



Knowledge & Learning Mechanism
on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services

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

Writing the protocol and outputs for an EKLIPSE assessment of knowledge

1) Rationale and context

The EKLIPSE mechanism comprises a number of steps that aim to ensure credibility, legitimacy and efficiency of the science-policy-society knowledge exchange.

Following the arrival of a request to the Knowledge Coordinating Body, a dialogue with the requester leads to the development of a Document of Work. In the Document of Work, the requester expresses his/her request and needs as clearly and explicitly as possible. The KCB provides advice about the scope and breadth of the request, and possible methodologies to answer the request so that an appropriate methodology is chosen, based on resources and risk of the requester.

The basic components of this Document of Work are:

- Context
- The request
- Expected outcomes/ type of answer expected (variables...) and expected use of these outcomes
- Scope: limitations put to the request in terms of space (geographical), timeline, methods found in the literature, ecosystem or biodiversity components, etc.
- Links to existing projects, past relevant ones, existing networks and initiatives
- Expected impacts for policy and for society
- Expected starting time, milestones and delivery time
- Any other relevant matters
- Preliminary glossary (the Document of Work should also provide clear definitions of terms used in the request in order to prevent endless discussions about “what is meant by...”)
- Useful literature and sources of knowledge, including hubs, networks, etc.

2) Writing a request protocol

A first major step in the work of the Expert Working Group is to write the request protocol. The request protocol aims to explain how the EWG will tackle the request before the full work is implemented, in order to get agreement from the requester, KCB and peer-reviewers. This also allows EKLIPSE to anticipate possible criticisms or limitations to the work that will be conducted from a range of external people and allows the EWG to provide the best possible outputs.

The Protocol relies initially on the elements provided in the Document of Work and should add more scientific and knowledge-based elements. The following provides the basic contents of a protocol, but this content is susceptible to change depending on the methodological approach that the EWG will follow and the rationale and structure given to the final report. Yet all these elements should be presented one way or another in order to ensure optimal consistency across various EKLIPSE knowledge synthesis exercises.

The basic elements that should be provided in the Protocol are the following:

- Background (complementary information if needed compared to the Document of Work)
- Request: components, semantics, any complementary elements
- Scope of the request and answer, which may be different if there is a need to further restrict the scope due to the amount of work envisioned; including other elements that would not have been foreseen in the Document of Work
- Methodology: here the details of the methodology used by the EWG are given explicitly in order to maximize replicability, transparency, understanding, and minimize possible sources of biases. The EWG can here rely on inputs provided by the KCB for each available relevant method (e.g. expert consultation, gap maps, others...)
- Expected approach to organise knowledge and data (if needed) (e.g. database, map, other...)
- Proposed method for data extraction (if needed) and evidence/knowledge synthesis (narrative, quantitative, statistical tools...)
- Limitations of the expected conclusions (as envisioned at the protocol stage), if feasible.
- Expected recommendations (to requester, scientists, and practitioners, others...)
- Expanded glossary
- Separate document that will remain within the KCB will contain
- Expected expenses and financial challenges
- Provisional agenda

3) Producing the final output

The output should reflect what has been outlined in the protocol but focus on results and outcomes rather than detailed methodology, unless more details are provided to ensure replicability and report about subsequent adjustments or difficulties faced by the EWG (e.g. unexpected limited access to some knowledge, experts or problems encountered with tools, etc.)

A proposed structure of the final output could be the following:

- Cover page: Title, name and affiliation of co-authors, summary table (see below)
- Abstract
- Background (complementary information if needed compared to the Document of Work)
- Request: components, semantics, any complementary elements
- Material and Methods (referring to the Protocol if needed)
- Results (including analysis, as appropriate)
- Conclusions
- Limitations
- Recommendations
- Glossary
- Supplementary material, appendices, annexes...
- Reference list
- Links to Repository

Summary table

- Date of beginning and end of the project
- Keywords describing the request
- Keywords describing the methodological approach
- Keywords describing the outputs

Other communication materials may include:

- Executive summary
- Briefs
- Academic papers
- Webpages
- Social medias