



Developing a mechanism for supporting better decisions on our environment based on the best available knowledge.

CALL FOR EXPERTS No.4/2017 EKLIPSE – September 2017

How can environmental regulators support businesses to improve the outcomes of their operations for biodiversity, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises in the food and beverage sector in Europe?

Deadline for Call: 18th of October, 2017

EKLIPSE is inviting experts to join an expert working group (EWG) to assess and synthesize relevant knowledge related to approaches environmental regulators can use to support businesses to improve their outcomes for biodiversity, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises in the food and beverage sector in Europe. This is a policy request from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). The goal of the EWG is to first define a rough framework of approaches and their effectiveness. From that the most promising shall be identified and analysed to understand under which conditions they work well.

The expert working group will cover diverse and complementary skills (including practitioners and policy experts and a broad geographical coverage) and will interact with relevant stakeholders to ensure appropriate methodological choices and uptake of outputs.

- Are you interested in helping governments and regulators to support their businesses to incorporate nature inclusive strategies and improve biodiversity outcomes?
- Do you have expertise or ideas about promising approaches for business and biodiversity, including but not restricted to corporate responsibility, market-based instruments, voluntary environmental approaches, planning, or environmental economics?
- Are you interested in knowledge assessment and knowledge synthesis?
- Would you like to contribute directly to a policy-relevant process in your field of expertise?
- Would you like to expand your network and learn about methods of knowledge synthesis?
- Are you interested in collaborating in a transdisciplinary and multi-cultural setting?

Then please apply at http://www.eclipse-mechanism.eu/open_calls



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Important dates and information:

- Interested experts should apply before midnight CET on the **18th of October, 2017** by following the rules and procedures detailed below.
- The members of the expert working group (EWG) will be selected by **6th of November, 2017** and a kick-off meeting will be organised by EKLIPSE in the week starting 4th of December.
- The EWG will have opportunities and financial and administrative support to meet face-to-face at regular intervals, as appropriate.
- The final deliverables are due **30th October, 2018**.
- Participation in this expert working group will require approximately 10% of a full time equivalent (i.e. 4 hours per week) – please find more information on expectations of and support to EKLIPSE Expert Working Groups [here](#).

EKLIPSE is developing a European Mechanism to answer requests from policy makers and other societal actors on issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem services.

EKLIPSE organizes and facilitates knowledge synthesis processes, horizon scanning and societal dialogue on topics that relate to or impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services by making the best knowledge available. It invites experts to contribute their knowledge.

More information on the processes and the EKLIPSE project funded by the EU in H2020 is available at www.eclipse-mechanism.eu

2 Request to be addressed by this call

Background to this request:

This request was initially put to EKLIPSE by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). The scoping of the request was discussed with scientists, policymakers, businesses and other stakeholders at different levels and through different platforms (conferences, social media, telephone calls and face-to-face meetings) to ensure the policy relevance of the request detailed below. Furthermore, a first scoping activity has been carried out (« Call for Knowledge »). The results of this call can be found in the EKLIPSE KNOCK forum http://www.eclipse-mechanism.eu/forum_discussion.

Improving biodiversity outcomes of businesses

Biodiversity loss is one of the biggest challenges that we are facing and many species and their habitats as well as ecosystems which provide essential resources for human nutrition and well-being are threatened by human activities.¹ Businesses are increasingly aware of their dependencies upon biodiversity and ecosystem services, taking this into consideration as the natural capital of their business operations, e.g. raw materials such as cotton or coffee. Despite this growing recognition, practical approaches for businesses to understand and manage their impacts on natural capital across their

¹ European Commission (2015a): The State of Nature in the European Union, COM(2015) 219 final ; European Commission (2015b): The Mid-Term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy To 2020, COM(2015) 478 final ; Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Industry, Baseline Report (April 2017).



