.
- Germany – the platform started to work with a financed project in 2009.
- Ireland – platform reactivated in 2009, after a stopping of 2 years.

According with the respondents the NBPs main objectives are:

- Better knowledge of the national biodiversity.
- Halt the biodiversity loss and promote the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Facilitate knowledge and access to biodiversity research and conservation (collecting and disseminating information)

- Promote the integration between scientists, policy makers and stakeholders in biodiversity research at all levels
- Contribute to the definition of biodiversity research priorities and strategies at all levels
- Contribute / Support the implementation of agreements / conventions related to biodiversity

Based on the information obtained with the questionnaires we can say that NBPs from Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Spain do not show progresses since 2007. In common, these platforms have the following characteristics:

- Bottom-up process (Top-down – Lithuania)
- Researchers' initiator
- EU fund crucial for establishment
- No permanent staff
- No main funding members (except Lithuania)
- No autonomous budget

We identify two groups of NBPs that show progress since 2007. The differences are attached to the way they were created.

1 - Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Netherlands, UK:

- Top-down process
- Government initiator
- EU fund not crucial for establishment (except Czech Republic)
- Permanent staff (no Netherlands and UK)
- Main funding members
- Autonomous budget (no Czech Republic and Netherlands)

2 - Germany and Switzerland:

- Bottom-up process
- Researchers initiator
- EU fund not crucial for establishment
- Permanent staff: No – Switzerland

Yes – Germany

- Main funding members
- Autonomous budget

In conclusion, the ideal NBP must have the characteristics indicated bellow in order to be active and effective:

- Permanent staff
- Main funding are the members
- Autonomous budget
- Good links with relevant institutional/governmental bodies
- Variety of research fields and policy areas represented
- Good links with all relevant research community
- Links with stakeholders (business and general public)
- Active outreach

I – BACKGROUND AND FUNCTIONING (questions 2 to 6)

I.1 - Creation of the Platforms

In Appendix 2, we present the identification of the respondents to the NBP 2009 questionnaire.

We received 24 responses to the questionnaire send in June 2009. 17 respondents indicate the existence of a national biodiversity platform in their countries and seven indicate that there is no such entity in their countries (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Table 1 – Existent NBP and date of creation (results of the NBP 2009 questionnaire).

	Platform	Creation
Belgium	Belgian Biodiversity Platform, BBPF	01-12-2000
Croatia	No	
Cyprus	Cyprus Biodiversity Platform	05-02-2005
Czech Republic	Czech BioPlatform	2003
Denmark	No such platform in Denmark	
Estonia	Estonian bioplatform	16-12-2003
Finland	There is no formal National Biodiversity Platform in Finland, but we are currently discussing the possibility of creating one	
France	Foundation for Research on Biodiversity	Fev-08 (Former French Biodiversity Institute created in 2000)
Germany	Network and Forum on Biodiversity Research	Plans ongoing since 2004, final creation by funded project April 2009
Hungary	Hungarian Biodiversity Platform, HBP	24-06-2003
Ireland	Irish National Platform for Biodiversity Research, NPBR	In 2003 but it ended in 2006 and was re-established in February 2009
Lithuania	Lithuanian Biodiversity Research Forum, LBRF	15-10-2004
Malta	Malta National Biodiversity Platform, Malta Bioplatform	27-10-2003
Netherlands	Biodiversity Platform - Netherlands	2004
Norway	There is no formal biodiversity platform in Norway. Hence, there is no name or other identifier for it.	
Poland	Polish National Biodiversity Platform	Apr-2004
Portugal	No	
Russia	National Strategy of Biodiversity Conservation	Aug-2002
Slovakia	Slovak Platform for Biodiversity	20-03-2002
Spain	Spanish Biodiversity Platform	2002
Sweden	No	
Switzerland	Swiss Biodiversity Forum	1999
UK	UK Biodiversity Research Advisory Group - UK BRAG	Mar-03
Ukraine	No National Biodiversity Platform in Ukraine	

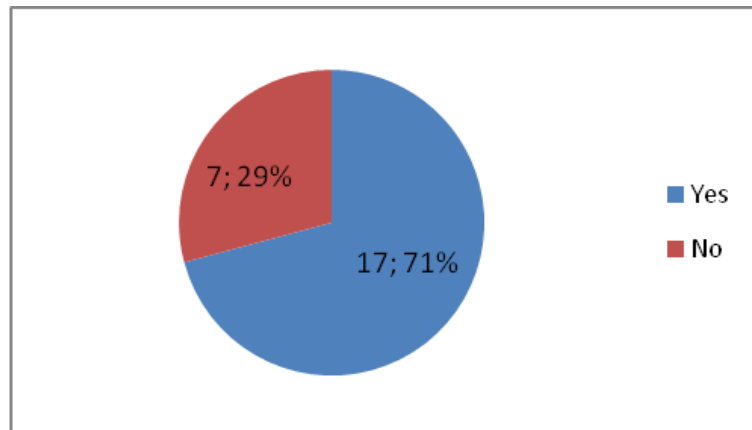


Figure 1 – Percentage of NBP existence or not (results of the NBP 2009 questionnaire).

The results of the NBP 2007 and 2009 questionnaires indicate that most of the NBPs were created during the BioPlatform project: 2002 (3), 2003 (6), 2004 (4) and 2005 (2). From Table 3 we can verify that the respondents from Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Spain consider the EU funds crucial for the establishment of their NBP.

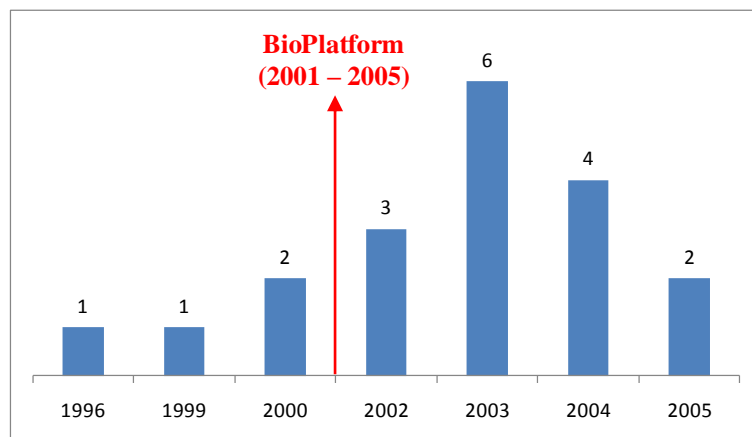


Figure 2 – NBP creation per year (results of the NBP 2007 and 2009 questionnaire).

Table 2 shows a summary of the information obtained from NBP 2007 and 2009 questionnaires regarding the creation date of the NBP, if they have or not a website and the level of activity we can identify by assessing the different websites.

The NBPs identified with no (or reduced) activities, due to the fact of the websites are out of date or off line, are presented in red (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Spain).

We did not receive any answer from Greece and Italy, neither in 2007 nor in 2009, and it was impossible to verify if these two countries have any kind of arrangement for their biodiversity community similar/close to a national platform or forum.

Table 2 - NBP creation and activity according to NBP 2007 and 2009 questionnaires and information available in the internet.

