These guidelines are to be used for the organization of proposals. Submissions are only valid if submitted through the electronic submission system (EPSS). Any application not submitted through the EPSS will not be considered for evaluation. All submissions are to be in English unless otherwise stated.

Deadline for submission of pre-proposals:	2 May 2018
Notification of selection for final proposal:	31 May 2018
Deadline for submission of complete proposals:	29 June 2018
Project selection by the Scientific Committee:	5 September 2018

Selection of proposals is conducted in two steps.

In the **first step**, pre-proposals will be evaluated by the CESAB Scientific Committee (CS) on the basis of four criteria: (i) originality of the project, (ii) alignment with the terms of the call and CESAB objectives, (iii) the feasibility of the project, and for those projects that deal with data, (iv) the identification, availability and readiness of the data for synthesis.

In the **second step** short-listed pre-proposals are invited to submit a full proposal. Criteria for this second step will include: (i) the innovation and scientific excellence of the proposal, (ii) alignment the terms of the call and CESAB objectives, (iii) the quality of the working group assembled, (iv) the feasibility of the work program (including budget), (v) the importance of the proposed activities for the dissemination of knowledge and data, and (vi) links with national (and international) initiatives. Proposals are evaluated by external reviewers, and candidates are asked to provide a list of suggested reviewers.

Proposals and pre-proposals are to be prepared on the forms provided. These will then be submitted by the due dates through the EPSS.

1. PRE-PROPOSALS

This phase of the process is to select those projects that have the greatest chance of success. We ask you if you have submitted a version of your project before, although there is no limit to the number of times you can re-apply.

A Introduction

- Descriptive title (in English and French)
- An acronym for use as a project name
- Principal Investigator's name and contact information
- Key words for your project, the focus of your work (ecosystems, organisms etc), key disciplines involved, and expected application of the project.

B Body of the pre-proposal

- A brief scientific abstract of your project (≤300 words: a clear and concise problem statement of what is to be done, importance and relevance of the subject, and how it will be accomplished) in French and English.

Context and objectives (≤ 750 words)

- problem statement, importance and relevance of the subject, and outline of the working hypotheses.

Proposed activities (≤750 words)

- brief description of methods and of their relevance to the issue.

Description and availability of data sets (where this is relevant). This is a very important part of the success of the project and needs to be treated accordingly.

Literature cited

C Composition of the working group:

- list of participants, their location, relevant expertise and intended contribution to the group.

Note: up to 20% of the original participants can be changed between the pre-proposal and complete proposal.

2. Proposals

Full proposals should be relatively short (≤ **3000 words** for the body of the proposal), and will include the following (as an indication):
- Descriptive title
- Short title: an acronym for use as a project name
- Principal Investigator's name and contact information
- Project summary: a brief scientific abstract of your project (≤ 300 words)
- Proposed beginning and end dates

Body of the proposal

In less than **3000 words** you will be asked to describe the project: the question being addressed, the proposed activities, type of data analyses and dissemination activities.

Context and objectives
- problem statement, importance and relevance of the subject, the degree of innovation and originality, outline of the working hypotheses.

Proposed activities
- brief description of methods and why they are appropriate

In addition (not included in the 3000 word limit), please provide:
- a clear timetable of activities including proposed schedule of meetings;
- list of literature cited;
- a project budget using the budget template (in excel). This is an important component of a project's success.

Anticipated results and benefits

A data management plan is required for projects involving data compilation and analyses. This will include:
- (i)   information about the origin, accessibility, type and size of data to be used in the project,
- (ii) a nominee from the group who will be responsible for data management,
- (iii) estimation of the time and assistance required to prepare and compile the data for analysis,
- (iv) intended standards used to document the data.

Your proposed solutions for the data at the end of the project, including your:
- (v)   policy for the data access and use,
- (vi) solution for sustainability of data storage, and
- (vii) public release date for the synthesised data.

Groups are asked as far as possible to make their synthesised data openly available and their work reproducible.

Composition of the working group

Although gender balance and age range are not required criteria we expect that aspects favourable to good group function are considered in forming the group and will be clear from the proposed group. We ask for the following information for each proposed participant:
- complete updated information for contact, year doctorate (or highest degree if less) was awarded, main research expertise, current position, organisation and country, top 5 publications in relation to the proposal, role in the project.

Proposal of reviewers

You will be asked to propose 6 reviewers, and if necessary to identify any people you do not wish to review your project. This is mandatory.

Capacity building

Working groups are encouraged to include training and dissemination activities through national initiatives and participation in lectures and/or training, as part of their projects. Allowance for this should be made in the budget proposal.

3. ONLINE SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Pre-proposals and proposals must be submitted on-line. The address for submission will be posted on the FRB (www.fondationbiodiversite.fr) and the CESAB (www.cesab.org) websites. The format of the pre-proposals and proposals will follow the organization described above and the required templates will be available for download when the call is opened. An email will confirm receipt of your application. Please contact the CESAB staff if you have difficulty submitting your proposal (cesab@fondationbiodiversite.fr).

4. PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals are evaluated for their scientific merit, novel approaches, and rationale for inclusion as a CESAB project. The Centre's Scientific Committee (CS, http://www.cesab.org/fr/organisation) will review proposals and make recommendations to the Director and the FRB.

Pre-proposals will be evaluated by the CS, while the evaluation of the full proposals involves both the CS and independent external reviewers.

Reviewers may decline reviewing a proposal if there is a conflict of interest, according to the terms of the CESAB review process and conflict of interest statement.

The CS will provide the PI(s) with a summary of the reasons for their decisions, but not the actual scores given by reviewers, their names, or details of the discussions on the project. Proposals clearly inappropriate for the CESAB (e.g. those requesting equipment, funds to be spent at the investigator's home institution, or funds for new data collection, etc.) will be returned without review.

Tips from the Scientific Committee

Proposals are evaluated primarily on the significance and novelty of the idea(s) under consideration and should be question-driven (i.e. not purely descriptive). To prepare your proposal, make sure you:
- provide a clear rationale for why this should be, or can only be done at CESAB;
- clearly identify the innovative and original nature of your project;
- give a precise description of the datasets to be used, their origin and availability, and provide a detailed management plan for the data (if you are using data);
- let us know whether a general database for the project will have to be created and how;
- include enough methodological details so that methodological soundness and feasibility can be assessed;
- are clear and concise: give brief examples of the major points you are making or approaches you are using;
- specify the expertise brought to the project by each participant, and whether he/she has agreed to participate;
- if the results are potentially useful to resource managers or policy-makers, justify this convincingly; and
- provide details concerning any possible co-funding (other synthesis centre, funding agency, private company, etc) if relevant. Although this will not alter assessment of the quality and suitability of the project, supplementary funding sources might improve its feasibility.

5. CONTACT

Information

For any further information on the CESAB initiative, the Centre facilities, the French Foundation of Research on Biodiversity, or the preparation of proposals, please see www.cesab.org or www.fondationbiodiversite.fr or contact the CESAB staff: cesab@fondationbiodiversite.fr