supply chains are lacking.²

Improving biodiversity outcomes of businesses span over a multitude of approaches from regulation, to standards, voluntary and market based approaches. It is essential, however, to understand and evaluate how effective the various approaches are in changing employee mindsets, company culture and customer behaviour. Some initiatives and projects are starting in this field, most notably the Natural Capital Protocol, a standardized framework to help businesses identify, measure, and value their impacts and dependencies on natural capital and ultimately to apply the results of natural capital accounting into their existing operations. To facilitate the implementation of the protocol, sector guides have been published, initially for the food and beverage and apparel sectors.³ In addition, the European Commission hosts a Business @ Biodiversity Platform providing a forum for dialogue and policy interface to discuss the links between business and biodiversity at EU level with the aim of working with and helping businesses integrate natural capital and biodiversity considerations into business practices.⁴

Focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food and beverage sector

While the starting point is on business in general, practical experiences shall be narrowed down to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food and beverage sector in Europe. These can have important implications on water/land management. Large multi-national businesses may have the necessary resources and knowledge to go beyond environmental regulations, whereas small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may require more support in understanding, selecting, and implementing mandatory and voluntary approaches to enhance environmental sustainability.

The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is the prerequisite for agriculture and food supply, because on the one hand they rely on healthy ecosystems and natural resources for production and on the other hand they are having a great impact on biodiversity as is described in the interim report TEEB for Food & Agriculture (2015). Most notably, intensified consumption patterns in industrialized countries and emerging economies, a growing demand for food and beverage products and an increasingly globalized food market have led to the vast exploitation of agricultural land, highly intensive production systems and dramatic biodiversity loss through land-use change, overexploitation, pollution and introduction of invasive alien species.⁵

Nonetheless, agriculture and food production in Europe has two sides: while it is one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss, it also provides the basis for many ecosystems and species of the historically grown cultural landscape.⁶

In addition to the high land use pressure, in Europe and along global supply chains, the complexity of biodiversity and the complexity of interactions and impacts across the supply chain of a food product (see Figure 1), render the reduction of adverse biodiversity impacts and thus improving biodiversity outcomes of business operations in the food and beverage sector very challenging.

² University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL). (2016). Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Corporate Natural Capital Accounting : Synthesis report.

³ Natural Capital Coalition. 2016. « Natural Capital Protocol – Food and Beverage Sector Guide ».

⁴ European Commission. 2017. EU Business @ Biodiversity Platform.
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/index_en.htm

⁵ Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Industry, Baseline Report (April 2017) ; Natural Capital Coalition. 2016. « Natural Capital Protocol – Food and Beverage Sector Guide ».

⁶ Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Industry, Baseline Report (April 2017).