	NBP 2007 Questionnaire	NBP 2009 Questionnaire	Creation	Web site	NBP
Austria	Yes		1996-2002; 2007	Off line	Yes
Belgium	Yes	Yes	2000	Updated	Yes
Bulgaria			-	Off line	Yes
Croatia	Yes	Yes			No
Cyprus	Yes	Yes	2005	Out of date	Yes
Czech Republic	Yes	Yes	2003	Working on a new website	Yes
Denmark	Yes	Yes	2005	Updated in 2008	No
Estonia	Yes	Yes	2003	No	Yes
Finland	Yes	Yes	-	Updated	No
France	Yes	Yes	2000 (IFB); 2008 (FRB)	Updated	Yes
Germany	Yes	Yes	2004 (plans); 2009 (funded)	New web site under construction	Yes
Greece					-
Hungary	Yes	Yes	2003	Out of date	Yes
Ireland	Yes	Yes	2003-2006; 2009 (re-established)	Updated	Yes
Italy					-
Latvia			-	Out of date	Yes
Lithuania	Yes	Yes	2004	Out of date	Yes
Malta	Yes	Yes	2003	Off line	Yes
Netherlands		Yes	2004	Under revision	Yes
Norway	Yes	Yes			No
Poland		Yes	2004	-	Yes
Portugal		Yes			No
Romania			-	Off line	Yes
Russia	Yes	Yes	2002	Off line	Yes
Slovakia	Yes	Yes	2002	Out of date	Yes
Slovenia			-	Updated	Yes
Spain		Yes	2002	No	Yes
Sweden		Yes	-	Off line	No
Switzerland		Yes	1999	Updated	Yes
UK		Yes	2003	Updated	Yes
Ukraine	Yes	Yes			No
Total	18	24			22

In summary, we have:

- 22 NBPs
- 7 countries with no NBPs
- 13 NBPs have no functioning or updated websites
 - 9 off line
 - 4 out of date (no information 2008/2009)
- 11 websites updated
 - 9 from NBPs
 - 2 from countries with no NBPs

Regarding the creation process of the platforms, we found several associations (Table 3):

- 6 NBPs created through a bottom-up process initiated by researchers: Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Poland, Spain and Switzerland.
- 5 NBPs created through a top-down process initiated by governmental bodies: Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Ireland and UK.
- 2 NBPs created through a top-down process initiated by researchers: Lithuania and Slovakia.
- 2 NBPs initiated by researchers (we assume that they were created through a bottom-up process): Estonia and Hungary.
- 1 NBP created through a top-down process (we assume that it was initiated by a governmental body): Netherlands.
- 1 NBP created through both process and initiated by both researchers and government: Russia.

In general, the NBPs initiated by researchers (8) indicate that EU funds were crucial for their establishment; six of them were created by a bottom-up process.

On the other hand, five of the NBPs created through a top-down process and initiated by a governmental body indicated that EU funds were not crucial for their establishment (Belgium, France, Ireland, Netherlands and UK).

Table 3 – Creation process, initiator and funding for the establishment.

	Process		Initiator		EU funds were crucial for the establishment
	Bottom-up	Top-down	Researchers	Government	
Belgium		X		X	No
Cyprus	X		X		Yes
Czech Republic		X		X	Yes
Estonia			X		Yes
France		X		X	No
Germany	X		X		No
Hungary			X		Yes
Ireland		X		X	No
Lithuania		X	X		Yes
Malta	X		X		Yes
Netherlands		X			No
Poland	X		X		Yes
Russia	X	X	X	X	No
Slovakia		X	X		Yes
Spain	X		X		Yes
Switzerland	X		X		No
UK		X		X	No

The NBPs that received EU funds for their establishment are facing problems regarding funding, and their functioning after the end of BioStrat project will be very difficult. They indicate that the work will be limited or even stop, since they do not have another source of income (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Spain).

Almost all the NBP's initiated by a governmental body and top-down process have their autonomous budget formed by national funds and will continue to work normally after the end of BioStrat project: Belgium, France, Ireland, Netherlands and UK.

Germany and Switzerland are the only countries where although the NBP's were created through a bottom-up process initiated by researchers, the future functioning does not depend on the continuing of BioStrat project, as they have their autonomous budget formed by national funds.

I.2 - Partners/members of the Platforms

The origin of the platforms' partners/members is independent of the creation process and if the platform has or not autonomous budget.

In general, researchers, statutory advisor organization and policy maker are present. The Slovakian NBP has policy maker members only. It was impossible to identify the partners/members of the Dutch NBP, as the respondent indicates the web site of the platform, but it is in revision.

Table 4 – Origin of partners/members of the platforms.

	Policy makers	Statutory Advisory Organization	Research institutions	Associations	Others
Belgium		X	X		
Cyprus	X		X	X	
Czech Republic	X		X	X	X
Estonia			X	X	X
France	X	X	X	X	X
Germany	X	X	X	X	X
Hungary	X	X	X	X	X
Ireland	X	X	X	X	X
Lithuania	X	X	X	X	X
Malta	X	X	X	X	
Netherlands	X				
Poland	X		X	X	
Russia	X	X	X	X	
Slovakia	X				
Switzerland	X	X	X		
UK	X	X	X	X	

The existence of operational members, permanent or not, in the platforms depends on if they have or not autonomous budget with national funds and do not depend on European projects. Clearly, we verify that the platforms that had the support of BioPlatform/BioStrat project for their establishment and functioning are in a worse situation than those who were formed through a top-down process started by governmental bodies and have autonomous budget and financiers.

Germany and Switzerland constitute the exception since their platforms were formed through bottom-up processes started for researchers, have autonomous budget with national funds, do not depend on European projects and have a permanent operational staff.

As we can see from Table 5 Cyprus and Estonia have no main funding members or operational staff (either permanent or non-permanent); Poland and Russia have no main funding members but have one non-permanent staff.

In the platforms that have main funding members (normally governmental bodies and research organizations) the number of the operational staff varies from 1 (Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands and Poland) to 28 (France).

Table 5 – Main funding members and operational staff of the platforms.

	Main funding members	Operational staff
Belgium	Belgian Science Policy	3 senior scientists, 2 data acquisition Managers, 4 IT. Temporary staff on projects: one project manager + one IT (SCAR-MARBIN), one project manager (BiodivERsA)
Cyprus	None	0
Czech Republic	BioStrat project; Institute of Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences; Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic	One person One person half time, when needed
Estonia	None	None
France	Ministries and research organizations; in the future, business sector to be involved in certain projects / partnerships	28 staff members, about half permanent, about 22 full time equivalents.
Germany	BMBF (ca. 75%), Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental research - UFZ (ca. 24%); Museum for Natural Sciences Berlin (ca 0,5%); University of Potsdam (ca. 0,5%) and other in-kind contributions	7 persons, by end of 2009
Hungary	EU Projects, Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2008 / approx. 5% /	One person in a half-time job, when we have EU funding / BioPlatform or BioStrat Project/
Ireland	Environmental Protection Agency and National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Dept of the Environment, Heritage and Local government	1 half time position and 2 additional support persons contributing no more than a 15% full time equivalent
Lithuania	Institute of Ecology of Vilnius university (founding source is EC FP6 project BioPlatform)	Number of persons involved in BioStrat funded activities: 4 non-permanent
Netherlands	Ministry LNV	0.1 person/year
Poland	Platform does not have a funding	1 (no permanent staff)
Russia		There is no permanent staff
Slovakia	Institute of Landscape Ecology of SAS	
Switzerland	Swiss Academy of Sciences SCNAT, Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, Federal Office for Agriculture and others (project related)	3 part time science officers totalling a workload of XXX staff person
UK	The UK BRAG is strictly an advisory organisation and is not a funding body. Most of the partners have access to separate research program budgets.	One part-time (0.5) person for the Secretariat, plus Chair's time.

I.3 - Objectives of the Platforms

Almost all the respondents that have a NBP indicate the objectives of their platform: Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Switzerland and UK.

The Netherlands indicate the web site of the platform, but it is in revision and Spain did not give any answer.

The main objective indicated in the answer we received are:

- Facilitate the knowledge and access to biodiversity research by collecting and disseminating information at all levels (scientists, policy makers and stakeholders).
- Promote the integration between scientists, policy makers and stakeholders (including business) in biodiversity research at the national, Europe and international level.
- Encourage interdisciplinary cooperation among scientists.
- Contribute to the definition of biodiversity research priorities, national biodiversity research strategies and enforcement of national and European legislation.
- Ensure that results of the research will improve the biodiversity conservation.
- Contribute to better knowledge of the national biodiversity.
- Contribute for halting the loss of biodiversity and promote the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Promote capacity building at all levels (scientists, policy makers and stakeholders).
- Promote dissemination of best practices and the results of biodiversity research and conservation.
- Promote national biodiversity in international fora.
- Contribute for the achievement of the EPBRS goals.
- Link with the EPBRS and other European and international biodiversity networks.
- Contribute / Support the implementation of the CBD⁷.

I.4 - Budget of the Platforms

Most of the NBPs do not have an autonomous budget, from those Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, and Malta said that their main source of funds came from BioPlatform/BioStrat and it is mainly to develop activities related with EPBRS.

