# Explore research proposal template

# Submission instructions

1. **Redact or remove** any references to the names and affiliations of research team members in the research proposal.
   * Information about the principal investigator and team members will be captured separately in the online form and as separate attachments. This ensures a **double-blind review** process for proposals.
2. **Submit the research proposal** following all formatting and content guidelines as outlined below:

### Formatting guidelines

Font type: Arial for all text.

Font size (Body text):11

Font size (Footnotes): Size 10

Line spacing: Single spacing throughout the document

Margins: 1 inch (2.54 cm) on all sides

Alignment: Left align body text; headings aligned to the left

Page numbers: Bottom-right corner on all pages

File format: Submit as a PDF

### Heading styles

Level 1 (main headings):

Font size: 14

Style: Bold

Case: Sentence case (capitalize the first word and proper nouns only)

Spacing: 18 pts above, 12 pts below

Level 2 (subheadings):

Font size: 13

Style: Bold

Case: Sentence case.

Spacing: 18 pts above, 12 pts below

Level 3 (sub-subheadings):

Font size: 12

Style: Bold

Case: Sentence case

Spacing: Single space above and below

# List of acronyms

Insert acronyms and their meanings in the table below.

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| --- | --- |
| Acronym | Meaning |
|  |  |

# Summary

Provide a summary of the proposed research project (maximum 300 words). Include the following points:

* Significance of the proposed research
* Objectives
* Research methods
* Potential impact
* Communication strategy and plan

# Problem statement

Describe the problem(s) your research aims to address (maximum 150 words).

# Objectives of the research

* What is the primary objective of the research?
* What are the specific objectives?

# Research questions

List up to five research questions your project aims to answer (maximum 200 words).

# Significance of the research

Provide background information that demonstrates the significance of the research. Include in-text citations and ensure that full references are provided in the references section at the end of the proposal.

Address the following questions (maximum 1,000 words):

* How much is already known about the problem(s)?
* How will your research address the problem(s)?
* What is missing from the current knowledge?
* What is innovative about your research?

# Anticipated research results

Describe the preliminary research results you expect to achieve during the grant period (maximum 150 words).

# Relevance to institutional, national, regional and international initiatives and priorities

Explain how the proposed research aligns with and contributes to institutional, national, regional and international initiatives and priorities (maximum 400 words). Provide specific examples of how your research builds on and serves these initiatives, such as:

* Nationally Determined Contributions
* Global Biodiversity Framework
* EU Deforestation Regulation
* Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures
* National Reforestation Targets

Contextualize your answers to the target countries, explaining how the project would contribute to their specific initiatives.

Provide details on how the research can engage with these initiatives and policy targets. Consider innovative methods beyond producing policy briefs for disseminating and applying your research findings.

# Stakeholders and benefits

List the research stakeholders and describe how the research will benefit them in the table below.

* Include all stakeholders within the landscape, categorized by country where possible
* Consider the different interests of each stakeholder group
* Assess the potential influence of each stakeholder in relation to the engagement strategy
* Focus on benefits that can be realized within the project duration
* Include improved landscape governance as one of the potential benefits from the research
* Consider policy harmonization as another potential benefit where applicable

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| --- | --- |
| Stakeholders and benefits | |
| Stakeholders | Benefits |
|  |  |
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# Analytical framework

Provide an analytical framework for the proposed research. Consider attaching an illustration of the framework as an appendix (maximum 500 words).

Ensure that your framework:

* aligns with research objectives and questions
* reflects the chosen methodology
* incorporates the theory of change
* presents a simplified yet comprehensive overview of your research approach

# Approach and methodology

Describe the overall approach and research methodology. Provide details regarding methods of data collection and analysis (maximum 500 words). Consider attaching an illustration as an appendix.

# Ethical considerations

Explain how you will protect the rights of research participants, referring to the ‘Principles of ethical research’ in the ‘Explore research guidelines’ (maximum 500 words).

Describe your approach to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for all participants, not just Indigenous Peoples, and explain how you will navigate FPIC processes in countries where they may be costly or complex.

Address the handling of sensitive information: Identify types of potentially sensitive data your research may produce, outline measures to protect participant privacy and confidentiality and describe compliance with relevant data privacy laws.

# Gender equality and social inclusion

Describe how your research will address issues of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) (maximum 500 words):

* How are GESI issues incorporated into your research objectives?
* How will the research project address any GESI-related challenges within the research team that may arise during the project?

# Theory of change

Provide a theory of change that demonstrates how your research will achieve its objectives and intended impact (maximum 400 words). Consider attaching an illustration as an appendix.

In your theory of change, address the following elements:

* Inputs, such as funding sources, scientific expertise and existing knowledge and data
* Processes, such as collaboration methods, research methodologies and outreach and engagement strategies
* Outputs, such as peer-reviewed academic papers, policy briefs and webinars
* Outcomes, such as informed policymaking, increased awareness among stakeholders and changes in practices or behaviours
* Impacts, such as long-term changes in the field of study and broader societal or environmental benefits

# Communication strategy and plan

Outline a comprehensive communication strategy that addresses stakeholder engagement, research dissemination and project impact (maximum 500 words). Include internal team communication and external stakeholder outreach throughout the project cycle.

When designing the communication strategy and plan to support your research project, address the following questions:

* How will you ensure buy-in and effective participation of stakeholders – including marginalized groups, practitioners and policymakers – throughout the research process?
* What methods will you use to reach and communicate with these stakeholders?
* What communication products will you develop and utilize?
* How will you monitor, evaluate and adapt your communication activities and products?

# Policy outreach

In this section, give special attention to engaging and influencing policymakers. Address the following questions (maximum 500 words):

* Which specific policies will your research target and at what levels (local, national, international)?
* What (inter)national policy gaps can your research help address?
* How will your research inform and influence these policies?

# Work plan

Describe the timeframe for research activities by month for the duration of the project. Complete the ‘Activities and timetable’ worksheet in the ‘Work plan and budget’ template. Consider the following:

* Develop a realistic timeline for two years
* Include the FPIC process
* Incorporate training and mentorship programmes for stakeholders to understand and use technical tools
* Focus on knowledge transfer to support institutionalization

**Upload the finalized budget as a separate Excel attachment.**

# Budget

Provide detailed budget information for the proposed research project using the “Work plan and budget” template. Refer to the budget guide for specific instructions and allowable expenses.

**Upload the finalized budget as a separate Excel attachment.**

# Risk management

Use the ‘Risk management plan’ template below to detail possible risks associated with the research project. For each identified risk, describe the risk, explain how the risk will be mitigated and specify who will be responsible for managing the risk.

Use one row for each risk and add rows as needed. Ensure that your risk management plan is comprehensive and addresses all potential challenges that may affect your research project.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk | Likelihood of this occurring (1–5; 1 is extremely low likelihood, 5 is extremely high likelihood) | Severity of risk (1–5; 1 is extremely low risk, 5 is extremely high risk) | Mitigation plan |
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# Research teams

Complete the table below, listing all research team members along with their roles and responsibilities.

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| Team member | Role(s) | Responsibilities |
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For each team member, include a brief two-pager CV. Include a personal statement describing what they hope to achieve through their involvement in this research project (maximum 250 words). **Upload a combined file including CVs and personal statements for all team members.**

# References

List all references used in your proposal using the [Harvard referencing style](https://www.mendeley.com/guides/harvard-citation-guide/).

# Appendices

Attach supporting documents to your proposal. These may include illustrations of analytical frameworks, methodology diagrams, theory of change visualizations or any additional data or charts relevant to your proposal.