

BIODIVERSITY Synthesis Team Proposal Template

In order to apply as a synthesis team you will need to **submit your proposal via our [online submission portal](#)**. Below is a template of the online application.

The template has four sections. Please follow the formatting instructions provided.

The proposal requires you to enter team member details into an online form. Please download the example [details of team participants](#).

The proposal requires you to upload:

- Short CVs for team leads and other team members;
- The main Body of your synthesis team proposal with 8 sections (MS Word or PDF document);
- [Table of Data and Knowledge Sources](#);
- [Gantt Chart Team Work Plan](#);
- *Teams are also strongly encouraged to upload letter(s) of support from one or more policy or practice organisations whose staff will participate in the synthesis team, stating why the synthesis team's efforts are important and outlining how they could apply the results.*

Your proposal should include all of the following:

Summary
Descriptive Title
Short title (25 characters max for use as team name)
Synthesis Team Leaders (2 leads per team): name, job title, complete contact information and confirmation that team co-leads are African and/or from Africa-based institutions. Please also upload a 2-page CV for each team lead as a pdf. Team co-leads must be African or from Africa-based institutions. Africa-based institutions include institutions with head offices in the global North but with the synthesis team participant based in offices in Africa. Citizens of an African country based at institutions outside Africa are eligible as team co-leads and as other team members.
Project Summary (brief abstract of your project; 300 words maximum)
Proposed Project Start date: Date of first in-person meeting at ASCEND during September 2025 to December 2025.
Table of Participants (enter into online submission portal)
Names and affiliations of synthesis team participants (maximum of 15). Please indicate each person's project expertise (scientific, policy, practice, etc), their expected contribution to the work, their nationality, their institutional affiliation, their career stage, and upload a 2-page CV. Team composition is a very important eligibility and evaluation criteria and it is important team

participants are committed to the duration of the synthesis team project. Please read the Request for Proposals eligibility and evaluation criteria carefully. Team changes after the start of a project should be avoided and will only be allowed with the agreement of ASCEND.

You do not have to list a person in the role of the Postdoctoral Research Fellow funded by ASCEND at this stage. You may indicate someone who could be suitable for this role, but when a team is selected, ASCEND will work with the team co-leads to identify the specific requirements for the Postdoctoral Research Fellow position, and then advertise for and hire the Postdoctoral Research Fellow according to University of Cape Town process.

Data Liaison. Indicate the team member who will be responsible for engaging with ASCEND when necessary regarding data analysis needs and archiving data produced by the project. This person should have relevant analytical expertise.

Communications Liaison. Indicate the team member responsible for engaging with ASCEND for communications and outreach about research products and other outputs from the synthesis team. This person should have some communications experience.

Equity and Inclusion Liaison. Indicate the team member responsible for engaging with ASCEND about linkages of the research to equity and social inclusion.

Table of Data and Knowledge Sources (upload to online submission portal)

Brief summary and description of existing datasets, evidence or knowledge to be used in the project. Datasets and knowledge sources are interpreted broadly and can include both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as different theoretical components or models.

Sources of these data: Please include references to databases, websites, or other data sources, and how you will access the information. Please also state whether there is data, evidence or knowledge that you still need to locate or gain permission to access and use.

Status of the datasets (e.g., datasets still need to be downloaded or otherwise acquired, 'raw' datasets are in-hand, dataset synthesis has already been done but further analysis needed). Proposals should provide evidence that sufficient data and appropriate analytical tools are available or will be developed to tackle the research questions.

List any potential ethical, legal or practical constraints associated with acquiring, using, and sharing project data.

Proposed Activities and Work Plan (upload to online submission portal)

Complete and upload the [Gantt Chart Team Work Plan](#). Please provide an expected timetable for the work of your synthesis team, including the timing of in-person meetings over a 2-year period. Please include specific data or knowledge synthesis tasks: what is planned to be done (1) before, (2) during, and (3) after each in-person team meeting at ASCEND?

For example, when will you engage team members and any other stakeholders throughout the research co-production process, including when not at ASCEND to enhance the use of knowledge for policy or practice?

Note the Gantt chart goes to 36 months to include additional activities after the last in-person meeting at ASCEND, as well as the timeline for Postdoctoral Research Fellow work that is funded for up to 3 years.

Proposed activities can also include, but are not limited to, a brief description of activities for team communication and virtual meetings between in-person meetings, group facilitation

methods, stakeholder processes, and brief details of sequencing of data integration and analysis steps of your methods.

