Connecting the green dots -

Towards an efficient and trustful structure for transferring knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe

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Network of Knowledge

This presentation aims to

- Highlight the challenges and criteria for solutions

- Present the current solutions chosen in the NoK

- Kick-start the discussions for break-out group 1.

Your feedback, suggestions and ideas will be included in a white paper the KNEU project is writing and further development of the NoK.

Purpose of a NoK

- To boost the knowledge flow between biodiversity knowledge holders and seekers

- Enhance the interface of biodiversity knowledge provisioning by knowledge holders

Knowledge providers: organisations, networks and individuals possessing biodiversity knowledge, information or data

Knowledge seekers: those actors that are faced with biodiversity related questions

General principles for a NoK

– Saliency: relevant to the need of users;

– Independence from influence of interest groups;

– Credibility of assessment and products;

– Geographic, disciplinary and knowledge-system inclusiveness;

– Legitimacy;

– Flexibility to learn and adapt.

Challenges and opportunities

- *Connecting, committing and acknowledging the actors;*

- *Data sharing, standards and data exchange;*

- *Governance;*

- *Finances;*

- *Quality assurance;*

- *Communication.*

Connecting, committing and acknowledging actors

A Network of Knowledge:

- **a network of networks of existing institutions**, initiatives and projects.

- should connect **all types of networks**, organizations and individuals within Europe.

- be **flexible** to cope with the dynamics of the knowledge landscape and to include new nodes.

- be **attractive for knowledge holders** to connect, commit and contribute the NoK.

Connecting, committing and acknowledging Criteria and options

Acknowledgement through status, financial or scientific rewards and credits.

- **Scientists**: ISI-ranked publications and third party funds.

- **Research institutions**: visibility of every networking activity and representing a clear added-value.

- **Funders** don't acknowledge science-policy activities as an indicator for quality and excellence

What should be the strategy for a NoK to tackle these three - partly overlapping- criteria? How can recordings from volunteers be used?

Data sharing, standards and exchange

- **Interpretation** of biodiversity data is hampered by lack of harmonisation of protocols, taxonomy and common databases.
  - Multiple experts can seemingly disagreeing .
  - Difficult communication and reduction of credibility.

- **Harmonization** is required for:
  - the reporting obligations for the International Conventions on Biodiversity s(e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity)
  - the European reporting on the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive.

- **Data sharing** is often problematic with issues like confidentiality and ownership emerging.

Data sharing, standards and exchange

- **Marine ecology:** data sharing is common practice for monitoring fish stocks and plankton. A certain level of standards and data harmonization allows communication and exchange of findings.

- **Freshwater ecology**: data are collected for specific purposes, differing between individual, institutes and agencies, Only in very exceptional cases publically available.

- **Terrestrial ecology**: only some species have standard protocols (e.g. birds and butterflies) . Art 17 has common guidelines, that are interpreted differently

Data sharing, standards and exchange Criteria and options

- Harmonization is required for the credibility of the NoK and its outputs
  - Harmonization of methods does not mean harmonisation of conclusions.
- Data accessed should include all countries and experts.
- The NoK should present used definitions and preferably use accepted protocols and standards.

- **How should the NoK deal with data ownership? Does a NoK need its own database? Who determines definitions and data standards?**

Governance

Governance for mutual trust, acceptance and credibility.
Clear and transparent procedures and flexibility are required.

Transferring knowledge improves when
- standard figures are used
- The context and issues are straight forward

Biodiversity issues are often characterized by:
- Lack of commonly accepted figures, complex systems and the involvement of many different interests

Governance
Criteria and options

Governance requires:

- Transparent procedures for the selection of scientists and project leaders
- Transparency of the quality control procedure
- Open involvement of the knowledge holders to ensure inclusiveness
- An active check on potential conflicts of interest (e.g. through funding, influence on selection processes and pressure to achieve desired results.
- Independence to allow for presenting agenda setting issues.

- **Which body should be concerned with the governance of the NoK? Is this the same body that lobiies for the NoK finances?**
- **How is the highest degree of independence balanced with open interaction with all knowledge holders and seekers?**

Finances

- Careful consideration of the financing structure
  - To develop a sound long-term business plan
  - To maximize funder independency for the NoK
  - To ensure political neutrality

- Looking at PSIs in general, three models of operation and financing can be identified:
  - **Complete funding of activities by one major donor**
  - **A core funding via a fund and additional financing per project**
  - **A bottom-up approach mainly driven by knowledge holder institutions**

Finances

Complete funding of activities by one major donor (a governmental body):

- PSI often linked to the funding institution (e.g. as advisory boards/bodies).

A core funding via a fund and additional financing for specific projects.

- Option seen at the global level not yet in Europe.
- It requires a memorandum of contributing parties.

A bottom-up approach:

- Research institutions have gathered together in networks
- This has not ye been able to ensure a critical mass of joint funding.

Finances
Criteria and options

- For a EU NoK long term core funding (KCB) or complete funding should be ensured.

- Some budget should be allocated to develop independent agenda setting issues coming from the knowledge holder community.

- Financial resources should come from all EU countries to ensure political neutrality and status.

- **How should the tasks of seeking budget and the lobbying be combined with the independent status of the NoK?**

- **What is required to gather funding from all EU countries? What kind of budget is required?**

Quality assurance

- Learning from IPCC: the quality insurance of the process and the output are of crucial importance.

- All products need clear review procedures

- An approach to assign certainty terms to key findings (e.g. MA and IPCC):

  – including an indication of the level of expert agreement on a given statement (from high to low) and the level of established

Quality assurance
Criteria and options

- **Accuracy of information**: validity, reliability, 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

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

- **Who should perform this task?**

- **How can quality assurance be done using minimal time and budget resources?**

- **Should used data be independently screened?**

Communication

Communication should take place:

- within the NoK (e.g. scoping and framing of questions),

- within the knowledge holder group (e.g. to ensure commitment)

- externally to potential clients

  – (e.g. to demonstrate the NoK niche and

  – to contribute and maintain the status of the NoK in the international context)

Communication

Communication should be used for :

- PR,
- acquisition,
- Announce produced outputs,
- To offer the wider knowledge landscape a means for input,
- To demonstrate transparency on governance and contributor issues.

Should all products be open for the public?

Which means of communication are most effective?

Which are required (websites, blogs, newsletters)?

Many questions remaining

Looking forward to hearing your opinion in the break-out groups

Thank you for your attention

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