

The NoK's Guide to the 2nd BiodiversityKnowledge Conference

What we are asking you to join in and what we all will get out of it....

Dear participants (and Webstream followers) of BDK2,

We are happy to welcome you in Berlin to the 2nd BiodiversityKnowledge conference. This guide aims to help you gain a better understanding of the challenging task we are dealing with in trying to design a Network of Knowledge (NoK) on Expertise on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Europe and how the conference – and your contributions to it! – will help in doing so.

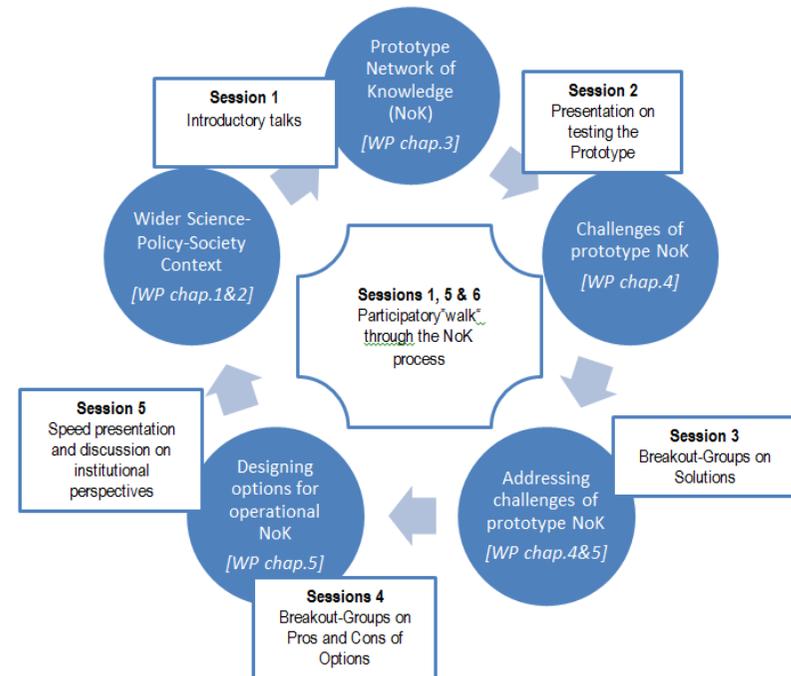
The diagram in Box 1 with its 5 main circles outlines the pathway of our whole project whose final deliverable is a proposed design for a future Network of Knowledge (in April 2014): These 5 circles also correspond to the main chapters of the document we have asked you to read as preparation for the conference: our White paper which will develop into the final proposed NoK design.

BOX 1: The context

To counteract biodiversity loss, efforts to strengthen the knowledge-policy-society interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services have considerably increased over the past years. There is indeed an active, still scattered landscape of projects, institutions, organizations and individuals in Europe involved in the science-policy-society interface, all aiming to improve the knowledge flow so that decisions at different policy levels (from European, to national and local levels) are based on the best available knowledge.

In this context, the Biodiversity Knowledge project has been set up to help organize this landscape. For this the project has been developing and testing a prototype Network of Knowledge since 2011 with more than 300 active participations of representatives of the biodiversity and ecosystems services knowledge community. Stakeholders involved included practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

Elements of designing the NoK and how the conference will address them



At the conference, we will visit these 5 issues in different formats. To be honest, this is a complex challenge for all of us, as we have to:

- Bring together the views from different disciplines and national contexts
- Find a common ground in understanding the challenges at the science-policy-interface
- Keep in mind the interests and needs of the knowledge users

And thus address the aims of the conference:

- jointly discuss and develop, innovative solutions of dealing with some of the challenges the project identified,
- further develop options for the design of an operational Network of Knowledge for Europe from 2014 onwards, and how this network could be integrated in the wider context of science-policy-society interfaces (by using the results of BDk2 for the revision of the White Paper)
- provide the space for institutions and any interested players to voice their interests in and benefits from contributing to the Network of Knowledge and outline the roles they can envisage for themselves.