Body of Proposal (up to 6 pages; font size 11; upload to submission portal as PDF or MS Word). Please use all the section headings below.

Problem Statement: (1-2 pages) Clear and concise statement of:

the research problem

why it is important and will lead to novel insights

how it relates to an identified evidence need for policy and/or practice to improve decision making and action on biodiversity and climate change, including in Africa.

Methods: (1 page) Please describe clearly the details of the methods and approaches your team will use to synthesise and analyse data and/or knowledge to answer the research problem identified.

Contribution to Synthesis: Which novel aspects with respect to synthesis are part of your project?

Synthesis typically integrates across multiple disciplines, and transcends academic boundaries to include associated knowledge from policy or practice. Research can be focused on any geographical scale, from local to continental and global.

If your research includes very localised synthesis (e.g., a focus on a specific city or locality as opposed to a synthesis across many cities or localities or cases) then please articulate how your research is relevant or applicable by being able to inform research, policy, practice, and/or advocacy in other contexts more generally.

Equity and inclusion: Please describe how you will integrate equity and social inclusion issues into the proposed work. For example, this could be by integrating equity and inclusion considerations into some parts of the project or where the project outcomes are specifically focused on enhancing equity and social inclusion in climate and biodiversity action. Projects where the expected outcomes are centred on supporting gender equality and/or social inclusion should include significant expertise on gender and/or social inclusion, and strategic collaborating partners. If integration of equity and inclusion issues or a specific equity and inclusion focus is not possible, reasons for this must be clearly explained as well as how equity and inclusion considerations may be integrated as the project evolves.

Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes: Clearly describe the expected research outputs (e.g., details of expected publications, new datasets, software), as well as other outputs (e.g., policy briefs, decision-support tools, toolkits, serious games).

What policy and or practice outcomes do you aim to inform (e.g., specific policy decisions or practitioner actions)?

We understand that this may evolve over the duration of the project in response to opportunities for influence and as research results become available.

Knowledge into use: Please elaborate on the specific impact(s) your team aims to achieve with regard to enhancing policy and/or practice, based on the specific policy or practice gaps and demands you have identified.

Identify audiences and knowledge users with as much specificity as possible, and how they may use the research.

Share how you have engaged relevant stakeholders in the development of your proposal and have relevant policy and/or practice participants in your team to increase the co-production and use of the research.

What approach do you intend using to co-produce and ensure that your proposed impacts in the policy and/or practice spheres are more likely to be achieved?

What is your strategy for disseminating and promoting the outputs to ensure their use and how these may lead to improved outcomes for action on climate change?

Additional questions to explore may include: Which knowledge into use activities do you envisage? How will you keep the team including relevant policy and practice stakeholders informed and involved in the project?

Synthesis team proposals are strongly encouraged to include a letter(s) of support from one or more policy or practice organisations whose staff intend to participate in the synthesis team, stating why the synthesis team's efforts are important and outlining how they intend to apply the results.

Team composition: Please summarise (1-2 paragraphs) how diversity was considered in the selection of the synthesis team members, especially highlighting how the project needs dictated the composition of the team across disciplines, as well as across team members from research, policy and/or practice.

We encourage teams to have at least 80% of participants from Africa or Africa-based institutions and to have at least equal representation of women in team leadership and the overall team. Africa-based institutions include institutions with head offices in the global North but with members of the synthesis team based in offices in Africa. Citizens of an African country based at institutions outside Africa are eligible as team co-leads and as other team members. Please include the percentage of your team that is African or from Africa-based institutions. Please also include the percentage of your team that gender identify as women, men or other.

Teams must have a minimum of 2 early career researchers (PhD or Postdoctoral career stage), in addition to the Postdoctoral position that will be provided to support the team. Please include the number of your team that are early career researchers (that is, less than 5 years post PhD).

We also encourage a broad lens of other diversity considerations, with teams made up of a mix across career stages, social identity, ethnicity, geography, parental status, (dis)ability, nationality, etc. We encourage reflection on barriers to inclusion given the team composition. For example, plans to ensure equitable participation across career stages and potential ways to resolve conflicts that may arise from diverse perspectives.

New Partnerships: Please describe how the team includes new partnerships between individuals and/or organisations. If multiple team members have a history of collaboration then state clearly which team members are new and have not worked together previously, as well as which new connections are being made between organisations.