



Bridging the gap between policy and knowledge
on biodiversity in Europe

Guidance Note 6

Expert working groups (EWGs)

1) What are the EWGs?

The EWGs are groups of selected experts in charge of answering the requests received by Eklipse. They are individual experts who have nominated themselves following a call for experts. The final selection of the EWG is carried out by the Knowledge Coordination Body (KCB) (see *Guidance note 2 and 2a about the KCB*). Those nominated experts who are not selected to be part of the EWG are invited to be experts in the peer review processes of the EWG, to support the EWG by suggesting sources of information the request, and gaps in current knowledge and to take part in online discussion on our LinkedIn Forum. The selected EWGs consist of scientists and practitioners who are experts in the field covered by the request, together with one member of the Methods Expert Group (MEG) (see *Guidance note 5 on the Methods Expert Group*). In addition, the KCB ensures the best possible coverage in terms of disciplines, geographic and gender balance.

Participation in the EWG is voluntary (although travel and accommodation to take part in the face to face meeting is covered by Eklipse) and the experts are asked to be active only for the duration of a request. The members of the EWG are expected to devote some time to their work (~10%) over the duration of the request, including at least one face to face meeting and active contribution to the output of the request.

EWG members contribute directly to a policy or societal need, are all recognised as authors of the output, and have the potential to write an academic paper and/or other communication materials should they want to (Eklipse has however no allocated budget for this follow-up).

2) Answering requests from policy and other societal actors

The EWG is responsible for answering selected requests from policy and other societal actors within a specific time frame and an allocated budget.





Elements of organisation and tasks include:

- A KCB request focal point, his/her deputy and a dedicated person from the Eclipse Management Body (EMB) will be the main spokespersons each EWG will interact with from Eclipse (*see the Guidance notes 2 and 2a about the KCB*). Exceptions may occur of course, in which case the KCB co-chairs can be contacted.
- Each member of the EWG will be asked to sign a Conflict of Interest Declaration (CoID) before starting their work in the EWG.
- The EWGs are responsible for their internal organization including the selection of chairs or co-chairs, the roles and task allocations within the EWG, when and where they want to have their meetings (face to face and virtual), and use of their allocated budget – and inform their respective request-dedicated spokespersons as appropriate.
- Based on the Document of Work (DOW) established by the requester and the KCB, the EWG write a request protocol that is to be sent to their KCB request focal point for the organization of the extended peer review.
- Each EWG is responsible for answering the peer review comments on the protocol, collated and compiled by the EMB, in a transparent, timely and comprehensive manner, and amending the protocol accordingly. This amended protocol (*see Guidance note “Guidelines for the EWG Protocol and Outputs”*) should be sent to the KCB request focal point for sign off by the KCB. The finalized protocol together with the responses to the comments will be posted on the Eclipse website by the EMB.
- Once the protocol has reached an agreement, the EWGs start the core of their work, i.e. carrying out the knowledge synthesis work following the protocol and producing a draft output¹. This draft will be sent to the KCB request focal point, for a new round of extended peer review and public consultation. The report includes all necessary analysis and results as well as recommendations and limitations (*see Guidance note 6a “Guidelines for the EWG Protocol and Outputs”*).
- The EWG is responsible for answering the peer review comments on the request report, collated and compiled by the EMB, in a transparent, timely and comprehensive manner, and amending the draft output accordingly. This final output is sent from the EWG to the KCB request focal point for further dissemination by Eclipse (see section 3 below).
- The EWG is responsible for writing an executive summary (maximum 500 words) of their output for dissemination on the Eclipse website and targeting a broad audience.
- The EWG members must agree to the confidentiality clause as set out in the Conflict of Interest form.
- The EWG members can only engage in dissemination activities following the approval of the KCB request focal point, and must acknowledge Eclipse in all dissemination activities.

¹ The output will be decided by the requester and could include a report, factsheet, policy brief, video, database, map etc. This will be have been clarified in the Document of Work.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Each EWG receives an allocated budget depending on the request. This budget can be used for:

- Travel and accommodation to attend the face to face EWG meeting.
- Honorary contracts for external assistance in specific tasks related to knowledge synthesis (e.g. information management, statistical analysis, survey design etc)
- A research assistant to support the work of the EWG.

METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT

- Support from the MEG and/or KCB request focal point on best practice related to the methodologies presented in the Document of Work and how to report them (*see Guidance note 6a “Guidelines for the EWG Protocol and Outputs”*).
- Mentoring from the MEG and/or KCB request focal point related to understanding and implementing best practice and Eklipse procedures and ethics.

PEER REVIEW SUPPORT

- The EMB disseminates draft protocols and outputs to relevant peer reviewers.
- The EMB responds to all reviewers, acknowledging their input.
- The EMB collates and compiles all extended peer review comments in order to provide the EWG and KCB request focal point with one single document that the EWG can consult and answer peer review comments received.
- The EMB is responsible for archiving all peer review processes and making this archive available on the Eklipse website.
- In cases of disagreement or conflict within the EWG or with external peer reviewers, the KCB request focal point may decide to refer the issue to the KCB.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION, AND DISSEMINATION SUPPORT

- The EMB covers the final design and the dissemination of the output produced by the EWG through the EKLIPSE website. This dissemination process, led by Eklipse, involves creating a page on the Eklipse website with relevant links to the EWG outputs, sending the EWG output to the requester, publicizing the output on the Eklipse Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn/ResearchGate/Twitter feed, disseminating the output in the EKLIPSE network, potentially printing copies of the output if relevant and agreed by the KCB. Any further dissemination is the responsibility of the EWG but must only be carried out once given the



go-ahead by the Eklipse KCB focal point and always acknowledging the outputs as an EKLIPSE output.

- EWGs will have access to the Eklipse LinkedInForum for them to use for example to start discussions on the requests, hold online science cafes etc.
- Each EWG will have access to an OwnCloud account to share documents and conduct their work
- Each EWG will have access to internal communication software (e.g. GoToMeeting) to arrange internal meetings.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE REQUESTER

- The KCB request focal point ensures communication between the EWG and the requester.