



Creating a Network of Knowledge
for biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe
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Defining elements of organisational structures and processes of a NoK (Deliverable 1.2 of the KNEU project)

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1 Outline and purpose of the Deliverable in the context of the KNEU project

In the context of the KNEU project, the Deliverable has been set up to scope the foundations of a potential NoK structure, which will then be developed in WP2, 3 and 5. Accordingly, the Deliverable builds on different elements, but also reflects some challenges during the course of the project.

Chapter 2 summarizes shortly the baseline of the NoK concept and how it relates to ongoing processes on the international and European scale, which the NoK would need to take into account.

Chapter 3 takes up this context and addresses the challenges of a NoK in a more specific context. Furthermore it summarizes the recommendations brought to KNEU by the regional workshops (M.2.2) in Copenhagen, Budapest and Aix-en-Provence where the very first draft of the NoK was presented.

Chapter 4 summarizes the results in terms of how the discussions are reflected in the current NoK prototype and its explanations in preparation for the first NoK prototype.

2 Baseline of the NoK concept note and approaches from a general perspective

The concept for the Network of Knowledge (NoK), as outlined already in the description of work of KNEU, is based on the concept note of EPBRS, which outlined the

Main tasks of a network of knowledge (EPBRS 2009¹):

1. **respond to requests** for information from its clients, including, if required by its clients, policy-relevant information, policy options and scenarios;

¹ http://www.epbrs.org/PDF/2009%2009%2010%20Concept%20note%20on%20the%20network%20of%20knowledge_version%202-1.pdf

2. **provide reports on issues that its members wish to draw to the attention** of its clients, including both early warnings and in some cases the need for further research on key policy-relevant issues;
3. design and co-ordinate multiple-scale assessments that respond to the needs of decision-makers;
4. **help to build capacity** to provide reliable, evidence-based and policy-relevant information and to undertake assessments;
5. interpret its findings for the clients of the network, and **communicate** with them, with other scientists, and where appropriate, with the public, concerning the implications of their findings, and what policy options might be available

These tasks pose a high expectation on the organizational and procedural structures of a NoK, as it clearly needs to interact with different stakeholders from basically two perspectives:

Requesters: According to the tasks outlined above, requesters can be decision makers (as in point 1 and 3), but also scientists – as in first place being knowledge holders – may become active as requesters to the NoK concerning early warnings and new and emerging issues.

Knowledge holders: Knowledge holders, from science and beyond, will need to get engaged in all tasks and it has to be made clear, what their specific role is and how they can get acknowledged for their work. Also, it might be expected from them to get involved actively into the communication (point 5) beyond the communication with the requesters.

So in general, a NoK may face different functions it has to fulfil:

- conducting assessment and targeted studies
- responding to policy requests (via the assessments, but probably also via other means)
- support capacity building of knowledge holders to get engage into the processes mentioned above
- identify potential knowledge gaps where additional research might be needed
- communication of results

The first four bullet points are reflected, in the main functions decided to be fulfilled by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)², as outlined in the Busan Outcome³. Additionally, communication of results has also been identified as an important task for IPBES there.

This challenging variety of task for a NoK as a science-policy interface (SPI) can be seen as consequence of the lessons learned from earlier, mainly global assessments like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) and the study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), which all included different challenges in the development of science-policy processes (see for example Hulme et al. 2011⁴). They also show to some extent a constant development from pure natural science driven assessments (the first phase of IPCC), to more integrated science assessments (e.g., MA and later stages of IPCC) up to the inclusion of other forms of knowledge (e.g., IAASTD and TEEB). Also, defining and developing policy relevant products has become more and more important, as can be seen in the report design of TEEB (see for example Ring et al. 2010⁵) and the ongoing discussions for IPBES⁶.

For setting up a NoK, this means that the roles, and accordingly the organizational structures and procedures need to reflect those roles, but also, that the NoK needs to have a certain flexibility in its processes to identify and include the right players for the right tasks. In terms of acknowledgement and motivation of participation, this is very challenging.

² www.ipbes.net

³ See UNEP/IPBES/3/3

⁴ Hulme M., et al. (2011): Science-policy Interface: beyond assessments. - *Science* 333(6043):697-8

⁵ See Ring, I. et al. (2010): Challenges in framing the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity: the TEEB initiative *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 2: 15-26

⁶ See chairs summary and scoping paper of the workshop on the IPBES Policy Support function, Bonn, Dezember 2011: <http://www.biodiversity.de/index.php/de/biodiversitaet/biodiversitaet-international/ipbes/ipbes-workshop-december-2011-in-bonn>

3 Challenges for structures and processes of a NoK

According to the discussion above, a number of challenges for the elements of a NoK can be identified.

3.1 Challenges for the NoK from a general perspective

According to the above mentioned tasks and actors, a NoK has to address key issues on the following aspects: connection with and of the knowledge holders, proper governance (internal structure and external transparency), financial solvability, communication and interaction and quality assurance.

Connection with and of knowledge holders

A Network of Knowledge is first and foremost a network of networks of existing institutions, initiatives and projects. It acknowledges the fact that nothing in the area of science-policy interactions starts from scratch and accepts that many processes are already going on and the majority of knowledge needed is available via existing knowledge holders, or can be integrated based on their knowledge. Identifying and addressing them is thus of major importance.

Given the existing number of initiatives within regions, member states, across Europe and worldwide (see Mapping exercise of KNEU, D.1.2) and that the NoK should be able to connect with all types of networks, organizations and individuals within Europe, this remains a major challenge.

Additionally, the NoK has to be flexible in order to be able to cope with the dynamics of the landscape and to be able to include new nodes as new questions arrive and contexts change.

Governance

Communicating knowledge between providers and users is not always an easy task. Sometimes it might be straightforward when it comes to standard figures regularly used in policy (e.g., on the labour market or the economic development), but in complex issues, where such figures do not exist or are insufficient and interactions with other areas are high, like in many environmental issues, these communication processes are much more challenging. A governance structure addressing this challenge needs clear procedures but will also need a high degree of flexibility, nevertheless ensuring a high degree of mutual trust between involved partners. This is something which cannot be achieved from the start, but needs to build during the development of the NoK over several years.

Financing

As in every science-policy interface, financing the work is a major challenge. Summarizing over many existing SPIs, it can be said that 3 models for operation and thus also financing can be identified:

- a) **Complete funding of activities by one major donor** (a governmental body): In such cases, the SPI is most often linked, also in terms of legitimacy, to the funding institution (e.g. as advisory boards/bodies). For example, DG Environment supports several boards supporting different policies (e.g., on Biodiversity and Nature)
- b) **A core funding via a fund** supported by one or several parties (governmental or others), and additional financing by requesters to conduct work on their request: This option, as often seen on the international level, hasn't been in practice in Europe very often. It would assume, that some countries or ministries would agree on a memorandum of understanding with clear rules and guidelines, as it is currently discussed, for example, for IPBES⁷.
- c) **A bottom-up approach mainly driven by knowledge holder institutions**: Over the last decade, many research institutions have gathered together in networks and similar constructs not only to improve scientific coordination, but also to better link up for the exchange with policy and society. For example, the FP funded Networks of Excellence like ALTER-Net, MARBEF and EDIT have developed means also to engage with society. A similar approach is followed by the ESFRI project Lifewatch. Until now, these networking activities have, although they gained some impact in improving communication to policy, have not been able to ensure a critical mass of joint funding to support the development of a high-profile science-policy interface work. Often this work is restricted to the time of EU project funding, and means are sharply reduced, even if networks are continuing their work afterwards (results of work of the SPIRAL project, ongoing). A similar lesson can be drawn from the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS). With funding via two EU project (BIOPLATFORM 2002-2004 and BIOSTRAT 2006-2009), a broad involvement of participants across Europe could be ensured. Without such support, participation in the EPBRS processes is more and more restricted to institutions and partner able to fund participation by their own means.

