

100 Questions for priority research on conservation in MTEs

This questionnaire is aimed at identifying questions that will direct research towards successful conservation of biological diversity in the five Mediterranean regions of the world.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Karen Esler <KJE@sun.ac.za>, Nicky Allsopp <allsopp@saeon.ac.za> or Jasper Slingsby <jasper@saeon.ac.za>.

Please assist us by formulating up to 10 research questions that “if answered, would have a high probability of increasing the success of actions targeted at the conservation of biological diversity in the Fynbos biome”. Please note that we would like you to express your own view, and not necessarily that of the institution to which you are affiliated. Your answers cannot be traced back to you.

Your questions should:

- (1) be answerable through a realistic research design,
- (2) allow a factual answer that does not depend on value judgments,
- (3) address important gaps in knowledge,
- (4) be of a spatial and temporal scale that reasonably can be addressed by a research team,
- (5) not be formulated as a general topic area,
- (6) not be answerable with “it all depends”,
- (7) if related to impact and interventions, contain a subject, an intervention, and a measurable outcome (thus, the question immediately suggests research design needed to address it), and
- (8) not be likely to be answerable with yes or no.

Your responses will be analysed in total anonymity. However, to determine if there are any covariates that determine responses and to describe the general characteristics of respondents in publications we would be pleased if you can fill in some ancillary information in addition to your questions.

1. I hereby agree to participate in this questionnaire and indicate my consent that any information I provide may be used for the stated research purposes.

A requirement for ethical clearance.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ I agree
- ☐ I do not agree

2. Which organisation best describes where you currently work?

If "Other" please specify.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ National or provincial conservation agency
- ☐ Government Department
- ☐ Privately funded conservation agency or organisation
- ☐ University or University of Technology
- ☐ Government funded research organisation
- ☐ Conservation advocacy group
- ☐ Environmental consultancy
- ☐ Environmental officer in non-conservation company
- ☐ Other: _____

3. How long have you been employed by this organisation?

Preferably in years in numerals (an estimate will do)

4. Were you previously employed by an organisation in another category? If so which one?

If no, tick "None" near the bottom. If "Other" please specify.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ National or provincial conservation agency
- ☐ Government Department
- ☐ Privately funded conservation agency or organisation
- ☐ University or University of Technology
- ☐ Government funded research organisation
- ☐ Conservation advocacy group
- ☐ Environmental consultancy
- ☐ Environmental officer in non-conservation company
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other: _____

5. How long were you employed by this organisation?

Preferably in years in numerals (an estimate will do)

6. In what capacity are you currently employed?

If "Other" please specify.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Field staff
- ☐ Reserve manager
- ☐ Conservation management
- ☐ Conservation planning
- ☐ Technical support
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Environmental education
- ☐ Environmental consulting
- ☐ Policy development
- ☐ Conservation stewardship
- ☐ Social ecology
- ☐ Lobbying
- ☐ Other: _____

7. How long have you been employed in this capacity?

Preferably in years in numerals (an estimate will do)

8. Were you previously employed in another capacity? If so which one?

If "Other" please specify.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Field staff
- ☐ Reserve manager
- ☐ Conservation management
- ☐ Conservation planning
- ☐ Technical support
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Environmental education
- ☐ Environmental consulting
- ☐ Policy development
- ☐ Conservation stewardship
- ☐ Social ecology
- ☐ Lobbying
- ☐ Other: _____

9. What are your main abiotic perspectives in conservation?

Tick as appropriate. If "Other" please specify.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Terrestrial
- ☐ Freshwater
- ☐ Estuaries and marine
- ☐ Fire
- ☐ Climate
- ☐ Physical landscapes
- ☐ None of these
- ☐ Other: _____

10. What are your main biotic perspectives in conservation?

Tick as appropriate. If "Other" please specify.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Animals
- ☐ Plants
- ☐ Society
- ☐ None of these
- ☐ Other: _____

11. What scales of biodiversity and conservation do you primarily focus on?

Tick as appropriate. If "Other" please specify.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Genes
- ☐ Species
- ☐ Populations
- ☐ Communities
- ☐ Landscapes and ecosystems
- ☐ Other: _____

12. What is the highest qualification you have achieved?

If "Other" please specify.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Doctorate
- ☐ Masters
- ☐ Honours
- ☐ Bachelors
- ☐ Postgraduate diploma
- ☐ Post-school diploma
- ☐ School leaving certificate
- ☐ Other: _____

13. What was your main field of study?

If "Other" please specify.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Conservation
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Biological Sciences
- ☐ Business management
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Other: _____

14. Have you studied in another field as well?

Please specify

15. How many years have you worked in a conservation related field?

Please use numerals

16. What is your age?

17. What is your gender?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Do not wish to disclose

18. Research question 1:

Please enter your question.

19. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

20. Research question 2:

Please enter your question.

21. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

22. Research question 3:

Please enter your question.

23. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

24. Research question 4:

Please enter your question.

25. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

26. Research question 5:

Please enter your question.

27. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

28. Research question 6:

Please enter your question.

29. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

30. Research question 7:

Please enter your question.

31. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

32. Research question 8:

Please enter your question.

33. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

34. Research question 9:

Please enter your question.

35. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

36. Research question 10:

Please enter your question.

37. Which of the subject areas is this question relevant to? You can tick more than 1.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Protected areas
- ☐ Ecosystem services
- ☐ Landscape management and restoration
- ☐ Farming and Forestry
- ☐ Fire and Grazing
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Impact assessment and mitigation
- ☐ Species management
- ☐ Alien and invasive species
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Public participation
- ☐ Other

Powered by



Dear [Name of Participant]

As you are aware, Mediterranean regions worldwide are hotspots of biodiversity, which are at risk due to a range of insidious threats. We (Karen Esler, Jasper Slingsby and Nicky Allsopp) have teamed up with researchers from the other 4 Mediterranean regions in a research project to identify ***questions that will direct research towards successful conservation of biological diversity in the five Mediterranean regions of the world.***

Our group is focused on gathering perspectives for the Fynbos Biome of South Africa.

Please assist us by formulating up to 10 research questions that if ***answered, would have a high probability of increasing the success of actions targeted at the conservation of biological diversity in the Fynbos biome.*** These questions should be framed in such a way that:

- (1) if you identify a problem, describe a realistic research question to address this,
- (2) they address important gaps in knowledge,
- (3) the spatial and temporal scale can reasonably be addressed by a research team,
- (4) they are not formulated as a general topic area, e.g. NOT “*mountain bikes*” BUT “*What is the impact of mountain bikes on soil stability in fynbos wetland conservation areas?*”
- (5) they will not be likely to be answerable with yes or no.

To get you started here are some general topics that you may want to consider when formulating your questions: Protected areas (design, management) and alternatives; ecosystem function and services; landscape management and restoration; agriculture, forestry and tourism; climate change; development, impact assessment and mitigation; species management; invasive species; governance; people. But feel free to address any other topics related to conservation in the Fynbos biome.

We are asking for research questions which you personally think are important. These do not necessarily have to reflect those prioritised by your organisation. Since your response is anonymous neither you nor your institution will be identified personally with the responses.

To assist you in this process, we have developed a web-based questionnaire found [here](http://goo.gl/forms/nU8n0yv45m). If you have difficulty accessing this directly please copy and paste this URL: <http://goo.gl/forms/nU8n0yv45m> into your browser. We are also

willing to set up telephonic appointments should you prefer this route of communication.

We are offering an incentive of a lucky draw for one of the following two books published in 2014 to two respondents:

- ***Fynbos Ecology and Management***
- ***Fynbos Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation of a Megadiverse region***

After you have completed the questionnaire, you will be given the opportunity to submit your e-mail address. Note that this is entirely optional, and in no way will your e-mail address be linked to your questionnaire response.

Our core research group within each region will compile and organize the research questions received. These will then be further discussed, grouped and prioritized in a symposium at the International Congress of Conservation Biology (2-6 August 2015, Montpellier, France). The intention is that a synthesis of the combined questions for all Mediterranean regions will be published in an international journal. Our intention is that, should the combined publication not address perspectives from the Fynbos biome sufficiently, we would publish a Fynbos focused analysis in a local journal.

We realize that this is a big “ask”, but we hope that the exercise will ultimately help to direct conservation research in the Fynbos Biome and in Mediterranean-type ecosystems in general.

Ethics:

Please take some time to read the information presented here, and contact us if you require further explanation or clarification of any aspect of the study. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the Humanities Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at Stellenbosch University and will be conducted according to accepted and applicable national and international ethical guidelines and principles.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact any one of us (contact details below)

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS: You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

You have a right to receive a copy of the Information and Consent form.

If you are willing to participate in this study please sign the attached Declaration of Consent and e-mail/post it back to us.

Yours sincerely

Nicky Allsopp (021 799-8836, allsopp@saeon.ac.za); Karen Esler (021 808 4005, kje@sun.ac.za); Jasper Slingsby (083 406-0581, jasper@saeon.ac.za)