

Belgian Biodiversity Platform

Annual Report 2020



Biodiversity.be

February 2021

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1/ Introduction

- This **'2020 Annual report'** is built on seven annexes (see AnnualReport2020.xlsx), summarizing the state of completion of actions that were foreseen in our 2020 Workplan, and listing the various activities we have been involved in during the last year. The report also includes some graphical representations of the 2020 activities of the Platform. These represent a quantitative assessment of our performance against our objectives. This report is meant for internal reporting purposes towards the Platform Steering Committee and External Evaluation Panel only.
- In addition, the reporting is also accompanied by a **'2020 Highlights report'** elaborating on a few success stories representative for the range of activities within our portfolio, and accessible to a wider audience. The Highlights report acts as a more qualitative representation of the work we have completed in 2020.

We note that categorization of tasks according to our 2017-2021 Strategic Plan is not always straightforward. They may relate to more than one objective; and should be seen as being interlinked and mutually supportive. Together, our results testify the credibility and relevance of the Platform as a science-policy interface, and as an important catalyst to the development and support of initiatives related to national and international biodiversity research. Hereafter, Belgian Biodiversity Platform will be referred to as 'Platform' or 'BBPF'. Contributions of Platform colleagues are indicated by an abbreviation (cf. Section 2.) throughout the text and Annexes.

2/ Platform Staff in 2020

Biodiversity experts:

- Jorge Ventocilla (JoV, RBINS; 80%)
- Dimitri Brosens (DiB, INBO; 100%)
- Maxime Coupremagne (MaC, DEMNA; 100%)
- Hilde Eggermont (HiE, Dr., RBINS; 100%)
- Lise Goudeseune (LiG, RBINS; 100%)
- Hans Keune (HaK, Dr., INBO; 40%)
- Sander Jacobs (SaJ, Dr. INBO; 60%)
- Sonia Vanderhoeven (SoV, Dr., DEMNA; 100%)

Communication Team:

- Divija Jata (DiJ, RBINS; 100%)
- Pierre Huybrechts (PiH, RBINS; 100%)

IT support team:

- Julien Cigar (JuC, System Administrator, BELSPO; 100%)

- André Heughebaert (AnH, IT engineer, BELSPO; 80%)

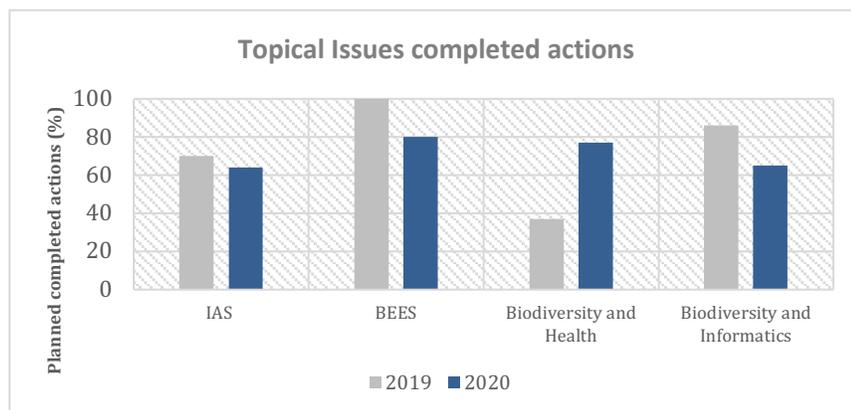
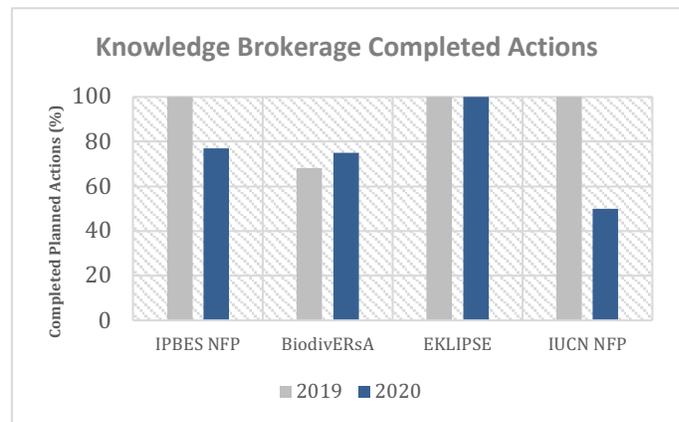
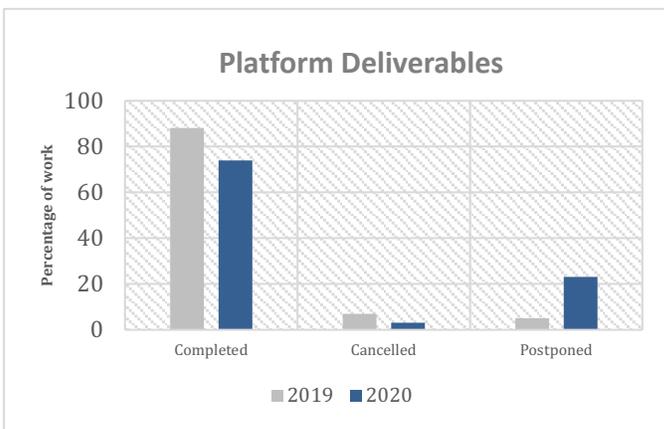
3/ Completion of the 2020 BBPF Workplan – ANNEX I

