**SynFlex proposal**



**Please read the** [**call description**](https://www.idiv.de/fileadmin/content/Files_sDiv/sDiv_call_documents/12th_sDiv_call_description_SYNFLEX.pdf) **which provides all relevant information for the sDiv application process, before filling in the template!**

Applications are to be submitted via the [iDiv application portal](https://apply.idiv.de/) ONLY.

Please note: You are only eligible to submit a full proposal if you have been invited to submit a proposal after a successful preliminary review.

Hints for filling in the proposal template are marked by <...> and should be replaced by text.

**<short descriptive title>**

**Acronym**

< We want all of our working groups to use project acronyms with a small “s” as the first letter, e.g. “sImpact'' or “sTability”. Be creative! E.g. <https://acronymify.com> might be helpful with your search. This acronym will be used in all relevant sDiv communication for this specific working group (homepage, emails, newsletter etc.). Please don't use acronyms of [past working groups](https://www.idiv.de/en/working-groups.html) and avoid any similarity with existing brands. >

**<PI’s name and affiliation>**

**Public summary**

< Please provide a short and concise summary of no more than 80 words for our website. >

**Submission date**

<DD/MM/YYYY>

< Proposals should not exceed eight pages including figures (four pages for section 1 and 2, four pages for sections 3 to 5), excluding bibliography. References are expected in sections 2 to 5, but please limit the number of cited references to 40 for the whole document (see format requirements in section 7). For the text, use Verdana 10pt font and 1.5 line spacing, as in this template. For tables, figures and their captions (which need to be embedded in sections 2 to 5 and not in any appendices), smaller font size and line spacing is acceptable. >

**1 Project summary**

< Provide a concise and comprehensive summary of no more than 250 words, covering the main objectives and expected contributions of the proposed research. >

**2 Scientific novelty, synthesis and aims**

< Please describe briefly how your project is going to yield novel research insights. Justify the novelty by relating your project questions, hypotheses and potential outcomes to a brief summary of the state of the art in the relevant research field. What is the relevance of your research for biodiversity research questions? What is the research gap you identified? Which novel aspects with respect to synthesis are part of your project and how do you plan to translate this into deliverables? Please describe the aims and scope of your project. How does your project relate to iDiv’s overarching research goals, including the [key research areas of and questions of iDiv](https://www.idiv.de/en/research.html). Examples of types of syntheses could be conceptual synthesis of different theoretical components, synthesis of different data sets, combination of knowledge from different disciplines or work fields (e.g. applied fields, policy). Projects should provide evidence that sufficient data and appropriate analytical tools are available or will be developed during the project to tackle novel questions.

If your project genuinely tackles an existing and defined [IPBES knowledge gap](https://www.ipbes.net/knowledge-gaps), please use a very concise individual paragraph with subheading “IPBES gap” and say which gap (ID and title, see link above) and how this is linked to your work plan (e.g. how is closing this knowledge gap a genuine part of your project?). This is not a prerequisite to get funded nor should it be constructed by yourself. >

**3.1 Work plan and deliverables**

< Please give a precise and comprehensive account of which modules (e.g. catalysis meeting, working group meetings, short term guest exchanges etc.) and deliverables are planned and why. What is planned to be done (i) before, (ii) during and (iii) after each of the modules. Additionally, provide a tentative timetable using our Gantt chart (see below). Describe the aims and specific deliverables of each of the modules and justify the timing within the general project. Who is planning to do what and why? Specify in which month each module is planned. Concisely describe the individual deliverables as planned (e.g. what will be the main focus of the planned publication(s) and which data/theories etc. will there be used/discussed).

The description of individual modules (e.g. working groups, student helpers etc.) can be found in Appendix III - please read it carefully! In general, we might allow activities outside of iDiv (e.g. teaching, funding travel to other places/conferences). Those activities should be well justified, should support capacity building and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If activities outside of iDiv are proposed, they also need to have a strong iDiv participation (e.g. traveling to iDiv, iDiv researcher travel to somewhere else, teachers of summer schools, etc.). Please also give a brief justification how this project is different/complementary to your other ongoing activities.

