

WHAT Climate WORKS Solutions

Call for African-led teams to shape high-impact systematic reviews on climate and health in Africa.

We invite teams of experts to lead a series of living systematic reviews gathering and synthesizing evidence on some of the most promising interventions that address pressing climate and health challenges in the African continent.

The reviews are intended to support the scientific evidence base global science assessments such as those by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) or United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) typically draw from.

You bring the priorities and insight – we'll pair you with experienced systematic reviewers and provide tailored training and synthesis support to produce high-quality, policy-relevant outputs.

Please note this is a technical assistance call and direct funding is not provided.

Summary:

Proposal deadline: 14:00 South Africa Standard Time on 13 February 2026.

Purpose: This request seeks to identify at least **five African-led teams** addressing relevant high-impact questions on what works in climate and health policies in Africa. Teams of researchers that also involve policymakers and practitioners are welcomed. The evidence generated by these teams should be designed to directly strengthen science assessments and support evidence-based policy in the area of climate and health.

The selected teams will:

- Lead on developing the review questions.
- Deliver the living systematic reviews of existing evidence in relevant scientific and grey literature sources. New data collection from laboratories or fieldwork will not be considered.
- Each team will be supported by an experienced systematic reviewer (at 40% FTE) from the WWCS Team.

The WWCS Team will:

- Ensure that each team is paired with an experienced evidence synthesis methodologist from Cochrane Africa and / or the Cochrane Evidence Synthesis Unit Nigeria (CESU). These methodologists will work closely with the team throughout the review process to provide methodological guidance and hands-on support with the design and execution of each review step.
- Provide training and support in systematic review methods, including the opportunity for two workshops for team leads.
- Will not provide direct funding to selected teams (only substantial hands-on support in the design and conduct of the review as well as training).

Please read this Request for Proposals carefully and use the online form to submit your application.

The WWCS Team includes ALIVE (Alliance for Living Evidence), Cochrane Africa, Cochrane Evidence Synthesis Unit Nigeria (CESU), Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

Call for Review Teams and Topics

Climate change is rapidly intensifying health threats – from food insecurity and infectious disease to mental health and heat-related illness. The consequences are vast, interconnected, and quickly evolving and threaten existing and future development gains. They are also disproportionately felt amongst vulnerable and low-resource communities, including those least responsible for emissions.

While countries have introduced thousands of climate policies over the past three decades, global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise (Crippa et al., 2024; Friedlingstein et al., 2024; Forster et al., 2025), and alongside them the health impacts and the urgent need to adapt. With limited time and resources, policy innovation must translate into effective, efficient and equitable actions at scale. We need to understand what climate-health policies work, under what conditions, why, and for whom, including their co-benefits and impacts on inequality, labour markets, development and innovation (The Economist, 2024).

The primary challenge now is not the lack of evidence-based practical solutions or insufficient policy experimentation, but the fragmented evaluation and synthesis of existing knowledge that integrates climate and health. There has been continuous learning about the climate problem, its effects and possible mitigation and adaptation pathways. However, rigorous knowledge on how to facilitate those pathways, and how these can protect human health in the real world, through an effective and equitable mix of policies and practice is missing (Berrang-Ford et al., 2020; Minx et al., 2019; Minx, Callaghan, Lamb, Garard, & Edenhofer, 2017). As a result of this evidence synthesis gap, little has been learned about what climate policies work for both the planet and human health, scientific decision support remains fragmented, expert advice is often conflicting, and assessments like those by the IPCC offer limited practical guidance.

In this Global initiative, **we will support at least five rigorous living systematic reviews on what works in addressing climate and health challenges in Africa**. This effort aims to address critical evidence synthesis gaps, relevant for Africa and for the global scientific assessments such as IPCC AR7, while building systematic review capacity in the African climate community. **The teams will begin work in the first half of 2026** and will form part of [What Works Climate Solutions \(WWCS\)](#) initiative – an initiative promoting rigorous evidence on climate solutions for evidence-based policy and scientific assessments.

This Request for Proposals invites potential team leaders to propose:

1. Relevant research questions on what works in climate and health in Africa;
2. An interdisciplinary team with expertise in climate change, human health and policy evaluation.

