

SCOPING STAGE

WHEN in the process should this stage be carried out?

The scoping stage marks the first step of the national ecosystem assessment process. During the scoping stage, the framework and direction of the assessment are identified in collaboration with stakeholders.



WHY is it important to include this stage in a national ecosystem assessment?

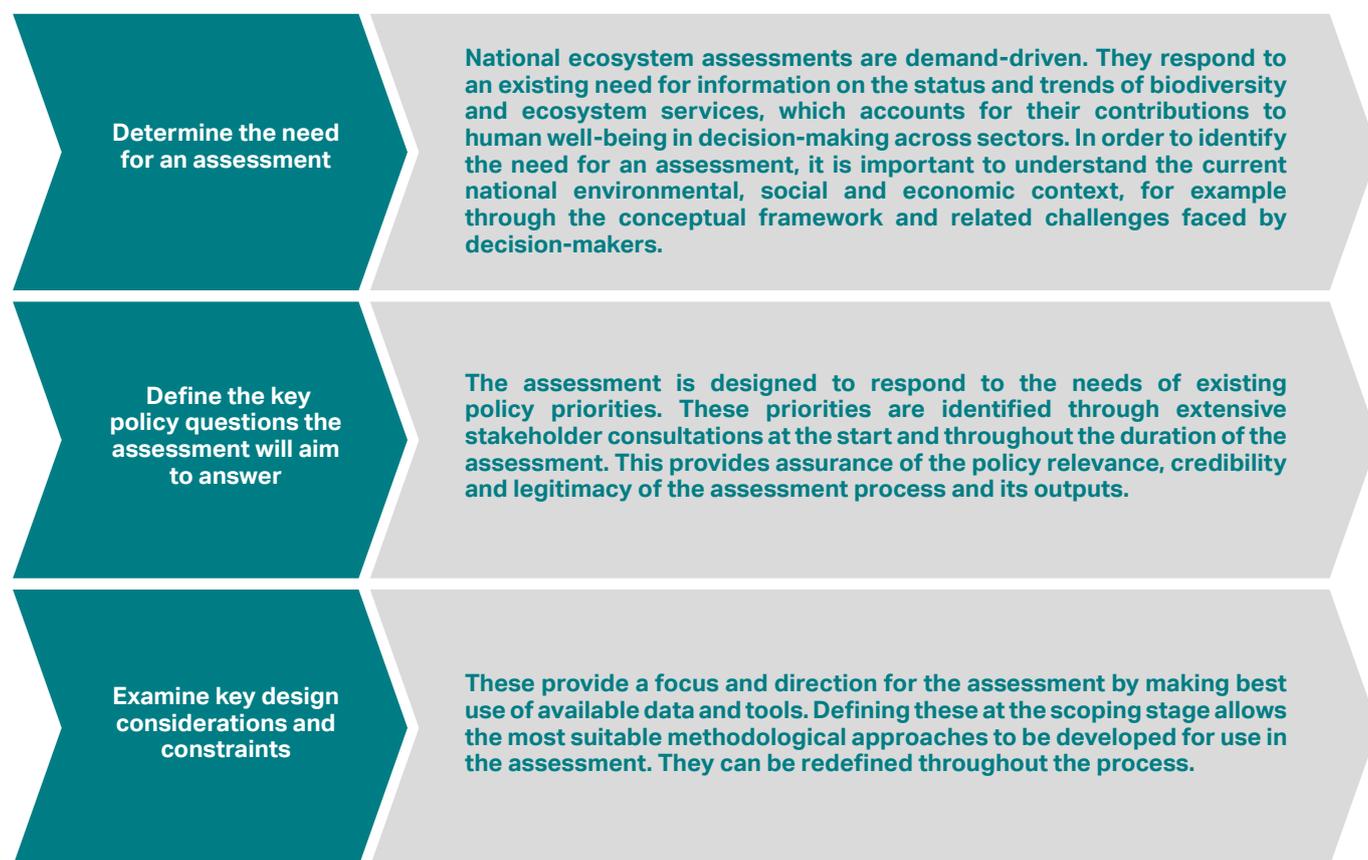
The scoping stage enables the development of the rationale and methodologies to the assessment, as well as it informs the potential uses of the assessment, ensuring all components of the assessment are relevant to decision-makers and practitioners. The scoping stage supports the creation of a shared understanding around the national ecosystem assessment process and is collectively owned by relevant stakeholders. Engagement of key stakeholders at the onset of the scoping stage helps develop ownership of the assessment process and its outputs. It further establishes a firm foundation for stakeholder and knowledge holder engagement, encouraging them to contribute to the review of the assessment’s drafts during the evaluation stage.

WHAT is the scoping stage?