Annex I presents an overview of the status of actions/deliverables that were foreseen for 2019, according to the BBPF Strategic plan 2017-2021. This table also specifies the initial target date, main actor (team responsible), and reason for possible cancellation or delay. For a detailed description of each specific action, we refer to our 2020 BBPF Workplan.

Of the 119 actions originally scheduled, **74% have been completed or are ongoing** (on track), **23% have been delayed/postponed until next year**, and **3% have been cancelled** (Figure 1).

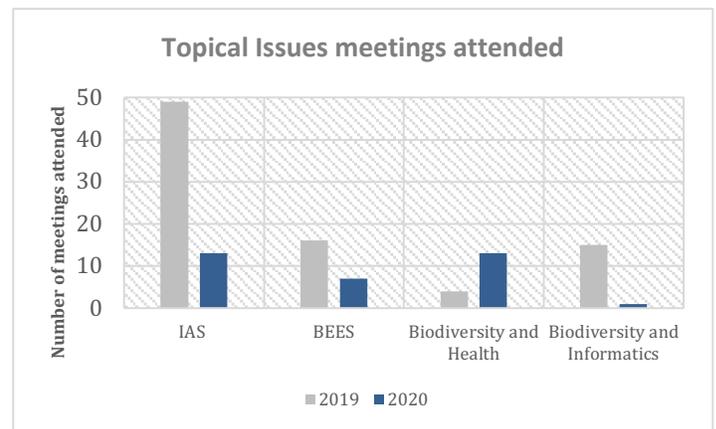
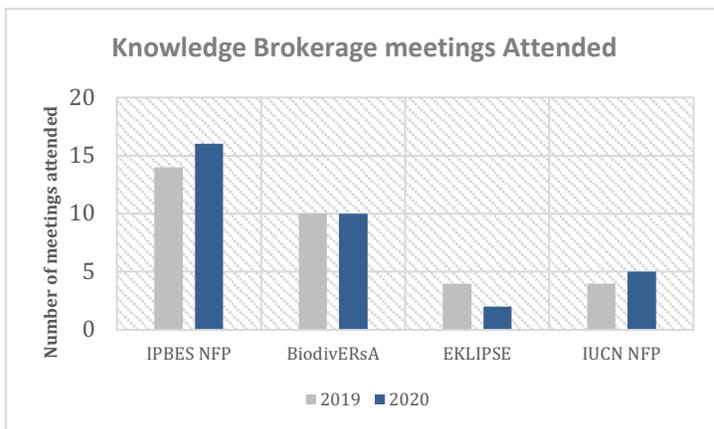
2020 was an unprecedented year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus causing a surge in projects being postponed to 2021 or further in the future. Despite these unusual and difficult circumstances, the Platform team endeavored to complete as many actions as possible, planned for 2020. Actions were postponed primarily because their execution did not meet government COVID-19 regulations. Some actions have also been cancelled due to IT resource limitations (i.e. 12 months delay on replacement of IT colleague). Some of the foreseen activities, such as for the European Biodiversity Partnership, took much more time than expected due to developments of Horizon Europe/European Commission, and our modified role (from vice chair, to chair/coordinator).

