

Call for early career researcher working groups

All financing is dependent upon successful renewal of DFG funding for iDiv (defense in March 2021). Financing after September 2024 is subject to approval of iDiv funding beyond DFG funding.

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1 General information and rules

This call is for small synthesis working groups (two or three meetings) led and driven by early career researchers preferably starting in October 2021. The call aims to allow early-stage scientists to conduct synthesis projects in a stimulating and supportive international environment. sDiv wants to support truly novel and innovative synthesis research.

The application is open to early career researchers (PhDs and postdocs, up to 6 years after obtaining PhD (extensions possible, see 2.1). For the first PI it is obligatory to have submitted the PhD thesis. The funding and evaluation of this call does not compete with other sDiv schemes.

sDiv, like iDiv, is committed to establishing and maintaining a diverse and inclusive community that collectively supports and implements our mission to do great science. We will welcome, recruit, develop, and advance talented staff from diverse genders and backgrounds.

Please read thoroughly about the **general mission and ideas behind iDiv and the sDiv synthesis centre** [here](#), as they are important and helpful for framing a successful sDiv proposal.

In-person meetings will take place in Leipzig as soon as possible depending on the Corona situation. Until then, sDiv working groups are supposed to meet virtually with full support by sDiv.

To maximize the integration of sDiv into iDiv's research, every sDiv working group needs to have a minimum of one [iDiv member](#) as a participant.

2 Working groups at sDiv

2.1 Working group composition

Applications are open to early career scientists worldwide. iDiv and thus also sDiv are committed to establishing and maintaining a diverse and inclusive community that collectively supports and implements our mission to do great science.

Project PI(s) must have completed their PhD within the last six years (counted with this call deadline). Extensions of this period will be considered. Maternity/paternity leave can be added

to the six years, or per child add one year to the six years period. Any other relevant non-full research periods to be considered in the extension should be well explained.

These working groups should be small collaborative teams driven and lead by early career researchers, i.e. PIs (max two) should be early career researchers. Group size is limited to eight scientists, including maximum two senior researchers. Minimum one of the eight participants must be an [iDiv member](#). Involved senior researchers must not be the supervisors of any early career researchers involved. The senior researchers are meant to contribute with their expertise but should not lead or dominate the team. In order to foster new collaborations and networks at least 50% of the working group participants should not have been collaborating before. We ask the PIs to work to minimize the carbon footprint of travel as much as possible.

2.2 Working group topics

All synthesis topics in biodiversity research are welcome, ranging from biology to social or computer sciences. Proposals should address novel questions or examine known problems from an innovative synthesis perspective. Topics should fall into one of the five research areas of [iDiv's biodiversity research](#) and should have strong links to iDiv's research mission regarding [Integrative Biodiversity Research](#).

Though the project may be risky, working groups should provide evidence that sufficient data and appropriate analytical tools are available or will be developed during their employment to tackle novel questions.

3 Application process

3.1 Pre-proposal

You are only eligible to submit a full sDiv proposal if you were invited to after a successfully reviewed pre-proposal. The mandatory pre-proposal should briefly describe the project and the aims. Pre-proposals have to be submitted via the [iDiv application portal](#) before **16 March 2021 (11:59 PM CET)**. Decisions whether you can submit a full proposal will be made within two weeks following the pre-proposal deadline.

The pre-proposal shall include:

1. Information about the PI(s) and participants, including the supporting iDiv member (a pre-proposal without an iDiv member agreeing being participant will not be further evaluated)
2. A brief description (750 words max. plus references, no tables or charts) of the novelty, the synthesis aspect and scientific objectives of the planned project, its approaches (methods, used data etc.). What is the relevance of your research particularly for biodiversity questions?
3. Letter of support by the iDiv member using the template provided on the [sDiv website](#).

3.2 Full proposal

After invitation to submit a full proposal, complete the **proposal template** provided on the [sDiv website](#). Submit your proposal including all attachments in **one PDF file** via the [iDiv application portal](#) by **8 June 2021 (11:59 PM CET)**.

4 Budget

The budget for one working group meeting is generally limited to 7,500 EUR. Working groups should meet two or three times over a period of two to three years (max. sum ~22.500€). The third meeting is subject to a project evaluation after the second meeting. The financial support itemized in the approved budget includes care of all local arrangements (local transportation, per diem expenses etc.) and reimbursement for travel and lodging. Administration of the budget is handled by the sDiv staff. For virtual meetings, please check our [virtual meeting guideline](#) to see which specific services sDiv offers.

Budget calculation is to be done via the [budget tool](#) provided on the sDiv website.

Any financial deviations from the proposed budget or change in participants of funded proposals have to be discussed with the head of sDiv.

5 Research data management

Upon invitation to submit a full proposal and submission of the resulting application, it is required that the data owners agree to make the data and code that result from sDiv funding publicly available. This should be achieved within three years of the final working group meeting, and under the least restrictive licence possible.

The working group PI(s) will therefore be required to read and accept the iDiv Data Sharing and Data Portal Usage policies. These are currently undergoing revision, but in general follow widely accepted Open Science principles.

Funded projects will receive intensive support in any needed code and data management demands by iDiv's Integrative Biodiversity Data and Code Support Unit.

6 Evaluation procedure

6.1 Selection criteria

Generally, selection criteria are based on scientific excellence, the relevance and novelty of the research questions, work plan (timeline, deliverables etc.) and expertise and fit of the working group participants.

6.2 Proposal evaluation

Pre-proposals will be evaluated within 2 weeks after the submission deadline by the sDiv executive board.

Full proposals are usually evaluated within 8 weeks after the submission deadline by the sDiv evaluation board and external expert reviewers.

7 Obligations

The PIs of funded working groups are obliged to provide a summary of every meeting immediately afterwards. Furthermore, it is expected that a final report will be delivered six months after the last meeting. All reports will be published on the individual [sDiv project webpages](#).

Demonstrating successful outcomes is part of the reporting process, and includes some of the following deliverable(s): either manuscript(s) of multi-author scientific publication(s), proposals for other funding sources, a written description of dissemination concepts (e.g. software, websites), databases etc.

sDiv support has to be acknowledged in any kind of sDiv working group publication/outcome ([see guidelines](#)).

As an important part of the improvement of sDiv and the development of synthesis centers, 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.