Please also provide an overview of the temporal perspective of the work plan in this Gantt chart. Clearly link the modules and deliverables/work packages etc. (e.g. use same numbering/names) you mention above in the description to the content of this table. >

| *Months* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* | *7* | *8* | *9* | *10* | *11* | *12* | *13* | *14* | *15* | *16* | *17* | *18* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *<Task 1>* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| *<…>* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| *<…>* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| *<…>* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

| *Months* | *19* | *20* | *21* | *22* | *23* | *24* | *25* | *26* | *27* | *28* | 29 | *30* | *31* | *32* | *33* | *34* | *35* | *36* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *<Task 1>* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| *<…>* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| *<…>* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| *<…>* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**4.1 Explanation of group expertise and composition**

< List the names, websites, professional status, gender ratio. Briefly describe the skills, expertise, qualifications and tasks of all involved project participants (including PIs) and how this relates to the modules and the individual project work packages. For more than five collaborators use the table in Appendix II, and if you plan to organize large working group meetings (>10) list at least 2/3 of all participants (see also Appendix III for potential working group settings and rules). Please make sure your group composition does meet the standards described in section 2.2 of the [SYNFLEX call description](https://www.idiv.de/fileadmin/content/Files_sDiv/sDiv_call_documents/12th_sDiv_call_description_SYNFLEX.pdf) and in Appendix III. >

**4.2 Regional focus**

< We also encourage proposals that engage genuinely with topics and researchers from under-represented regions ([see list here](https://www.idiv.de/fileadmin/content/Files_sDiv/sDiv_call_documents/iDiv_DFG_Research-wise_Underrepresented_Regions.pdf)). This could come in various ways that are important for regional biodiversity research as well as building synthesis connections beyond those regions. Proposals should avoid “helicopter research” and so called “colonial” science approaches (e.g. [read here](https://academic.oup.com/icesjms/advance-article/doi/10.1093/icesjms/fsac115/6613543?login=false)). Please describe briefly how research-wise under-represented areas will be affected by/included in your project (if applicable). Please explain briefly but clearly how your group composition reflects the engagement with those regions/regional topics. What information/data from such a region will be used? How will under-represented areas benefit from your research (this could be via the personal involvement of researchers from those regions and/or via the topical relevance). If aspect doesn’t apply to your proposal, leave the related sections empty. >

**5 Research data management plan**

< sDiv strongly encourages that the products of funded projects follow Open and FAIR data and code principles. Please contact the iDiv Data & Code Unit (iBID) and sDiv head Marten Winter if you have related questions and for project-specific advice and solutions. If data and/or data integration are crucial to achieving your project goals, please answer the following questions:

 1. On which data set(s) does the project rely? For each data set, please provide: Name, owner, access rights (e.g. license), any ethical or privacy issues, file format(s) and size. If existing closed databases will be used, provide proof of data availability (copies of formal data requests submitted to databases can be added as an appendix to the proposal).

2. Briefly describe how much time you estimate will be required for data integration and mention this is the work plan (Section 3) accordingly.

3. Briefly describe what will happen to the aggregated/integrated data. iDiv is publicly funded, and aims for data/code produced with our support to be made publicly available in a repository accepted by the biological community. One common way to publish newly collated synthesis data sets are e.g. data papers. Please note that should your proposal receive funding, iDiv's Data & Code Policy will need to be signed and followed (the Policy is currently under revision and will be forwarded). However, we recognize that sDiv collaborations may have special needs, and exceptions may be negotiated (e.g. with embargoes or stepwise release of data sets or only partial data releases due to potential other limiting data policies).

4. Indicate whether, and to what extent, the project requires the use of central iDiv facilities which we offer to be used (e.g. high-performance computing, statistical support, archiving of very large quantities of data). If you would benefit from specialized data management support or advice from iBID, please outline your requirements here. >

**6 Budget**

< The main information on the costs itself will be requested directly in the application portal. It is important to list all costs, define the modules and list for which year and/or for how long they apply for (e.g. for support staff it is necessary to list the starting date, the number of months they will be employed and the hours of work per week) in the application portal. This section here only needs to be filled if the budget for the module exceeds 50.000,00 € and/or if you apply for modules that need more specification. If you expect your travel expenses to differ from our calculation, please specify it here in this section, too (e.g. in case of many regional participants).

