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The National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC) was conceived as a platform for the US and international scientific community to conduct synthesis research that would cross wide disciplinary boundaries and inform solutions to pressing environmental problems. To meet its mission, SESYNC has focused on overcoming barriers that have traditionally impeded the progress of interdisciplinary research, including the challenge of building new communities, technically demanding synthesis methods, inter- and transdisciplinary teamwork, and linking fundamental research to actionable outcomes. Our programs and support services have evolved through ongoing efforts that have helped us test and quickly adapt to incentivize participation across multiple career stages and to foster innovative syntheses. Over time, we have developed a highly integrated center-wide practice grounded in the philosophy that we best serve those that come to SESYNC by helping them develop scientific insights at the same time that they build new, durable research capacities. Lessons from the past 7 years may be of use as the broad research community moves to develop the capacity to support new interdisciplinary approaches designed to meet the challenge of environmental problem solving.