Expert working groups

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1) What are the expert working groups (EWGs)?

The EWGs are groups of selected experts in charge of answering the requests received by EKLIPSE. They are individual experts who have nominated themselves following a call for experts. The final selection of the EWG is carried out by the Knowledge Coordination Body (see guidance note on the KCB). Those nominated experts who are not selected to be part of the EWG are invited to be experts in the peer review processes of the EWG, to support the EWG by suggesting sources of information the request, and gaps in current knowledge and to take part in online discussion on the KNOCK Forum. The selected EWGs consist of scientists and practitioners who are experts in the field covered by the request. In addition, the KCB ensures the best possible coverage in terms of disciplines, geographic and gender balance.

Participation in the EWG is voluntary (although travel and accommodation to take part in the face to face meeting is covered by EKLIPSE) and the experts are asked to be active only for the duration of a request. The members of the EWG are expected to devote some time to their work (~10%) over the duration of the request, including at least one face to face meeting and active contribution to the output of the request.

EWG members contribute directly to a policy or societal need, are all recognised as authors of the output, and have the potential to write an academic paper and/or other communication materials should they want to (EKLIPSE has however no allocated budget for this follow-up).

2) Answering requests from policy and other societal actors

The EWG is responsible for answering selected requests from policy and other societal actors within a specific time frame and an allocated budget. Elements of organisation and tasks include:

- There is one single EWG per request.
- A KCB request focal point, his/her deputy and a Secretariat request focal point are the only request-dedicated spokespersons each EWG will interact with from EKLIPSE (see KCB guidance note). The exceptions are when related to administrative matters, in which case the KCB request focal point communicates to the relevant person in the Secretariat (see Secretariat guidance note).
- Each member of the EWG will be asked to sign a Conflict of Interest Declaration before starting their work in the EWG.
- The EWGs are responsible for their internal organization including the nomination of chairs or co-chairs, the roles and task allocations within the EWG, when and where they want to

have their meetings (face to face and virtual), and use of their allocated budget – and inform their respective request-dedicated spokespersons as appropriate.

- Based on the Document of Work established by the requester and the KCB, the EWG write a request protocol (see Protocol template) that is to be sent to their KCB request focal point for the organization of the extended peer review (see Peer Review guidance note).

- Each EWG is responsible for answering the peer review comments on the protocol, collated and compiled by the Secretariat, in a transparent, timely and comprehensive manner, and amending the protocol accordingly. This amended protocol should be sent to the KCB request focal point for sign off by the KCB. The finalized protocol together with the responses to the comments will be posted on the EKLIPSE website by the Secretariat.

- Once the protocol has reached an agreement, the EWGs start the core of their work, i.e. carrying out the knowledge synthesis work following the protocol and producing a draft output[1]. This draft will be sent to the KCB request focal point, for a new round of extended peer review and public consultation. The report includes all necessary analysis and results as well as recommendations and limitations (see Request Output guidance note).

- The EWG is responsible for answering the peer review comments on the request report, collated and compiled by the Secretariat, in a transparent, timely and comprehensive manner, and amending the draft output accordingly. This final output is sent from the EWG to the KCB request focal point for further dissemination by EKLIPSE (see section 3 below).

- The EWG is responsible for writing an executive summary (maximum 500 words) of their output for dissemination on the EKLIPSE website and targeting a broad audience.

- The EWG members must agree to the confidentiality clause as set out in the Conflict of Interest form.

- The EWG members can only engage in dissemination activities following the approval of the KCB request focal point, and must acknowledge EKLIPSE in all dissemination activities.

3) Support from EKLIPSE

Financial support

Each EWG receives an allocated budget, managed by UFZ or FRB, depending on the request. This budget can be used for:
- Travel and accommodation to attend the face to face EWG meeting.
- Honorary contracts for external assistance in specific tasks related to knowledge synthesis (e.g. information management, statistical analysis, survey design etc)

Methodological support

- Support from the Methods Expert Group and/or KCB request focal point on best practice related to the methodologies presented in the Document of Work and how to report them (see guidance note on Request Outputs).
- Mentoring from the Methods Expert Group and/or KCB request focal point related to understanding and implementing best practice and EKLIPSE procedures and ethics.

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[1] The output will be decided by the requester and could include a report, factsheet, policy brief, video, database, map etc. This will be have been clarified in the Document of Work.

Peer review support

- The Secretariat disseminates draft protocols and outputs to relevant peer reviewers.
- The Secretariat responds to all reviewers, acknowledging their input.
- The Secretariat collates and compiles all extended peer review comments in order to provide the EWG and KCB request focal point with one single document that the EWG can consult and answer peer review comments received.
- The Secretariat is responsible for archiving all peer review processes and making this archive available on the EKLIPSE website.
- In cases of disagreement or conflict within the EWG or with external peer reviewers, the KCB request focal point may decide to refer the issue to the KCB.

Internal and external communication, and dissemination support

- The Secretariat covers the final design and the dissemination of the output produced by the EWG through the EKLIPSE website. This dissemination process, led by EKLIPSE, involves creating a page on the EKLIPSE website with relevant links to the EWG outputs, sending the EWG output to the requester, publicizing the output on the EKLIPSE Twitter feed/Facebook/LinkedIn/ResearchGate, disseminating the output in the EKLIPSE network, potentially printing copies of the output if relevant and agreed by the KCB. Any further dissemination is the responsibility of the EWG but must only be carried out once given the go-ahead by the EKLIPSE KCB focal point and always acknowledging the outputs as an EKLIPSE output.
- EWGs will have access to the EKLIPSE KNOCK Forum for them to use for example to start discussions on the requests, hold online science cafes etc.
- Each EWG will have access to an OwnCloud account to share documents and conduct their work
- Each EWG will have access to internal communication software (Visimeet) to arrange internal meetings.

Communication with the requester

- The KCB request focal point ensures communication between the EWG and the requester.

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