



Bridging the gap between policy and knowledge  
on biodiversity in Europe

## Guidance Note 7b

# Scoping with the requester

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### 1) Context, aims and key steps

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The scoping stage starts once requests have been pre-screened and selected as eligible, relevant and of policy interest by the Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) and the Knowledge Coordination Body (KCB), based on the information provided by the requesters and the experience of SAB and KCB members. The aim of the scoping is to determine whether a request should go forward, and if so, how. The scoping process involves a dialogue between the KCB and the requester, other relevant stakeholders, the Methods Experts Group (MEG), and if needed additional thematic experts on the topic of the request, to clarify the request and specify exact expectations, deliverables, methodological options, scope and scale in order to draft the Document of Work (DoW) that will be used for the Call for Experts (leading to an Expert Working Group (EWG) dedicated to answering the request). It is important to note that not all requests selected for scoping will necessarily lead to the request being taken forward.

The scoping stage needs to ensure European policy relevance while considering the general needs of the requester, including resources available and timeframe. It will need to take into account the level of risk that the requester is happy with, concerning bias and uncertainty in answering their request within the above-mentioned constraints (for details see below).

The scoping stage aims to assess the feasibility of the work for a future expert group given available support and timeline. This means that the request may need to be refined, possibly narrowed, if it appears to be too over-demanding with regards to resources. The scoping stage should ideally take approximately 3 months, and no more than 5 months, depending on the request.

Key steps in the scoping stage include the following (see below for more details):

- **Forming a scoping group within the KCB**
  - KCB focal point + deputy, 2-3 KCB members, one person from the EMB, methods group member(s) 22/04/2020
  - Additional thematic experts as required



- Dependent on the request, a first rough literature screening exercise by the Eclipse Management Body and/or KCB focal point, especially on review articles related to the topic
- **Dialogue with the requester(s)**
  - Clarify the request
  - Clarify the scope
  - Clarify the scale
  - Clarify the resources
  - Clarify the approach
  - Clarify the aims
  - Others
- 3. Dialogue with the MEG**
  - Identification of relevant, timely and cost-appropriate methods and approaches
  - Methods options and their implications
- 4. Agreement on the DoW by the requester and Eclipse**

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### *3) Forming a scoping group within the KCB*

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A scoping group for each request will need to be formed within the KCB. The main lead on the scoping stage will be the KCB focal point for the request, and his/her deputy. KCB focal point and deputy should disclose any possible conflict of interest with the requesters. In any case, two or three members of the KCB should be identified to assist the KCB focal point and deputy during the scoping stage and attend meetings.

The co-chairs of the KCB, the Chair of the MEG and the EMB will support this group throughout. If needed, additional thematic experts (e.g. senior researchers or decision makers in the field of the request) may be called upon to support the scoping stage. Because of possible conflict of interest these external experts will not be eligible to apply thereafter to contribute to the EWG. Such experts can be identified either by consulting the Eclipse network, screening the literature or consulting the SAB or the requester.

The role of the scoping group will be to:

- Start a process of dialogue with the requester and other relevant stakeholders
- Identify and engage with possible other relevant stakeholders and interest groups at the EU level who could benefit from being involved in the request; and
- Compile the results from pre-screening on existing reviews/assessments and national reports and the Call for Knowledge (see below)
- Agree on the DoW with the requester and if applicable other stakeholders
- Develop a Call for Experts if the request goes ahead.

Once the scoping group has been identified, they will have a first meeting to decide on:

- Whom, other than the requester, to engage with to ensure the EU policy relevance of the request (informed by suggestions from the SAB and KCB); and how and when to engage with them. It will need to be very clear who engages with these stakeholders and how and this will have to be implemented as early as possible after the request is judged eligible by Eklipse in order to assess EU relevance of the request. If not EU-policy relevant, the requester may be asked to revise their request or the request may be rejected.
- Develop a shared vision of the request: this step will include identifying some of the challenges in the original request, what key aspects the request should cover to be compatible with the Eklipse approach, and what will be needed to achieve this vision.
- Agree on roles and responsibilities within the scoping group. Tasks will be allocated to group members according to their expertise, skills and capacities. There is no generic way to distribute functions across the scoping group, so these decisions should be taken explicitly for each request.
- Develop preliminary timelines including milestones for ensuring adaptive management of the following processes in the scoping and beyond:
  - EMB observing and reporting back to the KCB focal point/KCB team to ensure standardisation and transparency of all processes
  - Differentiate strict deadlines and deadlines with potential buffer – and communicate these differences adequately.