The NBPs from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Russia, Switzerland and UK have NBPs autonomous budget provided by governmental bodies, research organizations and in some cases from international projects.

The average budget per year in 2006/2009 of those NBPs varies between ±33.000 € (UK) and 3.000.000 € (France).

⁷ CBD – Convention on Biological Diversity (<http://www.cbd.int/>)

Table 6 – Budget of the platforms.

	Do you have an autonomous budget? What is the funding source?	Average budget per year in 2006/2009
Belgium	YES, Federal budget	700.000 €
Cyprus	No	N/A
Czech Republic		2006 - ca 1000 € 2007 - 2000 € 2008 - 4000 € (for NBP reviews) 2009 - 16900 € (for EPBRS meeting)
Estonia	No	Bioplatform project support only
France	Autonomous budget from Ministries (mainly Ministry for Research) and from member research institutions.	2008/2009: 3 million €
Germany	Mainly third party by Ministry (BMBF), main addition by UFZ in house funding	2006: about 20.000 € UFZ in house funding; 2009: about 500.000 € p.a. (until 2011)
Hungary	No, basically EU Projects	Nil
Ireland	Yes. Environmental Protection Agency and National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Dept of the Environment, Heritage and Local government	N/A. Budget for 2009 to 2012 is approximately 75,000 €
Lithuania	The only funding source is BioPlatform and BioStrat projects. Attempts to rise other funding did not succeed.	7.525 €
Malta	No	None after the BioPlatform project ended
Netherlands	Not	Not
Norway	None	0
Poland	No	0
Russia	The funding sources: governmental financial support; local government support; international support	About 2.000.000 up to 2.240.000 €
Slovakia	No	N/A
Spain	No	
Switzerland	Yes, Federal Administration, Foundations	500'000 Swiss Francs
UK	The cost of providing the Secretariat is approximately £31,000 per year, including overheads. This is funded by JNCC and paid for via grant-in-aid from Defra. There is no budget to fund research.	Approx £30,000 to provide Secretariat and overheads.

I.5 - Visibility of the Platforms

13 of the NBPs have a website. Two of them are under revision, 4 out of date and two off line.

German website is under construction and Estonia, Poland and Spain have no website.

Only the Belgian and Irish platforms have a forum for email discussion.

The respondents from Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Ireland and Switzerland said that they have a newsletter to disseminate information about the NBP activities and national and international issues related to biodiversity.

In general, with a different level of extension, all the websites include information about the NBP activities, national biodiversity data and tools, news from biodiversity research, national and international events related to biodiversity, implementation of the CBD, publications, documents, links, education, etc.

Table 7 – Platform website, according with the NBP 2009 Questionnaire.

	Website	
Belgium	www.biodiversity.be	Up dated
Cyprus	www.cybioplatform.intercol.edu/partners.htm	Out of date
Czech Republic	www.ibot.cas.cz/biop www.bioplatform.ibot.cas.cz	Working on a new website
Estonia	No	
France	http://www.fondationbiodiversite.fr/Accueil.html	Up dated
Germany	Under construction	
Hungary	www.biodivplatform.hu	Out of date
Ireland	www.biodiversityresearch.ie	Up dated
Lithuania	http://www.ekoi.lt/info/bioplatform/LBTF.htm	Out of date
Malta	http://www.maltabioplatform.org/	Off line
Netherlands	http://netherlands.biodiv-chm.org/index.php?menuid=4550&lang=en&cl=blue&q=	Under revision
Poland	No	
Russia	http://bio.1september.ru/2004/28/5.htm http://sevin.ru	Off line
Slovakia	http://www.uke.sav.sk/bioplatform/index.htm	Out of date
Spain	No	
Switzerland	http://www.biodiversity.ch/	Up dated
UK	www.ukbrag.org	Up dated

II – ACTIVITIES (questions 7 to 13)

II.1 - Promoting dissemination of scientific knowledge

Regarding the dissemination of scientific knowledge, the platforms from Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland and UK do promote dissemination of scientific knowledge through a variety of ways: different forums, workshops, meetings email communication, publications, conference, website, etc.

The target audiences are scientific community, policy makers, practitioners, public and private institutions, NGOs, private consultants, public, etc.

The respondents from Estonia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Russia and Spain said that their platform does not promote dissemination of scientific knowledge.

II.2 - Involvement in international programs and agreements/conventions

The NBP or NBP members are involved, in different ways, with international programs and agreements/convention and do participate in their activities.

Some NBP or their members' acts as national representatives in international programs like DIVERSITAS (Belgium, France and Switzerland), GIBIF (Belgium), MAB (Hungary) and GTI (Czech Republic).

Other international programs are indicated by Belgium (EPBRS secretariat, the secretariat of the IUCN national contact group), Czech Republic (National Forestry Programme - The EU Forest Action Plan), France (International and European networks on genetic resources) and Germany (EPBRS).

Regarding the agreements/conventions, only Belgium and Russia said that their NBP is involved as the national focal point with SBSTTA (CBD). In most of the cases, the NBPs themselves or their members are involved in the work developed by SBSTTA by supporting it, collaborating and contributing with data.

When asked about the participation of their NBPs or NBP members in negotiations of any international agreements that involve Biodiversity issues (e.g. CITES, Ramsar, CBD, other) and negotiations of the environmental policy at the EU level, the Czech Republic, France (only CBD), Germany, Hungary, Russia and Switzerland give affirmative answers.

Furthermore, Ireland and Slovakia said that their NBPs or NBP members do participate in the negotiations of environmental policy at the EU level.

In Portugal for example, where doesn't exist a NBP, the involvement in that kind of programs is undertaken by individual researchers in representation of governmental entities, national committees with representatives of various entities or national focal points.

II.3 - Concerning National policy on biodiversity

In relation to national policy, the respondents from Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Slovakia and Switzerland said that their NBPs do contribute to define the orientations of national policy concerning biodiversity. The respondent indicated some examples:

- Belgium: Development of Risk assessment protocols for Invasive Species, and development of protocols for Forest's management.
- Hungary: Cooperation with authorities from the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Agriculture during the preparation of the action plan and national regulations. Platform members made serious contribution to the National Climate Strategy, and the National Document on Future Environment of Hungary.
- Slovakia: Providing information to relevant national policy makers.
- Switzerland: The Forum does 'lobbying'. For example, to date Switzerland does not have a biodiversity strategy. However, efforts (combined with those of other organisations) have led to a political process and now a BD strategy is being elaborated. The Swiss Biodiversity Forum participates in the meetings.

The recently created German biodiversity platform is aiming to contribute, in the future, to the definition of their national policy concerning biodiversity.

At the beginning of their creation, the NBPs from Cyprus, Lithuania and Malta have some contribution, but at the present due to the reduction of funds, their contribution became weak or even zero.

The respondents of Estonia and Russia said that their NBPs are trying to give their contribution to the definition of the biodiversity policy in their respective country.

On the other hand, Poland and UK said they do not contribute to the definition of policy related to biodiversity, although the UK respondent recognizes that the individual members can do so and the meeting and reports (NBPs activities) will contribute to the debate and to raise awareness regarding biodiversity issues.

II.4 - In relation to EPBRS

Regarding the relation of the NBPs with the EPBRS, the answers show different type of relation/contribution to the EPBRS activities as indicated bellow.

- EPBRS Secretariat: Belgium, Germany (support)
- Member of the Steering Committee: Portugal, UK
- Representatives in EPBRS: Hungary, Portugal
- Organisation of EPBRS meetings, conference, workshops and e-conferences: Czech Republic, France, Germany, Portugal

- Participation in EPBRS meetings, conference, workshops and e-conferences: Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, UK
- Contribution to the documents produced during the EPBRS activities: Portugal, Slovakia
- Dissemination of the results and news of the EPBRS activities: Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland, UK
- Representing EPBRS in different meetings and conferences: Portugal

The French platform (Foundation for Research on Biodiversity) as coordinator of BiodivERsA (an ERA-Net on biodiversity) collaborates with EPBRS in issues related to biodiversity. BiodivERsA itself has a representative in the EPBRS Steering Committee.