The main output of this stage is the scoping report. This report includes key elements such as the rationale behind undertaking an assessment, the identification of key policy questions, the development of a [conceptual framework](#), the approaches to the assessment process and the intended uses of the assessment, ensuring its relevance to decision-makers (see the guidance on [scoping outline](#)). It also delineates a clear chapter outline for the Technical Support Unit (TSU) to support authors in conducting the assessment. Another key output of this stage is the communication strategy, which sets out the rationale and approach to communications throughout the assessment process (see

the guidance on [developing a communication strategy](#)). As part of the scoping stage, the TSU is encouraged to engage with stakeholders and knowledge holders as early as possible in the assessment process. The contribution of stakeholders and knowledge holders in defining important aspects of the assessment such as the key policy questions and the conceptual framework can strengthen the validation of the scoping report and overall can support the assessment's legitimacy, credibility and relevance.

The scoping stage has 3 main objectives:



WHO does this stage relate to?

Once governments have set out to undertake the assessment, a TSU (see the guidance on [roles and responsibilities](#)) is established to facilitate the national ecosystem assessment process, starting with the scoping stage. The involvement of stakeholders and knowledge holders is essential at this stage as it supports the identification of the key elements to be included in the report and contributes to developing ownership of the process. Stakeholders and knowledge holders to consider involving in this process are government entities, non-governmental organisations, academic institutes, private sector representatives, youth leaders, indigenous and local knowledge holders and user groups. It is important to involve indigenous and local knowledge holders as their livelihoods may be directly impacted by the national ecosystem assessment process and its outputs through new policies based on assessment findings. It is encouraged to ensure equal gender representation to support the assessment's credibility and relevance.

HOW to carry out this stage?

Selection of authors: The first step includes identifying key authors who will be involved in undertaking the scoping stage and writing the scoping report. This may consist solely of TSU members or a set of authors who may be selected or self-nominated (see the guidance on [roles and responsibilities](#)). It is recommended to select or nominate indigenous and local knowledge authors at this stage in the assessment process and establish an indigenous and local knowledge taskforce to lead this work within the assessment (see the [practical guidelines for working with indigenous and local knowledge](#)). Authors have different roles in the assessment (see the guidance on [roles and responsibilities](#)), they are responsible for developing the assessment's technical report and summary for policy-makers. Authors address the key policy questions and can contribute to specific chapters or sections of the assessment, also ensuring the chapters feed into each other. They can also play a key role in the validation of the assessment by the government.

Information gathering: It is useful to gather some initial information on the following points below (see the guidance on [scoping outline](#) for more information):

- Status and trends of key ecosystems within the country;
- Key direct and indirect drivers of change and threats (both natural and anthropogenic) to biodiversity and ecosystems;
- Key policies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services; and
- The role of nature in providing benefits to people across the country.

Information gathering may also include organising scoping and framing workshops with stakeholders and knowledge holders and undertaking preliminary literature reviews on documented indigenous and local knowledge to identify how this can contribute to the assessment and relevant issues to be considered (see [practical guidelines on working with indigenous and local knowledge](#)).

Upon synthesis of gathered information, it may be useful to create a first draft of the conceptual framework. The knowledge gathered through this process will support discussions with stakeholders and knowledge holders.

Stakeholder identification and mapping: This step involves identifying and mapping the key stakeholder and knowledge holder groups who will contribute to the assessment, use the assessment findings and/or who will be impacted by the national ecosystem assessment process. It also includes defining an appropriate engagement approach. It is encouraged that stakeholders are engaged throughout the assessment process by using different approaches, such as the Triologue events.

Stakeholder engagement: It is encouraged to engage stakeholders in discussions around the definition of the following aspects of the assessment at the scoping stage, which is discussed and identified with stakeholders and knowledge holders: assessment rationale, conceptual framework, key policy questions based on national priorities and relevance to assessed biodiversity and ecosystems, key indigenous and local knowledge questions to feed into policy questions, and the potential use of assessment findings within decision-making processes.

Drafting the scoping report: Following the initial consultation with stakeholders, the TSU and authors analyse and synthesise the inputs from stakeholders and knowledge holders, and draft the report based on the scoping outline (see guidance on [scoping outline](#)). Key elements to be considered at the scoping stage and summarised in the scoping report are defined below:

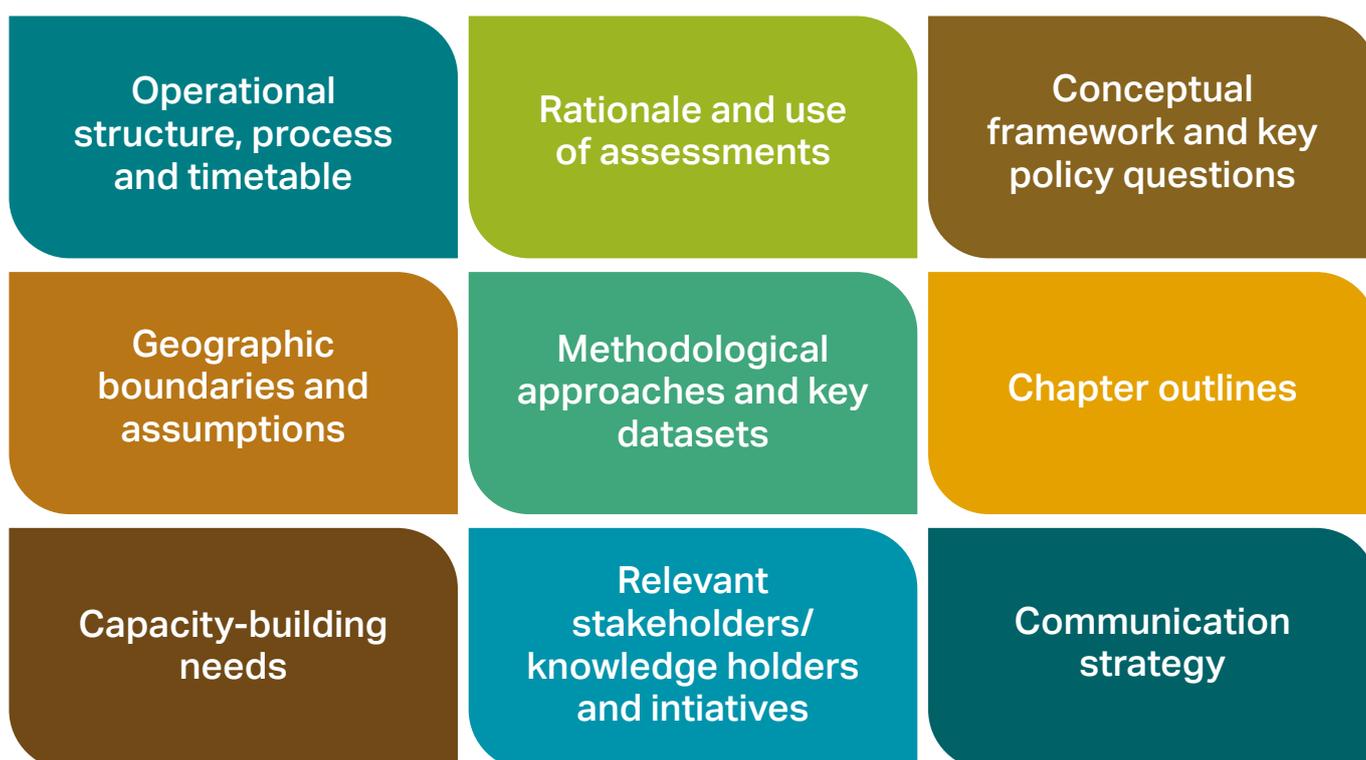


Figure 1. Key elements to define in the scoping stage and include in the scoping report.

TOP TIP

During the scoping process of its national ecosystem assessment, Grenada organised consultations with the support of local mobilisers who had close links to target groups. They supported stakeholders in defining key policy questions and priority areas of concern regarding important issues facing biodiversity and ecosystem services in the country.

Review stages of the scoping report:

- **Stakeholder review:** Once the draft scoping report has been completed, it may be useful to consider asking stakeholders and knowledge holders for their review. This could be coordinated through an online open-review process or an in-person meeting or workshop, open to all stakeholders or limited to a select number of individuals or organisations. For the indigenous and local knowledge content, a review dialogue workshop could be organised with indigenous peoples and local communities to examine and validate the content based on the principles of free, prior and informed consent.
- **Validation:** Comments are addressed by the authors of the scoping report and presented for validation. This may include a final review and approval by the government and stakeholders through, for example, a national biodiversity platform or an existing relevant committee.

Once the scoping stage is completed, the next stage in the national ecosystem assessment process is the evaluation stage. This is when the authors compile, assess and synthesise data, information and knowledge to address to the key policy questions based on the framework outlined in the scoping report.



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RESOURCES

- Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (2020) Grenada National Ecosystem Assessment. Scoping Report, https://canari.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Grenada-NEA-Scoping-Report_final_april-2020.pdf
- IPBES (2018) The IPBES Guide on the Production of Assessments. Ch.2, pg.12-19 (Nomination and selection processes for different roles in assessments), pg.23-26 (What should happen at each stage of the assessment and who should be involved?), <https://bit.ly/2wCfQHB>
- IPBES (2018) Decision and scoping report for the IPBES global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services, https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/pdf/Scoping_Global%20assessment.pdf
- IPBES (2013) Decision IPBES-2/4: Conceptual Framework for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/Decision_IPBES_2_4.pdf
- The Regional Environmental Centre for Azerbaijan (Report in progress). Azerbaijan Scoping Report. For more information, check the [NEA Initiative](#) website.

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