Minutes should be taken of this initial scoping group meeting by either the KCB focal point or EMB Contact, agreed by all, and posted on OwnCloud for future reference.

If a literature scoping exercise has not already been done during the request selection process, the scoping stage may, if needed, encompass a (further) exercise in order to evaluate the type and quantity of current relevant literature/activities related to the request. If the topic of the request is narrow, the literature scoping exercise can be useful at a very early stage. If the topic of the request is broad, it is recommended to particularly search for review articles and additionally consult an external thematic expert (see above). This exercise should be complemented by a Call for Knowledge to be carried out as part of the scoping stage. The KCB focal point and deputy will work with the Eklipse team (EMB and WP5) to call on the Network of Networks to help identify existing literature and/or activities, through a Call for Knowledge.

Considerations for Call for Knowledge include:

- The Call for Knowledge should have clear aims that are communicated to all potential contributors, as well as guidelines on how contributors to the Call for Knowledge will be acknowledged
- The LinkedIn Forum will be used for the Call for Knowledge: The KCB focal point and deputy will liaise with the EMB contact to ensure the Forum is ready for use.





- The EMB will get input from the KCB on whom to contact, and will contact these individuals personally.
- The Calls for Knowledge are time-bound (usually one month, but should be kept open in case further additions are made as any relevant information will be useful for the EWG).
- The Call for Knowledge and literature scoping will result in a section in the DoW, which provides a link to the OwnCloud compilation of existing relevant literature, projects and initiatives and which highlights three specific sections: general overview of wealth and breadth of information; most relevant information to the request; and how the Call for Knowledge and literature scoping impact on the request (has the request already been addressed? What are continued knowledge gaps?)

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#### *4) Dialogue with the requester(s)*

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The dialogue with the requester(s) is an iterative process. As much as possible, the dialogue should involve at least one member each from the KCB and EMB. It is unlikely that all issues will be clarified and resolved in a single meeting. For example, the requester may need to get back to his/her team or hierarchy to discuss the outcomes of the dialogue with the KCB. A face-to-face meeting is recommended to initiate the dialogue, and can be followed up by exchanges by email, phone conferences and other meetings. These meetings need to be minuted and records kept on the draft DoW and the log<sup>1</sup> – both of which should be made available on the OwnCloud. The log and the final DoW will also be made public.

The aim of the dialogue with the requester is to clarify the request, its scope, scale, resources, and approach and aims to guide the future EWG towards a process and outputs tailored to the needs of the requester. This dialogue process results in a written document, the DoW, which collates the expectations and requirements of the requester, and other stakeholders refined through the discussion.

#### **Steps of the dialogue process**

1. **Clarify the request** to ensure that the requester and Eclipse scoping group understand the request in the same way:
  - Background description: (scientific) debates and controversies
  - Context and rationale (presentation by the requester) (e.g. what is the specific policy process linked to the request and at what stage of the policy process will the Eclipse approach be relevant?), goals and expectations, and any relevant documents (as listed in the initial call for requests' application for instance)
  - Meaning of each component of the request (presentation by the requester): this is to ensure a shared understanding of the terms (e.g. to help identify keywords useful for the literature scoping)

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<sup>1</sup> Each request has a log where all steps are recorded to keep track of progress.

- Added value of the Eklipse approach: how does this request benefit from the Eklipse approach, rather than another approach? What is the added value of answering this request with the Eklipse approach at this current time?

## **2. Clarify the scope**

- Ensure European policy relevance of the work: Eklipse aims to build a European mechanism. Key questions to ascertain are: What are the key EU policies that are related to the request? What is the competence of the EU for these policies (main/shared/informing or observing)? At what stage is the policy process in terms of the issue presented in the request? Would the request be useful to the policy process, and in what way? How would the request fit into the policy process? Would the request need to be amended (either in the framing, scope or timeline) to be most useful to the policy process at the EU level? It would be useful as a first step to try to identify the desk officer in charge at EC level (could be several as different DGs will likely be affected). Are there networks working on the issue presented in the request across Member States or involving Member States and European institutions? Then liaise with these different people (not necessarily in their institutional capacity), to determine if the request is relevant from their point of view; and if the resulting DoW is clear and understandable to the wider policy audience (jointly with the requester and other relevant stakeholders). This process will take time but is essential, if European policy relevance cannot be ascertained it is highly unlikely that it will move beyond the scoping stage and be addressed by Eklipse.
- What must be included within the scope of the request and why?
- How can the scope be limited to not overburden the EWG while keeping it relevant?