We recognise that insights developed with a focus on Africa may hold global relevance, and vice-versa, and we encourage these connections to be made where relevant.

Proposals should identify a clear need for rigorous synthesis of existing evidence that can support science assessments by filling key evidence synthesis gaps in the field of climate and health in Africa.

We seek teams to lead on the delivery of living systematic reviews of quantitative and/or qualitative evidence, and jointly co-produce with the WWCS team peer-reviewed publications.

Teams will also have the opportunity (if they wish to do so) to co-produce with the WWCS team:

- Policy briefs and evidence summaries,
- Toolkits or datasets, and
- Knowledge translation outputs aimed at decision-makers.

Rapid or scoping reviews will not be considered.

Living Systematic Reviews

All proposed living systematic reviews should focus on health-centred climate action in Africa. Over the course of the project we will also co-develop clear engagement and dissemination strategies to targeted evidence users relevant to the domain of the respective review.

All outputs (protocols and living systematic reviews) must follow established systematic review methodology (e.g. [Cochrane Handbook](#), [CEE Guidelines](#)) and reporting standards (e.g. [PRISMA 2020](#), ROSES), and will be subjected to peer review. Protocols will be pre-registered, and full reviews will be published open access to ensure rigour, transparency, and accessibility. The living nature of these reviews will allow for regular updates as new evidence emerges, supporting decision-makers with the most current and credible information for policy and practice. For pragmatic reasons, the “livingness” will be restricted to the official end of the project (31 December 2027), but we will try to attract additional project resources to continue

them into the future - also making best and responsible use of artificial intelligence in the context.

Interdisciplinary Teams

Each team will be supported by Cochrane Africa and CESU, including the opportunity for two collaborative working meetings for team leads.

Each team must be **African-led**, and should also be primarily from **Africa or Africa-based institutions**, which include institutions with head offices in the global North but with members of the review team based in offices in Africa. The interdisciplinary team should have demonstrable expertise in the fields of climate, health and policy evaluation. We welcome diverse teams that include individuals at different career stages and outside academia.

We expect teams to have up to three co-leads. Team leads should be senior researchers with expertise in climate and/or health research and policy evaluation.

It is desirable the project is co-developed by researchers with those from policy and/or practice.

Between the two workshops, team members will collaborate remotely, participate in support activities relevant to the team's research, identify and utilise opportunities for moving knowledge into action.

Research Methods, Analysis, and Data Management

Proposals must clearly articulate the research question and relevance to science assessments such as those by the IPCC, and broadly describe their systematic review methodology. This methodology should outline the sources of evidence to be used and the capacity within the team to analyse these. WWCS data management policies state "open by default". Review teams will be supported to share research methods (e.g., code) and publish findings as open access (following best practice), and to share project data using findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR) principles while recognising legitimate constraints for restricted data types. Data management guidelines will be shared with the selected team.

The WWCS Team will provide training in living evidence synthesis methods, peer-review support, and actively support the teams in conducting the systematic reviews at every stage.

To Apply for the Call

Submission: Please submit your application via the online form. Applicants will receive confirmation via email. Please access the proposal template here: [Application Form](#).

We encourage those interested in this Request for Proposals to attend an **information webinar** scheduled for **8 December 2025 at 15:00 South African Standard Time** (13:00 GMT) - [Register here](#). A recording will be made available on the **WWCS website**.

Key Proposal Dates and Deadlines

Deadline: Proposals are due by 14:00 South Africa Standard Time (12:00 GMT) on **13 February 2026**. Late or incomplete submissions will not be reviewed.

For queries, please email maria@futureevidence.org, ideally including a short concept note outlining your project idea (research question, data, expected outputs).

Information Webinars	8 December 2025 at 15:00 South Africa Standard Time (13h00 GMT) - Register here
Proposal due date	14:00 South Africa Standard Time (12:00 GMT) on 13 February 2026
Proposal review period	February / March 2026
Awards announced	April 2026
Team begins work	May - July 2026

Proposal Review

Proposals will be evaluated for their research quality, the relevance of the topic to global and regional science assessments, and their potential to inform improved policy and/or practice. Proposals will also be evaluated for the availability of evidence for synthesis, on the inclusion in review teams of appropriate scientific, technical, and other policy or practice expertise to successfully conduct the project.

