



Bridging the gap between policy and knowledge  
on biodiversity in Europe

CALL FOR EXPERTS (CfE 1/2024)  
Eclipse – May 2024

Deadline for Call: **June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024** before midnight (CEST)

*Cumulative impacts of offshore wind farm  
expansions: consequences & solutions for  
achieving GES across European marine waters*

**Eclipse is inviting experts to join an Expert Working Group (EWG)** to contribute to answering an identified policy-relevant knowledge need that requires an in-depth analysis and assessment at the science-policy interface on a “Request on cumulative impacts of offshore wind farms on marine ecosystems”. This request was initially put forward by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Environment (EC-DG ENV), and it is funded by the EU Horizon Europe project “Connecting biodiversity knowledge and decision-making” – BioAgora. For further information about the request, see the Eclipse website under Request > [Offshore wind farms](#).

The EWG will comprise a broad group of about 8-10 people across the EU and elsewhere with diverse and complementary knowledge synthesis and/or participatory skills rooted in biodiversity and marine spatial planning areas but with multi- and trans-disciplinary skills and broad geographical coverage – see section 5). The EWG will closely interact with relevant members of the [Eclipse governance bodies](#) to ensure appropriate methodological choices and uptake of outputs, as well as to guide them through the ethical and robust [Eclipse process](#). Selected experts will have to comply with the [Eclipse Code of Ethics](#) to integrate the EWG.





In order to create this EWG, we are seeking expressions of interest from experts who have experience in knowledge synthesis techniques (e.g., rapid evidence reviews, scoping reviews and systematic reviews and/or participatory methods). Ideally, experts should be working in the biodiversity or marine spatial planning area. Both academic and practice experts are welcome to apply. Before applying, please consider the following questions below. Please consider the list of disciplines/expertise as non-exhaustive, as we are happy to consider others that you may think are relevant to answer the request.

- **Are you an expert on one or several of the following disciplines?**
  - Marine spatial planning
  - Ecology
  - Cumulative impact assessments
  - Marine biodiversity and ecology
  - Offshore wind energy development
  - European marine policy, and in particular, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive
  - Marine conservation and policy practitioners
  - Participatory methods.
  - Knowledge synthesis methods
- **Do you have direct experience in either knowledge synthesis and/or participatory research?**
- **Can you and your employer allow you to devote at least 10% of your time to helping support this project in a voluntary capacity? Would you like to contribute directly to a policy-relevant process in your field of expertise?**
- **Would you like to expand your network?**
- **Are you interested in collaborating in a transdisciplinary and multi-cultural setting?**
- **Are you able to work on this project over the summer period considering the time frame described in Table 2?**

Further information on the criteria can be found in section 5.

**Please read the information below to apply to the call.**

## Important dates and information:

How to apply: <http://eklipse.eu/calls/>

Deadline to apply: June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, before midnight (CEST).

Expert Working Group (EWG) selection: week of June 10<sup>th</sup> 2024.

Online kick-off meeting and training of the EWG: 2 sessions of 2 hours each between June 17<sup>th</sup> 2024

**Expected duration of the process**: 4 to 5 months, depending on the selected method(s) (see section 3).

The participation in this EWG will require **approximately 10% of your time** (see Eklipse [Guidance note n°6](#)). As in similar science-policy processes, Eklipse activities rely on in-kind contributions. Please make sure you can commit this amount of time over the period of June and December before applying

For further information on the request, please read the Document of Work (DoW) on the Eklipse website under Request > [“Offshore wind farms”](#).