One of the Hungarian Biodiversity Platform board members is the project coordinator of BioStrat, which is a FP6 SSA⁸ to support the organization of EPBRS meetings, outreach to other initiatives and support NBPs.

The respondent of Malta said that the contribution of his platform to EPBRS is to forward effective national feedback of requirements and potential strategies for research and policy improvements in the area of biodiversity. For Russia is the cooperation of some Institutes and researches from Russian academy of sciences with EU initiatives on biodiversity investigation and conservation.

When asked if their platform did produce national reviews for BioStrat/EPBRS, most respondents (18) answer positively (Table 8).

The national reviews were produced in various ways according to the topic and availability of information and funds. The responses included the engagement of national experts, hired private consultant, expert or collaborator, and elaboration of the review by themselves.

In most cases, the base of the review is a questionnaire draw by the organizing committee of the following EPBRS meeting in collaboration with the EPBRS Steering Committee. This questionnaire is sent to the Biostrat / EPBRS / NBPs members, which can also sent it to the national experts in order to collect the necessary information according to the topic of the reviews.

Some respondents indicate that they face difficulties in obtain a response from the national experts to the questionnaires.

⁸ SSA - Specific Support Action

Table 8 – Production of national reviews.

	Did you produce national reviews for BioStrat / EPBRS?	How did you produce them?
Belgium	Yes	Marine: Analyze national database Freshwater: engage national experts Business: hire a private consultant Taxonomy: analyze national database and contact experts
Croatia	Yes	Myself & hire experts
Cyprus	Yes, the platform produced the Review of biodiversity research results from Cyprus that directly contribute to the sustainable use of biodiversity in Europe	Experts were hired for this purpose
Czech Republic	Yes	We have synthesized the contributions of experts
Estonia	Yes	Hire experts
France	No	
Germany	Yes, but not for all meetings	Mixture, mainly by producing it directly with involvement and feedback from experts in the according fields
Hungary	Yes, we prepared three reviews	Sent questionnaires, invite experts to contribute, summarizing experiences produced partly ourselves
Ireland	Yes	Expert consultations and opinion and review of relevant documents, but in general we produce it by ourselves.
Lithuania	Yes	The reports were produced by a hired expert and further developed by myself. I filled the questionnaires. We have tried to distribute a questionnaire, but there was nearly no response.
Malta	When possible but resources too limited in the BioStrat project to allow for the effort to be undertaken as in the BioPlatform project.	Send questionnaire or request for expert advice and information, which could then be compiled if arrived on time.
Netherlands	Yes	Did myself
Norway	Yes (in most cases).	National reports are mainly done at the initiative of the BioStrat partner, with consultation of the Research Council of Norway and selected experts (according to the topic of the review)
Poland	Yes	It was produced ourselves but in consultation with other experts
Portugal	Yes	Yes. Hire collaborator that sent questionnaires to experts and produce the report with my contribution. According with the topic it is some time difficult to obtain a response.
Russia	Yes. We are produce national reviews for BioStrat	Produce it myself
Slovakia	No	
Spain	Yes	Produced them ourselves with feedbacks from experts
Switzerland	Report in April 2005; report for the Helsinki meeting (2006)	The Swiss Forum itself carries out the work.
UK	CEH produce national reviews on behalf of BRAG.	

Between 2007 and 2009, 56 national reviews were produced (see Table 9) as a contribution for the EPBRS meetings held in Germany (May 2007), Portugal (November 2007), France (November 2008) and Czech Republic (May 2009).

Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland never reply the solicitation to produce national reviews.

Table 9 – National reviews produced between 2007 and 2009.

Reviews	Biodiversity research and sustainable use of biodiversity	Marine Biodiversity and Policy survey	Business & Biodiversity	Biodiversity and Taxonomy
EPBRS meeting	Leipzig, Germany, 4-7 May 2007	Porto, Portugal, 7-9 November 2007	Paris, France, 17-21 November 2008	Průhonice, Czech Republic, 19-20 May 2009
Austria				Yes
Belgium	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bulgaria		Yes		
Croatia				Yes
Cyprus	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Czech Republic	Yes		Yes	
Denmark				
Estonia	Yes			Yes
Finland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
France			Send an internal report	
Germany	Yes		Yes	
Greece				
Hungary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ireland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Italy			Yes	
Latvia				
Lithuania	Yes		Yes	Yes
Malta				
Netherlands			Yes	Yes
Norway		Yes	Yes	Yes
Poland	Yes			
Portugal		Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania				
Russia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovakia	Yes		Yes	Yes
Slovenia				
Spain			Yes	Yes
Sweden				
Switzerland				
UK	Yes	Yes	Yes	Send an internal report
Ukraine		Yes	Yes	Yes
Total	13	11	17	15

II.5 - Participation in the development of research policy at National, European and International level

Five respondents answer negatively (Cyprus, Estonia, Norway, Poland and Spain) to the question “Has your Platform participated in the identification of national (biodiversity/environmental) research policy?” posed to assess the participation of the NBPs in the development of research policy at National, European and International level.

Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Switzerland and UK answered affirmatively and some of the respondent indicated examples.

- Belgium: Development of a national research strategy (in progress). Contribution for the launch of a call on Ecosystem Services in Belgium. Development of a green paper on research on climate change and biodiversity. Promotion of the Belgian Contribution to Lifewatch. Participation to proposals for the FP7 calls.
- Hungary: Through BiodivERsA, producing documents such as National Climate Strategy, LifeWatch Pilot project, Environmental Future of Hungary, etc.
- Lithuania: Representatives of some members of the LBRF participate in the national structures (e.g. Science Council) that develop the national research policy.
- Switzerland: In 2002, the Swiss Biodiversity Forum published “Visions in biodiversity research – Towards a new integrative biodiversity science”.

Regarding the participation of the NBP or NBP members in the development of the working program of FP7 or of any other multilateral European or international research programs (e.g. ERA Nets, ESF, DIVERSITAS, Census of Marine Life, other) Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Switzerland and UK answered positively. Whereas the respondents from Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland, Malta, Netherlands and Spain answered negatively to this question.

- Belgium: Work package leader of BiodivERsA ERA_Net. Contribution to the Freshwater Network of DIVERSITAS, and to the Census of Marine Life with the SCAR-MARBIN project.
- Czech Republic: BioStrat.
- France: FRB is involved in national working groups to prepare the French position concerning the work programme of FP7 (Environment and KBBE). It coordinates ERA-Net BiodivERsA and has strong links with DIVERSITAS. Link to ESF through BiodivERsA, since ESF is a partner organization.
- Hungary: Platform member participated in the review of FP7 Calls.
- Lithuania: During the participation at the EPBRS meetings and at the public consultation on the Working Program of the FP7.
- Norway: Individuals involved in EPBRS, BioStrat, etc, have provided input to working programs of FP7, etc, but mainly through national channels.
- Slovakia: Personnel active in the Platform and DIVERSITAS and national delegate in programme committee of FP7.
- Switzerland: FP7 and DIVERSITAS.

II.6 - Development of research infrastructure at National, European and International level

Only five NBPs were involved in the definition of funding priorities for research infrastructures (biodiversity / environment):

- Belgium: Promotion of the Belgian Contribution to Lifewatch. Digitisation Projects as a contribution to GBIF.
- Hungary: Participation in the activities of LifeWatch Project, as IPBES National Contact, and as member of the Advisory Expert Board at the National Biodiversity Monitoring System.
- Netherlands.
- Slovakia: ESFRI.
- UK.

In the middle of the scale of involvement, we find:

- France that the platform will be involved with Lifewatch in a near future;
- The Ireland NBP that is hoping to be involved in such developments in the future;
- The German platform that will support the discussions on these issues with researchers and funders; and
- Norway which involvement is by personnel participating in EPBRS, BioStrat and others and is giving input on priorities for research infrastructure at national and EU levels.

On the other side, nine NBPs (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Russia, Spain and Switzerland) declared that they are not involved in the definition of priorities for funding of research infrastructures (biodiversity / environment).

II.7 - Others

Another kind of activities was described by seven NBPs, as presented below.