The proposal review panel includes experts in climate change and health research, experienced contributors to science assessments and experts moving knowledge into decision-making and action. The panel may request additional reviews from experts with special relevance to the proposed research. Based upon panel reviews, WWCS may request proposal modifications (e.g., inclusion of additional data resources, or adjustment of team size or composition) and a short interview with team leads before teams are selected.

Limitations in staff time prevent WWCS from providing lengthy feedback to declined proposals, but we may share limited feedback (usually summarized bullet points) about these proposals. WWCS reserves the right to rescind its selection of a project if it is deemed that the information provided in the application is false or misleading.

Eligibility criteria

Proposals that have no focus on climate change and health in Africa will not be considered.

Teams must use systematic review approaches. New primary data collection using fieldwork or laboratory work will not be supported.

Team leads must be senior researchers from Africa or from Africa-based institutions. Africa-based institutions include institutions with head offices in the global North but with the team participant based in offices in Africa. Citizens of an African country based at institutions outside Africa are eligible.

Teams should include early career researchers (PhD student or Postdoctoral researcher less than 5 years after PhD).

The reviews are to be conducted in English, and the team should have proficient English language skills to communicate with the WWCS team throughout the project.

Evaluation Criteria:

- **Contribution to synthesis:** the proposed research is an important opportunity for synthesis of existing evidence to provide novel insights and lessons that will be relevant beyond a single discipline or locality, with potential for impactful contributions to research and scientific assessments such as the IPCC AR7. Research can be focused on any geographical scale, from local to continental, but if research includes more localised synthesis (e.g., focus on a specific city or locality as opposed to synthesis across many cities or localities) then relevance for importance for other African contexts should be clearly articulated.
- **Team Composition:** Team participants should have experience relevant to the actionable research and come from a diversity of career stages and backgrounds. Teams should be African-led and to have at least equal representation of women in team leadership and in the overall team. Citizens of an African country based at institutions outside Africa are eligible as team leads and as other team members. Teams should have up to three co-leads that are senior researchers. Team membership is encouraged beyond African or Africa-based participants where it is important for team success. Projects co-developed by researchers and non-academic knowledge users such as civil society organisations, private, or government sectors are encouraged and team composition can reflect this. Team composition is an important evaluation criteria and it is important team participants are committed to the duration of the systematic review work plan. Team changes after the start of a project will only be allowed with the agreement of WWCS.
- **Actionable research:** innovative research question(s) that address clear challenges for decision making and/or action on climate and health in Africa.
- **Data availability and methods:** the evidence to be synthesised is known and is available to be mobilised, and the proposed methods and activities for the living systematic review are clearly articulated and are appropriate.

- **Equity and inclusion:** the proposed work integrates issues linked to equity and social inclusion given marginalised and vulnerable groups are often more negatively impacted by climate change and access to health.

What this call will not support

- New primary data collection (e.g. fieldwork or laboratory work). The focus is on synthesis of existing evidence.
- Rapid synthesis or single brief synthesis. The focus is on more in-depth systematic reviews.
- Purely narrative literature reviews without systematic methodology.

FAQs

What topics are covered by this call?

Topics focused on interventions that address pressing climate and health challenges in the African continent.

What is living systematic review?

A systematic review that is continually updated to incorporate new research as it becomes available, making it a dynamic and current source of evidence.

Does this call support new data collection?

No, this call does not support new data collection. The focus is on synthesising existing evidence.

Who is eligible to apply?

Team leads must be African or from Africa-based institutions. Africa-based institutions include institutions with head offices in the global North but with the team participant based in offices in Africa. Citizens of an African country based at institutions outside Africa are eligible.

What support is provided?

Each team is paired with a methodologist from Cochrane Africa and / or the Cochrane Evidence Synthesis Unit Nigeria (CESU) at 60% FTE. They will work closely with the team throughout the review process to provide methodological guidance and hands-on support with the design and execution of each review step.

Training and support in systematic review methods, including the opportunity for two workshops for team leads will also be provided.

Hands-on support in developing policy briefs and evidence summaries, toolkits or datasets, and knowledge translation outputs aimed at decision-makers will be provided as relevant.