⁷ See UNEP/IPBES/3/3

In the current situation, with IPBES to be established in the coming year (2012) and with the potential need for a regional support, e.g. via a European hub, an option following a model between option a) or b) might be the most realistic one, given that the purpose of such an SPI (with the NoK becoming a part or core of it), is clearly defined in its roles, which may include purely European task (e.g. in the context of implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy) or could add the support of global processes like IPBES.

Communication

Communication is important to develop and maintain a position in the international context for the NoK as a means of importance as well as for the status of the outputs. This is both true for within the network of knowledge holders, so that commitment and motivation is captures to contribute to the Nok, as well as to knowledge seekers, to demonstrate the value of the contribution of the NoK to their requests. Additionally, communication should take place to demonstrate transparency about the process of selection evaluators, contributors and project coordinators.

Quality assurance

Learning from experiences like IPCC, the quality insurance of the process and the output are of crucial importance. For a NoK this indicates that for all products meant for the public, a clear review procedure needs to be established.

The quality assurance will need to tackle the following issues:

- **Accuracy of information**, external/internal validity, reliability, « risk assessment » / confidence, level of transparency & replicability
- **Limitations:** relevance to real-world conditions, measurable indicators of performance, applicability, adequacy of the information, actionability of the evidence
- **Alternative options:** if a dominant answer is not obvious (multiple options present themselves), potential trade-offs associated with the options identified must be discussed
- **Expected barriers to use of synthesis**, including time pressure, perceived threats to autonomy, preference for tacit knowledge, lack of resources. Suggests performance indicators

- **Lifespan of the answer:** Anticipated needs for future updating

For the methods envisaged for the NoK (expert consultation, evidence-based approach, adaptive management), there are a number of guidelines and even protocol for the first two methods, so that adapting them accordingly to the needs of the NoK should be easy and be widely accepted. For adaptive management procedures, the process is more open as it deals with deliberations and review with different stakeholders in the process. Here, the way to design the review process will need to be more context specific.

3.2 Discussion from the regional workshops

From the regional workshops carried out in KNEU WP2 to discuss a very first draft of the NoK structure, many comments were collected on the above mentioned challenges, but also the workshops added additional aspects to the discussions. The workshops were held in Budapest, Copenhagen and Aix-en-Provence with about 80 participants from 25 countries, thus representing a wide variety of regional perspectives.

The biggest challenges, across the three workshops where the following (row according to the importance identified by voting of the participants, see Figure 1):

1) Scale of questions asked to a European NoK
2) Funding of the process
3) Added-value of the NoK
4) How to prioritize requests? Criteria selection?
5) How to ensure credibility of the work?
6) Experts motivation to contribute
7) Involvement in NoK bodies
8) Expert selection / criteria?
9) Transparency

10) Possible alternative approaches (top-down vs bottom-up approach)
11) Identifying knowledge gaps feeding into research agendas
12) Confidentiality vs. open access (users vs clients)
13) Multidisciplinary (ensuring not only natural science)

The issues rated highest by participants were discussed in break-out groups, mainly the first four in the list. The following section summarizes the main conclusions on the topics across the 3 workshops, which sometimes led to somewhat conflicting recommendations, thus also highlighting the different regional and knowledge holder perspectives. This is highlighted accordingly.



Figure 1: Impressions from the regional workshops (Copenhagen) – voting on most important issues to be tackled by creating a NoK

1) Scale of questions to be addressed by the NoK

Most participants agreed that the NoK should mainly focus on questions of transnational interest, meaning that questions should have a higher relevance than just a national perspective, e.g. via addressing the scale of biodiversity “ecoregions” (e.g. Alps). In general, questions should be of pan-European interest, but also should try to link to the global level, e.g. the questions addressed via IPBES.

In order to address the scale issue properly, it should nevertheless try to involve and make use of existing local/national and regional mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the networking idea.

The Central European WS participants emphasized in addition, that the NoK should ensure the representativeness (in terms of experts and questions) of regions and topics that are addressed. The Nordic WS stressed the possibility that the NoK could extend the access to European experts knowledge to all countries (e.g. European expertise on Africa) so that the NoK could accept external requests from outside the European territory if they are of European relevance.

2) Funding & Finances

On the funding issue, the general opinion was that the basic functioning of NoK should be funded (the secretariat and Knowledge Coordination Body, see below), based on the minimal cost needed for its functioning. These funds should be publicly funded, supported by clients contributions if the work of the NoK is requested by them, nevertheless, the NoK would need to ensure the independency of the process towards the funding (transparency), which may only be ensured by a common source of money (fund) where potential clients pay into independent of concrete requests. For the contribution to this common fund different options were discussed (membership fees, Requesters could have different levels of fees depending on the client's nature (higher for commercial) and depending on the size of questions; contributions from private companies). The NoK should ensure the high profile of its process and products to motivate funding. These options should be further evaluated.

According to the Southern and Central WS, experts should be paid for their work in the NoK, while the Northern WS proposed a mixture of paid and voluntary involvement depending on the time spent in the process and size of the question (e.g., work group leaders should be paid). Peer reviewers should not be paid

As a regional IPBES node, there may also be additional funds available for that role.

3) Added value of the NoK

In general, most participants agreed that a NoK would have an added value, both for knowledge holders and knowledge requesters. But it would need to clearly articulate and focus on the added-value compared to existing structures, which would include:

- Supporting transnational knowledge sharing
- Fostering inter- and trans-disciplinary work
- Ensuring high credibility, inter alia via strict protocols for the processes
- Identifying knowledge gaps
- Forcing (as far as possible) the implementation of findings at the political level
- Clearly defining its roles related to IPBES

Some regional specificities also came up in the discussions of the added value of a NoK. The Central European WS highlighted the potential support of change of habits in networking which are mostly informal today. A NoK could also legitimate, evaluate and assess the quality of existing work, and thus validating existing reports to some extent. Also, it could provide models and scenario building for the use on the national level. Final reports or products should not only be reviewed by scientists but also by different professions and stakeholders to increase relevance.

The colleagues at the Southern WS stressed the importance to ensure open access to information, trying to produce syntheses in a standardized format, and in general it should be tried to consolidate a unique strategic position in European and international arenas for European biodiversity knowledge holders.

