**Bridging the gap between policy and knowledge
on biodiversity in Europe**

CALL FOR REQUESTS
CfR.6/2021, Eklipse – February 2021

Extended deadline to answer the Call: **April 19th 2021, 6 pm CET**
Announcement of the selected request: Week starting May 3rd 2021

Eklipse was created in 2016 to help make better-informed decisions when it comes to biodiversity in Europe. Eklipse invites proposals for requests from consortia representing policy, research, NGOs or individual applications from policy or other societal actors.

More information on the processes and Eklipse at:
www.eklipse.eu

1) Context

Eklipse is a European mechanism able to answer policy relevant questions at the European scale and thereby support evidence-informed policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services related issues. Since its inception in 2016, Eklipse has processed 13 requests on a range of topics linked to biodiversity and ecosystem services, from policy and societal actors such as the European Commission, IUCN, the French Ministry for the Ecological Transition, Buglife and many more. Eklipse uses a proven and robust process that responds to the evidence needs of requesters by producing a range of outputs synthesising the best available knowledge to facilitate actionable policy recommendations. A European Union funded project until November 2020, it is now managed by Alternet (www.alterneteurope.eu).

2) Invitation to request knowledge for informed decision-making

Policy and other societal actors are invited to **identify topics or evidence needs relating to biodiversity and ecosystem services of EU policy relevance, requiring an in-depth analysis and a consolidated view from science and other knowledge holders**. We particularly encourage requests from consortia representing policy, research, and NGOs, but also welcome individual requests from societal actors.

Interested parties – including consortia – should apply by **April 19th 2021** by following the rules and procedures detailed below. The selected requests will be announced the week starting May 3rd **2021** and will be publicised on the Eklipse website. The process of answering these requests will start thereafter.

Please put forward your request by accessing the open calls on https://eklipse.eu/calls/

3) Objective of the call

Eklipse coordinates innovative and transparent approaches for science, policy and societal actors to jointly provide the best available evidence leading to better informed decision-making. The topic and/or evidence needs are identified by policy and other societal actors. All Eklipse's past and current requests and their outputs can be found on the Eklipse website.

The process of knowledge synthesis is a crucial element of any science policy interface. Knowledge synthesis refers to a set of methods used to review, collate and communicate the best available knowledge on a specific topic or question, including explicit scientific knowledge, but also indigenous and local knowledge, or tacit technical or opinion based knowledge held by stakeholders (Dick et al., 2017). Eklipse's Method Expert Group (MEG) has identified and described 21 different methods to synthesise the different types of knowledge needs requested (see Eklipse's MEG report for further information). On this basis, Eklipse identifies and tailors a set of methods for each specific request.

The objective of this call is to encourage policy and other societal actors to suggest topics and/or evidence needs to be addressed by Eklipse, within the scope of its functions (see Figure 1 below).

Past requests include a broad range of questions, e.g. (see full list and explanation of categories of requests on our website):

- **Horizon Scanning requests:** e.g.
  - What are the impacts of artificial electromagnetic radiation on wildlife (invertebrates, vertebrates and plants)? – *from Buglife*

- **Knowledge Synthesis requests;** e.g.
  - What are the impacts of pesticide and fertiliser use in farmland on the effectiveness of adjacent pollinator conservation measures such as flower strips and hedgerows, and what additional research is needed? – *from Pollinis*
  - Understanding Farmer Uptake: What measures are most promising to deliver on supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services in the next round of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)? – *from IUCN and the Swedish Board of Agriculture*
  - Nature-based Solutions to Promote Climate Change Resilience in Urban Areas – developing an impact evaluation framework. – *from EC DG Research & Innovation*

- **Societal Engagement request;** e.g.
  - How can nature's diverse values be incorporated into and reflected by public policy? – *from ClientEarth*

- **Support Initiatives requests;** e.g.
  - How could the comments from the scientific community support the comments/questions of the EU negotiators of the IPBES SPM on Global assessment? – *from EC DG Environment*
  - What can researchers offer to understand Transformative Change and translate it into actions, goals, targets and pathways for the Global Biodiversity Strategy to 2030? – *from EC DG Research & Innovation*

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4) Added values of Eklipse

The added values of the Eklipse approach are multifold (See Figure 1 and 2, check also the video on added values and podcast on "How Eklipse makes a difference" on the Eklipse website):