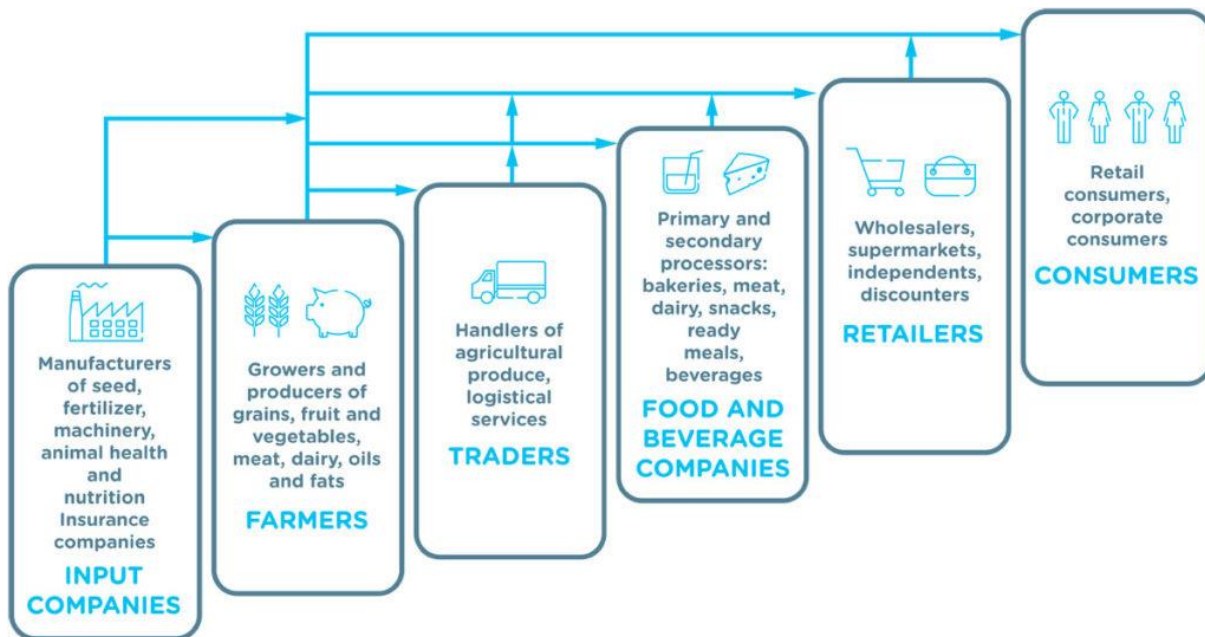


Figure 1 : The food and beverage supply chain

Source : Trucost. 2016. Environmentally extended input-output (EEI-O) model; Natural Capital Coalition. 2016. « Natural Capital Protocol – Food and Beverage Sector Guide ».

First attempts to tackle this challenge have been made and a range of analytical approaches exist, like TEEB in AgrifoodSector, iPES-Food research and recommendations on sustainable food systems and also (emerging) tools for the assessment, accounting and valuation of biodiversity and natural capital by business, notably the Natural Capital Protocol and the related sector guide for food and beverage, as well as an ongoing EU LIFE Project, led by Global Nature Fund, on “Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Industry”. The main objective of this project is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and labels within the food industry, by supporting standard organizations to include efficient biodiversity criteria into their schemes; and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.⁷

Role of government

Government organisations and regulators can have a key role in helping businesses operate in a more sustainable, yet still competitive, manner. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) who issued this request, is working to implement their new regulatory strategy ‘One Planet Prosperity’, which summarizes the agency’s vision for ways they can work with Scottish businesses to enhance environmental sustainability⁸. SEPA would like to find out which approaches they and other European regulatory agencies could use when working with businesses to achieve this vision, from traditional compliance with environmental standards, to going beyond compliance, and encouraging and promoting voluntary participation.

This raises the question how environmental regulators can complement or work together with private sector initiatives (e.g. the German Biodiversity in Good Company). Some of the most powerful drivers

⁷ Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Industry, Baseline Report (April 2017).

⁸ Scottish Environment Protection Agency. 2016. One Planet Prosperity – Our Regulatory Strategy.



and obstacles and intervention options for sustainability, relate to a range of actors relevant on the often many stages “from farm to fork”. Therefore, consumption patterns and lifestyle choices by consumers, procurement, trade and competition rules, and overall the way all parts of the value and supply chain interact or offer opportunities for interventions, can have a significant influence on business behaviour.

3 Objectives of the call and suggested programme of work

EKLIPSE is looking to create an expert working group (EWG) to assess and synthesize relevant knowledge related to approaches environmental regulators can use to support businesses to improve their outcomes for biodiversity, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises in the food and beverage sector in Europe.

This request aims to review literature, collect case studies and lessons learned to capture the variety of approaches used (or potentially being used) to enhance biodiversity outcomes of businesses in general and SMEs in particular, with a view on the different hindering or fostering (context) conditions, factors to success or challenges. From a stakeholder perspective this means responding to two expectations: first, showing that these approaches worked, why and how, and second, to point out the added value compared to business as usual.

The EWG supported by the EKLIPSE Team will review, collect and communicate the best available knowledge applying a structured step-wise approach in comprehensive identification of the existing research evidence. This is based on the following tasks and the indicated potential methods:

Task 1: Define a rough framework of approaches and their effectiveness

- What approaches can improve biodiversity outcomes of businesses?
- How do we know these approaches work / are effective in improving biodiversity outcomes and over what timeframe, i.e. regarding accounting for biodiversity impacts, identifying the most relevant parts of the value chain, and keeping track of interactions across complex value chains?

Goal : providing a systematic overview of approaches that regulators could potentially use

***Suggested methods:** Task 1 is about setting the scene and framing the problem with respect to possible approaches, it concerns « agenda setting » within the policy cycle and should use exploratory methods, without going into too much detail on exact causal relationships, i.e. more stocktaking than understanding how and why approaches are selected. Therefore a **Non-systematic Literature Review** (or **Quick Scoping Review**) could be the very first step to do a **Solution Scanning** of approaches that environmental regulators can use to improve outcomes for businesses. To complement the list of solutions a **Delphi process** could be applied.*

Task 2: Identify the most promising approaches to be used by regulators

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of existing (and potential) approaches?
- Which of the approaches identified in task 1 are most promising to be used by regulators?