4) Prioritizing questions via Selection criteria for the requests

In general, it was discussed, that a NoK needs transparent and standardized guidelines for selecting the requests. Among others, the following criteria were highlighted at the workshops:

Rejection criteria

- Duplication of existing or undergoing work: NoK should avoid duplication of work with other existing mechanisms and avoid working on similar questions (strategic research

alliances, EC Joint Programming Initiatives, etc...). NoK should not take up consultancy work.

- Relevance: Requests need to be relevant for biodiversity and for Europe (see also point 1)
- Realistic: Requests should be realistic with the delivery of the answers regarding **type of questions, time requirement and financial aspect**. NoK should not accept too generic question, which will be entirely up to the NoK to reformulate the question. Requester should have some thought behind the question to avoid the “How to save the world/biodiversity?” type of questions.
- Ethics and Motivation for the question: It should be clear from the requesters, what the reasons are behind a request. Although a NoK should be neutral in terms of the questions and outcomes it addresses, ethical and moral considerations on dealing with certain topics should be carefully considered.
- Agreement to open access of the output. In general, results from NoK work should be publicly available and not restricted to the clients. This would hamper the credibility of the processes in general.

Prioritization criteria

- Rapidity / efficiency: NoK should prioritize requests that can be delivered quickly to be more credible
- IPBES relevance: NoK should stress and convey European key priorities at the global level.
- Applicability: Management related questions should be prioritized, rather than more strategic or generic ones.
- Research and political agendas: NoK might prioritize requests regarding their importance on those agendas.

The complete set of recommendations from all three workshops (as main output of KNEU MS.2.2) have been added in Annex 1 for review. These recommendations also focus on additional aspects of the work of the NoK.

4 Conclusions for designing the NoK

From the analyses and exchange analysed in this document as well as from the interviews conducted in the context of the mapping of knowledge holders and users in WP1 (see D.1.2), it has become clear that there is a high degree of openness in both groups towards the general ideas of a NoK to support their work and the interface between knowledge and decision-making.

Nevertheless, a lot of challenges needs to be addressed when setting up the concrete structure, which need to be further specified in the prototype of the NoK in WP2 and the according Green paper.

The according conclusions are synthesized in the following sections.

4.1 Setting principles

From the analyses and discussion it is clear, that a NoK needs to get widely accepted in order to be successful and effective. Jointly accepted guiding principles, as they are the core of the work of organisation like the Cochrane and Campbell Collaboration, will be an important orientation in this respect. Accordingly, the KNEU team has developed a preliminary set of a mission statement and 8 principles for the operation of the NoK, which have been posted on the website⁸ and will be continuously updated based on further discussions:

Mission statement

BiodiversityKnowledge is an initiative by researchers and practitioners to help all societal actors in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services to make better informed decisions. In this challenge, we invite you to develop with us an innovation called Network of Knowledge - an open networking approach to boost the knowledge flow between biodiversity knowledge holders and users in Europe.

Principles

BiodiversityKnowledge's activities are based on the following principles:

⁸ See: http://biodiversityknowledge.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=119#term297

1. **Ensuring broad collaboration**, by enhancing good communication and teamwork with a multidisciplinary team of experts.
2. **Minimizing bias**, through a variety of approaches ensuring scientific rigour, broad participation, and by avoiding conflicts of interest.
3. **Striving for relevant and up-to-date information**, by linking the most recent knowledge with ongoing policy discussions on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
4. **Promoting access and enabling wide participation**, through open communication of procedures as well as outputs of Biodiversity Knowledge, taking advantage of existing networks and strategic alliances in the area of biodiversity research and management
5. **Ensuring quality**, by responding to feedback, applying advanced methodologies, and developing systems for quality improvement
6. **Supporting international processes**, by linking up with international organisations and bodies, including the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
7. **Building on the enthusiasm of individuals**, by involving and supporting people of different nationalities, expertise and backgrounds working on biodiversity
8. **Avoiding duplication**, by providing overview of existing knowledge, and by good management and co-ordination to maximize efficiency and minimize costs.

These principles need to be linked towards clear procedures in the further development, where appropriate.

4.2 Players in and bodies of a NoK

For the general stakeholder groups, which might get involved into a NoK, the approach envisaged in the DOW remains valid. The following groups will need to be addressed and involved into the work.

KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS / PROVIDERS : People & institutions possessing relevant knowledge in various areas of expertise. NoK aims to make it easy for knowledge holders to become knowledge providers as this step, especially for many scientific organisations, is not an automatic one in their dissemination and outreach activities.

In order to activate holders to become providers, it will be of major importance to address and engage

KNOWLEDGE HUBS: Networking person or institution. They have an overview of knowledge holders in a given area/ organization/ country and are able and willing to link these with the requests identified and tackled by the NoK.

REQUESTERS, KNOWLEDGE USERS: People and institutions responsible for the management and policy strategies on biodiversity and ecosystem services, approaching NoK with questions/problems related to their responsibility.

Based on these 3 groups, different groups might need to be set up in a NoK structure, which ensure that a NoK will work properly and address the groups in their different roles. The following groups have been discussed and further developed in the exchange of the project team and via the discussions in the regional workshops:

KNOWLEDGE COORDINATING BODY (KCB): identifies appropriate knowledge providers and communicates the question asked by the client, convenes working groups or other meetings, maintains dialogue across actors and organise (peer) review of documents.

NoK SECRETARIAT: schedules and handles the day-to-day work and budget, supports the work of the NoK, liases with knowledge hubs. May be responsible for developing communication strategies/plans and ensure their implementation.

SCOPING GROUP: after reception of a request by the KCB, a scoping group, consisting of experts and clients posing the request might be set up to discuss and refine the exact framing of the problem in order to make it manageable for the NoK.

Ad-hoc WORKING GROUPS: are set up by the KCB with individual experts identified with the help of knowledge hubs. They will structure, organise and conduct the handling of a question/problem raised towards the NoK, using different methods. They will produce an according report (or other product) and will discuss and set out recommendations and policy options as appropriate. They may also signal the need for additional research, assessment or capacity building.

EVALUATORS: examine the work of working groups under predefined conditions in order to evaluate its quality, the compliance to the methodological standards of each approach, the

absence of biased analysis or conclusions, ensure the independence of conclusions from any pressure group. They can be experts in the topic addressed by the request, the methodology chosen to provide the answer, or end-users. They can be scientists/academics but also holders of practical knowledge or decision-makers.

How these groups may concretely interact will be further discussed in the detailed prototype of the NoK (to be released in March 2012) for first details, see section below which outlines the NoK process.

4.3 The NoK procedure

For request driven activities of the NoK which aim at detailed processes to conduct an assessment of knowledge, the KNEU team developed a first outline as it is described roughly in Figure 2. Three phases are foreseen:

The Preparing phase will accept and check the request together with a requester. The KCB and the NoK secretariat will play the leading role here. If a request needs to be evaluated and discussed further, a scoping group might be set up to do a preliminary estimation of what (knowledge) is available to answer the request and design the exact question together with the requester which then goes into the second phase.