## **3. Clarify the scale**

- Spatial: geography, ecosystems, species
- Temporal: time scale
- Special attention on how to cover the European scale

## **4. Clarify the resources**

- Resources needed
- Resources available

## **5. Clarify/discuss the timelines and milestones including responsibilities**

## **6. Clarify the methodological approach**

- Possible methods: range of tools to conduct knowledge synthesis
- Source of knowledge: scientific, indigenous, local etc.



### **7. Clarify the aims**

- Potential stakeholders and end-users – this may require a stakeholder workshop which can be helpful for creating a common vision amongst relevant stakeholders as well as to integrate different stakeholders and discuss the policy relevance should be mentioned somewhere<sup>2</sup>.
- Expected outputs, aspired outcomes
- Possible impact beyond Eclipse (in terms of policy, practices, social impacts, research...): how will the results of the Eclipse approach feed into the relevant policy process? What other uses might be appropriate?

### **8. Others**

- Level of controversy: is there controversy in terms of the perception/values/opinion, or in the evidence base? What are the consequences of getting it wrong?

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### *5) Dialogue with the Methods Expert Group (MEG)*

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Based on the draft DoW, the KCB scoping group including the requester will exchange with the MEG to outline relevant, timely and cost-appropriate methods or approaches, and discuss these options and their implications on what to expect as outputs with the requester.

Should the requester have expressed an interest for a method in his/her request, this will be examined by the MEG and the KCB to see whether it is the most appropriate and relevant given expectations and resources. Other alternative methods may be proposed if needed, including their benefits and trade-offs.

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### *6) Agreement on the Document of Work (doW)*

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At the end of this dialogue and scoping stage, the KCB will be consulted to check the clarity of the DoW, before it is sent back to the requester and published on the Eclipse website. The DoW will be the basis for the Call for Experts launched to identify and select members of the Expert Working Group in charge of conducting the request.

Milestones and suggested timeline<sup>3</sup> for the scoping stage:

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<sup>2</sup> This could be covered through face to face or virtual meetings with potential stakeholders, or through a stakeholder workshop, where a common vision of the request is developed, different stakeholders are integrated and can discuss the policy relevance of the request.

<sup>3</sup> The timelines can be to some extent flexible and should be decided among the group at the first scoping group meeting and the first meeting with the requester.

Milestones	Responsibility	Others involved	Guidelines as to when to be completed – from date of request being accepted by KCB
1 <sup>st</sup> contact with the requester	KCB Co-chair		Within 1 week
Scoping group created	KCB focal point	KCB deputy, EMB contact	Within 1 week
1 <sup>st</sup> scoping group meeting	KCB focal point	KCB deputy, EMB contact	Within 2 weeks
1 <sup>st</sup> meeting with requester	KCB focal point	Requester, Scoping group	Within 4 weeks
Initial contact with other potential EU relevant requesters/stakeholders	SAB contacts	Scoping group	Within 5 weeks, this may involve a stakeholder workshop and will then take considerably longer.
Literature scoping, depending on request	EMB contact	Scoping group	To start immediately, to be completed within 1.5 months of request starting
Call for Knowledge: - Literature scoping AND/OR - Consulting thematic experts AND/OR - Call via the forum.	KCB focal point (developing call), EMB (posting, disseminating & managing)	Scoping group, WP5	To start after 1st meeting with requester – ideally to be completed by 2 months
Contact with methods expert group to identify potential methods, including their benefits and drawbacks (this is the last step within the scoping once the request is refined).	KCB focal point	Methods expert group	Within 2 months
Updated DoW with input from requesters, Methods Expert Group, Call for Knowledge and literature scoping	KCB Focal point, EMB contact	Scoping group, requester(s)	Within 2.5 months
Meeting with requester(s) to discuss updated DoW	KCB Focal point	Scoping group	Within 2.5 months
Meeting with SAB and/or KCB for final go-ahead with request	KCB Focal point, EMB contact		Within 3 months
Final DoW and call for experts out	KCB Focal point, EMB contact	Scoping group, MEG	Within 3.5 months