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





## *1. Request to be addressed by this call*

### 1.1 Background to the request

The aim of the request is to examine the multi-level impacts of the planned expansion of wind energy production at sea, including cumulative impacts on marine ecosystems and on the achievement of good environmental status (GES). Such analysis is critically needed considering the increase in challenging targets for renewable energy sources that need to be achieved by Member States in the coming years, a large percentage of which are likely to be offshore. Existing studies on cohabitation between offshore wind energy production and nature tend to focus, in particular, on marine protected areas (MPAs) or the protection of species (e.g. birds). Existing knowledge misses an analysis relevant to all the dimensions (descriptors) of good environmental status as per the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Such analysis, which includes literature reviews and scenarios modeling, should look at how offshore wind energy expansion might affect the achievement of GES, considering the GES threshold values set by Member States for a number of GES criteria (such as seabed loss, impulsive noise, contaminant levels, species abundance, etc.) and the subsequent cumulative impacts. The study should empower the Commission to propose solutions, including in the context of the Member States' MSFD Programmes of Measures and the MSFD review, to make sure that offshore wind energy expansion does not impede the achievement of GES under the MSFD, considering the entire lifecycle of offshore wind power plants (including their decommissioning), whatever the type of turbine (monopiles, floating, tripods, etc.). These solutions could, for example, relate to marine spatial planning (e.g. current developments in the context of the Greater North Sea Initiative), in particular considering the cumulative impacts of other human activities on the marine environment. Identification of other solutions (for instance, technological) would also be welcome.

The planned developments of offshore wind production in order to achieve the targets set in EU and national legislation and policies are likely to be at such a large scale that they will have impacts on marine ecosystems and marine ecosystem functioning, including seabed habitat loss, disruption of migratory routes of mobile species, including birds and cetaceans, deadly collisions with birds, disruption of feeding and breeding grounds of a number of species, underwater noise during development and maintenance, input of contaminants and litter and changes to hydrographic conditions. Almost all descriptors of good environmental status are likely to be impacted by these developments.

The main goal of the request, put forward by the DG ENV, is to identify and explore:

- Knowledge (incl. needs & synthesis, mapping & assessment, methodological guidance, facts & figures, policy briefs)
- (Web) Tools (e.g. dashboard, maps)
- Future outlook (e.g. scenarios, forecasts)
- Existing measures and monitoring schemes (e.g. models, indicators)



Specifically regarding:

- a) On-the-ground actions to gain an understanding of monitoring and mitigation of short- and long-term impacts of offshore wind energy developments.
- b) Knowledge (from science, policy, or societal experience) needed to better understand the cumulative impacts of offshore wind development on marine ecosystems.
- c) Knowledge gap analysis concerning the following items:
  - i. (cumulative) impacts of offshore wind farms, strategies to mitigate impacts of offshore wind farm expansions.
  - ii. transformative strategies of offshore wind farm expansions (e.g. benefits for biodiversity in no-take zones around the wind farms)
  - iii. effectiveness of environmental impact assessments of offshore wind farm expansions.

## 1.2 First screening of literature/initiatives and Open Call for Knowledge

A literature screening during the Scoping Phase resulted in a compilation of existing relevant literature, projects and initiatives:

- **(Non-exhaustive) Literature review collected by the Eklipse Management Body (EMB) and (non-exhaustive) list of initiatives/projects/networks collected by the EMB:** [Link](#)

Following this first screening exercise, a Call for Knowledge related to this request was launched in March 2024 and was open until April 2024 (for more information, please refer to the Eklipse website under "[Calls](#)" on our website). The CfK 1/2021 was broadly disseminated through the different Eklipse social media platforms, i.e. LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, as well as via different mailing lists and networks. The screening and the call for knowledge aim to gather relevant knowledge to be considered during the selection process and to search for existing or planned initiatives that may (partly) answer the requests. Both activities were essential during the Scoping Phase to avoid duplication of ongoing efforts and ensure the outputs will be timely developed. For more details on the literature collected in the Call for Knowledge, see Annex 4 in the Document of Work (DoW) published on the Eklipse website under **Request** > [link to the document](#)





## 2. Suggested methods

Subject to discussion with the EWG, the request process was suggested to include the following elements:

- An analysis, based on literature review, of the impacts, including cumulative impacts
- A quantitative analysis of the scale of [...] impacts

During the scoping phase, the members of the [Eclipse Methods Expert Group \(MEG\)](#) discussed potential knowledge synthesis methods suitable for this request (more information on knowledge synthesis methods in [Dicks et al. 2018](#) and on the Eclipse website under the "[Methods](#)" webpage).