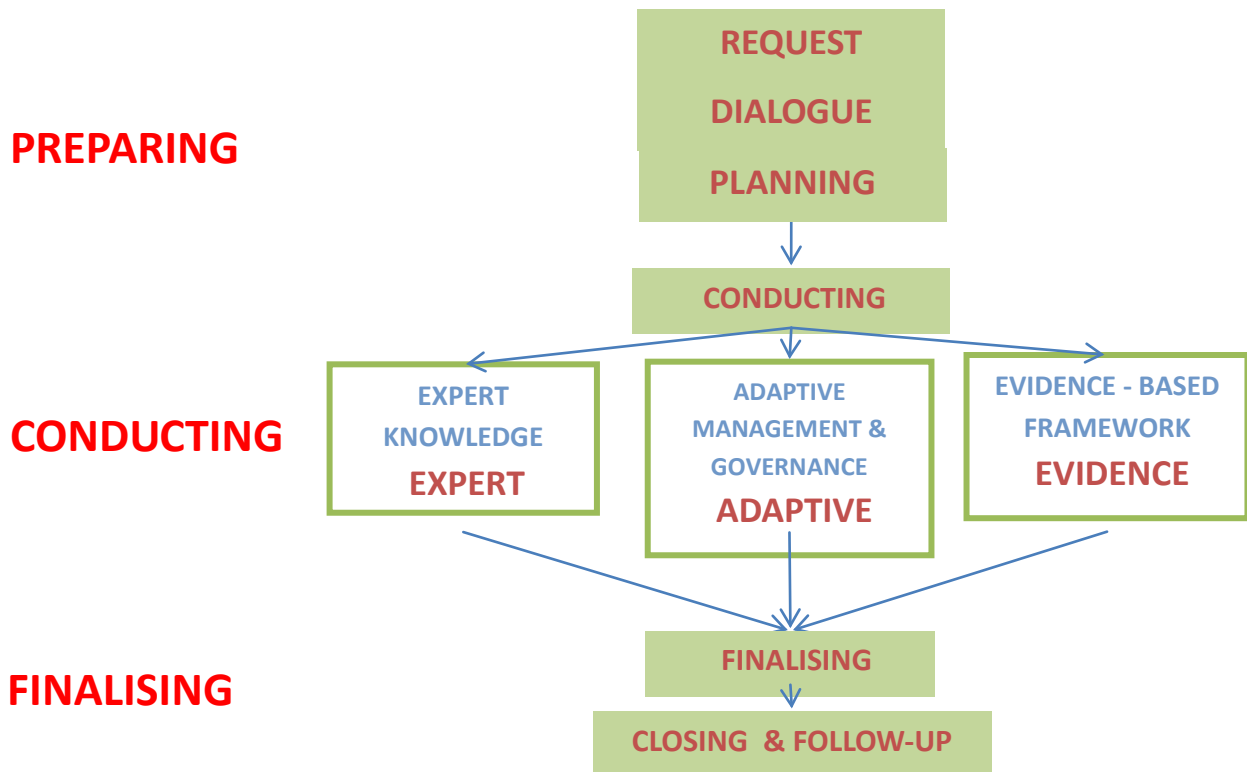


Figure 2 : General procedure for a NoK answering requests

The Conducting Phase will, based on agreed protocols with the requester, address the question via a working group of identified experts via one of the currently proposed (or another) method, which has also been decided in the protocol. Table 1 gives a general overview of which methods can be anticipated to be used: While expert consultation, in different forms, is widely applicable, an evidence-based approach and adaptive management will be limited to more specific questions (e.g., relating to specific management questions). Further developing the prototype will need to address these aspects in more detail.

The Finalising Phase will focus on ensuring a proper evaluation process in first place. In many cases (esp. expert consultation and evidence-based approach) this will include a scientific peer-review, but also a review by potential stakeholders and the requester will be included.

Table 1 : Potential use of methods with respect to knowledge available and general nature of question

Results of scoping / type of request	Limited or heterogeneous knowledge	Knowledge available
Synthesis	Expert consultation (fast) Evidence synthesis (thorough)	Expert consultation (fast) Evidence synthesis (thorough)
Assessment	Adaptive management (long)	3 approaches possible
Other (e.g. modelisation)	--	--

Further details are provided in the revised NoK prototype which will be available via the website biodiversityknowledge.eu from march 2012 onwards.

4.4 The role of technical solutions to support the NoK

From the interviews conducted within WP1 with potential clients (see D.1.1), and from discussions in the regional workshop, it has become obvious, that the original idea for the NoK to focus mainly on a process to conduct request-driven advice procedures, as outlined above, will not be sufficient to serve the needs for knowledge provision to decision makers and managers.

In addition, it will rather be important that the NoK may also function and support a more open and rapid exchange driven work by creating a “community of interest” via a web portal. As outlined in the barriers report, many stakeholders are looking for rapid information, and would prefer a “one-stop-shop” website for this. At the moment, the BISE (Biodiversity Information System Europe) by the EEA may develop into such a portal, but from an KNEU point of view, using a webportal to better network knowledge hubs (and potential requesters) will also need to be checked in more details.

Results from the according task 1.4 in WP1, which interviewed experts from similar networks (Cochrane and Campbell collaboration, Collaboration for Environmental Evidence) comes to the conclusion, that they are currently not using such approaches: For general communications, email and phone/skype remain the primary means, while for the processes to conduct reviews in Cochrane and Campbell, only Cochrane uses a specific webtool, which works basically as a

closed workspace or intranet. None of the networks currently uses a social network-like structure which could help in designing a potential solution for the NoK. For this, more generalized networks like Linked-in or Researchgate have been screened, but using such networks for an open network might prove problematic.

So basically the following two options exist in further developing this aspect in KNEU:

Option 1: Use resources from the project to allocate to IT experts to analyse our needs and identify appropriate tools – this will most probably be resource consuming and was not foreseen in the original work plan. Also,

Option 2: Consider minimum technological needs to implement through the BiodiversityKnowledge, with limited investment of resources. This could include:

- a library section for reviews, also linking to other sources,
- a list or even database of relevant knowledge hubs willing to actively engage in exchange processes
- a forum to exchange views and questions.

All these elements require to get a certain level of activity soon after they have been released. Many similar experiences, e.g. in the Networks of Excellence, show that it is difficult to ensure an active use of such tools. Accordingly, the way to react to such needs of rapid requests still needs to be further evaluated, also as it has major implications in terms of quality assurance in terms of knowledge provided and experts involved.

5 Annex 1: recommendations from the 3 regional workshops of WP2 on the structures and procedures of the NoK

(Recommendations can also be found for download at:

http://biodiversityknowledge.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=36:biodiversityknowledge-meetings-and-conferences&catid=2:uncategorised)



Creating a Network of Knowledge for biodiversity and ecosystem services

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Recommendations of the Southern European Biodiversity Knowledge workshop concerning the Network of Knowledge

Final Version (26/01/12)

BiodiversityKnowledge is a FP7 Coordination Action – “Creating a Network of Knowledge (NoK) for biodiversity and ecosystem services” (Grant No.265299).

