



Creating a Network of Knowledge for biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe

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Biodiversity is at risk as the 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss was missed. With the new global targets under the CBD taking a much broader approach to biodiversity conservation, by including also areas of society beyond traditional nature conservation, even more coordinated, integrative and knowledge-based actions for sustaining biodiversity and human livelihoods are required.

Even in Europe and its diverse landscapes we are still lacking a sustainable approach to the conservation and use of biodiversity and ecosystem services, although Europe is probably the region in the world with the best knowledge on its biodiversity.

This knowledge needs to be better accessed and used in the future. Due to the diversity of disciplines and institutions the challenge is to better link biodiversity knowledge with its potential users via a process, that also acknowledges the work of the knowledge holders.

This is the challenge that BiodiversityKnowledge, via the EU FP7 project KNEU, is aiming to analyse and to develop solutions for, by: i) creating an understanding of our knowledge landscape on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe; ii) discussing jointly with the members of this landscape ways to organise it in a “network of knowledge” approach, acknowledging the expertise of different kinds of institutions and individuals.

The Project and its objectives -

BiodiversityKnowledge is developed by the FP7 funded Coordination Action KNEU - Developing a prototype Network of KNowledge to inform policy-making and economic actors in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe. Its aim is to better link our biodiversity knowledge landscape with biodiversity governance across Europe.

To achieve this aim, the project has the following objectives:

- **Objective 1:** gain a broad overview of existing knowledge holders in biodiversity issues in Europe and on potential measures to link them for the Network of Knowledge approach
- **Objective 2:** develop a mechanism to identify and accesses expertise ready to answer a wide range of policy-relevant questions on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and use that mechanism to develop a flexible and appropriate network of knowledge
- **Objective 3:** develop sets of rights, roles, rules and procedures to identify, access, assemble and synthesise information relevant to questions posed to the network
- **Objective 4:** test the procedures in practical cases
- **Objective 5:** implement a process of learning by doing to permit an iterative improvement of the network to achieve more effective responses
- **Objective 6:** distil and communicate a set of lessons learned and best practice from the prototype and develop a recommended design of a Network of Knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe

Approach - The Network of Knowledge

To achieve the objectives, *BiodiversityKnowledge* will develop the concept of a “Network of Knowledge”, developed by the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) in 2009. A Network of Knowledge aims at bringing together existing organizations and processes in a flexible, responsive and broad-based way, thus helping to focus the support of science and scientists on the needs of those setting policy and taking decisions. The Network of Knowledge would allow temporary, *ad hoc* associations of diverse organisations to assemble and communicate knowledge adapted to the needs of clients.

First steps - Developing a prototype for a Network of Knowledge

Over the next years, *BiodiversityKnowledge* aims at developing jointly with experts from all areas the Network of Knowledge approach – not only for the benefit of European biodiversity and ecosystem services, but also to support the starting phase of IPBES – The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services.

The first step will be a mapping exercise to improve our overview of knowledge holders of biodiversity and ecosystem services across Europe. In parallel, we will develop a first prototype of the Network of Knowledge, discuss it with members of the community in regional workshops and a larger conference in 2011, and then test the Network in 3 case study areas - conservation, agriculture and marine biodiversity, where we will jointly identify potential questions with the clients of the network – decision makers from European and national level but also the private sector.

Partners - Supporting the biodiversity knowledge community

The project comprises a consortium of 18 leading institutions in Europe on biodiversity and ecosystem services research and governance. The consortium understands itself as a facilitator in developing the Network of Knowledge, aiming at a broad involvement from partners across the biodiversity knowledge landscape. The project partners are:

- Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung, UFZ, Germany (Coordination)
- Natural Environment Research Council – Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, NERC-CEH, UK
- Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, RBINS, Belgium
- Centro Interdisciplinar de Investigação Marinha e Ambiental, CIIMAR, Portugal
- Stichting Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut voor Zeeonderzoek, NIOZ, Netherlands
- Foundations Francaise pour la Recherche sur la Biodiversité, FRB, France
- Stichting Dienst Landbouwkundig Onderzoek, ALTEERRA, Netherlands
- Universität Wien, UNIVIE, Austria
- Stiftelsen Norsk Institutt for Naturforskning, NINA, Norway
- Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, CSIC, Spain
- MTA Okologiai es Botanikai Kutatointezete, IEB HAS, Hungary
- Stichting Europees Centrum Voor Natuurbescherming, ECNC, Netherlands
- Bangor University, Bangor, UK
- Eigen Vermogen van Het Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek, EVINBO, Belgium
- Umweltbundesamt GmbH, EAA, Austria
- Suomen Ympäristökeskus, SYKE, Finland
- Botanical, Environmental & Conservation Consultants Limited, BEC, Ireland
- Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee, VLIZ, Belgium

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