

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH UNESCO'S PROGRAMMES AND SITES

Deadline: 9 May 2022 – 23.59 CET

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

UNESCO and the abrdn Charitable Foundation (aCF) launched in March 2022 a 3-year partnership to promote sustainability through research and education with the goal of developing innovative solutions relating to the environment, water and the ocean. As part of the partnership between UNESCO and the aCF, the project **Promoting sustainable development through UNESCO's programmes and sites** seeks to promote a more sustainable and climate neutral Europe by working through the role of Biosphere Reserves and other UNESCO sites to act as pilot sites for sustainable development and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, notably SDGs 6 (water), 13 (climate), 14 (ocean) and 15 (land). UNESCO's scientific programmes, the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC) and its networks will be mobilized in supporting and promoting the project.

The project will focus on 3 components/expected results:

Expected result 1: promoting research applied and applicable in UNESCO designated sites related to SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15 and MAB, IHP and IOC priority areas, notably biodiversity and sustainability, water, the ocean, and the climate. Priority will be given to research scalable at ecosystem level, regionally and globally.

Expected result 2: promoting and implementing Education for Sustainable Development, water education, climate change education or ocean literacy in UNESCO sites. Activities should be developed closely with upper primary/lower secondary schools located in the site with the capacity to adapt and implement UNESCO guidelines/methodologies.

Expected result 3: Innovative 'green' and 'blue' solutions for sustainable development and climate change mitigation and adaptation promoted through UNESCO sites. Priority will be given to innovative solutions developed with the private sector and the civil society (preferably youth), scalable at ecosystem, regional and global level.

ELIGIBLE TOPICS

Biodiversity and Sustainability (MAB-related)

Water (IHP-related)

Ocean (IOC-related)

ELIGIBLE SITES

Eligible UNESCO sites are Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks, and Natural and Mixed World Heritage sites.

The project will work through a total of 15 sites in 3 years. Each year, UNESCO and the advisory board will select 5 sites at the beginning of each one year cycle. Each selected site will be expected to work on all 3 expected results and to focus on one topic throughout the project (for example, if the chosen topic is water the site will implement research, education and innovative solutions dedicated to water).

For the first year of the project, sites **must be located in Europe**. Sites under the direct purview of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe will be prioritized. Multi-designated areas, i.e. areas having obtained more than one UNESCO designation will be considered favourably. Two sites (such as a Global Geopark and a Biosphere Reserve) that are situated in a same geographical area may also decide to submit a joint proposal. For the second and third years of the project, European sites will continue to be prioritized, but sites from other regions will also be eligible.

Each selected site will receive funding from the project to implement activities under the three expected results for a total amount of up to 25,000 USD per site (of which approx. 15,000 USD for research, 5,000 USD for education and 5,000 USD for innovative solutions). The selected sites will need to provide a detailed budget with itemized costs and an implementation plan.

Sites will be work closely with UNESCO for the implementation of the three expected results on the ground. In particular, UNESCO will work with the selected sites to ensure the work proposed is linked closely to UNESCO priorities, and is scalable at the regional and global levels. UNESCO will also work closely with the communities involved in the activities (for example with the schools). Finally, UNESCO will assist the selected sites to ensure that the activities proposed fit within MAB, IHP priority and IOC areas and can be scaled up to the regional and global levels as best practices.

The 5 selected sites (per year) will have the opportunity to exchange and support each other throughout the 3-year project. Sites will be invited to present the results of their activities to the advisory board of the project as well as at international events organized by UNESCO as appropriate.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Managing authorities of the eligible sites will need to submit an application (see attached template of the Application form) in coordination with their MAB National Committee (if a biosphere reserve) and/or their UNESCO National Commission (if a Global Geopark or a natural/mixed World Heritage Site). Applications from multi-designated areas (or multiple sites) shall jointly submit the application signed by the relevant managing authorities.

The application will be judged against the following criteria:

- **Completeness of Application form duly filled, dated, stamped and signed** by the relevant managing authority(ies) (see attached template and below)
- **Proven capacity of the project proposed to achieve the 3 expected results** notably in relation to the chosen topic within a 10-month timeframe.
 - For the research expected result, demonstrated cooperation with a university or a research centre situated within or very close to the site(s) with proven expertise in relation to the chosen research topic (for example an existing EU-funded project, a nationally-funded project or a PhD or master's thesis). Relation with a UNESCO Chair or Centre is an advantage.

- For the education expected result, previous cooperation with schools within or close to the site with experience working on sustainability, biodiversity, water, climate change or ocean literacy. Participation of UNESCO ASPnet schools is an advantage.
- For the innovative solutions expected result, demonstrated cooperation with key stakeholders in the private sector or civil society (such as local administrations, NGOs, local businesses.) with capacity to carry out innovative projects related to the chosen topic. Involvement of youth groups is an advantage.
- **Quality and relevance of the application and coherence between the 3 expected results**
 - For the research expected result: scientific originality, use of scientific methodology, potential for development of new scientific knowledge, link to MAB/IHP/IOC priority areas and SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15, involvement of universities, research partners, and PhD students
 - For the education expected result: innovative approach to promote water/ESD/climate change education/ocean literacy, proposed use of existing UNESCO guidelines and tools such as ESD and ocean literacy toolkits, capacity of the education partners and schools to implement activities, link to research expected result and to MAB/IHP/IOC priority areas and SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15
 - For the project expected result: innovative proposal on green/blue solutions, link to research and education components, identification of key stakeholders in the project, project management capacity of project manager
- Properly-structured and detailed **budget** with itemized costs
- Clear **implementation plan**
- **Scalability of the 3 expected results** with other UNESCO global networks
- **Demonstrated ecosystem value** of the proposal (coastal/island/Mediterranean; mountain; forest; agricultural; river basin; hydrogeological resources, wetland/Ramsar, Natura2000)
- Demonstrated impacted climatic zone
- Consideration of **youth and gender dimensions** in the proposal is an advantage
- Consideration of **interdisciplinary approaches** is an advantage
- **Geographical location** (within Europe, with priority to applicants from countries under the purview of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe)

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FORM

Applicants (site managing authorities) must submit the application form together with the following documents:

1. Legal registration document of the managing authority/ Proof of authorization of the person officially representing managing authority
2. Letter of support from the MAB national committee and/or National Commission for UNESCO (email is accepted)
3. Activity reports (or links to online activity reports) and any additional information demonstrating the required criteria.
4. Curriculum vitae of the project coordinator

The application must be submitted **by 9 May 2022 at 23.59** CET as PDF file(s) in English, dated, stamped and signed with all necessary attachments by e-mail to the following address: Regional.Bureau-SC@unesco.org. Applicants may direct questions related to the preparation of the application to the same e-mail address.