The project aims at creating a Network of Knowledge (NoK) for biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe including a broad range of scientific knowledge and expertise from different regional perspectives. Three regional workshops (in Central Europe, Northern Europe and Southern Europe) were therefore planned during October and November 2011 (Budapest, Copenhagen and Aix en Provence).

This document summarizes the main recommendations from the Southern European workshop (Aix-en-Provence, France, 28-29th of November, 2011

The participants of the workshop, and thus contributors to this paper, are listed in the annex.

The following areas and main points were considered important by the participants:

- 1) Expert rewarding system/experts motivation/incentives
 - NoK should have a transparent, easy-accessible and pre-defined process of involvement of experts, the process should be scientifically-driven but open as well to non-academic experts;
 - NoK should ensure commitments from institutions to mobilize national experts (top-down) and acknowledge their involvement (e.g. secondment);

- NoK should have concrete incentives (modulated according to engagement level)
 - o Facilitate interactions with policy-makers, particularly when formulating the request/question
 - o Reputation of the contributors:
 - Visible authorship
 - synthesis/assessment reports to be recognized as valid as high ranking scientific papers (will be the case once NoK has proved its credibility)
 - A strong interaction between the NoK process with IPBES might catalyse the engagement of European experts in the European NoK process;
 - o Valued in career process (EU frameworks): e.g. positions, grants, etc;
 - o Facilitation: money, assistants, technical support;
 - o Increased opportunities for scientific publications (through networks built up through NoK's work);
- Geographical scope / type and relevance of the request could act as an incentive for experts to be involved in the process;
- NoK should create, right at the beginning of the process, opportunities for experts to interact with policy makers and to participate in the setting up of the questions;
- NoK should contribute to the recognition of knowledge synthesis/assessment reports (the pinnacle would be if they are recognized as much as peer-review scientific papers)

2) How to ensure the credibility and independency of the NoK?

- NoK should create its own niche of existence, i.e. not replacing the work of consultants and avoid competition with any existing mechanisms;
- NoK should have a clear legal basis;
- NoK should have a clear mandate, and highlight what would be its role *vis-à-vis* other national, regional and international assessment mechanisms;
- NoK processes and procedures should be transparent ;
- NoK reports should be open access;
- NoK should set-up an independent review of the whole process in addition to the assessment review;
- NoK should ensure to limit any conflicts of interest from experts; ensuring a mix of experts would help towards this goal ;
- NoK should be able to highlight potential existing controversies in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- NoK should ensure/be able to testify the scientific (with fixed confidence and uncertainty levels) and technical quality (clear language/message so that the outputs are understandable by the client) of its work. The NoK outputs should be largely accessible and disseminated;
- NoK should ensure that the non-academic knowledge is also taken into account in the process and be acknowledged as such;

- NoK should develop a professional communication strategy directed to the general public;
- NoK should try to ensure a clear and long-term support from the European Commission to this regional process while IPBES is being created

3) Expert and peer-reviewers selection / criteria

- The expert group within the NoK process should;
 - o Be independent from governments decisions;
 - o Be set-up through a transparent process, notably for the nomination and selection of experts (e.g. some selection criteria could include scientific excellence (publications), participation to previous assessments, etc.);
 - o Be composed of experts which are selected by governments/institutions (top-down), open calls (bottom-up) or a combination of both; regional relays could be used;
 - o Be constituted by a panel of different stakeholders (scientists and other knowledge holders, policy makers, civil society);
 - o Be multidisciplinary or the experts within the group should have multidisciplinary skills in relation to the biodiversity and ecosystem services research fields;
 - o Define and implement specific means and tools to generate a constructive and fruitful dialogue between different knowledge holders (science/society interface);
 - o Ensure an effective turnover of experts participating in the NoK process;
 - o Encourage exchanges/interactions with external experts who don't belong to the biodiversity and ecosystem services "sphere";
 - o Represent a good geographical balance.

4) Funding of the process

- The process of the NoK should be funded (logistic, staff and incentives for experts);
- The treatment of requests by the NoK should not be driven by funding (the whole process should be transparent and open access);
- NoK and IPBES should welcome funds from everyone (create a common pool of money), including private investments to "green" their image and to allow them to be more aware on what is going in the biodiversity field (it could be an incentive for them to be more pro-active with regards to biodiversity research);
- The funding of the NoK should be operated through a Trust funding mechanism in order to secure a complete independence of the whole process from funders.
- Funding sources can depend on the scope of the requests:
 - o Running assessment (on a regular basis: subscription system or rely on institutions which provide man power);

- One shot specific system;
- Basic funding for running the secretariat could be provided by government contributions;
- NoK should look at existing funding models (public and private funds) which are in accordance with EU legislation;
- Requesters/clients should pay all or part of the expenses depending on their ability to pay (IPCC has some funds to cover this activity)
- NoK should give ideas of prices (budgets) and timeframes to deliver the expected products;
- NoK should rely on existing networks (LIFEWATCH, GEO BON...) to create synergies and further support the assessment process of IPBES;
- Research gaps should be highlighted by the NoK but not funded by NoK;
- NoK should clarify/distinguish the difference between funding “assessments” and funding research projects (which is not part of the NoK mandate)

5) Priorization of requests

- NoK should prioritize requests from IPBES and from national/EU political agendas;
- NoK coordination body should define pluriannual priorities, i.e. highlighting hot topics/ flagships initiatives over a certain period of time;
- NoK should avoid duplication of work with other networks (EC Joint Programming Initiatives, strategic research alliances...);
- NoK should also stress and convey European key priorities at the global level (IPBES)

6) Scale of the requests

- The requests to the NoK should mainly have a transnational approach, in accordance with biodiversity “ecoregions” classification (e.g. Alps), be of interest for Pan-European citizens and be in relation with the global level (IPBES);
- NoK could accept external requests from outside the European territory if it is directly relevant for Europe;
- NoK should facilitate the exchange of best practices: specific national/regional issues could mobilize the NoK to get support from other countries in order to understand some particular issues and to solve some common challenges, i.e. one national request could be of great interest for other European countries and regions;
- NoK should have contact points in each country

7) Added-value of the NoK compared to the processes currently in place (with respect to the European, but also the national level)

NoK will be successful if it provides the following added values:

- Clearly define its functional niche in the existing landscape, in particular clearly define its role related to IPBES: would NoK be in charge of IPBES implementation at European level? Would it be an assessment mechanism with regard to biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe? A mixed model between the two? Depending on the approach chosen, the prioritisation of tasks and activities could be different;
- Ensure credibility, independent expertise and independency from funders;
- Ensure a permanent collaboration platform for existing networks to join forces, to gather the knowledge and to avoid competition and duplication with existing initiatives;
- Bring more legitimacy to the cases and to the answers ;
- Identify needs, gaps and uncertainties in knowledge;
- Ensure open access to information;
- Production of synthesis in a standardized format ;
- Include experts from different countries to enlarge the perspective and broaden the vision
- Identify interesting questions which could have implications beyond national boundaries
- Consolidate a unique strategic position in European and international arenas (due to a more common regional approach)
- Increase accountability for biodiversity;