Finally, we also took up some new roles in committees/steering groups/working groups (e.g. Paris Risk Group; Life 3n Bullfrog; Vlaamse UNESCO MAB Werkgroep; Stuurcomité NARA rapport), and invested in regional biodiversity strategies (such as the Wallon strategy 'Biodiversité 360°').



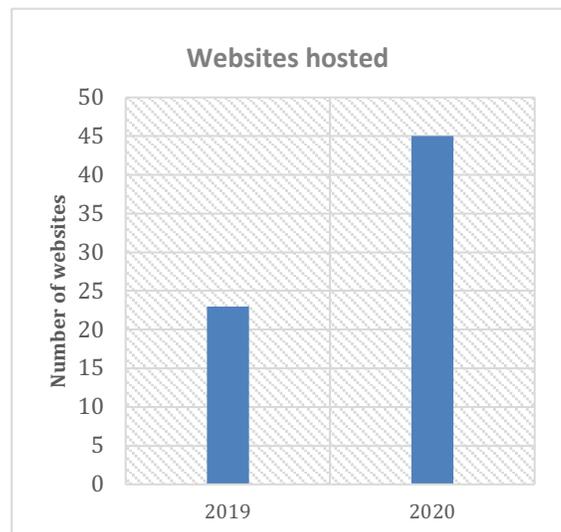
3/ Meetings attended/(co)organized by Platform members in 2020 ANNEX II

Annex II presents an overview of the virtual and where possible physical meetings attended/co-organized by Platform members – including details of the venue, participants, role and corresponding task in our BBPF Strategic Plan 2017-2021, and time investment (days). We restrict to key events taking at least 0.5 day/meeting. Bilateral exchanges between team members being part of our day-to-day job are not listed. Overall, we participated to some 104 events and meetings, accumulating in 229 working days (i.e. on average 1 – 1.5PM per BBPF member), of which a substantial number were (co)organized by the Platform team. Participation and/or organization of these meeting further strengthened our facilitating role in the science-policy scene, as well as our impact and visibility. Numbers are very comparable to last year.



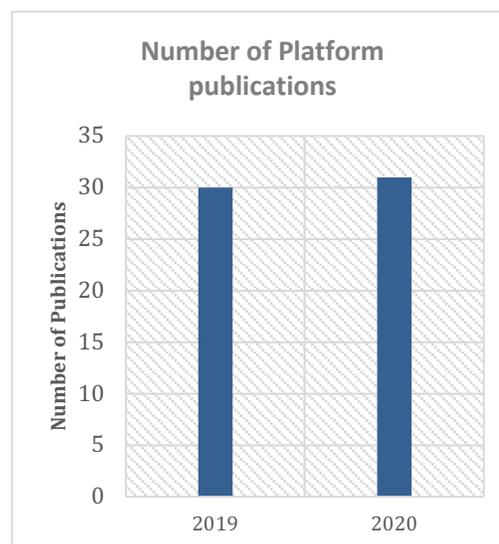
4/ Websites hosted by the Platform – ANNEX III

Annex III lists all the websites currently hosted by the Platform (i.e., **45 in total**) incl. some related to European initiatives such as the European Platform on Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS, dormant now) and BiodivERsA (such as the main website and database).



5/ Publications (co-)authored by the Platform – ANNEX IV

Annex IV presents a list of **31 publications (co-)authored by the Platform**. The majority of these are peer-reviewed papers (scientific research or opinion papers), some of which are published in high-impact journals such as Science, Global Change Biology, and Sustainability. It also includes 4 policy briefs covering the topical issues of Invasive Alien Species and Biodiversity and One Health. Other notable publications include being a partner author for the 2020 WWF Living Planet Report, BiodivERsA Citizen Science Toolkit for Biodiversity Scientists, and BiodivERsA handbook on the use of Biodiversity Scenarios.



6/ Resources published to GBIF – ANNEX V; GBIF Country Report – ANNEX VI

Annex V presents an overview of the resources (checklists, occurrences and sampling events) published to GBIF. By the end of December 2020, Belgium provided 12.811.851 occurrence records from 144 datasets, 1.148.859 checklist records from 25 datasets and 717.006 sample-event records from 121 datasets to the GBIF network.

The GBIF National Country report for Belgium (January 2021) indicates that 675.027 additional occurrences have been published over last 12 months. Belgian users made 3.599 download requests in 2020, compared to 2.734 in 2019. Belgian researchers contribute to 24 new peer-reviewed articles citing GBIF during 2020, compared to 16 new articles in 2019. In total 137 articles since 2008.