- Belgium: Organisation of training workshops for Belgian Scientists, Data management and Quality, Communication of Biodiversity research.
- Czech Republic: In summer 2006, The Institute of Botany of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (administrator of the Czech Bioplatform) decided to organize a meeting to bring together scientists and practical managers to discuss sustainable forestry management. The majority of participants accepted the final document defining main goals for forest management. The National Forest Programme II for 2007–2013 has been prepared and scientists from BioPlatform have participated in the negotiation process.

Currently, the Czech NBP is involved in the preparation of new forest law as the main partner responsible for biodiversity. Revision of the Strategy of landscape planning. The Czech Bioplatform was invited to the organisational board for the second European Congress on Conservation Biology (Prague, 2009).

- France: Calls for research proposals: FRB funds its own "small" call (1st call launched May 2009) and manages the larger biodiversity programmes of the National Agency for Research.
- Germany: Bringing biodiversity research into the daily debates on biodiversity issues (now, the moment, this field is mainly covered by NGOs in Germany).
- Hungary: Since its establishment, the Platform has prepared and partly executed its work plan for 2003-2006, which is as follows: Get acquainted with the documents related to the EU Biodiversity Strategy; Get acquainted, analyse and determine the conditions of implementation of the Hungarian National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan; Join the work of international fora in the topic of biodiversity; Organization of conferences (EPBRS and BioPlatform 2004); Development of a website; Participation in EPBRS activities (as described above).
- Malta: The Malta Bioplatform allowed for the meaning and expansion of the needs of biodiversity at national and European level to be promoted and the creation of an effective national network of relevant entities to meet and discuss in fruitful and non-political manner issues relevant to the conservation and improved research and awareness of national to European biodiversity needs.
- Netherlands: All other actual and relevant biodiversity issues: herbaria, botanical gardens, etc.

III – DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURES PROSPECTS (questions 14 to 17)

III.1 - Strength of the Platforms

To assess the Strength of the Platforms 3 questions were posed:

- a) If you have a working platform, what do you consider the greatest strength of the platform?
- b) How did this strength contribute at the national level to support biodiversity conservation and research?
- c) Can you identify best practice examples how to operate national platforms to help other countries?

Cyprus, Estonia and Spain did not answer to question a), so we assume that they do not have an actively working platform, as well as Lithuania that expressed that in his answer. Poland indicated that its NBP is working very slowly.

We want to make a special reference to Malta by quoting its position regarding this issue: “The BioPlatform system needed to be extended for at least another set of years instead of the BioStrat to really allow those countries where the political and economic will to invest in such a platform needed a clear signal and example from the EU through funding of such important and relevant projects. So indeed once the BioPlatform would have really been given the chance to become a routine entity with results appreciated from all parties it would be easier to find other financial sources to sustain such an important entity”.

The countries that have answered this question indicated as main strength of their platforms the commitment of their members, the connections with policy makers and NGOs, the connections with international biodiversity community, the variety of scientific expertise and the access and dissemination of information.

Following we present a summary of the answers given by Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Netherlands, Russia, Slovakia, Switzerland and UK regarding the greatest strength of their platform.

- Belgium: International visibility of the platform and the link it represents between the national biodiversity community and the international fora.
- Czech Republic: Participation actively in the EPBRS activities and dissemination of the results to the national community; Organization of the annual meeting of the platform and contribution with the results for the definition of national policies and goals; Participation of the platform members in different convention, agreements and programs.
- France: The interface between science, policy and society has been strengthened. Stakeholder involvement through the Council of stakeholders.
- Germany: Personnel as continuous working "backbone". Open structure inviting every interested researcher to get involved.

- Hungary: Their members, gathering and sharing information; development and representation of common/agreed standpoints; diversity of expert knowledge.
- Ireland: Senior level policy representation and a wide range of scientific expertise covering all areas of Irish biodiversity
- Netherlands: The Chair
- Russia: Persistence of enthusiastic people ready to work despite the lack of money.
- Slovakia: Personal initiative and involvement.
- Switzerland: Contacts to policy makers and NGOs for example. The forum really is the think-tank of biodiversity researchers. The forum is closely connected to its members.
- UK: The very wide membership that is made up of the main biodiversity research funders, and users of biodiversity research in the UK.

In relation to question b), the answers vary from country to country, but there is a consensus regarding the need of having influence in the surrounding community and be able to involve the stakeholders (scientists, policy makers, NGOs, general public) in order to contribute for the support of biodiversity conservation and research at the national level.

- Belgium: Promote Belgian research at the international level and import international advances and development in the field of Biodiversity research.
- France: Stakeholders were directly involved and contributed to the prospective reflexion on biodiversity research.
- Germany: First, it led to the willingness of the community to accept the platform approach. The next step will be to use this strength for policy advice.
- Hungary: Participation of members in different Committees, close cooperation with Nature Conservation Authorities and NGOs. Involving the public on different programmes and meetings focusing on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Ireland: The involvement of senior level policy is essential for the government to "buy it" of research priorities and policy needs can be stated and the research required implementing them considered by the expert members.
- Malta: When in action, the BioPlatform had started setting up the necessary network of people that allowed for the best consideration and action toward the target of biodiversity conservation.
- Netherlands: Having influence.
- Poland: By spreading information/sharing data.
- Russia: The initiatives can exist without financial support.
- Slovakia: Mainly research, by wide research, involving most of the possible capacities of researchers.

- Switzerland: The forum speaks in one voice; it consists of recognized experts. The forum is part of the Swiss Academy of Sciences.
- UK: Improve networking between researchers and funding providers. Improve funding of policy relevant research.

Belgium, France, Germany, Malta, Netherlands, Slovakia, Switzerland and UK indicate their best practice examples of how to operate national platforms in order to help other countries. In summary, biodiversity platform must have: secure funding, permanent staff, stakeholder involvement is crucial (policy makers, funding members, NGOs, a wide range of biodiversity researchers), and access and dissemination of information.

- Belgium: Secure Funding! Have permanent staff dedicated to the platform activities and development. Ensure Communication and Visibility at National and International levels.
- France: Still a little early because FRB is going through a learning process, but developing best practice in scientific coordination and dissemination, stakeholder involvement, research programme management, research databases, etc.
- Germany: Continuous financial / personnel backbone; personnel should be people familiar with transdisciplinary work.
- Malta: It was very important to involve all relevant ministries but also private and nongovernmental organisations that deal with and could improve biodiversity research and policy.
- Netherlands: Keep it simple (NL) or combine functions (BE).
- Slovakia: Everything depends on personal approach of national platform work.
- Switzerland: It is very important to bring together a large enough pool of recognized biodiversity researchers. They need to be willing to invest some of their time to contribute ideas. A lot of the work has to be carried out by the office/coordination staff.
- UK: Very important to include as many organisations as possible who have an interest in biodiversity research in any way - it is crucial to include funding organisations, government agencies, and, if possible, NGOs as well. When looking in depth at particular issues it is important to pull in relevant experts. Identifying such experts and inviting them to participate in special topic groups is an important part of the networking.

III.2 - Improvement of the Platforms

Cyprus and Lithuania indicated that due to lack of funding is difficult to conceive a strategy to improve the structure of their platform.

For France is too early to say what will be the improvements, since, their national platform is coming from a big reorganization.

Bellow we find the answer given by others respondents regarding how the structure of their platform can be improved.

- Belgium: long-term stability of the cooperation agreements and improvement of the governance.
- Estonia: join some bigger NGO.
- Hungary: revision of platform members, to extend the number according to the new challenges, to develop a bylaw and further documents.
- Ireland: the structure was improved from the previous platform by targeting policy needs with small expert working groups drawn from the platform membership. Firstly, senior policy was asked what research was lacking and required for them to implement directives and legislation and this allowed focused working groups on different thematic areas to be formed.
- Norway: form an active bioplatform, although there seems to be little interest in research or policy institutions to contribute to such a platform.
- Poland: by funding of at least one permanent staff.
- Russia: disappearance of huge gaps between declaration and real work, removing of intermediate useless chains, removing of useless financial consumers. Experts' opinions on biodiversity have to be really taken into account by decision-making people.
- Slovakia: Yes, of course, many partners are only formally involved, and they only accept the information provided by the leaders of Platform.
- UK: Greater consultation and participation from research funding providers so that Biodiversity Research Advice is picked up more quickly and smoothly. Keep special topic areas under constant review to ensure that relevant experts are consulted.