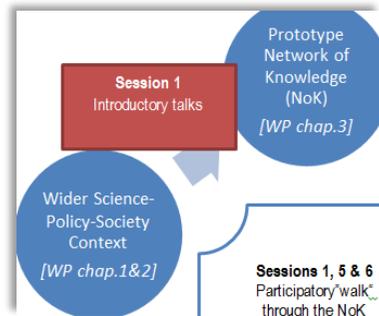
Or, to make it short: explore the chances we can gain at the science-policy interface as knowledge holder community (and as knowledge requesters, of course) and how your expertise helps us improve the concept of the NoK laid out in our White Paper so far.

For this, all sessions have their distinct roles and we hope you will help us in making the tour through them a success – for every participant and for further shaping the science-policy interfaces perspective on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe.

Your notes :

Day 1

Framing the challenge - Improving the evidence base for decision making, and the science-policy interface



Session 1: Introductions

The first session will briefly introduce the context of the NoK development, present the major aspects of the white paper as well as the core of the proposed NoK, the answering-decision-making needs mechanism we have developed and tested over the last

couple of years.

Intended Outcome: Obtain an overview of the current situation and the steps for developing the NoK so far.



Participatory walk, Part 1: Getting to know the NoK (and its challenges) with your own case

Getting a grip on the NoK processes is not so easy, as it mixes needs from decision-making, knowledge from science and other knowledge holders, and

procedural knowledge and requires a complex process to balance credibility, relevance and legitimacy.

For that, we have collected a set of potential NoK requests from different source (see Box 2 on the right side), and we invite all participants to choose one of them to form a virtual KCB (Knowledge Coordination Body of the NoK) and discuss jointly with a requester how the request would be tackled in the NoK.

BOX 2: Potential question for a NoK to be used in the participatory walk (part 1 and 2) – subject to revision before conference based on input from potential requesters

1. How do changes in the diversity and abundance of pollinators in Europe relate to different factors like the use of pesticides, landscape attributes, parasites and other factors? (- From White Paper)
2. What is the relationship between animal health and aspects of global change (including changes in biodiversity) in Europe? (- From White Paper); more specific: What is the link between avian flu and bird migration? (- From Regional Workshop)
3. What are the potential consequences of climate change in Europe on the current legislation in nature conservation (Birds and Habitats Directive)? (- From White Paper)
4. Ecosystem restoration: How to balance the goals of service provision and nature conservation in restoration efforts across European ecosystems? (- From White Paper)
5. How can ecological (green) infrastructure contribute to sustain biodiversity in EU? (- From Regional Workshop)
6. What is known about marine acidification in the Mediterranean, where are the more critical zones, and what should we do? (- From Regional Workshop)
7. How important is the connectivity of marine protected areas? (- From Regional Workshop)
8. What do we know about the efficiency of agri-environmental measures? (- From Regional Workshop)
9. What is the relevance of microbes on the biodiversity management? Is this relevance enough recognized by the authorities? (From Regional Workshop)
10. What are likely to be the most important changes to conservation from synthetic biology? (From William Sutherland on ResearchGate)
11. What are some concrete examples of how declines in wildlife have led to social unrest/inequity/conflict? (From Ryan Marsh, Berkeley, on ResearchGate)

For this, the following steps, particularly Steps 2 and 3, should be discussed (see flowchart on the right, Box 3)

