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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

WHY is it important to setup appropriate governance and operational structures for a national ecosystem assessment?

The assessment team will be comprised of individuals/groups concerned with its stewardship and governance, and others involved in its implementation as part of an operational structure. Setting up a well-structured assessment team will ensure that:

- 1) There is effective oversight of the technical and administrative aspects of the assessment. This includes ensuring its objectives are delivered in alignment with the work plan and budget, and that the process remains open and transparent.**
- 2) The assessment process and its findings are legitimate, credible and policy-relevant, including ensuring continuous stakeholder engagement throughout the whole process.**

WHO does this aspect of the assessment relate to?

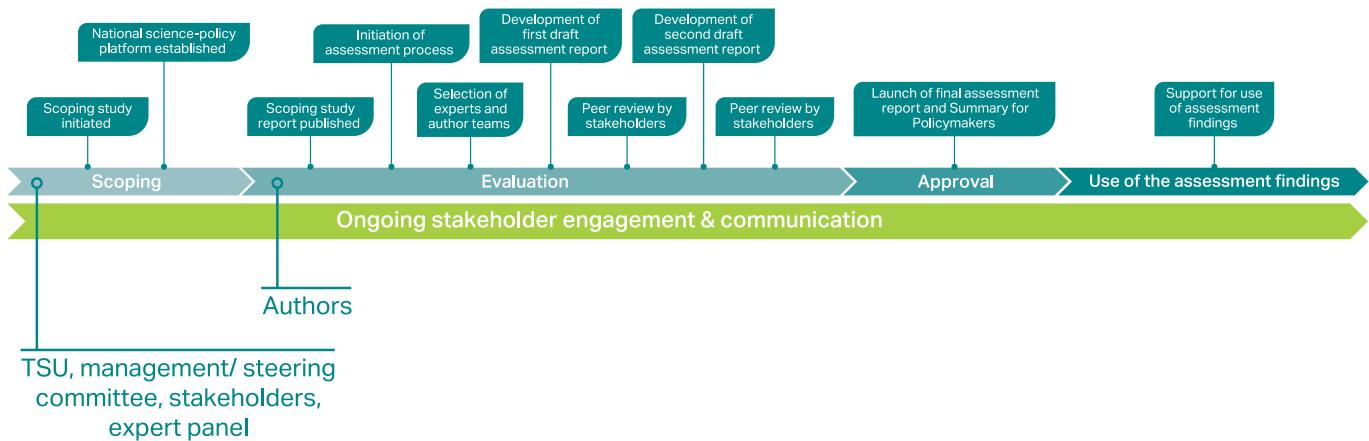
The assessment team can be made up of different groups such as: a management unit, an expert panel, a national biodiversity platform, steering committees and stakeholder groups. The size and scope of the assessment will determine which groups will be engaged in its governance and implementation. In the table below there are examples of groups that can be part of an assessment team and their potential roles. These will need to be adapted to suit each national context.

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities of different groups within the assessment team

Group	Summary of role	Type of representative and or individual or group roles/members
Technical Support Unit (TSU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides technical support for the assessment • Oversees selection of authors • Creates a stakeholder engagement strategy and leads stakeholder engagement • Coordinates meetings and workshops • Leads the communication strategy (see the developing a communication strategy guidance) • Manages the administrative side of the assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager/Coordinator • Data and knowledge focal point • Stakeholder/User group focal point • Communications focal point • Capacity-building focal point • Finance and administration officer <p>Note: Various of the above roles can be held by the same person.</p>
Management/Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides oversight and governance of the assessment including on technical and administrative aspects • Ensures the assessment remains policy relevant • Stays up to date with the assessment process, ensuring work is carried out in alignment with the work plan and the budget • Has a role in identifying and filling gaps in author involvement • Ensures diversity in the assessment author team and stakeholder group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative from the TSU i.e. Project manager • Assessment Co-Chairs • Government focal point
Expert Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides expert advice and input into the assessment design, implementation and communication • Ensures the assessment remains policy relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from a variety of disciplines, (i.e. leading natural scientists, economists, social scientists and indigenous and local knowledge holders who are not involved in writing the assessment)
Stakeholder/User group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involved in technical aspects of the assessment to inform the approach and assessment outputs, ensuring its relevance for policy processes and different audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from government agencies, NGOs, private sector, civil society, academia, indigenous peoples and local communities etc.
Author team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide contributions to specific chapters of the technical assessment report. The level of contribution depends upon the role within the author team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge holders in fields relevant to the assessment • Assessment Co-Chairs • Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) • Lead Authors (LAs) • Contributing Authors (CAs) • Review Editors (REs) • External reviewers • Fellows

WHEN in the process should this strategy be developed?

It is important to have an agreed Technical Support Unit (TSU) and Management/Steering committee before the scoping stage begins. This ensures there is a structure that can provide effective oversight of the assessment process and can support the core objectives of the assessment. Other components of the assessment team can be put in place at different stages as needed. For example, authors can be selected at the onset of the Evaluation stage.



HOW to carry out this phase?

This stage will involve assigning roles and responsibilities to the different groups involved in the assessment (governance and operational structures) in line with its objectives. It could also require mapping out options for Steering Committee, Expert Panel and Stakeholder Group members. It is important to set out a clear working structure for the assessment team at this stage, and that its configuration reflects a diversity of perspectives and knowledge types.

Early involvement of intended users and stakeholders of an ecosystem assessment is crucial for supporting its legitimacy and subsequent impact, and to establish effective communication channels with authors.

TOP TIP

There may be existing initiatives and structures that can be drawn from or built upon to fulfil particular roles in the assessment team. Are there any existing project teams with skills in project management who can be given additional training in ecosystem assessments? Are there any existing relevant agencies or institutions that can sit on the Steering Committee or Expert Panel?

RESOURCES

1. IPBES (2018) The IPBES Guide on the Production of Assessments, Ch.2, pg.12-19, pg.23-26. <https://bit.ly/2wCfQHB>

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