



Bridging the gap between policy and knowledge
on biodiversity in Europe

TARGETED CALL FOR EXPERTS (CfE 2/2024) Eklipse – November 2024

Deadline for Call: **December 11th, 2024** before midnight (CET)

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

Eklipse is inviting experts to join an ongoing 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 Eklipse website under Request > [Offshore wind farms](#).

The EWG will comprise a group of about 10-15 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 strong multi- and trans-disciplinary skills and broad geographical coverage – see section 5). The EWG will closely interact with relevant members of the [Eklipse governance bodies](#) to ensure appropriate methodological choices and uptake of outputs, as well as to guide them through the ethical and robust [Eklipse process](#). Selected experts will have to comply with the [Eklipse Code of Ethics](#) to integrate the EWG.

In order to complete the expertise of the current EWG, we are seeking expressions of interest from experts who have experience in the disciplines/topics listed on the following page, as well as knowledge synthesis techniques (e.g., scoping reviews and/or participatory methods). Both academic and practice experts are welcome to apply. Please consider the list of





disciplines/expertise below. In the application form, please provide evidence of your experience in disciplines connected to the descriptors of the Marine Strategy Directive, disciplines, and knowledge synthesis and/or participatory research.

- **Are you an expert in one or several disciplines related to the 8 mentioned descriptors of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive?**
 - Descriptor 1: Marine biodiversity
 - Descriptor 2: Non-indigenous species
 - Descriptor 3: Commercial fish and shellfish
 - Descriptor 4: Food webs
 - Descriptor 5: Eutrophication
 - Descriptor 7: Hydrographical conditions
 - Descriptor 8: Contaminants
 - Descriptor 9: Contaminants in seafood

- **Are you an expert in one or several of the following disciplines?**
 - Cumulative impact assessments
 - Climate change
 - Offshore wind energy development
 - European marine policy, and in particular, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive
 - Marine conservation and policy practitioners
 - Marine Spatial planning

- **Do you have direct experience in either knowledge synthesis and/or participatory research?** (e.g., scoping reviews and/or participatory methods)

- **Can you and your employer allow you to devote at least 10% of your time from January to March-April 2025 to support this project on a voluntary capacity? Would you be interested in contributing directly to a policy-relevant process within your field of expertise?**

- **Would you like to expand your network?**

- **Are you interested in collaborating in a transdisciplinary and multi-cultural setting?**

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: December 11th, 2024, before midnight (CET).

Expert Working Group (EWG) selection: Mid-December 2024.

Online kick-off meeting and training of the EWG: 2 sessions of 2 hours each, during the week of December 15th, 2024

Expected duration of the process: Until March-April 2025

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.

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





1. Request to be addressed by this call

1.1 Background to the request

The request aims 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 an analysis is critically needed, given the targets set by the European Union for renewable energy sources that need to be achieved by EU Member States in the coming years, and a large number of renewable energy projects are likely to be developed offshore. Existing studies on the cohabitation between offshore wind energy production and nature tend to focus on marine protected areas (MPAs) or the protection of species (e.g. birds, fish and marine mammals). However, existing knowledge should also include an analysis relevant to all dimensions (descriptors) of GES according to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Such analysis, which includes literature reviews and scenario modelling, should look at how offshore wind energy expansion might affect the achievement of GES, considering the GES threshold values set by EU Member States for a number of GES descriptors (such as seabed integrity, underwater noise, contaminant levels, species abundance, etc.) and the subsequent cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts exist when they have combined and repetitive interactive impacts that arise from multiple offshore wind farms (OWF) activities or operate across multiple OWF projects over a given space and time. The study should empower the EU Commission to propose solutions, including those within the context of the Member States' MSFD Programmes of Measures and the MSFD review, to make sure that offshore wind energy expansion does not hinder the achievement of GES under the MSFD, considering the entire lifecycle of offshore wind power plants (including decommissioning). These solutions could relate to marine spatial planning (e.g., current developments in the context of the Greater North Sea Initiative), particularly considering the cumulative impacts of other human activities on the marine environment. Identification of other solutions (for instance, technological) would also be welcomed.

The main goal of the request put forward by the Directorate General for Environment (DG ENV) is to enhance the understanding of the potential impacts of Offshore Wind Farms (OWFs) expansion on achieving Good Environmental Status (GES), as defined by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

Specifically, the work aims to:

- a. Investigate the impacts of fixed-foundation wind turbines and grid connection infrastructure expansion on each of the 11 Descriptors of GES under the MSFD.
- b. Assess the consequences of the cumulative impacts on marine ecosystems, i.e. to what extent do individual stressors overlap in time and/or space.
- c. Identify and analyse knowledge gaps and mitigation strategies through literature review, expert consultation and participatory workshops.

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 remained open until April 2024 (for more information, please refer to the Eklipse website under “[Calls](#)” on our website). The CfK 1/2024 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 aimed to gather relevant knowledge to be considered during the selection process and to identify existing or planned initiatives that may (partly) address the requests. Both activities were essential during the scoping phase to avoid duplication of ongoing efforts and ensure the outputs will be developed in a timely manner. For more details on the literature collected in the Call for Knowledge, refer to Annex 4 in the Document of Work (DoW), published on the Eklipse website under **Request > [link to the document](#)**

1.3 Initial Call for Experts and selection of an Expert Working Group

To answer this request, Eklipse launched a Call for Expertise (CfE). We received 15 applications, from which 11 experts were selected in June 2024. These experts covered a broad range of expertise, gender and geographical representation to form the Eklipse Expert Working Group (EWG). Four experts dropped out at the beginning of the process due to unavailability.