For the budget of working group meetings, please use the [sDiv budget tool](https://www.idiv.de/fileadmin/content/Files_sDiv/sDiv_call_documents/sDiv_call_Budget_Tool.xlsx). This calculation tool is based on the average expenses of past sDiv working groups. It is important to add a screenshot of the budget tool to the full proposal.

The maximum that can be spent for outside of iDiv activities is 1/3 of the overall budget but not more than 8.000,00 € in total. For hints on calculating other modules, please see Appendix III and contact sDiv for a Q&A session.

sDivs fiscal year runs from November to October. Please take this into consideration when planning your budget. Costs incurred in November are most likely to be carried over into next year's budget. Please note, that because we cannot shift the money over the years (e.g. savings in one year cannot be transferred into the next year). Any proposed financial deviation needs to be well justified and described and will be considered with regard to feasibility.

Open access publication costs will be covered on a first come first serve basis only - no budgeting in the proposal needed. >

**7 Bibliography**

< Verdana 10pt font and single line spacing for the text is acceptable. Do not list more than 40 references. Please use the reference style of Global Ecology and Biogeography (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14668238/homepage/forauthors.html>. >

In text:

(Light, 2008)/ Light (2008) etc..

Journal article:

Light, M. A., & Light, I. H. (2008). The geographic expansion of Mexican immigration in the United States and its implications for local law enforcement. Law Enforcement Executive Forum Journal, 8(1), 73–82.

Book:

Goldstein, H. (1990). Problem-oriented policing. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Edited Book:

Gilbert, D. G., McClernon, J. F., Rabinovich, N. E., Sugai, C., Plath, L. C., Asgaard, G., ... Botros, N. (1983). Situational crime prevention: Its theoretical basis and practical scope. In M. Tonry & N. Morris (Eds.), Crime and justice: An annual review of research (Vol. 4, pp. 225–256). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. >

**Appendix I - CV of PI(s)**

< max. two-page CV of PIs, should include:

* Contact info with link to proper website as well as link to an up-to date full CV and a publication list
* Professional background, scientific career stages (including years), status of thesis (completed on XX.YY.ZZZZ or not completed), maternity/paternity leave(s), number of child(ren) - only if applicable
* Five to **max. ten** most relevant publications for this project (short author list indicating your position, title, year, journal, link to paper) >

**Appendix II - Participant list and participation agreements**

< List all participants (including PIs) **if you have more than five participants**. Minimum one [iDiv member](https://www.idiv.de/en/groups_and_people/members.html) (full & associated members are eligible, **please note: iDiv member is a pre-defined term and is not referring to every iDiv researcher (e.g. iDiv employee) in your project team**) must be included. **Please note that you have to attach a confirmation to participate from each participant (e.g. email, informal letter). Any deviation** of the group composition has to be clarified with the head of sDiv. >

| **Participant type** | **Name / institution / website** | **Professional status**ProfessorAssistant professorAssociate professorSenior scientist (> 5 years)Post-Doc (<= 5 years)PhD-studentother | **Skills, expertise, qualifications and tasks of all involved project participants and how this relates to the modules and the individual project work packages** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PI | (add a row per person) |  |   |
| iDiv member | (add a row per person) |  |   |
| iDiv employee |  |  |  |
| Confirmed participant | (add a row per person) |  |  |
| Tentative participant | (add a row per person) |  |   |

**Appendix III - Information on Modules (to be deleted from proposal)**

< The following section is to provide an overview. Q&A sessions will be provided upon request, please contact the sDiv admin team. **Any proposed deviation** from the given rules (e.g. place of work, budget, participants,...) needs to be **well justified** and described and will be considered with regard to feasibility.

* **Scientific helpers/support staff**

Scientific helpers must be enrolled at a German University during the time of the contract as bachelor/master students or PhD students. Workplace is the iDiv headquarter in Leipzig. Working time is 19 hours per week maximum, average costs 1.700,00 € per month.

* **Short-term guest exchange**

If an exchange of collaborators (i.e. short-term visits) is considered, the iDiv member has to be involved. Either the iDiv collaborator is traveling or is hosting visitor(s). Funds can be requested to cover expenses of the visit(s), (e.g. travel and housing). Any necessary access to iDiv should be clarified in advance.