7/ Other activities by Platform members, ANNEX VII

Annex VII gives an overview of activities executed by Platform members in their capacity as scientific expert. These include Keynote presentations and editorial work for journals such as Cities & Health, Frontiers Public Health and Environmental Science.

8/Platform Coordination and Communication

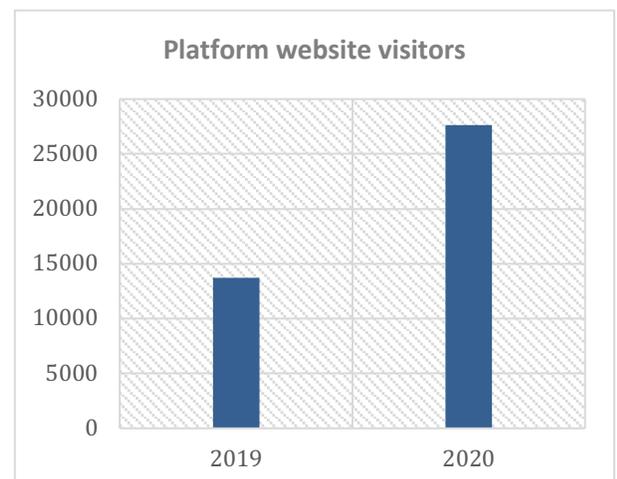
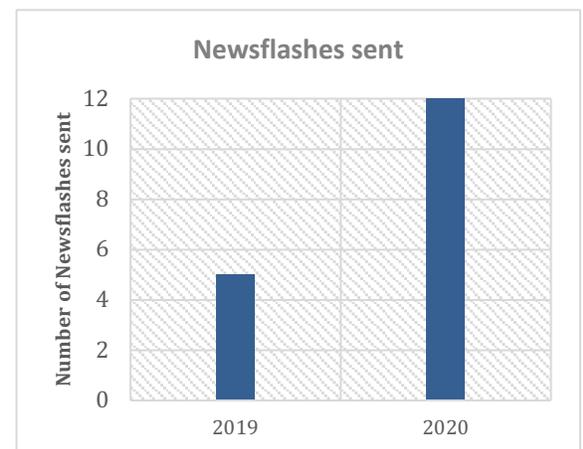
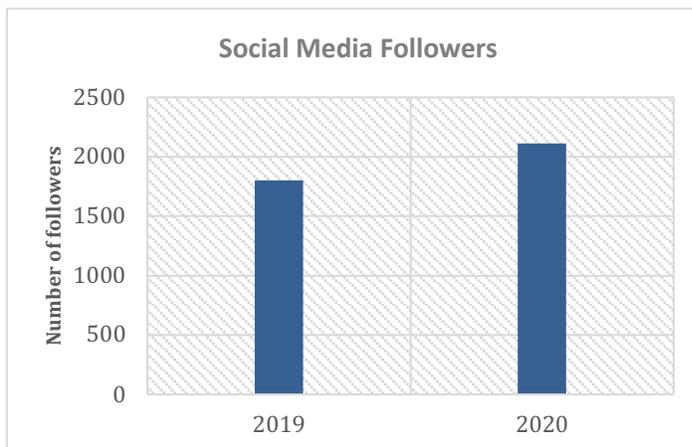
During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic the Platform continued to virtually conduct monthly coordination meetings, **10 in total** (with breaks during Summer and Winter). To boost team morale, we also managed virtual weekly informal coffee breaks throughout the periods of lockdown. The planned team building session has been postponed to 2021 when government rules allow for this type of event.

The Platform also met with the Steering Committee 4 times throughout 2020, ensuring that Platform renewal and any changes in the next four-year phase have been discussed in detail.

Minutes for all meetings (no exceptions) are archived in Nextcloud (our online file share), with name of file corresponding to date of the meeting.

Communication

The main outreach activities that regularly reach stakeholders include our social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram), releasing monthly Newsflashes which contain news pertaining to Platform activities, and the main Platform website. The following graphs show our yearly indicators for the above activities. 2020 showed an increase in social media followers and website visitors. We also managed to send a dedicated Newsflash every month.



9/Attached Documents

- **GBIF Country Report 2020**
- **Belgian datasets published by GBIF.**

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