Bridging the gap between policy and knowledge on Biodiversity in Europe

CALL FOR KNOWLEDGE FOR INITIAL SCOPING

Eklipse - CfK 01/2026

TOPIC:

Games to connect science and policy

May 2026

Responses by May 22nd, 2026

1. Invitation to share knowledge for informed decision-making

Eklipse invites you to contribute to this open call with your knowledge on games that connect science and policy.

Background:

The Ecological Knowledge Games (EcoKnowGames) project is an interdisciplinary research programme leveraging the technology of video games to evaluate sustainable development solutions and share diverse views on human development. How humans collectively respond to environmental change will ultimately determine the degree to which many global challenges of the 21st century are successfully met. Global challenges are reflected across multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including conserving biodiversity, ensuring food and water security, and responding to climate change. Finding effective SDG solutions is critical but often hindered by the undesirable risk, high cost, and long timescale of their implementation. The EcoKnowGames project develops virtual game worlds to address challenges for sustainable development.

EcoKnowGames is funded by the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) cross-research council responsive mode pilot scheme (MR/Z505833/1). The core team includes members from the University of Stirling, the James Hutton Institute, King's College London, and the project partner, Marist College. Game development is in collaboration with the award-winning games studio Glitchers.

Games are a science-communication tool that provides players with the opportunity to engage with scientifically informed contexts and situations that would otherwise be inaccessible. They are inherently interdisciplinary, with insights from the arts and humanities, as well as scientific disciplines, including social sciences.

Considering the broader concept of "games," they are defined as designed systems of play that may encompass cooperation, learning, competition, and meaning-making, extending beyond a sole focus on winning. This includes categories such as strategy, role-playing, simulation, educational, and participatory games, delivered through formats like board and tabletop, digital and mobile, card-based, and facilitated field exercises—ranging from light gamified tools (e.g., quizzes and interactive dashboards) to participatory role-play and simulation-based policy games for decision support.

Eklipse invites scientists, policymakers, practitioners, and other societal actors to share their knowledge on the topic. The main aim of this Call for Knowledge is to gather all relevant knowledge to be considered during the Eklipse process. This is to avoid duplicating ongoing efforts and to ensure that outputs are developed jointly and in a timely manner.

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Do you know of any **major or overlooked projects, papers, reports, or grey literature** that could support the understanding of what types of games and game features/design choices can enable games become an effective and impactful tool to connect science and policy and/or lead to an improved science policy interface in any topic or context (e.g., incorporating stakeholder perspectives, making complex science understandable, support evidence-based decision-making, enhancing learning about uncertainty etc.). Please share details such as names, relevant links, etc., where possible.

2. Could you share your experiences of **on-the-ground actions** related to types of games and game features/design choices that can enable games to become an effective and impactful tool to connect science and policy and/or lead to an improved science policy interface? Please share details such as names, relevant links, etc., where possible.

3. Could you share your experiences related to challenges and problems in using games with decision-makers? (Please also include game design)

4. What types of knowledge and key knowledge gaps—across science, policy, practitioner and societal experience, including local and Indigenous knowledge systems—need to be addressed to better understand how games can meaningfully connect with and inform policy processes?

2. How to contribute?

Please contribute your comments, knowledge/initiatives/references through the Eklipse Form. Please feel free to email us directly at emb@eklipse.eu or request a meeting with us.

We invite you to add any information you consider relevant to this request and to justify its inclusion (e.g., additional information from countries, scales, or disciplinary perspectives not sufficiently covered). We also warmly encourage you to help us disseminate this call for knowledge broadly.

Relevant information should be grouped under the following:

(1) initiatives/projects (indicating if completed, ongoing or planned),

(2) literature reviews,

(3) empirical studies/practical experiences,

(4) modelling studies, and

(5) conceptual papers.

Contributions may include:

(a) links to websites or contact details,

(b) links to open-access papers,

(c) links to published and unpublished grey literature or case studies,

(d) descriptions of ongoing research projects or knowledge compilations expected to deliver results within the next year or

(e) your on-the-ground experiences in this field

You may choose to have your contributions acknowledged or remain anonymous. If you opt for acknowledgement, your contributions will be included in the document generated by this request process, with the steps you contributed specified.

3. Objective of the call and request to be addressed by this call

Through Eklipse, the aim is to explore what types of games and game features/design choices will ensure for games to become an effective and impactful tool to connect science and policy and lead to an improved science-policy interface, acknowledging the balance between integrity of science and fun of playing a game. Also, identifying the enablers and barriers for policymakers to use games as a way of understanding and changing perspectives as well as knowledge transfer.

Specifically, the request will be working on the following themes:

1. To make explicit the role of games as a way to experience alternative perspectives - put policy-makers (and other stakeholders) in others' shoes.
2. To consider/reflect on the spectrum of games and gamification tools depending on the ambitions of the science -policy connection sought.
3. To consider how scientific data are integrated into game mechanics and how the complexity of a game supports or hinders effective perspective change and policy-making

The objective of this call for knowledge is to launch an initial scoping process on the request meant to identify available assessments, existing studies, and other resources.

For further details, check Eklipse's background, its functions, and its process, describing how it addresses requests from policy and society.

The Eklipse Scoping Team

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And the Eklipse Management Body.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the Eklipse Management Body (https://eklipse.eu/contact/).