

# Joint international call for synthesis proposals

## **Interactions between biodiversity and climate change**

Final funding approval for 2026 and beyond is not yet 100% guaranteed and is subject to final approval of iDiv funding, which is expected in the first half of 2025.

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### **List of relevant documents & links:**

- [Joint call description](#)
- [sDiv call website including the necessary documents for proposal submission](#)
- [The general mission and ideas behind iDiv and sDiv](#)
- [iDiv's research mission in the field of integrative biodiversity research](#)
- [iDiv's research portfolio](#)
- [iDiv application portal](#)
- [sDiv budget tool](#)
- [List of iDiv members](#)
- [List research-wise underrepresented regions](#)
- [iDiv data and code sharing policy](#)

### **1 General idea and aims of the global Synthesis Call**

Synthesis centres are research infrastructures that enable the development of knowledge from heterogeneous information, data, theories etc. as well as multiple perspectives from diverse groups. In this distinctive position on the world research scene, synthesis centres are at the forefront of knowledge in critical areas such as Biodiversity, Environment and Climate Change. Given the global nature of the tightly linked climate and biodiversity crises, several synthesis centres around the world have joined to synthesize knowledge linking the biodiversity and climate change crises.

Related synthesis efforts taking place at different centres have the potential to shed light on how the two crises interact and affect each other, and provide information and models to tackle the enormous challenges of our time.

We aspire to facilitate and encourage joint interactions among the different teams working on different aspects of the same overarching topic. In addition to centre-specific synthesis working groups, we will provide opportunities for cross-project fertilization that includes seminars, training, symposia, and an "ubersynthesis" final in-person meeting and working group for some participants from each group.

**sDiv's part of it is for funding up to two synthesis working groups of 10-15 people, preferably starting in January 2026.** The call aims to enable scientists to carry out synthesis projects in a stimulating and supportive international environment.

## 2 General sDiv call rules for this joint synthesis call

All proposals must address a synthesis topic on interactions of biodiversity and climate change.

Applications are open to all scientists worldwide. sDiv, like iDiv, is committed to building and maintaining a diverse and inclusive community that collectively supports and delivers on our mission to do great science. We will welcome, recruit, develop, and promote talented individuals of different genders and backgrounds. **We encourage proposals** that genuinely address topics and researchers **from underrepresented regions** (see list [here](#)). This can be done in a variety of ways that are important for regional biodiversity research, as well as for building synthetic connections beyond these regions. If you plan to work with researchers from and on questions relevant to underrepresented regions, proposals should co-design and collaborate with researchers from underrepresented regions, recognizing differences in scientific culture, interests and needs (more information [here](#)).

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

In addition to data synthesis, we also encourage theory and conceptual synthesis of all topics covering interactions of climate change and biodiversity. We encourage applicants to propose forward-looking theory and synthesis topics and perspectives, which can pave the way for novel research topics beyond backward-looking perspectives. We also encourage interdisciplinary projects e.g. covering socioeconomic and socioenvironmental or also planetary health topics.

## 3 Working group composition

### 3.1 Group size and number of meetings

All in-person working group meetings should take place at iDiv in Leipzig. Please check our [sDiv calendar](#) for available dates. If hybrid or full in-person meetings are not possible, sDiv working groups should meet virtually with full support from sDiv. In exceptional cases and if well justified, sDiv could also support satellite working group meetings (e.g. two teams meet in two locations - one of which must be iDiv - and meet simultaneously).

The group size can range from two to **max. 15 participants**. Our long experience has shown that 12-15 people is the optimal size for manageable and successful synthesis groups. In general, longer stays are considered more effective, but the costs should be balanced by a smaller group size to stay within the funding limit. We encourage working groups to meet three times, ideally for four or five full days per meeting. However, **a funding approval for a third**

**meeting will be based on a mid-term evaluation** by the sDiv Head after the second meeting.

The PIs are responsible for communicating with sDiv. They are expected to provide a list of all participants (including themselves) who have agreed to participate (for large working group meetings, a list of ten core participants is sufficient). Once a working group has been approved, exchanges or the addition of new participants may be allowed if agreed upon by the sDiv Head and the PIs.

### 3.2 Group Diversity

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 diversity and scientific expertise. Therefore, the groups should have **at least 40% female participation and at least one PhD student**. We strongly encourage you to include [PhD students of iDiv's graduate school yDiv](#) if the scientific focus matches the student's expertise (for help in finding the right yDiv student, please contact the sDiv Head [Marten Winter](#)). Please note again the encouragement towards underrepresented regions (see section 2), which should also be reflected in the composition of the group, if applicable.

Successful groups will consist of people with excellent expertise but also with the commitment and time to attend the meetings and make a significant contribution to the goals of the working group. Criteria for acceptance will include the composition of the group, the particular skills of the participants, their contribution to maximizing the complementarity of skills within a meeting, and available funding. Participants should reflect the goals of the group, e.g., working groups addressing socio-economic aspects of biodiversity science should include stakeholders and social scientists.

Although working groups include international scientists, 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.