Final Attendance list

KNEU Expert	Organisation
Sophie Condé	European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity
Wolfgang Cramer	Institut Méditerranéen de Biodiversité et d'Ecologie marine et continentale (France)
Carlo Heip	Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research
Marcel Jouve	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (France)
Murièle Millot	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transports and Housing (France)
Catherine Numa	IUCN – Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation
Andreas Obrecht	Federal Office for the Environment, International Affairs Division (Switzerland)
Daniela Pauli	Swiss Biodiversity Forum
Anne-Hélène Prieur-Richard	DIVERSITAS
Marian Ramos	Natural History Museum (Spain)
Adriana Ressurreiçao	Department of oceanography and Fisheries, University of the Azores (Portugal)
Ramon Rosello-Mora	Mediterranean Institute for Advanced Studies (Spain)
Claire Sabbagh	National Institute for Agronomic Research (France)
Nirmala Seon-Massin	National Agency for Water and Aquatic Environments (France)
Eleni Stravianoudaki	General Secretariat for Research and Technology (Greece)
KNEU Partner	Organisation
Estelle Balian	Royal Belgian Institute of <i>Natural Sciences</i>
Cécile Blanc	Foundation for Research on Biodiversity (France)
Aurélien Carbonnière	Foundation for Research on Biodiversity (France)
Claude-Anne Gauthier	Foundation for Research on Biodiversity (France)
Ilse Geijzendorffer	Alterra (The Netherlands)
Barbara Livoreil	Bangor University (UK)
Marie Vandewalle	UFZ (Germany)
Koen Van Muylen	INBO (Belgium)



Creating a Network of Knowledge for biodiversity and ecosystem services

www.biodiversityknowledge.eu

Recommendations of the Central European BiodiversityKnowledge workshop concerning the Network of Knowledge

Budapest, Hungary, 13-14th of October, 2011

BiodiversityKnowledge is aiming at creating a Network of Knowledge (NoK) for biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe. For this a broad range of knowledge and experiences need to be included, a regional aspects within Europe need to be taken into account. Such regional aspects are discussed in three regional workshops in October and November 2011. This document summarizes the recommendations from the workshop for Eastern Europe. The participants of the workshop, and thus contributors to this paper, are listed in the annex.

The following areas and main points were considered important by the participants:

1) Scale of questions asked to a European NoK

- NoK should act on a pan-EU scale and act as a driver that can direct and raise biodiversity hot topics and influence national and international policies on biodiversity
- NoK should address mainly issues of global⁹ or European interest yet should be open to any local, national, regional requests.
- NoK should ensure representativeness (in terms of experts and questions) of regions and topics
- Local implementation should be done on a regional/national levels, e.g. by involving national mechanisms

⁹ e.g., request towards the regional level coming from the forthcoming Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

2) Use of existing national biodiversity mechanisms/ platforms

- NoK should avoid competition, but rather collaborate with and strengthen the existing, functional national and/or relevant biodiversity platforms/mechanisms as interfaces and hubs
- The added value of involvement for existing hubs must be visible
- Ideally NoK should be a network of networks between national and European level, and thus also contribute to strengthening national bodies (especially in eastern European countries, lack of funding is a major problem on the national scale).
- Secretariat function of NoK could be distributed and / or changing between different national/European hubs/ institutions
- NoK should benefit from a map of those existing mechanisms at the regional and national level and not only ecological mechanisms but as well legal, social, technical mechanisms...

3) Added-value of the NoK compared to the methods currently used (with respect to European, but also national level)

NoK will be successful if it provides the following added values:

- Ability of networking and transnational cooperation by knowledge sharing and improving access to knowledge
- Facilitation of inter- and trans-disciplinary integrative approaches (people from different background and training)
- integrate opportunity to include other disciplinary approaches in the decision making process (economics, social science, health etc.)
- opportunity to involve different level of expertise
- Legitimate / Evaluate/ assess quality of the work (Quality assurance), e.g. by validating existing reports/assessments
- Encourage knowledge based decision making (use of knowledge produced and increasing involvement of experts)
- Ensure independent expertise, objectivity, and high credibility
- Ensure transparency of procedures (selection of experts, funding, sources of information etc.)

- Support the change of habits in networking which are mostly informal today by ensuring high credibility of a NoK, especially in an Eastern European context
- Ensure supervision of the work at different stages of the process, continuous consultation
- Evaluation by peer reviewers, who should have no contact with clients
- Rely on a strict protocol for the mechanism
- Provide models and scenario building
- Support with its work to avoid duplicated research
- Force the implementation of findings at the political level
- The final reports/products should be not only be reviewed by scientists but also by different professions and stakeholders to increase relevance (engineers, economists, lawyers, social scientist, etc..)
- Ensure that processes are cost-efficient

4) Funding streams: who pays/ who is paid?

4a) Sources of fundings

- NoK should find a transparent way to avoid the influence of the money on the mechanism and final reports / products (The UN system could be a solution: every country pays a contribution; regardless of the questions asked to the NoK. This common pot of money will avoid governments influence in the NoK.)
- NoK should rely on public funds for covering its basic functioning (secretariat and coordination)
- Clients should fund their requests
- Low income clients should be supported by a secured common pool of money.
- NoK should be a regional IPBES node
- Long-term commitment (subscription) should be assured by governments
- Private sector should be able to contribute.
- Institutes might also contribute as they may gain in reputation if their scientists are involved in such an organization.

4b) Users of fundings

Secretariat of the NoK

- People contributing to working groups should be paid and acknowledged
- Work should be fully costed (incl. in-kind contributions)
- Flow of money within the NoK should be transparent
- Peer review should be on a voluntary based.

Who is involved in NoK work and its bodies?

- NoK should be opened to all disciplines and level of expertise.
- NoK should ensure representation of member states in its knowledge coordination body (KCB)
- NoK should ensure thematic representatives (disciplines, sub-disciplines)
- NoK should have an additional actor: the observer group, which could be e.g. academic societies and NGOs
- NoK should have a permanent secretariat and fixed term representatives in KCB
- NoK should find a way of providing independency of the knowledge holders from their governments if needed
- KCB could be made of 80% of permanent scientific staff (15 MS, 10 topical experts) & 20% contractual

Further information on BiodiversityKnowledge, and especially the Network of Knowledge prototype, can be found at www.biodiversityknowledge.eu

BiodiversityKnowledge is an initiative funded as Coordination Action under the project KNEU - Developing a Knowledge Network for EUropean expertise on biodiversity and ecosystem services to inform policy making economic sectors with the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission (Grant No.265299).

