



**Creating a Network of Knowledge for
biodiversity and ecosystem services**
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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 global¹ 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

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

¹ e.g., request towards the regional level coming from the forthcoming Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

- 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, *small* 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**

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Annex : Final list of workshop participants

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