sDiv – Call for Individual Postdoc Research Proposals

1   About iDiv

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

2   Individual postdoc projects at sDiv

2.1   General information

sDiv individual postdocs apply for a position individually, independent of a specific working group. To maximize the integration into sDiv research, every postdoc needs to have an iDiv member as Co-PI.

The aim of sDiv postdoc positionis to allow early-stage scientists to conduct synthesis projects in a stimulating and supportive international environment. The projects should be related to one of the four elements of iDiv's biodiversity research (Biodiversity Patterns, Processes, Functions, and Biodiversity and Society) or aspects of iDiv's research mission regarding Integrative Biodiversity Research (Integration across time and space, Integration across complexity levels, Integration across disciplines). After a decade of successful platform building and data generation at iDiv/sDiv, we perceive a need to synthesize biodiversity knowledge in order to develop a more coherent theoretical framework for biodiversity science. Therefore, postdoc proposals addressing synthesis and theory projects, preferably those capitalizing on existing data, e.g. through iDiv platforms, will be preferentially considered.

Applicants should address novel questions or examine known problems from an innovative synthesis perspective. All synthesis topics in biodiversity research are welcome, ranging from biology to social or computer sciences. Though the project may be risky, candidates should provide evidence that sufficient data and appropriate analytical tools are available or will be developed during their employment to tackle the question. **sDiv does not fund any field nor lab work, i.e. any additional data generation or sampling.**

Applications are open to scientists from inside and outside of iDiv. Individuals of any nationality who have experience in academic institutions, free-standing research institutions, scientific societies, governmental or policy agencies, or non-governmental organizations are generally eligible and highly welcome to submit proposals for the sDiv individual postdoc position.

Any postdoc at sDiv will be supervised and mentored by an iDiv researcher (see iDiv employee website). This will be preferably an iDiv professor, one of her/his postdocs or the sDiv coordinator working at the iDiv headquarter in Leipzig. **The sDiv coordinator will support the postdoc in finding a suitable mentor**. The mentoring programme for postdocs at iDiv includes attendance in lab meetings, a general support for career development via the possibility of attending and leading courses of iDiv's graduate school yDiv, co-supervision of PhD students (if applicable), and many other career counselling opportunities. **It is strongly recommended that you contact and consult with your Co-PI(s) (including the iDiv member) early in**

the process of writing your application. We will consult with the iDiv members as part of the proposal evaluation.

Postdocs are usually funded for 24 months with possible extension up to 36 months in total, following a positive evaluation of the postdoc project by the sDiv board in the 2nd year (full-time employment by Leipzig University, salary TV-L E13, place of work at iDiv in Leipzig only). Please note that the current DFG funding period ends on 30 September 2020. The employment beyond this date is subject to approval of further iDiv funding. However, the work plan needs to be provided for 36 months.

All sDiv employees are fully integrated into iDiv and adhere to the general regulations. They are expected to contribute to synergistic activities within the center and they have the right to make use of and receive support from iDiv facilities (e.g. Biodiversity Informatics Unit, Bioinformatics Unit, general IT Support Unit) and participate in institutional programmes (e.g. family care fund, career fund for women).

2.2   Full and pre-proposal application process

Pre-Proposal

You are only able 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 the **iDiv application portal** before **06 December 2018 (14:00/2:00 PM CET).** Decisions whether you can submit a full proposal will be made by the sDiv board within two weeks following the pre-proposal deadline.

The pre-proposal includes:

1. Information about the PI and Co-PI(s), including the supporting iDiv member
2. A brief description (3000 characters max.) of the aims, scope and scientific objectives of the planned project, its approach (methods, used data etc.), and its synthesis aspect

Full Proposal

Complete the **template for the full proposal provided on the sDiv website** and add all required documents. **Submit the full proposal via the iDiv application portal and upload all documents as a single PDF file by 13 March 2019 (14:00/2:00 PM CET).**

Applicants that will compile datasets or make use of existing datasets have to clarify in the **data management plan** the ownership rights before the data are used (see section 2.6).