1. The Eklipse approach **responds directly** to policy and other societal actors' knowledge needs through regular Calls for Requests
2. The Eklipse approach **frames questions** directly with requesters to better understand what knowledge they need, for what purposes, in what timescale and with which resources
3. The Eklipse approach **builds on existing knowledge** and links requests for knowledge to the most relevant knowledge holders
4. Eklipse includes a Methods Expert Group, who have identified 21 knowledge synthesis methods, and suggest the **most relevant methods to match requesters' needs**
5. Eklipse approach is building its activities on a **strong Ethical Infrastructure** and a **strong focus on networking** and institutional support

5 functions

Answer key questions from policy and/or society by mobilising and synthesising the best available knowledge and experts

Create a responsive and active network of experts and knowledge holders across Europe that get acknowledged for providing their knowledge

Identify current and future emerging issues of policy makers and citizens related to biodiversity and ecosystem services

Improve citizens engagement in SPI activities

Link up with international SPIs such as IPBES, SBBSTTA-CBD

Ethical Infrastructure

12 measures:
- Guiding values
- Code of ethics
- Training programmes
- Declaration of conflict of interest
- Management body
- Complaint mechanism
- Transparent selection procedure
- Reinforced measures
- Legal framework
- Crisis management group
- Feedback processes
- Public consultation of all our outputs

A proven and robust process to answer policy relevant requests

Advanced Governance structure

Method Experts

Strong focus on networking

Figure 1: The combination of components making Eklipse unique

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5) *Process for the call for requests*

Interested parties or consortia (referred to as the requester) need to fill in a request form outlining major elements of the request by 6pm (CET) on **April 19th 2021.** In this form, the requester is expected to provide some background on why the topic/evidence need is of interest, its policy relevance at the European scale, an indication of required outputs, indicative timing for final outputs, budget available, how the requester plans to use this information, etc. To facilitate the selection process and to ensure eligibility, the request form will be screened by the Eklipse Management Body (EMB) who might engage in an initial exchange with the requester for clarification. We encourage requesters to submit early and agree in sharing publicly their request via Eklipse's website to allow other interested parties to discuss and find common ground and potentially create consortia, thereby increasing the relevance as well as the potential budget and impact of a request.

The submitted requests will then be discussed with the Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) and selected by the Knowledge Coordination Body of Eklipse (KCB). The outcome of the selection process will be announced in the week of May3rd. This stepwise selection ensures the quality, relevance of the request as well as the suitability for Eklipse to answer them. It is in the interest of the requester to prepare their request as thoroughly and precisely as possible in order to facilitate the selection process.

All selected requests will go through an initial scoping phase and, potentially, a call for knowledge and stakeholder consultation to support the framing of the request. Once precise questions, scope, approach and suitable methods as well as a budget have been agreed, a dedicated expert working group[1] will be set up to specify the methodological protocol in agreement with the requester and supported by a member of the Methods Expert Group (MEG). Both method protocol and final results will be reviewed. Finally, the results of the co-generated process will be communicated in targeted ways to the requester

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[1] Some methods do not require setting up an expert group, but all methods involve a range of different experts from different disciplines and backgrounds contributing their knowledge in a structured way.