Annex : List of workshop participants

András	Báldi	Institute of Ecology and Botany of the HAS
Angélique	Berhault	Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences
Petr	Blahnik	Ekologické služby, s.r.o.
Cecile	Blanc	International, Europe & Overseas Unit French Foundation for Research on Biodiversity
Robert	Boljesic	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
Zoltán	Botta-Dukát	Institute of Ecology and Botany of the HAS
Aurélien	Carbonnière	International, Europe & Overseas Unit French Foundation for Research on Biodiversity
Andraz	Carni	Academy of Science and Arts, Institute of Biology, University of Nova Gorica
Constantin	Cazacu	Lifewatch Romania, University of Bucharest
Rita	Engel	Institute of Ecology and Botany of the HAS
Ditta	Greguss	Ministry of Rural Development
András	Gubányi	Hungarian Natural History Museum
Klára	Hajdú	CEEWEB Budapest
Lubos	Halada	Institute of Landscape Ecology, of Slovak Academy of Sciences
Gergő	Halmos	BirdLife Hungary
Michael	Hosek	Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic
Eszter	Kelemen	Szent István University
Jan	Kirschner	Institute of Botany of the ASCR
Eszter	Kovács	Szent István University
Edit	Kovács-Láng	Institute of Ecology and Botany of the HAS
Kinga	Krauze	International Centre for Ecology, Polish Academy of Sciences
Barbara	Livoreil	University of Bangor
Stoyan	Nikolov	Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, Bulg.Acad.Sci.
Andrew	Pullin	University of Bangor
Kristine	R. Ulvund	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research - NINA
Cristina	Sandu	Institute of Biology Bucharest, Romanian Academy
Sylwia	Śnieg	General Directorate for Environmental Protection Department for Natura 2000
Eszter	Székely-Bognár	Institute of Ecology and Botany of the HAS
László	Szemethy	Szent István University
Katalin	Török	Institute of Ecology and Botany of the HAS
Olivér	Váczi	Ministry of Rural Development

Marie	Vandewalle	Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung GmbH - UFZ
Sonja	Voeller	University of Vienna
Thomas	Wrbka	University of Vienna



Creating a Network of Knowledge for biodiversity
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Recommendations of the Nordic European BiodiversityKnowledge workshop concerning the Network of Knowledge

Copenhagen, Denmark, 24-25th of November, 2011

FINAL version 24.01.2012

BiodiversityKnowledge is aiming at creating a Network of Knowledge (NoK) for biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe. For this a broad range of knowledge and experiences need to be included, a regional aspects within Europe need to be taken into account. Such regional aspects are discussed in three regional workshops in October and November 2011. This document summarizes the recommendations from the workshop for Nordic Europe. The participants of the workshop, and thus contributors to this paper, are listed in the annex.

The following eight areas and main points were considered important by the participants:

- 1) Possible approaches of what NoK could be doing:
 - Multidirectional /social network approach
 - Database interrogation
 - Client to NoK

8 votes

- NoK should not be restricted to a top-down approach, i.e. when funding determines the questions to be answered. It should also facilitate the bottom-up approach where scientists and NGOs are organizing themselves to deliver something. It would be very interested to compare the questions raised in a top-down approach with the one raised in a bottom-up approach
- In a bottom-up approach, manager could go to a network to get a list of people working with this subject area across Europe (organized in knowledge hubs such as the European Wildlife Network), they could create working groups, arrange funding, refine the questions through

existing knowledge (BISE consultation?) and then pose the refined question to the NoK that organizes a systematic review.

- Nok should have parallel approaches to ensure interactions in addition to the unidirectional way
 - o NoK could have an internal virtual forum but it would add some costs
 - o All NoK results should be open access in an easy way with labels and clever search engine: self-learning system. Help-yourself NoK.
 - o NoK could use the Community of Practice as a model.
 - o NoK could provide advice on best practices and could advise on various aspects of programs and practices.
 - o How to achieve multi-directionality
 - Aspect 1 – contributing to a review process will allow the contributor access to the other contributor’s knowledge
 - Aspect 2 – insight into client question will help researchers identify relevant research topics
 - Aspect 3 – knowledge gaps will be identified and used to stimulate research priorities
 - Aspect 4 – dialogue between client and scoping group during question definition and contract negotiation
 - Aspect 5 – client can be included on the way to ensure NoK is fulfilling his needs
 - Aspect 6 – during communication of results
 - Aspect 7 – policy makers may be pulled in as experts in some contexts.

2) Scale issue (At which scale should the NoK be operating / which type of questions)

7 votes

- Issues of scale, funding and quality are all interconnected.
- NoK should answer questions at the European scale but considering international, anyway questions should have higher relevance than national.
- NoK could answer questions from non-European clients if the questions are relevant to Europe
- NoK could extend the access to European experts knowledge to all countries (e.g. European expertise on Africa)
- NoK should use existing local/national/regional networks : It could create claim forms for experts to directly engage in the Nok
- NoK should build a map of experts on different issues

3) Cost / funding concerns

7 votes

Sources of fundings

- NoK should start by evaluating the minimal cost of its functioning (few staff as possible in the secretariat and advisory board)
- There are two funding routes: donor vs clients. NoK might need both routes
- NoK needs some funding for the basic structure: e.g. coordination role of the NoK needs funding for the maintenance of the network, and for planning and fundraising activities (through overheads?). Those fundamental funding should be secure at least for 5 to 10 years.
- NoK would need a secretariat but could try to place it within existing structures to save money. If specific hosting country, this one could take care of the basic cost.
- NoK would need some top-down long term support, e.g. for the secretariat.
- NoK could ask for membership fees
- Clients to the NoK could be asked to find co-funding, depending of the size of the question
- NoK might need to get the influential organisations on board to increase its reputation. European Network of Conservation Agencies or other cross-European organisations might be interested in funding the NoK process if they see the added values of it. Until the system proves its added value, they could consider contribute something small to secure a start-up fee.
- NoK should think of targeting rich clients at the beginning for the first case studies to have enough resources to prove the concept.
- NoK might think of IPBES as core-funding
- NoK should be concerned about perception of independence towards funding if it is run like a consultancy, it should also be concerned with possible competition with private consulting
- NoK could request governments or research councils to give some contributions to a common sponsorship pot (ESF model)
- NoK could have different levels of fees depending on users: higher for commercial
 - o NoK could have a common sponsorship pot with fees
 - o The client question is answered if he pays the fee
 - o Independency can be ensured by the common pot and by the transparent process
 - o DG environment or those clients using most NoK could have contract with Nok: Nok on demand/Yearly subscription to be able to use the services or Service level agreement.

Users of fundings

- NoK would need both a physical and virtual interaction platforms, virtual/e-platform may also need to be assisted with funding for communication technology
- The processing of questions could work on a mixture of paid and voluntary involvement, the principle of no-cost participation should be preferred though

- The processing of bigger questions needs to have some funding schemes; experts should be paid, at least through availability process. NoK could consider internal binding process to some experts depending on the size of the question.
- NoK might consider the need to subsidize the requests from European “poor” clients
- Raising a problematic to the NoK should be free
- Those who initially invest into the NoK or the “frequent users” of the NoK could get some free or discounted request
- NoK should secure money for events, workshops, meetings, helps by maybe some in-kind contributions.
- Reputation and prestige might be enough enticement for participation of managers and researchers with their knowledge and resources. For that NoK should ensure the high profile of the product to motivate people to contribute.
- Peer reviewers should not be paid
- Working group leader would need to work full time on this and should then be paid
- Scoping group and client negotiate costs and product in iterative process.
- NoK should not pay all contributors, but then will have to limit how much people are asked to take part and how much time the participants are expected to give
- Travel costs for networking to facilitate knowledge access should be paid

4) Transparency and peer-review

5 votes

- NoK as a new network would need to build trust, peer-review and transparency are key for credibility:
 - o Being reliable, transparent, understood, quick, deliver frequently not to be forgotten, should not be modest about your products, authoritative
 - o Products should have high standards
 - o NoK would gain in transparency if it is perceived independent to the funding
 - o NoK should offer a service to the clients, which involves as many perspectives and knowledge as possible
 - o NoK would need a process to ensure the relevance of the results but that it is not steered by the policy makers
 - o NoK would need to systematically report back to the clients on their results
- Peer review: scientists and other experts called for peer review should not be involved in the process. Adapted to the scope of the answer and the funding
- Peer-reviewers should not be paid

5) Ownership /Who is responsible of the results; the clients or the researchers?

