



EUROPARC
F E D E R A T I O N

Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships 2023

Application Guidelines

EUROPARC strongly believes that young people have a vital role to play in caring for Europe's natural heritage. Like everything else, the future of Protected Areas relies on the young generation taking an active and informed role.

Well aware of this challenge and in cooperation with the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S. (Hamburg), EUROPARC invests in the professional development of young professionals working for Protected Areas and related disciplines.

While there are many opportunities for students to get scholarships to improve their skills abroad, there are few for those who have already entered the working world.

However, the management of a Protected Areas is complex and constantly challenged by new issues, most of them of a global scale. EUROPARC believes that networking among professionals can greatly improve the management of Protected Areas.

Hence, the aim of this scholarship is to give the opportunity to those young professionals that have chosen to develop a career in Protected Areas management to improve their skills and learn from other professionals by carrying out study visits to Protected Areas across Europe.

I. Objective

1. Each year the EUROPARC Federation in cooperation with the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S. (Hamburg) awards **three** Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships to young professionals working in the field of Protected Areas and nature conservation.
2. The programme offers the opportunity of financial support to individuals for a study visit to one or more Protected Areas in another European country and to gather experience which will be both of benefit for the future career of the scholars, and to the EUROPARC Federation and its members.
3. The programme intends to enhance cross-national co-operation to advance the quality, innovation and European dimension of Protected Area management.

Please read these Guidelines for Applicants carefully and check the FAQs for more detailed information

II. Target Group

Participation in the Alfred Toepfer Scholarship programme is open to persons who are **currently employed** by a European Protected Area or a nature conservation institution, administration, organisation or environmental NGO in a European country¹.

III. Eligibility / Application Requirements:

1. The age limit **at the time of application** is 35 at the time of application.
2. European Nationality² or permanent residency.
3. Presentation of the applicant's professional and personal reasons for the planned study visit. This will be elaborated in the online application form.
4. Proof of relevant contacts with target Protected Areas that are intended to form part of the study tour need to be established at the time of application. Evidence of contacts will be required to the pre-selected candidates.
5. Evidence of the current employment status.
6. Study visits to prepare master or doctoral thesis, or form any part of field work or gathering of data or evidence for thesis, will not be considered.
7. The applicants should be available to receive their award at the EUROPARC Conference in the Netherlands on the 3rd to the 6th of October 2023. Please check the EUROPARC website for details.
8. It is not possible to be awarded the scholarship more than one time.

IV. Study Visit

1. Study objectives and purpose must be described in the application. Applicants must demonstrate that their study visit will bring real benefit to his/her professional tasks.
2. The application must address **one** of the following selected themes faced by Protected Area Management:
 - **Biodiversity and Climate Change** – Importance of Natura 2000 sites and protected areas in reducing impacts of climate change and implementing the EU Biodiversity Strategy
 - **Sustainable Development in Protected Areas** – contribution to a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy
 - **Opportunities for Health and Well-being in Protected Areas** – Contribution of protected areas to safeguard the European citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being.

^{1,2} see current list of eligible European countries in <https://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/our-member-states>

- **Parks for People** – Approaches and strategies to address local communities and how to involve particular groups into activities or management of Protected Areas.
 - **Outdoors sports in Protected Areas** – Contribution of outdoor sports initiatives on Protected Areas management.
3. Any of the above themes can be undertaken in any or multiple types of Protected Areas, i.e. national park, nature and regional parks, nature reserves, biosphere reserves and N2000 sites. We especially welcome applications that address their studies in Periurban and Marine sites.
 4. The study visit has to be undertaken **in at least one European country, beyond the applicant's home country**. The choice (both in number and relevance) of the visited Protected Areas and countries will be an important selection criterion. We do encourage applicants to plan their trips as sustainably as possible. Information on sustainability must be provided in the application form.
 5. **The study visit should be undertaken in 2024**. An extension for up to 2 months can be granted if a well-founded request for exceptional circumstances, is made 3 months prior to end of the scholarship period.
 6. A report and video of the study visit is to be submitted to the EUROPARC Federation **within 3 months after the end of the study visit**³. The report structure should be based on the template provided by EUROPARC. This report is essential for final scholarship payment.
 7. No economic activity or money can be earned as a result of the study visits during the scholarship.
 8. For the three scholarship awardees, a **final travel plan including** contact addresses, journey and the length of the visit has to be submitted to the EUROPARC Federation in early 2024, prior to the start of the trip. An unsatisfactory final study trip plan could lead to the offer of the scholarship being withdrawn.

V. The Award

1. The award will be worth **EUR 3.000 to each of the 3 successful candidates** and are generously donated by the [Alfred Toepfer Stiftung](#) F.V.S. in Hamburg (Germany).
2. The scholarship is paid in two installments:
 - a. The first installment – of **EUR 2.000** – **around two-three months** prior to the start of the journey on presentation to the EUROPARC Federation of a **detailed travel plan**.
 - b. The remainder of **EUR 1000** on presentation of a **study visit report, which includes a video and a short summary** to be published as a news in the website. The report has to be presented within 3 months after the end of the study visit.
3. The selection of the scholars is made by the EUROPARC Federation, which informs the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S of its decision.
4. The winning scholars must be present at the award of the scholarship and must give a short presentation at the awards ceremony. The Alfred Toepfer Stiftung covers the full travel costs and conference fee for the scholars to participate at the EUROPARC annual conference (or awards ceremony). This will be from 3rd to the 6th of October in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands.

³ see the Alfred Toepfer Scholarship schedule in point no. VIII
[Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship – Guidelines 2023](#)

VI. Responsibility

Applicants, if awarded a scholarship, are expected to do the following:

1. Make their own travel plans and arrangements to achieve their objectives.
2. Disseminate the results of their study visit amongst colleagues and in areas of work/influence to ensure that wider benefits are achieved.
3. Submit a report on their study visit within **3 months** of their return, which will be placed on the EUROPARC's website, as well as a **short film** (maximum 3 minutes) summarizing the topic of the study and a **short abstract with pictures** to be published as a news article on EUROPARC's website.

VII. Applications

1. Applicants should fill in the online Application in English language. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.**
2. The deadline for applying for the Alfred Toepfer Scholarships is **1st of May 2023 23:59 CEST.**

VIII. Time Schedule 2022

When?	What?
March 9 th 2023	Call for applications open
May 1 st 2023	Deadline for applications
June 16 th 2023	Notification to pre-selected applicants
27 th June 2023	Requirement of proofs (current contract and proofs of PAs contacts)
3 rd to 6 th October 2023	EUROPARC Conference / awarding ceremony in the Netherlands
January – December <u>2024</u>	Study visits