### 3.3 Collaboration in iDiv

Each sDiv working group must have at least one [iDiv member](#) (full & associate members are eligible) as a participant. **Please note: iDiv member is a predefined term and does not refer to all iDiv staff.** Rather, iDiv members are researchers from iDiv or collaborating institutes who must apply for this special status. It is mandatory to **include a letter of support from the iDiv member(s) with the proposal**. A pre-proposal without an iDiv member agreeing to participate will not be further evaluated. Contact sDiv Head [Marten Winter](#) to find a suitable iDiv member.

In general, we want the iDiv researchers - iDiv members, PhD students, and others - to be involved in the project in the same way as anyone else. It should not lead to picking names

because you have to, but it should really lead to a meaningful and helpful integration and collaboration. Choose researchers wisely according to their expertise.

## 4 Application process

### 4.1 Pre-proposal

You are only eligible to submit a full sDiv proposal if you have been invited to do so 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 an online form in the [iDiv application portal](#) before **09 January 2025 (11:59 PM CET)**. Decisions whether you can submit a full proposal will be made at the end of January 2025 and the feedback will be sent to you a few days after that.

The pre-proposal online form includes:

1. Information and status of the PIs and participants, including the supporting iDiv member (early career or senior researcher).
2. A brief description of the planned project (no more than 750 words excluding references, usage of references is optional, no charts, no graphics, no calculations, no formatting but continuous text) including the novelty, the synthesis aspect and scientific aims, approaches (methods, used data etc.) and relevance for the interaction of climate change and biodiversity.
3. A brief description how your project engages genuinely with topics and researchers from underrepresented regions (if applicable).
4. A list of data to be used - Clarify the source and availability status (e.g. available, to be mobilized, etc.) of the data you plan to use, if applicable. If data is not available, explain why.
5. A letter of support by the iDiv member(s) using the template provided on the [sDiv website](#) - a pre-proposal without a letter of support from an iDiv member will not be further evaluated.
6. A list of min. five potential reviewers for the full proposal in case of a successful pre-proposal.

### 4.2 Full proposal

Following the invitation to submit a full proposal, it is necessary to complete the **proposal template** provided on the [sDiv website](#) - available after the pre-proposal deadline. Submit your full proposal including all attachments in **one PDF file** via the online form in the [iDiv application portal](#) by **27 March 2025 (11:59 PM CET)**. **Check all regulations and the**

**online form well before the submission deadline** - it contains a number of questions to be filled out in order to ease processing of the application data. Final funding decisions will be made at the end of May 2025 and the feedback will be sent to you a few days after that.

## 5 Research data management

It is required that the data owners agree to make the data and code resulting from sDiv funding publicly available. This should be achieved within three years of the final working group meeting, and under the least restrictive license possible.

Therefore, PIs that get a positive funding decision have to read and sign the [iDiv Data and Code Sharing Policy](#) (and send it back to the sDiv Head). iDiv's data policy follows widely accepted Open Science principles. Funded projects will receive intensive support in any necessary code and data management demands by iDiv's Integrative Biodiversity Data and Code Support Unit.

## 6 Budget

The budget for one working group meeting is generally limited to ~15.000,00 €. Working groups should meet two or three times over a period of two to three years (max. sum ~45.000,00 € for three meetings). Note again, the third meeting is subject to a project evaluation by the sDiv board after the second meeting. The financial support shown in the approved budget includes care of all local arrangements (local transportation, catering at iDiv 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 has to be done via the [budget tool](#) provided on the sDiv website. It is important to **add a screenshot of the budget tool to the full proposal**.

**Any financial deviations from the proposed budget of funded proposals must be discussed with the sDiv Head.** Due to the uncertain and rapidly changing general financial situation, mainly in travel costs, potential increased costs compared to the proposal can be handled flexibly if well-justified. Please note that we cannot save money in one year and shift it to other years!

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## 7 Evaluation procedure

### 7.1 Selection criteria

Generally, selection criteria are based on scientific excellence, the relevance and novelty of the research questions, a strategic fit to the call topic, iDiv's research (please read carefully the [sDiv framework](#)), work plan (timeline, deliverables etc.), expertise and suitability of the working group participants and the PIs and in this call. The project's objectives have to be highly relevant to iDiv's central missions.

### 7.2 Proposal evaluation

Pre-proposals will be evaluated at the end of January 2025 by the sDiv board. The feedback will be sent to you a few days after that.

Full proposals are evaluated at the end of May 2025 by the sDiv board and external expert reviewers. The feedback will be sent to you a few days after that.

## 8 Reporting

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](#).

The report should include specific project deliverables: i.e. manuscripts of multi-author scientific publications, proposals for other funding sources, code, databases etc. It should also include a description of further collaboration plans. **sDiv support has to be acknowledged in any kind of sDiv project publication/outcome ([see guidelines](#)). Copies of published products should be sent to sDiv.**

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 follow the sDiv rules & regulations for unjustified reasons and non-compliance with [iDiv's data policy](#) can result in banning PIs from submitting future proposals to project calls.