5 votes

- Ownership will depend on how the Nok will be funded which depends on the clients.
- NoK should clearly define at the beginning whether the clients will own the results, define the ethics of the use of the results and acknowledge who pays for answering the question
- Nok should stand with the principle of public information: the reports that results from the Nok include the authors, so client is free to use it
- NoK coordination body should be responsible for the results:
 - o The peer-review should be more a quality control adapted to the answers depending on the complexity or amount of work it requires
 - o NoK should communicate uncertainties, transcribe the results not only from a scientific point of view, adapt the language for the client and provide help to interpret the results
- Ownership could be bottom up approach, i.e. the community would take ownership

6) Screening of requests (criteria)/Scoping process

5 votes

- NoK should keep the speed in the process as they would need to keep having some screening at the desk
- NoK should provide already on its website all the outputs to give answers
- NoK would need to have a set of first selective criteria at the desk:
 - o Scope/Scale: Prioritization should be based on the nature of the issue (e.g. how many countries are experiencing the concern? But would questions related to arctic areas for instance be tackled by Nok? The issues should not be too broad or too restricted and should not depend on fashion subjects only
 - o NoK should focus on the feasibility of the request (Cost, timeframe...)
 - o Nok should be flexible to drag in the relevant expertise
 - o Not should be restricted to European questions but relevant to EU biodiversity
 - o NoK should deal with topics about BD and ES, relevant to EU, not local topics and topics for which it is easy to find the answer on google. The NoK should make use of experience, up to date information
 - o NoK should study the ethics of the questions
 - o NoK could establish a simple grid: too silly, too simple, outside of scope, too long, too expensive
 - o NoK should be transparent on what sort of questions people can ask to the Nok, on the selecting criteria and on the screening experts (it should not be only administrative)

- NoK should be transparent on the background of the people who screen the requests and the screening people should be aware of the scope of the NoK
- After posing the questions to the NoK and the scoping work, if the question is not refined enough, the secretariat could advise the client to first go to an existing knowledge hub to help posing the question

7) How iterative? Identifying knowledge gaps feeding into research agendas

5 votes

- NoK should integrate feedback on gaps within the NoK process: i.e. planning section for scoping exercise to identify limited knowledge
- NoK should be tied to the cost –funding aspect: when questions arrive to the NoK which cannot be treated because of lack of knowledge, it should be directed to the research funding
- NoK should exercise some lobby work to make sure knowledge gaps are addressed
- NoK should establish contacts with the research funders to be able to pass on these priorities, and to identify whether there are proposals that have not been funded on these gaps so far.
- NoK could maintain a list of the knowledge gaps: i.e. questions still to be answered. NoK would become in a way a reference for funders that can validate the topics they fund based on this list.
- NoK should elaborate some principles for qualifying what goes to this list of knowledge gaps; it should not just be a list of good ideas. Stakeholders should get involve in establishing these principles
- Ensuring work in this direction (feeding into research agenda's and priority setting) will result in getting the interests from the research community

8) Added values How do add value to existing networks

4 votes

NoK will be successful if it provides the following added values:

Group 2 only answered directly this question

- NoK should clearly state its ambitions and limits
- NoK should phase in of ambition and costs: NoK should work on its reputation to help funding coming in and allowing more ambitious activities
- NoK should highlight people's participation – peer review panel and editorial board = both incentive to take part and key for establishing NoK's credibility
- NoK should build on what already exists and learn from what has, and has not, worked elsewhere

- NoK should represent a client interface. NoK should put client in contact with experts to directly negotiate the greater depth analysis needed. NoK should help facilitate client access directly to existing networks, i.e. should provide some type of network access for clients to contact directly experts for specific questions
- NoK should build a meta-network, i.e. networking networks, but also involve non-networked individuals
- NoK should be working at international scale
- NoK should involve a diversity of knowledge – not just peer-reviewed, and should exclude collecting new field data if possible
- NoK should direct you to an existing knowledge hub for you to discuss, refine and fund your question and issue

The red line of the discussion during this regional workshop in Copenhagen especially focussed on ensuring the added value of having the NoK by

- including a social dimension to it (e.g. the network of networks approach, and the inclusion of local knowledge as well as scientific knowledge)
- making explicitly use of and recognition of the existing knowledge hubs
- secure the added value of participating both for funders, clients, but also for knowledge providers by a transparent process, a clear and fast process and a feed-back loop into research agenda's and priority settings.

Further information on BiodiversityKnowledge, and especially the Network of Knowledge prototype, can be found at www.biodiversityknowledge.eu

BiodiversityKnowledge is an initiative funded as Coordination Action under the project KNEU - Developing a Knowledge Network for EUropean expertise on biodiversity and ecosystem services to inform policy making economic sectors with the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission (Grant No.265299).

Final Attendance list

Participant names	Organisation
Alison Hester	The James Hutton Institute (UK)
Aurélien Carbonniere	Foundation for Research on Biodiversity (France)
Barbara Livoreil	Bangor University (UK)
Carsten Neßhöver	UFZ (Germany)
Cecile Blanc	Foundation for Research on Biodiversity (France)
Courtney Price	Conservation Arctic Flora and Fauna (Iceland)
Estelle Balian	Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (Belgium)
Jiska van Dijk	NINA (Norway)
John Linnell	NINA (Norway)
Kristian Kvist	Danish Nature Agency (Denmark)
Kristine Ulvund	NINA (Norway)
Lars Björk	Swedish Scientific Board on Biodiversity (Sweden)
Marie Vandewalle	UFZ (Germany)
Mart Külvik	EMU (Estonia)
Martin Forsius	SYKE (Finland)
Martin Schneekloth	Ministry of the Environment; Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning (Denmark)
Mary Christie	Scottish Natural Heritage (Scotland)
Olaf S. Banki	GBIF (Denmark)
Olof Olsson	SLU (Sweden)
Richard K. Johnson	SLU (Sweden)
Rania Spyropoulou	European Environmental Agency (Denmark)
Renée Bekker	Gegevensautoriteit natuur (The Netherlands)
Sigurður Á. Práinsson	Ministry of Environment, Island (Iceland)
Toms Zalitis	Latvian State Forest Service (Latvia)
Tuulikki Rooke	Naturvardsverket (Sweden)