### 2.1 Methods suggested by the Methods Expert Group.

These methods are to be agreed upon by the Expert Working Group but are bounded by the short time period for the work.

- **Option 1 Rapid Evidence Assessment and Expert Consultation:** this preferred option requires a two-staged methods process, with a REA undertaken in the first 4-6 months. The results of this are then used to inform an online participatory workshop.

#### Risks:

1. The two-stage approach may require deadline extensions, especially as we move into a summer vacation period.
2. The summer vacation period may result in a period of up to 2 months where productivity is slow due to participants' and expert working groups' annual leave requirements, which likely all differ. Equally, this could have an impact on the time required to form the Expert Working Group.
3. The REA would risk covering existing work that is underway, as revealed by the call for knowledge.

#### Opportunities (way to manage the risks):

1. June-August, in order to maximize the time and expertise on the two stages, we recruit two expert working groups. First, one small group of 3 people to work on the REA with Eclipse support (MEG/KCB). Given the voluntary nature of their contributions (they are not paid as expert working group members), they can just focus their time on the REA element. Recruitment can also take on board leave times.
2. From July-September, we then recruit a second expert working group that designs, plans and facilitates the online participatory workshop. Here,

there would be a briefing paper that summarises the results from the REA to inform discussions, scenarios and co-designed policy solutions.

3. In order to minimize the risk of duplication and to capture emerging research work in this area, which has been exposed in the call for knowledge, we recruit members of such research teams to be actively involved in the workshop event.

- **Option 2 Deliberative workshops using experts:** This option emerged as the top-scoring single-method approach from Eclipse's MAGICKS tool. This can be planned as a series of iterative workshops 3x3 hours over the answering request period. Alternatively, an applied policy Delphi can be used, which has the advantage of not requiring everyone to be in the same place at the same time. Here, the experts working on cumulative impacts can share their knowledge, science and practice (suggest a mixed academic/policy audience) to arrive at a series of conclusions as to how best to design, plan, assess and monitor cumulative impacts of wind farms.

#### **Risks:**

1. The lack of objective, robust knowledge synthesis in this option may increase the risk of bias into the results of the panel, as not everyone is necessarily aware of the work that has been done. i.e. bias is introduced due to the arbitrary selection of results. Results from published studies may be subconsciously prioritized, which can differ systematically from the results of unpublished studies.
2. Online workshops could result in the domination of key players, thus suppressing minority voices
3. The Delphi approach requires considerably more time in reading and responding and could result in panel drop-out over successive rounds.
4. Summer vacation may mean slower productivity for a duration of 2 months participants' and expert working groups' annual leave options.

#### **Opportunities:**

1. By not undertaking a knowledge synthesis, outputs are more likely to be delivered on time, with only one expert working group needed.
2. The use of an applied policy Delphi has the advantage of enabling people to contribute when it suits them, rather than having to synchronize diaries for online workshop meetings. Given the nature of the participants (busy timetables), we need to recruit for the participatory events; this may pose a problem.