Regarding the kind of activities that should be promoted in the future by the national platform, we have a variety of answers.

The main activities are: fund raising activities, local conferences, development of database to map landscape of biodiversity, integrative research projects, raising awareness regarding the relevance of biodiversity research, dissemination of biodiversity research results, gathering information about European and national research priority and policy, networking among researchers and policy makers, encourage participation from economists and social scientists in biodiversity issues.

- Belgium: Flexibility is important so activities should be decided and revised regularly by the governing board of the platform.
- Cyprus: Fund raising activities and participation in research projects.

- Czech Republic: For example, landscape policy, reasons of the failure in the agri-environmental schemes and problems of rural community (focusing on landscape owners and stakeholders such as fishers, farmers, landscape managers and architects, foresters). Within the scope of the ECCB, discuss questions about Natura 2000 and targets 2010.
- Estonia: Local conferences.
- France: Development of database to map the landscape of biodiversity research in France, integrative research projects, flagship projects in partnership with stakeholders, especially the business sector.
- Germany: Long-term, problem-oriented research (personal opinion). Make the relevance of biodiversity research clear in comparison to other much more costly research fields.
- Hungary: In accordance with new challenges and targets, develop a new working plan and action plan, to prepare the forthcoming EU presidency.
- Ireland: Small working groups drawn from a wider platform membership designed to formulate research to assist policy needs.
- Lithuania: Dissemination of latest biodiversity research results, demonstrating its importance and consequences of its decline in the way understandable to a broad audience. Coordination of research providing such results.
- Norway: Information about European research priorities, development and communication of national research priorities, improved networking among researchers and policy makers.
- Poland: Influencing policy makers, promotion of the Platform itself.
- Russia: Involvement of bottom-up initiatives, prevailing of support of local projects connected with different aspects of biodiversity conservation, investigation, etc.
- Slovakia: Everything should be promoted, priority influencing the national research policy.
- Switzerland: Better interrelations with climate change community necessary, since at global and national level, mitigation measures are being discussed and elaborated, and it is important to incorporate biodiversity issues.
- UK: Encourage participation from economists and social scientists in biodiversity issues. Higher profile activities that also publicise biodiversity research to younger people, such as UK BRAG's collaboration with the British Ecological Society (BES).

When asked about the ideal model of biodiversity platform for their country the answers vary. Respondents from Belgium, Norway, Poland and UK stress the fact that is important to have a secretariat / centralized office with staff to facilitate the organization.

Table 10 - Ideal model for your country of a biodiversity platform.

Belgium	On the long-term: transfer to a legal entity with a centralized office
Czech Republic	Ideally, there should be both top-down and bottom-up process.
Estonia	Forum or workshops taking place in every year on different topics to meet scientists and practitioners and policy people.
Hungary	The model is appropriate under the present conditions; a little bit higher activity would be preferable.
Lithuania	Information portal on biodiversity research with discussion forum, as a part of a more general environment-related information portal.
Norway	An informal networking organisation supported by a couple of key individuals in a secretariat function, that may contribute to biodiversity related meetings, workshops etc, as well as channelling views in biodiversity research priorities
Poland	Office/organization with staff funded by Ministry of Science and Higher Education
Russia	Legitimate distribution and spending of the finance. More independence from bureaucracy, corruption and formalism. Development of national platform has to be real bidirectional process.
Slovakia	Functioning Platform of present structure, more acceptance of Platforms advice in National Science Policy.
UK	UK BRAG with its wide range of participating members is a very good model for other countries. It is important to have dedicated secretariat time to facilitate organisation.

III.3 - European Support for the Platforms

According to the answer received, 13 respondents used BioPlatform support and seven do not, and 12 respondents used BioStrat support and eight do not.

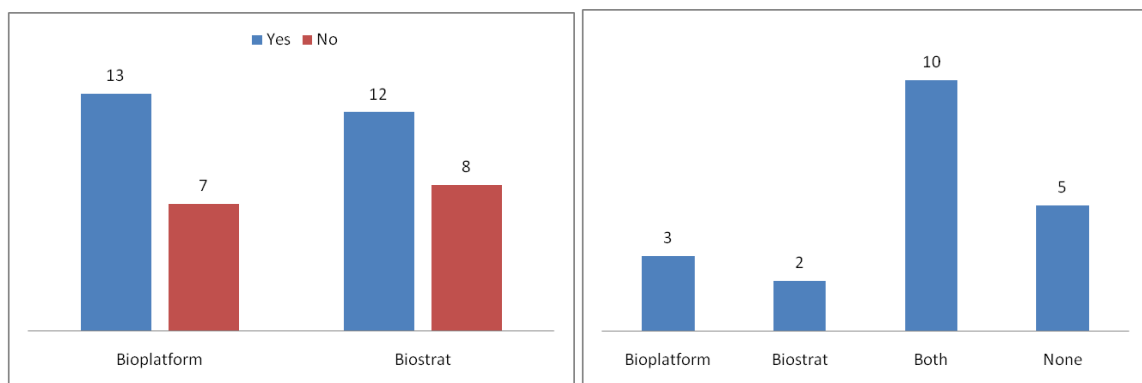


Figure 3 – Number of respondents that used or not BioPlatform and BioStrat support.

The distribution of countries according to the support received from BioPlatform and BioStrat is:

- BioPlatform: Cyprus, Malta and Poland
- BioStrat: Croatia and Germany
- Both: Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia and Spain
- None: France, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and UK

Table 11 - Best funding scheme for your platform.

Czech Republic	Funding of the Czech EPBRS meeting from both BioStrat and Ministry of the Environment.
Estonia	Half loaded permanent position plus conference costs.
Germany	National funding should be preferred.
Hungary	The EU support is needed, to make possible the employment of a permanent secretary. Scientists cannot afford doing so much administrative work.
Ireland	Dedicated Irish government support.
Lithuania	BioPlatform seed funding allowed organisation of national meeting and a workshop on Natura2000 issues.
Malta	The independent EU bioplatform funding allowed all entities to feel they could contribute to EU through national networking and not influenced by one or another ministry.
Russia	Scientific and some other forms of grants and projects.
UK	Funding of the part-time secretariat is via grant-in-aid from the Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra).

The best funding scheme for the biodiversity platform indicated are presented in Table 11. The examples vary between national funding only, EU support in conjunction with national funding, and grants and projects (national and international).

Regarding the ideal model of EC funding (Table 12), some respondents indicated that a model like BioStrat project would be good. It is useful to have some European support but is important that the main funding for the NBP's came from national funds.

The European Commission should:

- Secure permanent funding for EPBRS and a network of national platforms
- Fund European meetings to ensure balanced participation across Europe
- Co-fund of national platforms. National platforms should only be supported where there is a significant national funding contribution. EC funding should be used to derive specific Europe-wide products

Table 12 - Ideal model of EC funding.

Belgium	At least a supporting action in FP7, but ideally secure permanent funding for EPBRS and a network of national platforms.
Germany	Although continuous funding by EC would be nice, the topics carried out by national platforms are mainly for the country, thus main funding should come from national sources. From EC, only a continuous funding for major meetings would be needed to ensure balanced participation across Europe.
Ireland	
Lithuania	At least, it would be nice to have the support of international activities, like EPBRS meetings.
Slovakia	The ideal would be financial support from EU, even small one. This would persuade everybody that this is EU initiative and not only the initiative of few scientists.
UK	Co-funding of national platforms. National platforms should only be supported where there is a significant national funding contribution. EC funding should be used to derive specific Europe-wide products.

III.4 - Development of last 3 years and future evolution

From the 17 NBP identified through the questionnaires, 9 show progress in the last 3 years, in some cases with great success and good prospects for the future: Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland and UK.

Estonia and Slovakia indicate that they have low activity with no progress.

Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Spain showed no progress, and in some cases, the NBP activity decreased to zero. They are facing funding problems due to lack of national funds available to support the NBP daily activities, also due to low interest of the national policy maker regarding biodiversity research and conservation. With the end of BioStrat project, they will stay in a difficult position to maintain the daily work of their platform.

Table 13 - Development in the last 3 years and future evolution.

Belgium	Activities will be maintain with development of new projects
Cyprus	Any progress in the last 3 years due to the not existing funding of the platform
Czech Republic	Success
Estonia	Activity has been low
France	The platform has just gone through a major change with a new entity (FRB)
Germany	Positive, since it is now operating
Hungary	Platform members represented the Platform's views in different important issues
Ireland	It has only been re-established so difficult to say at the present
Lithuania	No progressive development of the LBRF as an informal forum in the future (lack of national funding and relatively low interest to the biodiversity research by Lithuanian policy makers)
Malta	Died out! After the EU bioplatform funding ended, even if voluntary work was done and personal funds put in to sustain a webpage for some more time.
Netherlands	Good
Norway	No development
Poland	Decreasing
Russia	Development of investigation, improvement and creation of electronic resources, publication of new data, intensification of researches on effects of global changes, biodiversity loss and environmental stability.
Slovakia	Stable, no progress, no increase of activities.
Spain	Non existing
Switzerland	Quite successful. Some financial insecurity remains.
UK	Period of consolidation resulting in a clearer remit and better communication.

Table 14 present the possible role in the future indicated by the NBP. Those who are well implemented and showing great progress (Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands and Russia) are willing to be involved in the future development of the EPBRS, future IPBES, ImoSEB, EU FP projects, European expert mechanism and some other.

However, all the difficulties, the platforms that depend on external funds believe that if the financial problems were exceeded, they will have an important role in their national decision making process and raising awareness on biodiversity.

Some role indicated will involve the maintenance of forums for scientists and practitioners to meet policy makers, communication between national and international researchers, etc.

Table 14 - Possible role of the platforms in the future.

	Will stay involved in EPBRS follow up and in future IPBES
Cyprus	If the platform manages to be economically autonomous, then the Cyprus national Platform can have a significant role in decision making process, policy making, research, and awareness rising.
Czech Republic	We are planning to involve into European expert mechanism via various EU FP projects and IPBES.
Estonia	It will be a forum for scientists and practitioners to meet policy makers.
France	IFB previously supported the secretariat of the IMoSEB process. FRB is interested in active participation in IPBES and the European mechanism and already supports activities at the national level related to IPBES.
Germany	We will actively participate in IPBES and European Mechanism.
Hungary	We intend to join the different initiatives, mainly in the frame of preparation to the EU Presidency.
Ireland	It is hoped the platform will grow and become increasingly involved in such mechanisms.
Lithuania	The LBRF might be a national focal point in case of development of European network of networks in the frame of IPBES.
Netherlands	National and European contributing.
Norway	Mainly as a national network to mobilise common interests in biodiversity research, as well as facilitating involvement of Norwegian scientists in European processes.
Poland	Realistically, without direct funding I cannot see any role for it.
Russia	European expert mechanism and some other.
Slovakia	Can contribute in future, providing input from the region.
UK	Identification, promotion and co-ordination of research needs and investments. Two-way communication between national research funders and international science-policy platforms with respect to research needs and priorities. Promote a co-ordinated research response.

IV – STATE OF THE BIODIVERSITY COMMUNITY ON COUNTRIES WITH NO NBP (question 18)

Seven respondents indicate that they do not have a National Biodiversity Platform in their country (Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Ukraine). Those countries were invited to answer question 18 of the questionnaire in order to give a perspective of the state of their biodiversity community. In addition, we receive some answer from countries that have a formal biodiversity platform.

Croatia and Denmark said that they did not do any efforts to create a NBP and Norway said that he made very limited efforts to do so.

Regarding the question “Are you still planning to have a NBP?” Croatia, Finland, Portugal, and Ukraine answered yes and Denmark answered no. Norway, Spain (that had a platform in the past) and Sweden are not sure if they will keep on making efforts in order to have a platform.

Table 15 – What are the difficulties?

Croatia	Organisational issues, low level of interest in administrative structures, necessity of strong lobbying, time consuming, lack of funds.
Denmark	No inviting attitude from decision makers to interfaces with scientist when it comes to biodiversity.
Finland	Everybody is too busy.
Malta	Funding and political realization of the EU importance of such issues only just developing.
Norway	Lack of perceived need and/or ownership of the bioplatform idea; difficulty of getting the research and policy maker communities involved.
Portugal	The difficulties are due to organization issues, low level of interest in the governmental bodies, lack of funds specific for this matter, availability of time to overcome the difficulties.
Spain	Ministries (especially Environment) were not very keen to fund it.
Sweden	The difficulty is probably that Sweden was quite early in setting up different organisations after the ratification of the CBD, but the idea of joining these organisations into a platform came a little bit too late, when already things were running.
Ukraine	Funds for the establishment of the Platform have been not appropriated and the relevant prognoses are inauspicious. Lack of understanding of benefits from the NBP founding mostly among administrative workers. Political instability originates certain difficulties in projects that need support of policy makers or administrative authorities.

The main difficulties posed to the biodiversity community to create a NBP are related to organizational issues, lack of interest or availability of the governmental/institutional bodies in support this kind of initiatives, lack of funds, or simply because the actors of biodiversity community didn't have time to address all the problems and difficulties.

Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Spain and Ukraine indicate that they have plans to overcome those difficulties.

- Denmark: No actual plans, but widespread participation in biodiversity issue debates from various groups and persons.
- Portugal: To keep on establishing the contacts with the potential integrant of the platform and demonstrate the interest and benefits of having a national biodiversity platform.

- Spain: Key people in the department have changed recently, and the new ones seem more eager to collaborate.
- Ukraine: Working on the plan progress. The common approach to the Platform organisation under the condition of fund deficiency is under development.

Table 16 – Role of external help to overcome the difficulties.

Croatia	Formal support, experience exchange, participation on national events, funds.
Denmark	EU-attitude to biodiversity conservation and research is clearly stimulating - especially obligations such as the directives!
Finland	Pressure on the busy people.
Malta	Funding and giving incentives for such work from National to EU level just what the Bioplatform project has so effectively achieved.
Norway	A clear external demand for a formal national bioplatform as an instrument for coordination and communication of biodiversity research issues (but in a sense, the Research Council of Norway may be seen as already having such a role, on biodiversity issues as well as most other topics of research).
Portugal	Experience exchange, formal support, participation in national and international events, and participation in international projects with European funds.
Ukraine	For the Ukrainian scientific community is very important to contact and cooperate with European colleagues on continuing basis. One of the possible ways to begin moving forward is to get grant for the initial organisational work. In reality, joining of efforts of 4-5 institutions will be enough for successful beginning.

According to the respondents, the most important role that the external community can have in order to help to overcome the difficulties they are facing is the formal support showed by other NBPs and by EU bodies, the contribution to the exchange of experience, and the invitation to participate in projects supported by EU funds.

Regarding the organization of the national biodiversity community the answers show that there is no particular organization in most countries, and also that biodiversity issues are addressed in a fragmented way by various institutions (governmental, non-governmental, researchers, educational):

- Croatia: No particular organisation; several NGOs cover some aspects.
- Denmark: In NGOs, and scattered, less organised researchers in informal networks. Also in strategic research bodies.
- Finland: Various kinds of committees, work groups, networks, etc.
- Germany: Community is very diverse and fragmented, mainly organised along disciplines.
- Lithuania: As biodiversity-related research departments (botany, zoology, etc.) of universities, other research institutions, incl. museums, scientists (ecologists) of protected territories.
- Norway: It is not organised, apart from the individual institutions of research, management and policy and the more or less informal networking between them.

- Portugal: Governmental bodies, governmental institutes, research laboratories, universities, NGOs, national and international projects. A Marine and Biodiversity Network (divMar – Rede de Biodiversidade Marinha e Costeira) was started in 2007.
- Spain: Very loosely.
- Ukraine: Not specially organised. There are some scientific centres (universities and research institutes) working in the biodiversity field in the country. A few of them cooperate and change information. Most non-governmental organisations do not take real steps.