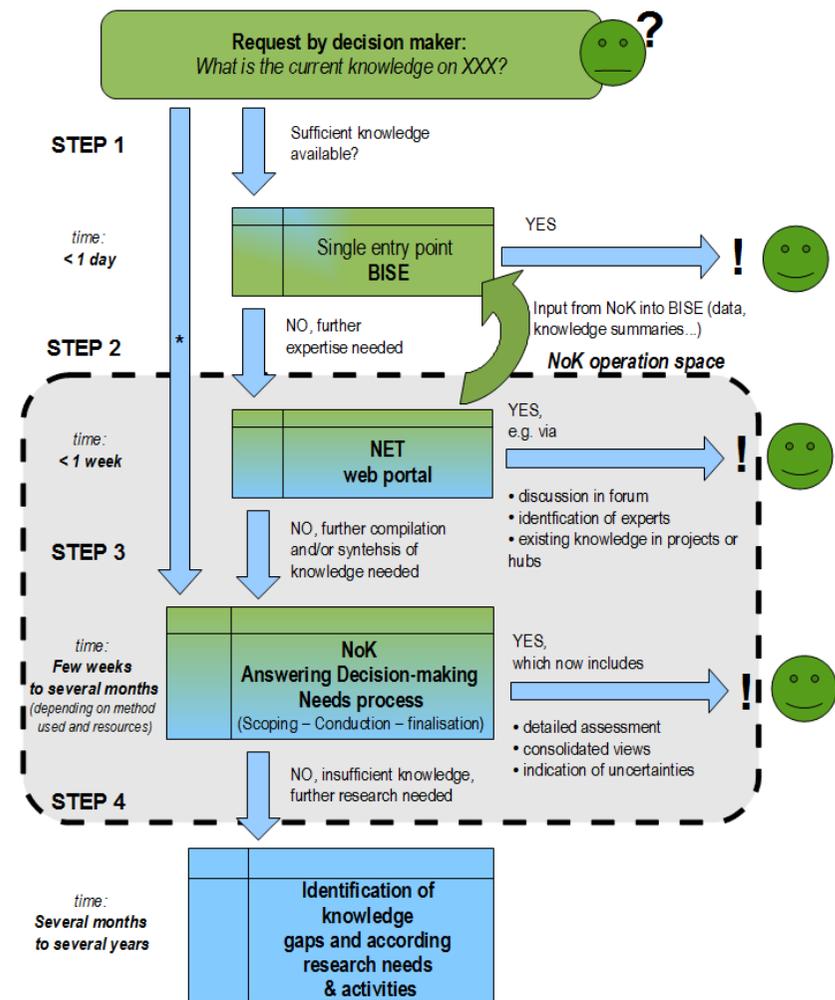
- STEP 1: Is the topic covered by BISE (the Biodiversity Information System Europe) or any other source available?
- STEP 2: Who needs to be addressed in the overall network to give quick answers on the topic? e.g. individuals, institutions, projects
- STEP 3: If a more thorough answer is needed: what would be the main elements for the conclusion of an assessment on the topic? Which method(s) would be chosen?

These questions follow the stepwise approach of the NoK as outlined in the flowchart above. Additionally, when taking a closer look in step 3, the KCB will discuss the elements of the NoK prototype flowchart (see Box 4 on the right, next page)

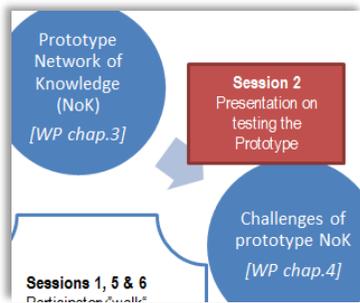
The results of this participatory exercise will not completely cover the work needed by the KCB to address a question, but it will give all participants a joint understanding of how the NoK is supposed to operate and which challenges it faces.

Intended Outcome: Get a joint understanding of the NoK processes by working jointly on concrete (and potential future) cases

BOX 3: The stepwise approach for tackling requests in the NoK



*: direct request route for strategic policy questions



Session 2: Insights from testing the NoK prototype & Panel discussion with potential NoK users from different levels of policy

The second session will present the main insights the project team has gained by testing the NoK procedures with three different knowledge communities. The

focus here is on the methodological approaches that have been used.

After these presentations, we will invite potential requesters from different institutions to reflect on how their potential needs could be matched with the NoK approaches.

Intended outcome: Illustrate the practical application and what we learned from it, especially in terms of methods used to assess existing knowledge, reflect on the needs of requesters from different levels regarding a NoK.