**Table 1.** MEG opinion(s) based on MAGICKS tool output (cf. Annexe 3 for the full MAGICKS output and options)

MAGICKS TOOL OUTPUT	MEG insight(s)
Expert consultation	There are various adapted techniques here (e.g focus groups, world cafe, workshops). The chosen specific method must reflect the needs of the Requester and the context of the EWG. What we can agree on is that it should be a one-off event due to time constraints.
Multiple expert consultation with Delphi	This method has certain advantages (e.g. the systematized process better ensures transparency and reproducibility) compared to regular Expert consultation, but may be less viable regarding timescale. Indeed, a Delphi requires multiple rounds of consultation and synthesis; a minimum of three rounds is advised by the MEG. We feel that the periods needed and time commitment for those involved would be too great.
Rapid evidence assessment (RAE)	Despite the MAGICKS output, the MEG agrees that there is a need for a knowledge synthesis method to ensure we meet the needs of the Requester. Compared to Systematic review or Meta-analysis, which both require at least 1 year, a RAE would provide a quicker way (4-6 months) of equally capturing both descriptive and quantitative information to inform the participatory activities - that score highest on MAGICKS.

To help the EWG understand what tools might best address the three method pathways outlined above, the MEG recommends collectively using the [MAGICKS](#) tool. This guides a dialogue about the characteristics of the required knowledge synthesis, and prioritisation decisions match these characteristics to the expected attributes of different methods and provide concise guidance on how to conduct each method. An example output is shown below in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Example of the use of MAGICKS (Method Application and Guidance in Conducting Knowledge Syntheses) to help guide the process of choosing a method of knowledge synthesis.

Results



### Conclusions based on Options 1 and 2:

The MEG considers that Option 1 offers the best value in terms of providing an in-depth evidence-based approach in line with the Request, which then is used to shape a one-off participatory event. Whilst this does have risks associated with the very tight timescales, we believe that a focused strategy of ‘expert working group recruitment’ can better meet the deadline; for example, here, the call for experts should be sent to targeted experts from the ICES 2024 Roadmap.

The final decision on which method or combination of methods will be used to process the request “Cumulative impacts of offshore wind farm expansions: consequences & solutions for achieving GES across European marine waters” will be made after a thorough dialogue between the EWG and the MEG. The description and justification for the selected method(s) will be synthesised in the Method Protocol. All Eklipse Method Protocols are peer-reviewed, open for public consultation, and once revised, they are published on the Eklipse website (sometimes in scientific articles) and broadly disseminated.





For more information on the range of methods, please refer to the [Eclipse report](#) on knowledge synthesis methods.

### 3. Implementation steps and timeline

The work of the EWG is expected to follow the [Eclipse knowledge synthesis process](#). The Eclipse Group scoping this request has developed a provisional timeline to give an orientation of the milestones and duration of the answering process until the final outputs (see Table 2 below). A key component of the method protocol is for the EWG to develop a refined timeline for answering the request considering the needs of the requesters, the relevant policy process(es), the complexity of the request and the selected tailored methods. Please note that a kick-off dialogue meeting between the EWG and the consortium of the requester(s) will be held the last week of June (a doodle will be sent to selected experts). This kick-off meeting will be facilitated by the [Eclipse Knowledge Coordination Body \(KCB\)](#) and aims to ensure a common understanding of the request among experts.

**Table 2.** Suggested timeline

Suggested timeline	Key activities	Actions or feedback from requesters
<b>Last week of June</b> Two sessions of 2 hours each on the week of June 17th 2024	Online kick-off meeting of the EWG including training	Participation in the first part of the meeting to explain the specific interest in the request and answer key questions of clarifications from the experts
	Call for Open consultation and Peer Review of the Methodological Protocol	Dissemination of the call Requesters can submit a review
<u><i>Duration of the answering phase of the Eclipse process</i></u>  Between 3 and 8 months, depending on the selected method(s)	Call for Open consultation and Peer Review of the synthesis report	Dissemination of the call Requesters can submit a review
	Launch of the final report	Dissemination and contribution to ensure the uptake of the evidence produced by EWG by research and policy, i.e. ensuring the usefulness of the results /evidence

#### 4. Support provided by Eklipse

**Eklipse team:** The Expert Working Group (EWG) will be supported in all steps by the [Eklipse Management Body](#) (EMB) in logistics, communication, documentation (via the Eklipse website), and dissemination of products required for this request. The working group will be supported thematically and strategically by the [Knowledge Coordination Body](#) (KCB) and the [Methods Expert Group](#) (MEG) on the choice and use of knowledge synthesis methods.

