

Living Data Project: Invitation to propose a working group topic

Do you have a research question in ecology, evolution or environmental science that could benefit from a focused working group? Could a team of a dozen highly qualified and motivated graduate students and postdoctoral fellows from across Canada help you answer this question with a week of intense work? Working groups collaboratively synthesize existing data and research and/or develop new conceptual frameworks or models.

We are seeking a team of two researchers to develop and lead a one week working group (August 30 – September 3, 2021) focused on a challenging and important question in ecology, evolution or environmental science. We welcome both applied and fundamental questions. We invite researchers from all sectors (universities, governments, non-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations, community groups, industry) and career stages (from early career to senior researchers, including experienced PhD students and postdoctoral fellows) to submit proposals. The working group will consist of a small group of researchers (the two research leaders, 10 graduate students and 3 postdoctoral research fellows) who will meet virtually over a week to work intensively and collaboratively on the research question, using best practices in team science and digital collaboration.

What we will provide:

We will run a national competition for the ten graduate students who will take part in this working group. The majority of these graduate students will have already been trained by the Living Data Project in the specialized statistics for synthesis science (1 month course) and in best practices in scientific collaboration (1 month course). The research leaders are invited to be part of the selection process.

Three Living Data Project postdoctoral researchers will help you develop the schedule for your working group, assist with facilitation and meeting logistics, and organize the digital platforms. The postdoctoral researchers will also be full participants in the working group, and are highly trained in data management and analysis, reproducible research, and inclusive collaboration practice.

We will provide coupons for meal delivery during the working group for all participants, and up to \$1500 to cover publication costs.

Responsibilities of research leaders:

We are looking for a team of two researchers who will co-lead the working group. You will be responsible for setting the scientific agenda, defining the research question and providing in advance any relevant datasets to be analyzed.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- (1) The research question will be of interest to graduate students in ecology, evolution or environmental science.
- (2) The research question can feasibly be answered within an intensive five day working group, and will result in a concrete product or outcome.
- (3) The graduate students and postdoctoral fellows will benefit from the working group, for example through exposure to non-academic careers, development of new skills or applications of ecology and evolution theory.
- (4) The project is consistent with the goals of the Living Data Project. The Living Data project provides cutting-edge training in data and collaboration skills, including breathing new life into legacy datasets in ecology, evolution and environmental science. The Living Data Project applies an equity, inclusiveness and diversity lens to all its activities.
- (5) The researchers are highly qualified to lead the working group, including experience leading research teams and building inclusive collaborations.

Proposals should include:

A description of the research question and its importance (max 200 words). We seek research questions of high importance to science or society that require the synthesis of existing data or results, or the development of new models or frameworks. These questions should be answerable within a 5 day working group, and may be either conceptual or applied in nature.

A description of the work plan for the working group, including goals (max 200 words). Provide a step-by-step plan for how the working group will collaboratively answer the research question. An important feature of working groups is that it can be broken into smaller subgroups that work on different aspects of the workflow during part of the day, which then collectively assemble later in the day to synthesize their work. Please specify any product you hope to achieve from the working group (e.g. report), and how production of this product will either be incorporated in the workplan, or will be finalized by the participants after the working group. We expect that graduate students that make a substantial contribution to publications would be included as co-authors.

If relevant, a description of the data to be analysed (max 200 words). We require any database, or combination of databases, that will be analysed in this working group to be in a

format that allows immediate programmatic access. The emphasis of these working groups is in formulating and testing hypotheses, so it is imperative that participants do not spend most of the working group time in cleaning data, building databases or navigating access. There is a preference, but not requirement, for databases that are open access, Canadian or that have originated from data rescue activities. The research leaders need not have been involved in the creation of the database, but should be familiar with it.

A description of the benefits to graduate students for participation (max 200 words).

Graduate students are often motivated by opportunities to learn about non-academic careers, to deepen their understanding of concepts, to experience the application of science beyond academia, to contribute to initiatives that have high societal value, and to have concrete products that can enrich their cv.

Please attach the cv of each research leader that will take part in this working group. Please highlight experience in coordinating research teams and building inclusive collaborations.

Complete applications must be emailed to Kelly Haller at ciee-icee@biodiversity.ubc.ca by **12 April 2021**.