And in the evening... visiting the dinosaurs and other ancestors of today's biodiversity at the Museum for Natural History and dining with them.

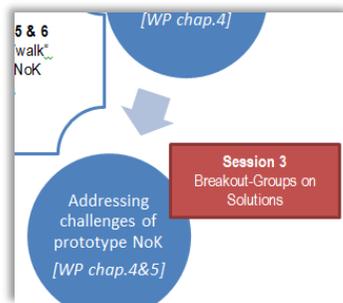
BOX 4: The process to conduct a detailed assessment on a topic in STEP 3 of the NoK process



Your notes :

Day 2

Solutions and design options for an effective NoK



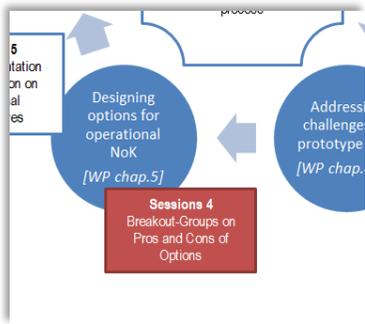
Session 3: Identifying solutions for major challenges of the NoK

Throughout the NoK development process, a main focus was on identifying different kinds of challenges that such a process might face: e.g., taking into

account the interests of existing institutions and experts, ensuring quality, and linking up properly with the requester-side (see White Paper, chapter 4). The session will present the major challenges identified by the evaluation process of the project, which interviewed nearly 80 experts involved in developing and testing the NoK prototype. The focus of the breakout groups is to discuss the best available solutions for the challenges identified (see Box on the right side):

BOX 5: Main challenges identified in the project's evaluation of the prototype development and the test cases (based interviews with 80 participants)

- A. **Develop and maintain a strong focus on the process of the NoK** throughout its planning and during implementation to help ensure the NoK meets its objective to effectively transfer knowledge into the decision-making process. This requires bringing various different but interrelated elements together and clearly laying out from the start how things will be done to better transfer knowledge into the decision making process.
- B. **Include different groups in the planning and implementation of the NoK**, ensuring they are represented at all levels and from the very beginning. A wide range of expertise, skills, knowledge sources and knowledge types and perspectives are essential to ensure the overall success of the NoK. Expertise from social sciences and practitioners, particularly those working on science, policy and society interfaces were specifically identified as key. Skills such as facilitation, negotiation and advocacy were also identified as important to implementing the NoK processes.
- C. **The important role of communication within and outside the NoK.** Different groups within the NoK may have different information needs and communication styles. There is a clear link between communication and transparency, which is a key aspect of building trust in the NoK to help encourage individuals to contribute, use information produced from the NoK and promote the NoK within their networks.
- D. **Ensure that outputs from the NoK are usable in the policy community.** To improve the policy usability of the outputs the evaluation suggested that the NoK seeks this information at the start of the process to help frame the question with the target audiences, consistently uses language which is relevant and understandable in the policy community and selects and prepares appropriate tools to disseminate this information to the target audiences and wider.
- E. **Capacity-building will be an important aspect of any future NoK**, requiring support not only from donors, but through strengthening links with different organisations, networks and initiatives at both the European and to a lesser extent national levels. A process of reflection and learning must be central to the NoK to build bridges and reduce gaps between groups and move ever closer to collaborative working and information sharing.



Session 4: Breakout Groups on strengths and weaknesses of different design options for the NoK

In the complex biodiversity landscape, there are a number of options on how to design and set up the NoK in reality. Generally speaking, and as discussed in chapter 5 of the White Paper, the main

options are a **network-based approach** with a high division of responsibilities and tasks between different partners, and a **platform-based approach** where a rules and procedures are more explicit and official bodies of the NoK are set up. Both options have their strengths and weaknesses, especially when it comes to tackling the challenges discussed in the session before. The four breakout groups will discuss the different approaches, each of them taking an additional focus on the functions that the NoK might serve:

- A. Network option perspective (focus on the needs that could be taken care of by different partners)
- B. Network option perspective (focus on the technical approaches to develop the NoK)
- C. Platform option perspective (focus including research strategy perspective)
- D. Platform option perspective (focus on the policy support perspective)

Each group will come up with a set of strengths and weaknesses of the approaches, taking the results from Breakout group 1 into account. Together, these options will then form a broader set of building blocks for the NoK to further develop the according chapter 5 in the White Paper.