(e.g. as a report or brief or other output to be discussed with the requester), as well as relevant decision-makers, the knowledge community and the general public. See Figure 2 for the process of answering a request below and watch our [video](#)
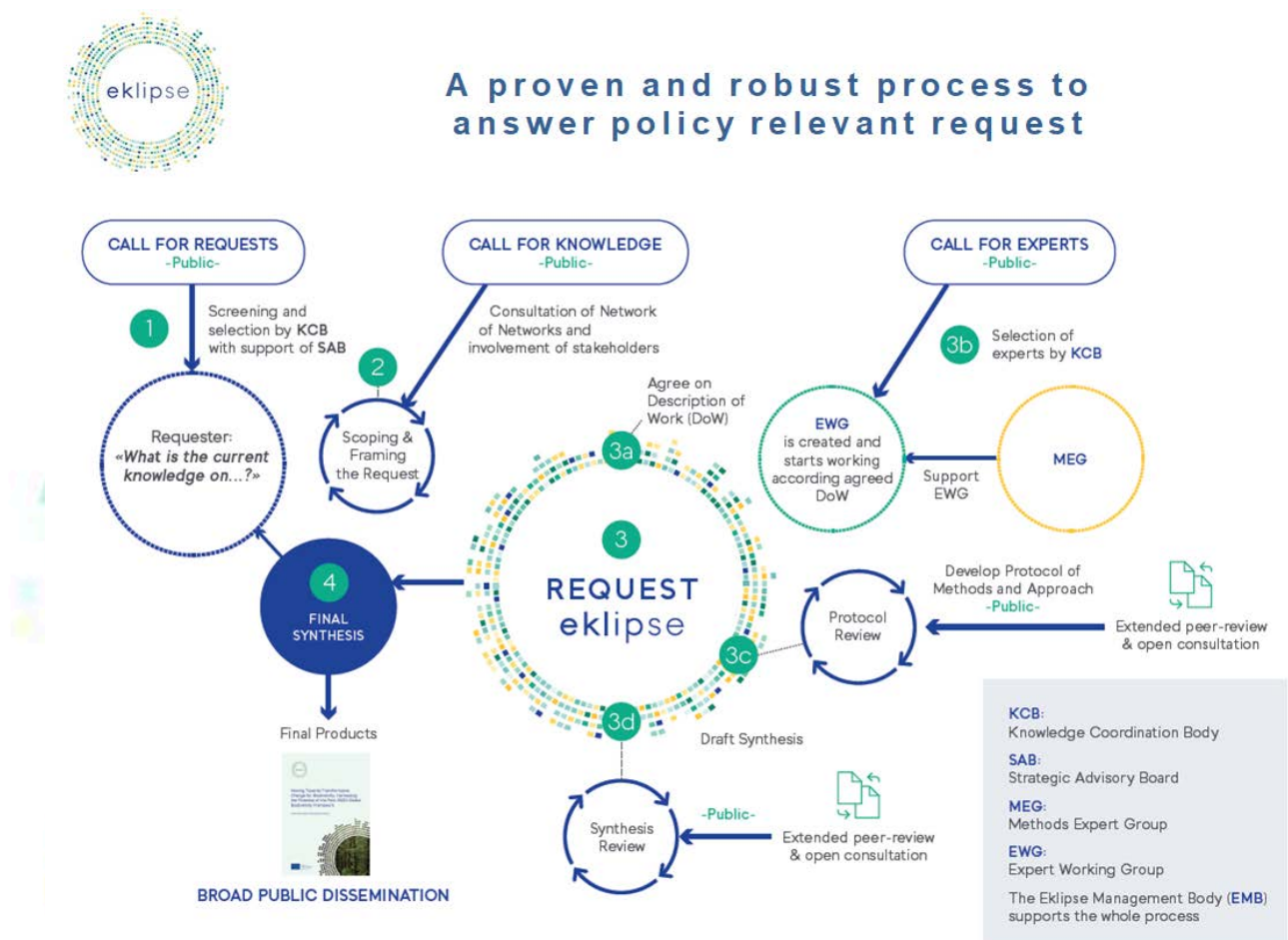

Figure 2: The Eklipse process of answering a request

6) Anticipated budget to process requests

Before applying to the call, we suggest that interested parties evaluate the budget they are planning on allocating for their request to be processed. Upon selection of a request a scoping phase follows to discuss and specify scope, specific questions and suitable methods and based on this to agree on a budget.

We encourage interested parties to use the [online tool](#) Eklipse has developed called MAGICKS (Method Application and Guidance In Conducting Knowledge Syntheses). MAGICKS is an open-source, interactive decision support tool developed with our MEG to inform the process of identifying which methods meet your synthesis needs, as well as clarifying your synthesis parameters. It includes a subset of 18 methods suitable for a wide range of different contexts, purposes and desired types of outputs. MAGICKS is applicable to a variety of policy and management queries, and currently used in the Eklipse request process under the guidance of the MEG.

The time and budget needed is significantly influenced by the methods selected and the scope of the question. Our costs in the past ranged from ca. 20.000€ for a rapid evidence assessment to ca 75.000€ for a systematic review, the time required after scoping from 5 to 15 months. The cost of the scoping phase is fixed at 2.000 €.

If budget constraints are problematic, please provide information on the budget you could allocate to answering the request and the expected shortfall for the type of request you would like to put forward. Eklipse's vision is to improve decision making on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe and in line with our vision, we will aim to find solutions in order to answer topical and policy relevant knowledge needs.

7) Eligibility criteria

7.1. Eligibility criteria for requesters

- Requesters cannot be individual members of the Knowledge Coordination Body, or Strategic Advisory Board
- Requesters should represent the 'community's view of their policy or societal group e.g. policy makers, an NGO, international business group, local community group etc.
- Individual requesters should have a professional or community affiliation to the topic of the request

7.2. Eligibility criteria for requests

- Relevant to the European scale.
- Issues of policy relevance
- Relevant to biodiversity and/or ecosystem services.
- Not requiring new knowledge, but based on the synthesis of existing knowledge.
- Consortia of requesters (representing different countries and/or different sectors (policy, NGOs/society, research) are encouraged.
- Eklipse encourages requester(s) to refine their question with the help of their organisation or colleagues, to ensure the policy relevance of the question.