2.3   Budget

Funding of the postdoc project has to be described, including (i) travel costs (if well justified) for the time the candidate is at iDiv (e.g. conferences), (ii) additional costs, such as literature or software (see proposal template). Salary for funded postdocs is automatically included into the funding. Again, as inherent idea of the synthesis research at sDiv, **any field nor lab work, i.e. any additional data generation or sampling, will not be funded.**

Administration of the budget is handled by the sDiv staff. Any later financial deviations of funded proposals have to be discussed with the sDiv coordinator.

2.4   Research Data management support

It is required that the data owners agree, prior to the application, to make their data available to the participants for the aims of the working group and any resulting publication.

Every funded postdoc has to sign the iDiv [Data Sharing Policy](#) and the [Data Portal Usage Policy](#). The postdoc will be required to register on the iDiv data portal and provide information regarding his/her research project, including any relevant metadata.

For further details please refer to the Data Sharing Policy, which describes the regulations with respect to data sharing in the context of iDiv. The iDiv Biodiversity Data Portal Usage Policy describes the rules governing usage of this infrastructure and of the data provided through it.

Additionally, the Biodiversity Informatics Unit of iDiv also provides the following services if necessary:

1.   Data storage and archiving on the iDiv data portal.

2.   Assistance and advice on:

 a.   Research Data (Textual and Multimedia) and Metadata management

 b.   Data structure and standards for data integration and sharing

 c.   Biodiversity data paper publications

 d.   Publishing data via national, regional or global data portals

 e.   Assigning DOIs to datasets

 f.   Submission of datasets to the global structured biodiversity data repository hosted in iDiv

3.   Develop data integration pipelines, provided data is in a standardized format.

4.   Access to a High Performing Computing Cluster (via the General IT Support Unit at iDiv).

These activities will be carried out in close consultation with the postdoc.

2.5   Summary of application

Check list

- ☐ Read all relevant documents and information.
- ☐ Identify and contact iDiv member(s) for your project.
- ☐ Register via the the **[iDiv application portal](#)** and submit the **pre-proposal by 06 December 2018 (14:00/2:00 PM CET).**
- ☐ Successful pre-proposal evaluation and being invited to submit a full proposal.
- ☐ Calculate your costs.
- ☐ Explore a possible starting date of your contract.
- ☐ Clarify the data management.
- ☐ Gather letters of reference.
- ☐ Submit the **full proposal via the [iDiv application portal](#)** by **13 March 2019 (14:00/2:00 PM CET).**

If you have any questions regarding the application procedure, please contact the [sDiv coordinator Marten Winter](#).

3 Evaluation procedure

3.1 Selection criteria

General selection criteria are based on the scientific excellence of the postdocs' objectives, work plan, and expertise. The project objectives have to be highly relevant to iDiv's central missions and may, for example, be related to one or more of iDiv's **key research areas** or iDiv's **research mission**. **Generally, individual postdoc proposals including a detailed and convincing project agenda (timeline, work plan, deliverables etc.) will have increased chances of getting funded.** Likewise, the postdoc budget should be detailed and well justified.

3.2 Proposal evaluation

The **sDiv advisory board** consists of 13 members, consisting of leading biodiversity scientists from each of the four iDiv founding institutions (Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Leipzig University, Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research GmbH – UFZ), the sDiv coordinator and the iDiv Managing Director. The sDiv board is appointed by the iDiv directorate.

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

Full proposals for individual postdocs are usually evaluated within 12 weeks after the submission deadline by the sDiv board and external reviewers.

Proposals clearly inappropriate for sDiv will be returned without review. Decisions will be communicated in written form. Reviewer comments on the full proposals need to be answered and implemented by the working group PIs.

4 Reporting

The funded postdoc is obliged to provide annual progress reports, and a final report. The postdoc will have regular meetings with his/her supervisors and mentors.

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) (ideally high-impact), proposals for other funding sources, a written description of dissemination concepts (e.g. software, websites), databases etc.

sDiv support always has to be acknowledged in any kind of postdoc publication/outcome (see guidelines). Copies of published articles should be sent to sDiv.

Failure to complete a postdoc project successfully for unjustified reasons and non-compliance with iDiv's data policy will typically result in banning the postdoc from submitting future proposals to project calls for a time period specified by the directorate.