Intended result: A common understanding on the pros and cons of the different approaches and how they can help to achieve certain functions. Identified building blocks to further develop the White Paper proposal on the NoK design.

Your notes :

Day 3

Institutional perspectives and the way forward

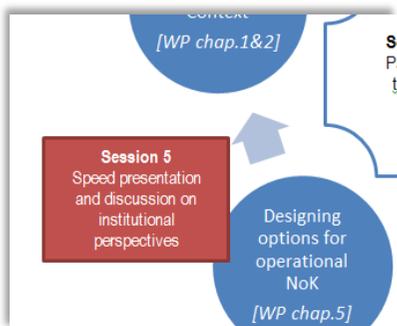
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Sessions 1, 5 & 6
Participatory walk
through the NoK
process

Participatory walk, Part 2: Applying results from Day 2 on “your” case.

With the insights gained on Day 2, the first round of Day 3 will be dedicated to revisit the walk through the NoK process from Day 1 on 8 different potential questions and see, how the solutions for challenges developed in the breakout groups may in fact help to further shape the processes for each case. You may either go back to your case from Day 1, or join another one to bring in your expertise there.

Intended result: Strengthening understanding of the NoK process, but also, outline the approach for a potential follow up of initial cases of the NoK in 2014.



Session 5: Institutional perspectives

The number of networks, projects and institutions that could benefit and contribute to a NoK is broad and diverse. We have invited some of the major ones on the European level to share with us, in short five-minute presentations their thoughts of potential benefits and

contributions – for setting the NoK up, and for maintaining it and filling it with life later. The summary of the presentations build the basis for everybody in the room to share their institution’s perspective (use Box 6 for your thoughts).

Your notes :

BOX 6: Your insitutions/ projects/ networks, how could they :

Benefit from a NoK ?

Contribute to a NoK ? (in 2014, and beyond)

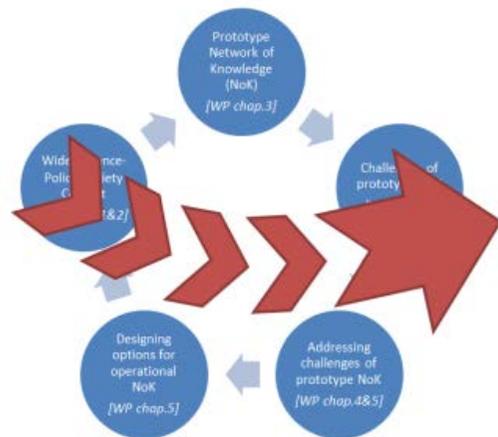
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Sessions 1, 5 & 6
Participatory walk
through the NoK
process

Participatory walk, Part 3: Assembling the diversity of potential institutional benefits and contributions

The final participatory round invites all participants to add their institution's perspectives to the potential benefits and contributions from the speed presentations, and discuss jointly, whether they are complementary and fill the needs identified earlier during the conference. If time permits, the session may also allow linking the contributions identified to the cases developed in the earlier rounds of the participatory walk.

Intended outcome: Joint overview of institutions', networks' and projects' potential benefits and contributions to a NoK, to be fed into the NoK White Paper and to identify complementary roles in the future design of the NoK.



Session 6: Wrap-up and way forward

At the final session, the project team will summarize their lessons learned for the further development of the White Paper and how the NoK could be brought into reality.

Next steps will be discussed jointly in order to identify the interests of participating institutions to further develop the NoK and make it happen.

Intended outcome: Actions for the way forward (with timeline)

Your notes :