



## FRB-CESAB 2026 Generic call for synthesis proposals

### Context and objectives of the call

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The French Foundation for Biodiversity Research (FRB) opens its 2026 call for research projects within its Center for Synthesis and Analysis of Biodiversity (CESAB).

Funding will be provided for at least 2 innovative three-year projects dedicated to the synthesis of ideas and concepts and the analysis of existing biodiversity-related data. **The main aims of these projects are to improve scientific knowledge on biodiversity and to demonstrate how this knowledge can be used to better protect biodiversity.**

Members of projects funded by CESAB share scientific expertise, available data and/or modeling and methodological tools to answer a wide range of biodiversity-related questions at all biological, spatial, and temporal scales (all levels of biodiversity are concerned from genes to ecosystems).

### Expectations

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Projects may deal with any topic related to biodiversity, in the fields of natural sciences, environmental sciences and/or human and social sciences. Examples of research topics include (but are not limited to): the state and dynamics of biodiversity changes; the relationships between biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services; the relationships between biodiversity and anthropogenic pressures; the role of evolutionary processes in biodiversity dynamics; the role of biodiversity in socio-ecosystem resilience; the access to and conservation of biological resources; biodiversity law and governance; biodiversity conservation; the relationship between biodiversity and the four other nexus domains *sensu* IPBES (health, water, food and climate) are encouraged; nature-based solutions approaches are welcomed, etc.

Innovative ideas, feasibility and scientific excellence are primary selection criteria, including interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinary approaches that engage stakeholders (managers, policy makers, NGOs, general public).

### Consortium composition

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A project submitted to the call must include a thorough description of its consortium, i.e. the working group that will be hosted at the CESAB during workshops. Successful groups consist of people with relevant expertise but also with the dedication and time to participate in the meetings hosted at CESAB as well as the time to contribute to the group goals.

The consortium is expected to meet at the **CESAB 5 times over the 3-year** duration of the project. Each **meeting lasts 5 days**. The group is also expected to organize a two-day virtual meeting and regular short virtual meetings throughout the project duration.

A project's working group must:

- be led by two principal investigators (PIs)<sup>1</sup> :
  - the first PI must be a scientist with a permanent position in a French research organization or a French university;
  - the second PI must have a permanent position or a contract that runs until the end of the project, within any organization worldwide. If he/she is a researcher, he/she must come from a different laboratory than the first PI ; if he/she is not a researcher, he/she must justify a scientific leadership background;
- consist of a maximum of 12 members (including the PIs, notwithstanding the post-doctoral fellow to be recruited);
- include international members; in order to reduce the carbon footprint, we advise the group not to have too many participants traveling from very far locations.
- be balanced and diverse in terms of gender, range of expertise, and career stage<sup>2</sup>; multidisciplinary groups or groups including non-academic stakeholders or practitioners are welcome;
- include at least one group member clearly identified as responsible for the management of data within the group. This person will be in direct interaction with the CESAB data scientists.

Any change in the list of participants after the selection of the project must be approved by the CESAB scientific director.

## Post-doctoral fellow

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Each selected group will have the opportunity to recruit a postdoctoral fellow. The recruitment will be led by the two PIs and the FRB-CESAB staff. The postdoctoral fellow will act as a catalyst for the working group. He/she will be fully involved in the dynamics of the project and be a driving force behind the group's research. We expect the postdoctoral fellow to be independent and willing to contribute to the FRB-CESAB activities and collaborative opportunities.

He/she may be hired by either the FRB or the French PI's institution, depending on CESAB's hosting capacity and FRB Human Resources management policy; he/she will be hosted either at the CESAB in Montpellier (if hired by the FRB), or at the French PI's laboratory (if hired by the PI's institution).

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<sup>1</sup> There is no hierarchy between the PIs, who must equally share the scientific direction and the coordination of the group throughout the project. Their names will appear in alphabetical order on the project presentation materials.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that the group must be stable in composition for at least three years (including the year of the proposal evaluation), which is incompatible with including too many non-permanent members (we recommend one or two non-permanent researchers max if justified)

Funding dedicated to interactions with the PIs (should the post-doc be hosted at CESAB) and development of skills and network is included in the budget of the project.

## Budget and resources

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The financial support of the FRB includes:

- the **recruitment of a postdoctoral fellow for a maximum of 24 months**, (duration for salary based on FRB reference wages, i.e. a junior researcher with a maximum of 4 years of postdoctoral experience), as well as:
  - **her.his computer equipment** (if necessary and within the limit of 2000 euros; second-hand equipment is preferred, should it meets the requirements);
  - **travel and accommodation dedicated to her.his skill and network development** (link with the PIs and/or the CESAB team, collaborations within the consortium between the workshops, training courses, ...), according to the terms and conditions of the post-doc charter;
  - **participation to national or international conferences** (registration fees and travel costs, up to 3000 euros);
- **the organization of the 5 project meetings and related costs:** transportation, accommodation, food and incidental costs for 12 participants + the post-doc, at CESAB, Montpellier
- **publication costs** up to 5000 euros;

The FRB-CESAB team will also provide:

- workspaces at the CESAB and communication tools;
- support for data analysis;
- support for communication and promotion of the project and its results;
- support for financial and administrative management of the project.

