Bridging the gap between policy and knowledge
on biodiversity in Europe

Fourth Call for Nominations for members of the Methods Expert Group (MEG) (CfMEG. 04/2023)

Eklipse – July 2023

Deadline for Call: August, 25th 2023
Period in office: September 2023 – August 2026

1. Invitation to become a member of the Methods Expert Group

Eklipse *aims to support evidence-based decision making in environmental policy by bridging the gap and promoting the integration of science and policy in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Eklipse facilitates the synthesis of scientific evidence, supports the co-creation of knowledge, and fosters the uptake of research findings into policy and practice*.

Currently, **Eklipse is inviting applications from experts to join the Eklipse Methods Expert Group (MEG).** The MEG plays a fundamental role in advising the Eklipse Expert Working Groups (EWGs) on the strengths and weaknesses of available methods of knowledge synthesis. The MEG will cover diverse and complementary methodological skills (including multi- and trans-disciplinary skills and broad geographical coverage). This important Eklipse governance body interacts closely with relevant members of the Eklipse governance bodies to ensure appropriate methodological choices, following the ethical and robust Eklipse process.

This new call for nomination corresponds to the end of the mandate of the second MEG (period in office: June 2020 to June 2023). All current members are allowed to re-apply to this call. Due to an increased

number of Eklipse activities and a growing number of knowledge synthesis processes that the KCB will have to oversee in the coming years, Eklipse is aiming at selecting a minimum of ten new members to complement the current MEG (period in office: 2022 to 2025).

- Are you an expert on knowledge synthesis methods?
- 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?
- Are you interested in collaborating in a trans-disciplinary and multi-cultural setting?

Please express your interest in participating as a MEG member by visiting the Open call webpage, or directly filling out the Eklipse application form.

Important dates and information:

How to apply: http://eklipse.eu/calls/#open-call-for-meg

Deadline to apply: August, 25th 2023 at midnight (CEST).

Announcement of Methods Expert Group (MEG) selection: First two weeks of September 2023.

Online kick-off meeting and training of the MEG: 1 session of 3 hours (to be agreed upon by the selected MEG members)

Participation in the MEG will require **approximately 10% of your time** (see Eklipse Guidance note n°5). As in similar science-policy processes, Eklipse activities rely on in-kind contributions.

For further information on the current members of the MEG, please visit our webpage:
http://eklipse.eu/team/#methods-expert-group.

For further information on the broad range of methods developed by past and current MEG members, please visit our webpage:
http://eklipse.eu/methods/

Should you require any further information or support, please contact the **Eklipse Management Body (EMB) at** emb@eklipse.eu

2. Methods Expert Group role and expected contributions

The task of the Methods Expert Group (MEG) is to provide and share knowledge about different forms, methods and limitations of knowledge collation, appraisal and synthesis to Eklipse Expert Working Groups

(EWGs) in the process of answering a request. Such methods enable robust identification of evidence and knowledge gaps. The MEG plays a fundamental role in advising the EWGs on the strengths and weaknesses of available methods of knowledge synthesis, including their costs and requirements in terms of human capital and technical tools. The MEG also provides support to the EWG throughout the knowledge synthesis process. MEG experts are expected to communicate the range of methods available for a request rather than promoting one over the others, thus drawing on a landscape of methodological opportunities for requesters. The MEG Membership is an exciting opportunity to contribute to diverse knowledge syntheses of high EU-level policy relevance in collaboration with international researchers. Appointed MEG expert(s) are an integral part of a request, and their contributions are accredited in any EWG output(s), such as reports or scientific publications. The mandate of the MEG lasts for a term of 3 years.

Members of the MEG are expected to contribute to the following tasks:

- For each request accepted by Eklipse, interact with the Knowledge Coordination Body (KCB) and possibly the requester to advise on appropriate methods to draw on diverse types of knowledge, including non-scientific knowledge. It is anticipated that one or two members will advise on each request and become an integral part of the request's EWG.
- If assigned to a request, support the EWGs over the course of the request with methodological guidance as and when needed and co-author the final product of request process.
- Ensuring peer-review includes methodological review by appropriate experts. Members may peer-review synthesis processes but will need to sign a declaration of conflict of interest.
- Co-authoring one or several 'critical evaluations' of existing approaches and methodologies, following the work initiated in Biodiversity Knowledge (see Pullin et al. 2016) and continued in the MEG Eklipse Report (Dicks et al. 2018).
- Co-authoring scientific articles and/or books on methods for knowledge synthesis for (European) policy processes.

In addition, members are expected to:

- Dedicate 10% of their time to Eklipse requests when engaged with a request.
- Each MEG member is expected to support no more than one Eklipse request per year or two if acting as a secondary advisor for one of these requests.
- Comply with the ethical principles of the Eklipse process (read the Ethical Framework webpage for more information). All Eklipse request results will be made publicly available through the Eklipse website, and transparent procedures will apply, including authorship and involvement.

3. Support provided by Eklipse

- **Eklipse team:** The expert group will be supported by the Eklipse Management Body (EMB) for communication, documentation (via the Eklipse website), and dissemination of products as required.

- **Financial support:** Eklipse activities rely on in-kind contributions as in similar science-policy processes. The benefits for experts and institutions arise from networking in the group and the visibility of expertise to policy and society. Eklipse will actively support the visibility of experts and their institution's contributions. In addition:
  - ✓ Eklipse will host all meetings and fund travel costs
  - ✓ Upon specific request, individual experts from Eastern and Southern European countries may be supported via an honorary contract provided by an Eklipse.