Goal : providing a comprehensible and expedient choice of approaches from task 1 for further in-depth analysis in task 3

Task 3: Analyse under which conditions the chosen approaches work well

- Which of these approaches work well under which conditions?
- This shall take into account different perspectives and can include for example the following conditions:
 - conditions related to the national policy and legal context (e.g. do integrated food policies as recently developed in some EU countries help to have a more holistic approach?),
 - conditions related to the specific scheme (different standards, governance schemes),
 - conditions related to corporate natural capital management practice, culture and mind-set,
 - conditions related to the socio-economic context, e.g. structure and interactions within the entire market chain, consumer awareness and choices, and
 - conditions related to the level of trust and partnership between the private and public sector.

***Suggested methods:** For tasks 2 & 3, a framework is required for assessing the « effectiveness » of the different approaches both with regard to different criteria (for the outcomes such as biodiversity, other sustainability indicators, feasibility, costs, etc. conditions such as planning environment, culture, ...).*

*Therefore, a **Multi-Criteria-Analysis** may be best suited to deal with this task. Furthermore, we suggest to build on existing frameworks and complement it again with **expert consultations** or **focus groups** as « intermediaries » what could also be a good source for seeking people's understanding.*

While all three tasks are consecutively building on the previous one, the major emphasis of this knowledge synthesis is on task 3 and the development of practical recommendations for environmental regulators.

Challenges to be taken into consideration

Improving biodiversity outcomes of businesses faces a number of challenges that the EWG may take into consideration:

- Government agencies and others need to **communicate** with businesses in their own language and with a good understanding of their business operations and supply chains.
- Temporal aspects need to be taken into consideration, both with regard to anticipating and piloting future regulation (what may be a standard today may become a regulation tomorrow) and the **longevity** of any biodiversity improvements (people want immediate results, but how effective are approaches in terms of long-term biodiversity outcomes?)
- To start to pull together a **database** and data collection method to evaluate the biodiversity impact of businesses (both large and SMEs) is vital. Most businesses face the problem that they don't know where their products/raw materials come from and which risks or threats may be associated with them, thus data on the provenance of raw materials would be needed to be aware of risks that arise along the supply chain.



- It would be interesting to reflect on the **level** at which a measure or approach would work best – sub-national, national or EU (e.g. where a level playing effect is important). This question of scale also refers to what is relevant on the market in the food and drink retail industry, e.g. mostly global standards that reach many businesses vs. regional initiatives and influences.
- Ultimately, with regard to the **target group** for biodiversity improvements of business operations two different strategies could be used: 1) Innovation leverage for businesses to go beyond regulation (i.e. pilots, first movers) or 2) mainstreaming the variety of existing approaches beyond the minority of already committed businesses.

4 Implementation steps and timeline

The work is expected to follow the EKLIPSE [knowledge synthesis process](#), i.e. it will include the following steps:

- **Kick-off dialogue meeting with EKLIPSE Knowledge Coordination Body (KCB)** to ensure common understanding of the request among experts (within 3 weeks of nomination of expert group).
- **Preparation of the work** (to be concluded within 12 weeks of nomination)
 - Develop a methodological protocol based on the above suggestions, (with support of the EKLIPSE expert group for knowledge synthesis methods)
 - Refining agenda and needs for support (e.g. librarian)
 - Agreement of protocol with KCB and requesters and publication
 - Review of protocol through open consultation (organized by EKLIPSE)
 - Respond to and integrate the results of extended peer review on the methodological protocol
- **Conducting the work**
 - Collating and assessing existing knowledge relevant for the request (possible help of librarians to be agreed)
 - Draft report including recommendations for measures potentially effective across Europe concerning policy, management and research (draft to be discussed with KCB and requesters)
 - Full draft completed for review
- **Finalisation**
 - Extended peer review of the draft report by scientists (selected by EKLIPSE) and involving also requester and stakeholders (via open consultation, organised by EKLIPSE)
 - Respond to and integrate the results of extended peer review on the final report
 - Disseminate final report and its results as required, by October 2018.

