

Kick-off of the Knowledge Exchange Network on Agro-ecosystems

Date: 29–30 September 2026

Venue: Herman Teirlinck Building, Havenlaan 88, Brussels

Background

The Horizon-project **BioAgora** is building a Science Service for Biodiversity (**SSBD**) in support of the European Commission's Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (**KCBD**). The SSBD will operate through Knowledge Exchange Networks (KENS), which in turn are meant to provide a shared knowledge base, scientific evidence and a forum for dialogue in support of the implementation of EU policies. The **Agro-ecosystems KEN** will bring knowledge holders together in support of EU governance of agro-ecosystems (e.g. the Common Agriculture Policy and the Nature Restoration Regulation as it pertains to agriculture and the EU's soil strategy). This vision reflects an aspiration to ensure food security without compromising the environment at a time when the global food system is considered the primary driver of the biodiversity crisis.

Event Objective

This 2-day event will mark the kick-off of the Agro-ecosystems KEN. Together, participants will shape the Network's structure and outlook in preparation for a long-lasting collaboration in addressing knowledge requests from the European Commission.

Approach

A strong emphasis will be placed on impartial facilitation, creating a safe space for open exchange and ensuring active engagement from all participants. This is meant to enable the establishment of long-lasting bridges between science, policy and society.

Who Is Invited?

- **European scientific projects** (Horizon, LIFE, Interreg, Agro-Ecology Partnership, Biodiversa and others) (maximum 1 representative per project, 2 if a place is available)
- **Other European knowledge networks** on agro-ecosystems (maximum 1 representative per network, 2 if a place is available)
- **European and national policy-makers** (maximum 1 representative per Member State, 2 if a place is available)
- **Relevant actors** operating at European level in the field of agro-ecosystems

[Please register here](#)

*Limited financial support for travel and accommodation is available for up to 5 participants through the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA). Priority in this regard will be given solely to participants from European civil society organisations for whom attendance would otherwise be impossible and whose role is particularly relevant to the Agro-ecosystems KEN. **As numbers are limited, you will be advised whether you have been selected to attend subject to the criteria outlined by August 31.***



AGENDA

DAY 1

KEN Agro-ecosystems: Improving impact through a Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN) on agro-ecosystems

09:00 | Welcome Coffee

09:30 | Introduction: Background and Objectives

09:45 | Ice breaker

“WHY” a KEN on Agro-ecosystems: Building a common vision

10:00 | Introduction to the SSBD, the role of the KENs

10:40 | Specific intro to the function “Answering Requests” of the SSBD and the role of the KENs

11:00 | Coffee break

11:15 | **Mapping the knowledge 1:** Getting to know projects and initiatives
Short 3-minute pitches of scientific projects and networks

12:15 | **Keynote:** Framing the current landscape and gaps/needs: Joost Dessen (Ghent University)

12:45 | **Generative dialogue:** What is the possible “role” of a KEN on agro-ecosystems?

13:10 | Lunch break

Further exploring “WHAT” a KEN on Agro-ecosystems could be? And “WHAT FOR”?

14:25 | **Group work in 3 Groups:** 3 rounds of 20 minutes

Group 1: Building on the outcome of the generative dialogue: What are the important elements/principles for this KEN?

Group 2: What are the main levers and the main risks/threats to overcome for the KEN to be effective?

justice/pluralism other types of knowledge governance and funding

Group 3: From your perspective, which new challenges on agro-ecosystems need to be tackled? What are the important knowledge gaps to address?

15:30 | **Departure for the field trip to the farm [Perkuus](#)**

16:10 | **Farm visit (including dinner)**

20:50 | **End of Day 1**

DAY 2

SPI Dialogue workshop: How can a diversity of knowledge holders in the Agro-ecosystems KEN contribute to supporting the implementation of EU policies?

08:30 | Arrival & registration

09:00 | Opening session: Introduction, objectives and programme

Digging into the “WHAT FOR”: Better understanding cross-sectoral challenges for agro-ecosystems

09:20 | **Keynote:** A transformative Science-Policy-Society Interface on agro-ecosystems (Sander Jacobs, IPBES)

09:50 | **Panel & discussion:** Current policies and cross-sectoral challenges

10:35 | Coffee break

How can the Agro-ecosystems KEN help overcome implementation barriers for policies supporting agro-ecosystems?

10:50 | **Keynote:** Implementation barriers for policies supporting agro-ecosystems and possible ways to overcome them (Nicolas Dendoncker, University of Namur)

Reflecting on the morning challenges and barriers to implementing EU policies on agro-ecosystems, some insights on possible ways to overcome them

11:20 | **Fishbowl discussion:** “How can the KEN help overcome the identified challenges/barriers? What are the lessons learned or best practices?”

12:10 | Lunch Break

Co-creation lab: Breakout groups on developing recommendations for the Agro-ecosystems KEN

13:30 | Introduction to the group work and reminder about “developing requests” in the SSBD

13:30 | **Group work on:**

- following up on the challenges identified in previous sessions and the possible role of the KEN: What would be some first actions/recommendations for the new Network?
- science and policy perspectives on current knowledge needs to inspire future requests

15:20 | **Reporting from the groups**

16:00 | **Reviewing the recommendations**

16:30 | **Reflecting on the SPI processes during the workshop**

16:50 | **Conclusions and next steps:** Evaluation of the day

17:00 | Farewell cocktail

19:00 | End of Day 2