The national communities do not have a satisfactory contribution, as it depends on the interest and available time of the researchers and institutions that have to deal with a wide range of issues other than only biodiversity issues. This conclusion results from the fact that the national biodiversity communities are not well organized and the response to the biodiversity issues is given in a fragmented way.

- Croatia: Low level.
- Denmark: There is a contribution, but the policy interface is not well established.
- Finland: It is fairly well capable of contributing to biodiversity issues, as Finland is a small country.
- Germany: High expertise on the disciplinary level, but rarely organised and experienced in contributing actively to societal discussions.
- Lithuania: Not too much formally organised, but small enough to self-organise in case of necessity.
- Norway: Contributions to various biodiversity issues are organised partly sectoral (especially linked to specific policy instruments and their knowledge needs) or adhoc on specific topical issues that may cut across sectors and institutional arrangements.
- Portugal: The national community can address various biodiversity issues in a moderate extent and not in a global and integrated way.
- Spain: It has the potential to contribute, and efforts are being made to this end.
- Ukraine: Despite the permanent lack of funds, some research institutes and universities have sufficient experience and trained staff.

APPENDIX 1 - Questionnaire

STATE OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY PLATFORMS 2009

Dear colleague,

Responding to the following questions is an important contribution not only to deliver the BioStrat project tasks but also to help the work of other, emerging National Biodiversity Platforms and EPBRs. So we thank you for the time that you are taking to answer this questionnaire, especially in case you are not a BioStrat partner.

In case your country does not have a formal National Biodiversity Platform of any kind, you are invited to answer the questions relevant for your national biodiversity community and also question 18 of this questionnaire.

Thanks for your contribution!

1. Name and email address of respondent

2. Creation of the platform

- What are the full name and the abbreviated name of your platform in English?
- When was your platform created?
- By which process (bottom-up process, top-down process) was your platform created?
Could you explain briefly who was the initiator of the platform (government, researchers)?
- Was external EU funding (specifically BioPlatform, BioStrat or another project) crucial for the establishment of your platform?
- What are the prospects for the functioning of your platform after BioStrat?

3. Partners / members of the platform

- List of partners. Please give an exhaustive list of the partners / persons of your platform?
Policy makers (ministries, ...):
Statutory Advisory Organisation (Government conservation / environment organisations, ...):
Research institutions:
Associations (NGO, ...):
Others (TV, radio, ...):
- Funding members of the platform. *Could you give a list of the principal partners that contribute to funding? If possible, specify what percentage of the total budget their contribution represents.*
Main funding members:
- Operational staff of your platform (number of people: XX (including permanent staff: XX)).

4. What are the objectives of your platform?

5. Budget

- Do you have an autonomous budget? What is the funding source?
- Average budget per year in 2006/2009

6. Visibility

- Does your platform have a website where it advertises its activities? If yes what is the address?
- Does your website have a forum where mail discussions can be held?
- Does your platform have a newsletter (electronic and/or printed) or other form of regular distribution of information and news? How many people receive this information?
- What other information is contained in the website?

7. Activities of your platform: promoting dissemination of scientific knowledge

- Does your platform actively summarize and/or disseminate results or other scientific information?
No/Yes
- Who is the target audience(s) (Scientific community; policy makers and practitioners, young children, general public, etc)

8. Activities of your platform: involvement in international programs and agreements / conventions

- Could you briefly describe in which international programs your platform is involved?

Program	How does your platform contributes to meeting the objectives of the program
Diversitas	
GBIF	
Man and Biosphere	
Global Taxonomy Initiative	
Others (please specify)	

- Is your platform the national focal point of the SBSTTA of CBD (Yes/No)?
- Is your platform involved in the negotiations of any international agreements that involve Biodiversity issues (e.g. CITES, Ramsar, CBD, other)?
- Is your platform involved / giving support to the negotiations of the environmental policy at the EU level?

9. Activities of your platform concerning the national policy on biodiversity

- Does your platform contribute to define the orientations of national policy concerning biodiversity?
- Has your government asked your platform to prepare prospective reports on what should be the policy concerning biodiversity in the future?

10. Activities of your platform in relation to EPBRS

- What is your platform contribution to the EPBRS? Briefly describe it.
- Did you produce national reviews for BioStrat / EPBRS?
- How did you produce them? (E.g. hire expert(s), sent questionnaires to experts and produce the report, produce it yourself, other)

11. Activities of your platform: participation in the development of research policy at National, European and International level

- Has your Platform participated in the identification of national (biodiversity / environmental) research policy?
- Have you/your platform participated in the development of the working program of FP7 or of any other multilateral, European or international research programs (e.g. ERA Nets, ESF, Diversitas, Census of Marine Life, other?)

12. Activities of your platform: development of research infrastructure at National, European and International level

- Is your platform involved in the definition of priorities for funding of research infrastructures (biodiversity / environment), e.g participation in ESFRI planning projects or other?

13. Activities of your platform: others

- Please feel free to describe activities that have not been mentioned here.

14. Strength of your platform

- If you have a working platform, what do you consider the greatest strength of the platform?
- How did this strength contribute at national level to support biodiversity conservation and research?
- Can you identify best practice examples how to operate national platforms to help other countries?

15. Improvement of your platform

- How can the structure of your platform be improved? (please describe)

- What kind of activities should be promoted in the future?
- Could you briefly describe the ideal model for your country of a biodiversity platform for the future?

16. European Support for your Platform

- Did you use support from Bioplatform?
- And from BioStrat?
- What was the best funding scheme for your platform?
- What would be the ideal model of EC funding?

17. Development of last 3 years and future evolution

- How do you see the development of your platform over the last 3 years?
- How do you see the possible role of your platform in the future (e.g. IPBES, European expert mechanism, other)

18. If there is no National Biodiversity Platform in your country

- Have you done any efforts to create one?
- Are you still planning to have one?
- What are the difficulties?
- Do you have plans to overcome these difficulties?
- What do you see could be the role of external help?
- How is the national biodiversity community organized in your country?
- In what extent it is able and/or organised to contribute to various biodiversity issues?

APPENDIX 2 - Respondents

Country	Respondent	
Belgium	Aline van der Werf	Belspo – Belgian Science Policy
	Estelle Balian	Freshwater Laboratory, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences
Croatia	Toni Nikolić	Department of Botany, Division of Biology, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb
Cyprus	Evi Eftychiou	University of Nicosia
Czech Republic	Petr Petrik	Estonian Agricultural University
Denmark	Rasmus Ejrnæs	National Environmental Research Institute, Aarhus University
Estonia	Tiiu Kull	Estonian Agricultural University
Finland	Jari Niemelä	Professor, Dean - Faculty of Biosciences, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences
France	Flora Pelegrin	Foundation for Research on Biodiversity
Germany	Carsten Neßhöver	Department of Conservation Biology, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ
Hungary	Dr. Edit Kovacs-Lang	Institute of Ecology and Botany, Hungarian Academy of Sciences
	Dr. Katalin Torok	
	Gergely Torda	
Ireland	Louise Scally	Botanical, Environmental & Conservation Consultants Ltd
Lithuania	Eduardas Budrys	Institute of Ecology of Vilnius University
Malta	Adriana Vella	University of Malta, Conservation Biology Research Section
Netherlands	Sander van Opstal	(Dutch) Biodiversity Platform - NI
Norway	Erik Framstad	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research
Poland	Bogdan Jaroszewicz	Warsaw University, Białowieża Geobotanical Station
Portugal	Marina Pereira Silva	CIMAR - Centre of Marine & Environmental Research
	Isabel Sousa Pinto	
Russia	Vladimir Vershinin	Russian Academy of Science, Institute of Plant and Animal Ecology
Slovakia	Julius Oszlanyi	Institute of Landscape Ecology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences
Spain	Francisco I. Pugnaire	Dept. de Ecología Funcional y Evolutiva, Estacion Experimental de Zonas Aridas, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas
Sweden	Thomas Nilsson	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
Switzerland	Sylvia Martinez	Swiss Biodiversity Forum
UK	Tina Yates	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Ukraine	Viktor Gasso	Dnipropetrovs'k National University