5 Support provided by EKLIPSE

EKLIPSE team: The expert working group will be supported in all steps by the EKLIPSE Secretariat in communication, documentation (via the EKLIPSE website), and dissemination of products as required for this request. The working group will be supported thematically and strategically by the KCB.



Financial support: EKLIPSE activities rely on in-kind contributions as in similar science-policy processes. The benefits for experts and institutions arise from the networking in the group and the visibility of expertise to policy and society via the products. EKLIPSE will actively support the expert working group with a maximum budget of €30.000 that can be granted for the following tasks:

- the kick-off meeting, and a second EWG group meeting if required, will be hosted by and travel costs covered via EKLIPSE funds.
- upon specific request, individual experts from low income European countries or experts not receiving financial support from their institution (e.g. NGOs, consultants) might be supported via honorary contracts by an EKLIPSE partner institution.
- literature review and management (for this if a separate contract is required see section 6).

Technical support: EKLIPSE will cover the layout, printing, and dissemination of interim and final products, i.e. using the OPPLA Platform.

6 Eligibility and applicant information

6.1 Selection criteria for the composition of the Expert Group

Selection of the expert working group will be done by the KCB according to selection process and criteria outlined below (6.2) and on the EKLIPSE website.

The expert working group should cover all relevant disciplines including natural, social, economic and planning sciences.

Gender balance and geographical diversity of EU countries will be considered in the selection. If teams are applying, this will also apply, and the KCB may decide to complement a team selected with additional individual experts.

The working group is expected to have up to 10 experts.

6.2 Selection criteria for individual experts

- Demonstrated expertise in relation to the call covering one or more of the following: business and biodiversity, analysis of biodiversity impacts and biodiversity valuation, market-based instruments, voluntary environmental approaches, environmental policy, natural capital accounting, environmental standards, supply chain management, corporate responsibility, sustainable food production systems, small and medium-sized enterprises, methods for knowledge synthesis, and any other relevant discipline.
- Experience with biodiversity and ecosystem services and/or sustainable development as well as with European policy processes is desirable.
- Experience in inter- and transdisciplinary work on similar topics and in science-policy interface processes is desirable.
- Experts will have to comply with the principles and rules of EKLIPSE (e.g. conflicts of interest policy (see http://www.eclipse-mechanism.eu/our_ethical_framework for more detail).
- Project partners of EKLIPSE, or members of their institutions and KCB members are excluded.



6.3 Process and eligibility criteria for supporting contracts

Based on the needs identified by the EWG in its kick-off meeting, EKLIPSE may support the work of the group by sub-contracting some tasks to individual experts or institutions, from and beyond the EWG via working contracts.

The aim of these would be, for instance, to allow the recruitment of at least one skilled person for the literature search and screening based on the details provided in the protocol written by the EWG. An EKLIPSE partner would prepare and issue a (restricted) call for tender for this purpose.

Moreover, honorary contracts will be given upon request to experts chosen for the expert groups on an individual basis, if they could not contribute otherwise. This may be applicable to experts from low income European countries or experts not having financial support from their institution (e.g. NGOs, consultants). In case you require such support please contact the EKLIPSE secretariat (secretariat@eklipse-mechanism.eu).

6.4 Data and information policy

All results will be made publicly available through the EKLIPSE website and transparent procedures will apply, following [Creative Commons Agreement 4.0⁹](#), which includes the reference of authorship and involvement⁹.

6.5 Information to provide

The EKLIPSE form should be completed, including a list of relevant publications and outlining relevant experience on the topic and details of experience in previous assessments or knowledge synthesis processes.

7 Application and notification of results

7.1 How to apply

The EKLIPSE expert form can be found on the EKLIPSE website under '[Open calls](#)'. The completed form should be submitted at latest **by midnight CET on 18th of October, 2017**.

Should you require any further information do not hesitate to contact us: secretariat@eklipsemechanism.eu.

7.2 Announcement of the results

Successful applicants will be notified directly by EKLIPSE by **6th of November, 2017**. As soon as they accept the nomination, names of selected experts will be made public on the EKLIPSE website.

EKLIPSE has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 program under grant agreement 690474

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