* **Travel to collaborators labs**

All travel costs will be reimbursed provided that they comply with the Saxon Travel Law (e.g. travel in 2nd class). Travel combined with private stays cannot be reimbursed.

* **Catalysis Meeting**

These one-time meetings can bring together up to 25 scientists with different research and non-research backgrounds to focus on a major question or research area in biodiversity related to synthesis, theory and iDiv’s research mission (rules for group composition and necessary diversity are the same as for working groups, see above). Catalysis meetings are intended to be used to:

● focus on a theme that is grand enough to excite and inspire
● foster discussions leading to new synthesis research questions and/or themes
● identify classes of primary data (if synthesis is data driven) that must be collected

before synthesis is possible
● initiate a dialogue across disciplinary boundaries
● to facilitate the assembly of scientific networks

* **Working group meetings**

All in-person working group meetings should take place at iDiv in Leipzig. Please check our [sDiv calendar](https://www.idiv.de/de/sdiv/kalender.html?tx_znmidivcalendar_idivcalendar%5Baction%5D=showYear&tx_znmidivcalendar_idivcalendar%5Bcontroller%5D=Calendar&tx_znmidivcalendar_idivcalendar%5ByearSelector%5D=1672578226&cHash=847d55224de51ab701019c18618da890) for available dates. The following instructions are general recommendations for sDiv working groups. However, in this call working groups can be more flexible in size and duration according to the needs of the project. Group size can range from two to 20 participants (maximum). From our experience, working groups of 12-15 are the optimal size for manageable and successful synthesis working groups. Larger meetings usually run for four or five full working days, up to two weeks. In general, longer stays are considered more effective but costs should be balanced by a smaller group size to stay within the funding limit. We encourage working groups to meet several times. If the main project modules are large working group meetings, an approval for a funded third meeting will be based on a midterm evaluation by the sDiv board after the second meeting. In-person meetings will take place in Leipzig depending on the prevailing Corona situation. If hybrid or full in-person meetings cannot take place, sDiv working groups are supposed to meet virtually with full support by sDiv.

The PIs are responsible for communicating with sDiv. It is expected that the PIs provide a list of all participants (including themselves) who have agreed to participate (if large working group meetings are considered a list of 10 core participants is sufficient). Once a working group has been approved, exchanges or the additions of new participants can be allowed if agreed with the Head of sDiv and the PIs.

Following the spirit of iDiv and the science about successful synthesis groups, PIs should strive for a well-balanced group of participants in terms of gender balance, career stage, international and scientific expertise diversity. sDiv aims to have at least 40% female participation as well as at least one PhD student at meetings. Please consider including PhD students of iDiv’s graduate school yDiv. Successful groups consist of people with excellent expertise but also with dedication and time to participate in the meetings and to contribute significantly to the working group goals. To maximize the integration of sDiv into iDiv’s research, every sDiv working group needs to have a minimum of one [iDiv member](https://www.idiv.de/en/groups_and_people/members.html) as a participant (please note an iDiv member is a specific group of elected colleagues and not every iDiv employee). It is obligatory to attach a letter of support of each iDiv member to the proposal. A proposal without an iDiv member agreeing to be a participant will not be further evaluated.

The admission criteria will include the group composition, the participants' particular competences, and their contribution to maximize complementarity of skills within the project. If the research questions tackled are relevant for under-represented regions, we will also evaluate to what extent the group composition and work plan genuinely include those regions, researchers from and in those regions. The group composition should reflect the goals and objectives of the group, for example, working groups that address socio-economic aspects of biodiversity science should involve stakeholders and social scientists.

Although working groups should include internationally renowned scientists across career stages, we ask the PIs to minimize the carbon footprint of travel as much as possible. Therefore, no more than 50% of the participants should travel from outside geographical Europe.

**Budget calculation** for working group meetings has to be done via the budget tool provided on the [website](https://www.idiv.de/en/sdiv/calls.html). Any financial deviations from the budget or change in participants of funded proposals have to be discussed with the head of sDiv.

As an important part of the improvement of sDiv and the development of synthesis centres, working groups are evaluated before, during and after the meetings. Every working group participant is asked to answer the evaluation survey(s) after the meeting(s).

Failure to complete a working group successfully for unjustified reasons and non-compliance with iDiv’s data policy can result in banning PIs from submitting future proposals to project calls. >