- **Technical support:** Eklipse will cover the layout, printing, and dissemination of interim and final products.

4. Eligibility and applicant information

4.1 Application and selection process

Please apply by reading the open calls webpage and completing the online form on the Eklipse website, including a list of relevant publications and outlining relevant experience on the topic and details of experience in previous knowledge assessments or syntheses, according to the selection criteria below. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at emb@eklipse.eu. Successful applicants will be notified directly by the Eklipse Management Body (EMB) in the first two weeks of September 2023. When they accept the nomination, their names and affiliation will be listed on the Eklipse website.

Interested parties are strongly encouraged to ask their organisation/network/community to provide them with a **letter of support**, which they will be able to upload directly in the application form or send to Eklipse Management Body (EMB) at emb@eklipse.eu.

Eklipse recognises numerous benefits in requesting this letter of support, i.e. for the selection process, but mainly to start a dialogue between the interested parties and their organisation/community (and eventually Eklipse) on the implications of joining the MEG and may help the interested party to get recognition within their organisation/community for their work for Eklipse.

Should you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact us at emb@eklipse.eu.

4.2 Selection process and criteria

Eklipse expects to integrate a minimum of 10 new experts into the current MEG, covering all relevant disciplines, including natural, social and planning sciences as well as humanities. The selection of members will be performed by a selection committee constituted by members of the Eklipse Knowledge Coordination Body (KCB) according to the criteria:

A) Demonstrated expertise in knowledge synthesis approaches or methodologies (must be more than one):

a. Experience of knowledge synthesis for non-academic settings (e.g. policy, business) should be demonstrated, e.g. for project participation, work package or project coordination, business engagement, membership of an expert group, or similar activities.
b. Scientific experience: at least two papers published in the last five years, in more than one knowledge synthesis approach or methodology
c. Or technical/practical expertise: clear evidence of having worked directly in more than one knowledge synthesis approach or methodology.
d. Expertise should cover one or more of the following topic areas:
    - ✓ Demonstrated expertise in methodologies related to quantitative and/or qualitative synthesis of scientific, technical or Indigenous and local knowledge
    - ✓ Demonstrated skills in knowledge search, collection and management (librarians, information managers), including grey literature
    - ✓ Demonstrated skills in knowledge assessment, and evidence-based approaches, including social sciences such as justice and ethics
    - ✓ Skills in epistemology, philosophy, and any social sciences related to knowledge, beliefs and justification, risk management and decision-making processes.
    - ✓ Demonstrated experience with impact assessment processes at the EU level and a good understanding of policy-making processes, particularly but not limited to the EU.

B) Other important criteria (to ensure the good working ability of the expert group, all selected individuals should have most of these characteristics):

a. Proven ability to work in international scientific and policy processes (e.g. fluency in English, language skills)
b. Experiences in inter- and transdisciplinary work on topics related to knowledge synthesis and/or in science-policy interface processes
c. Time that they can dedicate to the process (10%)
d. Support from their respective team/company, students etc.

In addition, the selection committee will aim to ensure that the MEG expert group as a whole represents:

- ✓ Breadth of experience and expertise across all 20 endorsed knowledge synthesis methods (see Dicks et al. 2018)
- ✓ Geographical and gender balance
- ✓ Breadth of disciplinary backgrounds
- ✓ Policy experience/expertise: experience in knowledge synthesis processes with policy at the EU level
- ✓ Expertise in impact evaluation and/or conceptual frameworks and/or decision-making tools to guide research processes
- ✓ Experience in visualisation or infographics to support decision-making (bonus rather than a must)
- ✓ Experience in leadership of knowledge assessment processes.
- ✓ Representation of evidence synthesis collaborations or partnerships (e.g. Collaboration for Environmental Evidence, Conservation Evidence, etc.) collaborations working on criteria to develop standards in evidence synthesis.

5. Further information

MAGICKS tool, https://ksm-eklipse.shinyapps.io/MAGICKS/

Watt, A.D., Ainsworth, G., Balian, E., Cojocaru, G., Darbi, M., Dicks, L., Eggermont, H., Furman, F., Goudeseune, L., Huybrecht, P., Kelemen, E., Koch, F., Konstantinou, Z., Livoreil, B., Locher-Krause, K., Lux, A., Lyytimäki, J., Mehring, M., Neßhöver, C., Paloniemi, R., Saarela, S-R., Saarikoski, H., Sousa Pinto, I., Vandewalle, M., Varjopuro, R., Varumo, L., Wittmer, H., Young, J.C. 2019. EKLIPSE: engaging knowledge holders and networks for evidence-informed European policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Evidence and Policy 15(2): 253-264.

Pullin, A., Frampton, G., Jongman, R., Kohl, C., Livoreil, B., Lux, A., Pataki, G., Petrokofsky, G., Podhora, A., Saarikoski, H. and Santamaria, L., 2016. Selecting appropriate methods of knowledge synthesis to inform biodiversity policy. Biodiversity and Conservation, 25(7), pp.1285-1300.

Dicks LV, Haddaway N, Hernández-Morcillo M, Mattsson B, Randall N, Failler P, Ferretti J, Livoreil B, Saarikoski H, Santamaria L, Rodela R, Velizarova E, and Wittmer H. (2018). Knowledge synthesis for environmental decisions: an evaluation of existing methods, and guidance for their selection, use and development – a report from the EKLIPSE project