**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 and beyond the group, capacity building and the visibility of expertise to policy and society via the products. Eklipse will actively support the visibility of experts and their institution's contributions. In addition, travel costs to potential events hosted physically by Eklipse will be covered via Eklipse funds as needed (depending on travel restrictions following lockdown development).

**Technical support:** Access to literature databases will be facilitated if needed. Eklipse will cover the layout, printing, and dissemination of interim and final products.





## 5. Eligibility and applicant information

### a. Selection criteria for the composition of the Expert Working Group (EWG)

The EWG is the group of selected experts that will be in charge of answering the request “Cumulative impacts of offshore wind farm expansions: consequences & solutions for achieving GES across European marine waters” based on the [Eclipse process](#). They are individual experts who will nominate themselves following the call for experts. The final selection of the EWG will be carried out by the Knowledge Coordination Body (KCB), which will ensure the best possible coverage in terms of disciplines, geographic and gender balance (see our [Guidance note 7c. “Preparing and managing Calls for Experts”](#) for more information). The selected EWG will consist of scientists and practitioners and will be supported by dedicated members from the KCB, the MEG and the EMB (see [Guidance Note 6. “Expert working groups \(EWGs\)”](#)). The EWG 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. KCB may decide to open a follow-up, more tailored Call for Experts to this one to complement the EWG with additional expertise.

**The working group is expected to have between 8 and 10 experts.**

### b. Selection criteria for individual experts

- The individual experts that nominate themselves should have demonstrated expertise or experience in one or several of the following disciplines:
  - Marine spatial planning
  - Ecology
  - Cumulative impact assessments
  - Marine biodiversity and ecology
  - Offshore wind energy development
  - European marine policy, and in particular, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive
  - Marine conservation and policy practitioners
  - Participatory methods.
  - Knowledge synthesis
  
- Some individual experts of the EWG should have **either direct experience** in knowledge synthesis or experience in qualitative research. Specific techniques/experiences that are especially valued include:
  - Systematic and/or Rapid Evidence Review
  - Systematic mapping
  - Multi-criteria decision analysis
  - Delphi



- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups
- Workshops

Experience in **European policy processes** will be regarded during the selection discussion.

**Important information:**

- Eklipse highly encourages all applicants to provide a **letter of support from their organisation**.
- Selected Experts will have to comply with the principles and rules of Eklipse, e.g. conflicts of interest policy, Code of Conduct, etc. (for more details, see the Eklipse website under "[Ethical framework](#)").
- Invited participants to the Focus Group, as well as Eklipse KCB and EMB members, are **not eligible**. Please note that two members of Eklipse MEG with relevant knowledge synthesis methods will be selected from the MEG team to integrate the EWG but will not need to apply to the Call for Experts. Please note that the MEG is composed of experts selected for a mandate of 3 years to integrate EWGs.

a. **Data and information policy**

All results will be made publicly available through the Eklipse website, and transparent procedures will apply, following Creative Commons Agreement 4.0<sup>1</sup>, which includes the reference to authorship and involvement.

b. **Information to provide**

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

**Eklipse highly encourages all applicants to provide a letter of support from your organisation.**

---

<sup>1</sup> See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. It permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided appropriate credit is given to the original author(s) and the source, provides a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicates if changes were made.





## *6. Application and notification of results*

### a. How to apply

The Eklipse application form can be found on the website under [“Open calls”](#). The completed form should be completed **by midnight on June 7<sup>th</sup> 2024**. Should you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact us at [emb@eklipse.eu](mailto:emb@eklipse.eu)

### b. Announcement of the results

Successful applicants will be notified directly by Eklipse Management Body (EMB) during **the week of June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. As soon as they accept the nomination, selected experts' names will be made public on the Eklipse website.