2. Suggested programme of work and methods

During the scoping phase, the members of the [Eklipse Methods Expert Group \(MEG\)](#) discussed potential knowledge synthesis methods suitable for this request (For more information on the range of methods, please refer to the Eklipse report Dicks et al. 2018 on knowledge synthesis methods and in the Eklipse website under “Methods”).

2.1 Methodologies selected by the EWG in place

No single method addresses all the methodological challenges in this request. Rather, a combination of techniques in the process can tackle the knowledge synthesis objectives. A two-staged methodological process: A Scoping Review (SR) will be applied to produce short science





summaries (SSS, stage 1) that will then be leveraged to inform a one-off online expert consultation and participatory workshop (stage 2).

- **Stage 1: Scoping review for SSS:** The SR will provide an overview of the distribution and extent of existing evidence related to the above-mentioned objectives. It will help to identify current knowledge gaps for which further information will be sought from the expert consultation and participatory workshop. The SR will be conducted in close accordance with the guidelines and standards for quick scoping reviews (Collins et al., 2015; Dicks et al., 2017). Thus, the SR will follow a structured methodology - following an a priori protocol (current document) - to collate and synthesise the existing research evidence (academic and grey literature) into SSS per GES descriptor.
- **Stage 2: Participatory workshop using external experts:** A participatory workshop will be held to support this project and the publication of the draft report. The main focus of this workshop is to seek experts' knowledge and insight to corroborate the outputs of the literature review and experiential evidence, including the management of complex cumulative impacts. This will also identify knowledge gaps and possible actions for each of the 11 descriptors. It will complement identified gaps and discuss them around the main phenomena of interest (i.e. cumulative impacts, physical impacts, chemical impacts, impacts on habitats and biodiversity as well as ecological interactions, etc.), considering potential mitigation strategies.

The Expert Working Group (EWG) selected the methods above, guided by the Methods Expert Group (MEG) members through a dialogue about the characteristics of the most adequate knowledge synthesis to be used to answer the request. The description and justification for the selected method(s) is part of the first deliverable of the EWG, i.e. the Method Protocol. All Eklipse Method Protocols are peer-reviewed, open for public consultation, and, once revised, they are published on the Eklipse website and broadly disseminated through social media and Eklipse networks.

3. Implementation steps and timeline

The work of the EWG is expected to follow the [Eklipse knowledge synthesis process](#). The EWG has first developed a [methodological protocol draft](#) based on the [DoW](#), describing the current knowledge gaps and research needs on the topic, and proposing the most suitable methods of knowledge synthesis to address this request. The methods protocol was open for public review until the 24th of October, 2024. From the consultation process, nine reviews were received. The EWG is currently going through the reviewers' comments and advice, in order to decide if they should be integrated into the final version of the methods protocol or if it was not in the scope of the request.

Table 1. Suggested timeline

Task/Milestone	Description	Duration/ Deadline
Task 1	Method protocol	Draft finalised and external review process complete.
Milestone 1	Final Method Protocol	Final version will be available end November 2024
Task 2	Stage 1, Scoping review for SSS	
Milestone 2	Stage 1, Scoping review for SSS, preliminary results	Preliminary results presented to the requester on the 14th of November
Task 3	Stage 1, Scoping review for SSS, finalisation	January 2025
Taks 4	Stage 2 Participatory workshop	January/February 2025
Taks 5	Report finalisation	March/April 2025

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 include networking within and beyond the group, capacity building, and the visibility of their expertise to both 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, MEG, and 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 across EU countries will be considered in the selection. KCB may also decide to open a follow-up, more tailored Call for Experts to this one to complement the EWG with additional expertise.

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 **connected to the 8 mentioned descriptors of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive?**
 - Descriptor 1: Marine biodiversity
 - Descriptor 2: Non-indigenous species
 - Descriptor 3: Commercial fish and shellfish
 - Descriptor 4: Food webs
 - Descriptor 5: Eutrophication
 - Descriptor 7: Hydrographical conditions
 - Descriptor 8: Contaminants
 - Descriptor 9: Contaminants in seafood

- The individual experts that nominate themselves should have demonstrated expertise or experience in one or several of the following disciplines:
 - Cumulative impact assessments
 - Climate change
 - Offshore wind energy development
 - European marine policy, and in particular the Marine Strategy Framework Directive
 - Marine conservation and policy practitioners
 - Marine Spatial planning

Some individual experts of the EWG should have **direct experience** in knowledge synthesis or experience in qualitative research. Specific techniques/experiences that are especially valued include:

- Scoping review
- Systematic mapping
- Multi-criteria decision analysis
- Delphi methodology
- 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 through the Call for Experts. 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 4.0¹, 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.

¹ 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.





Eklipse strongly encourages all applicants to include a letter of support from your organisation.

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 December 11th 2024**. Should you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact us: emb@eklipse.eu

b. Announcement of the results

Successful applicants will be notified directly by the Eklipse Management Body (EMB) during **the week of December 15th, 2024**. As soon as they accept the nomination, selected experts' names will be published on the Eklipse website.