The budget will be managed and handled by FRB<sup>3</sup>. The CESAB team will make all the expenses; it does not need to be detailed in the (pre-)proposal.

Funding is managed by FRB-CESAB on a project-by-project basis and within the overall budget for the call for proposals. As a result, PIs do not have direct access to a dedicated budget that they can manage as they see fit. Only the items listed above are covered. It does NOT include, for example :

- salaries of projects members,
- travels costs for group members outside of the workshops, or unrelated to collaboration with the post-doc,
- internships,
- field work or data collection costs...

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<sup>3</sup> except if the postdoctoral researcher is hosted in the PI's lab, in which case the portion allocated to their salary and their computing equipment is transferred to the hiring institution

## Deliverables

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- The working group will provide a **mid-term report** (after 18 months - evaluated by the CESAB scientific council to allow the continuation of the funding) and a **final report** (after the last meeting), based on a template provided by the CESAB team.
- Multi-author high-quality scientific **publications**, publication of datasets on European portals as well as outreach products are expected; publications in non-profit and society-owned scientific journals are strongly encouraged.
- Particular attention will also be paid to **knowledge transfer**. In particular, the following are expected: scientific publications and oral communications at international conferences, as well as other forms of knowledge dissemination tailored for communication with scientists, managers and users, construction of open-access databases, development of open access analysis and modeling tools, websites, organization of international workshops, training courses or official events and public outreach when relevant.

## Call process and governance

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The call runs for two stages:

- Phase 1 - submission of pre-proposals, to be reviewed by the CESAB scientific committee, who will make the pre-selection. Only the PIs of a pre-proposal selected at the end of this first stage will be invited to submit a full proposal.
- Phase 2 - submission of full proposals, each to be evaluated by four reviewers: two members of the CESAB Scientific Committee and two external expert reviewers.

The **CESAB scientific committee** handles the scientific evaluation, ranks the proposals based on their scientific excellence, and submits the final selection to the FRB board.

The **FRB board** approves the selection and the funding within the limits of the available dedicated budget.

## Eligibility and evaluation criteria

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### Eligibility of the submitted projects

To be eligible, the projects submitted must :

- meet the requirements related to the **working group composition** (PIs and members)
- address the **synthesis of existing biodiversity data** (projects collecting new data in the field/lab are not eligible to this call, while projects aiming at gathering scattered existing datasets in a common database for further analyses should apply to the DataShare call)

## Evaluation of the submitted (pre)proposals

Projects will be selected at each stage of the process, according to the following criteria:

- the **scientific quality and innovative nature** of the project;
- the **relevance** of the project to the objectives of CESAB;
- the quality of the **working group** (i.e. expertise matching the topic addressed and overall balance among disciplines, genders, career stages);
- the **feasibility** of the work program;
- the **impact** of the project's scientific data and results;
- and the **dissemination** and the knowledge transfer plan.

## Data management policy

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The CESAB adheres to the principles of open science and reproducibility. The datasets produced/assembled by the funded projects and the associated scripts and codes used for the analyses must be made publicly accessible.

To achieve this objective, the CESAB expects that:

- the datasets synthesized during the research project at the CESAB are described in a relevant way (using international standards) and made publicly available within a reasonable amount of time (subject to confidentiality constraints for data on individuals and organizations);
- the raw data used to generate any scientific output are well documented;
- the associated scripts and codes used for the analyses must be made publicly accessible;
- the intellectual property rights of all data owners are respected when their data are used by CESAB working groups;
- Creative Commons BY 4.0 standards are applied as much as possible to all deposited data.

The CESAB offers a unique opportunity for scientists to benefit from the expertise of a team of data scientists (part of the CESAB staff). The CESAB does not offer any storage or hosting solutions for its groups. The hosting and deployment of databases, web services and any other product of the project is the responsibility of the PIs. In terms of numerical analyses, a computing station will be accessible (for medium performance computing only). According to this, the objectives and computing needs of the project must be described in the proposal submission.

## Calendar

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18 June 2026 at 13:00 (CEST): Deadline for submission of the pre-proposals

30 Sept 2026: Invitation to submit a full proposal

10 Dec 2026 at 13:00 (CET): Deadline for submission of the full proposals

April 2027 : Announcement of results

Spring 2027 : Virtual kick-off meeting with the FRB-CESAB team

Autumn 2027 : Virtual kick-off workshop within the project team  
Early 2028 : 1st CESAB workshop (= official starting date of the project)

## Submission procedure and contact

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All information is available on <https://frbcesab2026.sciencescall.org/>  
Contact : [cesab@fondationbiodiversite.fr](mailto:cesab@fondationbiodiversite.fr)

## Annexes

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Annex 1 - [Cesab synthesis project timeline](#)

Annex 2 - <https://padlet.com/cesab/cesab-groups-information-tools-and-tips-fr2rmhnharwgd38s>