

Submission

UNFCCC call for submissions: Views from Parties and relevant organizations on possible themes for the eighteenth meeting of the Research Dialogue, to be held in conjunction with SBSTA 64

Science Europe is pleased to suggest for discussion at the eighteenth meeting of the Research Dialogue the topic linked to the **use of rapid and living evidence synthesis**. We consider this to be a transversal topic, which can be of especial relevance in the context of research on mitigation and adaptation.

Context

Scientific knowledge can and should contribute to tackling societal challenges, including the triple planetary crisis. In the context of the climate emergency, one of the relevant questions for facilitating research-policy dialogue concerns the accessibility of research results to policymakers.

Climate and environmental science frequently rely on the conventional model of evidence synthesis, based on systematic reviews. While systematic reviews are recognised as the “gold standard”, they tend to operate in several years-long cycles. As academic literature on climate and the environment grows exponentially, relying solely on the cyclical model of evidence synthesis poses the risk of evidence becoming outdated towards the end of the cycle. Evidence synthesis has traditionally been manual, labour-intensive, and too slow to meet the needs of fast-moving policy. Living evidence, which is being continuously updated, and rapid evidence, which can be delivered in shorter timeframes, can be complementary in this context.

On 26 June 2025, Science Europe co-organised a webinar, addressing how rapid and living evidence synthesis (including AI-assisted approaches) can complement the existing evidence synthesis architecture. It specifically focused on environmental action.¹

¹ See “Report on Exploratory Webinar on the Potential of Rapid Evidence Synthesis for Environmental Action” (2025), <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/report-on-exploratory-webinar-on-the-potential-of-rapid-evidence-synthesis-for-environmental-action/>

Rapid and living evidence synthesis

Rapid Evidence Synthesis (RES) has been defined as “a series of methods that adapts systematic review methods for shorter timelines than for a full systematic review.”² It is generally recognised as a valid method that can provide “good-enough” results within shorter timescales.³

Living evidence (see also *living reviews*) refers to “continually updated, systematically appraised summaries of research evidence,” which may include systematic reviews, evidence briefs or guidelines.⁴

Both approaches can assist researchers with mapping scientific literature and identifying knowledge gaps. They can also support collaboration among researchers, policy-makers, and other stakeholders, promoting rapid implementation of latest available evidence in policy and practice.⁵

There are already multiple examples in which rapid and living evidence reviews are being used to inform decision-making, some of them in the field of environment. While rapid and living evidence synthesis methods need to be deployed carefully and with attention to their limitations (including, but not limited to, AI-assisted evidence synthesis), we believe that their potential for facilitating science-policy interfaces merits further consideration.

Discussing rapid and living evidence synthesis at the eighteenth meeting of the research dialogue

Rapid and living evidence synthesis approaches can be of transversal relevance to the research dialogue, in particular when it comes to mitigation and adaptation.⁶ Relevant questions include:

- How rapid and living evidence synthesis approaches may be of use for the implementation of the UNFCCC;
- What are the next possible steps for decision makers, research organisations and other stakeholders.

² “Rapid Evidence Synthesis,” Implementation Science Methods, accessed August 6, 2025, <https://imscimethods.org/index.php/toolkits/rapid-evidence-synthesis-toolkit>.

³ Gill Norman et al., “Rapid Evidence Synthesis to Enable Innovation and Adoption in Health and Social Care,” *Systematic Reviews* 11, no. 1 (2022): 250, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-022-02106-z>; Implement. Sci. Methods, “Rapid Evidence Synthesis.”

⁴ Sabine M. Allida et al., “A Practical Guide to Living Evidence: Reducing the Knowledge-to-Practice Gap,” *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing* 24, no. 1 (2025): 165–75, <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurjcn/zvae048>; Samantha P. Chakraborty et al., “Living Evidence Syntheses: The Emerging Opportunity to Increase Evidence-informed Health Policy in Australia,” *Medical Journal of Australia* 221, no. 3 (2024): 122–25, <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.52368>.

⁵ Allida et al., “A Practical Guide to Living Evidence”; Chakraborty et al., “Living Evidence Syntheses”; Julian Elliott et al., “Decision Makers Need Constantly Updated Evidence Synthesis,” *Nature* 600, no. 7889 (2021): 383–85, <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-03690-1>; John N. Lavis et al., “SHOW ME the Evidence: Features of an Approach to Reliably Deliver Research Evidence to Those Who Need It,” *Clinical and Public Health Guidelines* 1, no. 5 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1002/gin2.70006>; Norman et al., “Rapid Evidence Synthesis to Enable Innovation and Adoption in Health and Social Care”; Implement. Sci. Methods, “Rapid Evidence Synthesis”; Jonathan Breckon et al., *Rapid Evidence Assessments: A Guide for Commissioners, Funders, and Policymakers* (CAPE, University College London, 2023), https://theippo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/FINAL-IPPO-POST-CAPE-rapid-evidence-assessments_V61.pdf.

⁶ Elliott et al., “Decision Makers Need Constantly Updated Evidence Synthesis.”

Noteworthy is the context of the global alliance, the Evidence Synthesis Infrastructure Collaborative.⁷

About Science Europe

Science Europe (SE) is an association representing 40 major public organisations that fund and/or perform excellent, ground-breaking research in Europe. One of SE's three strategic priorities is to "strengthen the role and contribution of science in tackling societal challenges"⁸; accordingly, one of the topics it has worked on, generally and in relation to the UNFCCC processes, is science for policy activities⁹.

⁷ Evidence Synthesis Infrastructure Collaborative, <https://www.evidencesic.org/>

⁸ Science Europe, *Strategy 2021-2026* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4911426>.

⁹ See notably Nicola Francesco Dotti, *Science Europe Guidance on Science for Policy Activities: Principles, Actions, and Examples*, with Yamine Aït-Ameur et al. (Zenodo, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.10911927>.