

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Project: **Regional Governance of Protected Areas in West Africa (FED/2018/399-509)**

Title : **Call for application for one doctoral scholarship on translocation and ex-situ conservation of wild animals in West Africa**

Publication date: **18 February 2021**

Closing date: **30 April 2021**

1. Background

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a Union of Members composed of governments and civil society organizations. It provides public, private and nongovernmental organizations with the knowledge and tools necessary for human progress, economic development and the conservation of nature to proceed in harmony. Founded in 1948, IUCN has grown over the years to become the world's largest and most diverse environmental network. It draws on the experience, resources and strength of its 1,300 Member organizations and the expertise of more than 13,000 experts. Today it is an international authority on the state of nature and natural resources in the world and on measures to preserve them. Our experts are divided into six Commissions, dedicated to species conservation, environmental law, protected areas, economic and social policies, ecosystem management, and education and communication.

Within the framework of the implementation of the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) of the European Union in West Africa 2014-2020 (11th European Development Fund), and specifically in its priority area 3: "Resilience, food and nutritional security and natural resources", an action to support the preservation of biodiversity and fragile ecosystems, environmental governance and climate change in West Africa - PAPBio (ROC/FED/039-269) has been selected in consultation with ECOWAS and UEMOA.

Component 2 of PAPBio - Regional Governance of Protected Areas and Security - is implemented by IUCN through its Regional Programme for Central and Western Africa (PACO). It aims at fostering a regional dynamic for the effective management of protected areas and climate risks, the sharing and capitalization of experiences and knowledge at all levels and the fight against environmental crime.

The Regional Governance project intervenes at several levels, namely national, regional and at the level of transboundary areas. At the regional level among others, the project aims to improve skills development and human resource management on issues of conservation and transboundary management of biodiversity while helping to prevent the extinction of the most threatened species. Result R5 specifically calls for the development of regional capacity for the reception, translocation and ex-situ conservation of critically endangered wildlife species and those resulting from seizures during operations aimed at fighting against environmental crime.

Studies carried out within the framework of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA) indicated that skills in protected areas and wildlife management are generally limited at the level of West African countries. Moreover, a weak capacity for management and conservation of animals resulting from the actions taken to fight against environmental crime was observed. The Regional Governance project will therefore strengthen regional capacities for ex-situ conservation and reintroduction (including genetic identification, veterinary analysis, translocation, reintroduction monitoring). To this end, a process of funding of

research projects has started since 2020 to facilitate the development of expertise in the fields of translocation and ex-situ conservation of critically endangered animal species and those resulting from seizures during operations to combat environmental crime.

These doctoral research projects are to be conducted in partnership with a regional centre of expertise in wild animal conservation. They will enable these centres to acquire veterinary and genetic analysis and identification tools in the field of conservation in captivity, translocations or a related subject.

The programme will therefore fund the acquisition of laboratory equipment, tuition fees, a scholarship, field research fees and travel for doctoral students to carry out this doctoral research.

The total estimated amount per research project (including tuition and scholarship) is at least 60,000 euros of which a maximum of 48,000 euros will be provided under this call for applications and at least 12,000 euros will be co-financed by the host reference centre and/or research laboratory.

2. Eligibility criteria for research projects

- The doctoral research project proposal should enable the region to acquire knowledge and techniques to reduce the risks of animal species extinction through ex-situ conservation and translocation;
- The proposal shall not exceed three (03) years of implementation. ;
- The proposal should focus on a model animal species. This species must at least be classified as ENDANGERED (EN) by the IUCN Red List or the research project must demonstrate that the actual status would merit such a classification ;
- The doctoral research project will be expected to make concrete improvements in the conservation of the animal species over the duration of the project and beyond. These improvements must be measurable and demonstrable by the end of the project ;
- The candidate proposed for the doctoral fellowship must hold a Master's degree recognized in the field of conservation and allowing him/her to register for a doctoral thesis. Proposals from candidates already enrolled in PhD program addressing the targeted research field will also be considered ;
- The thesis supervisor should have a sound knowledge of the research field addressed by the thesis project proposal and a demonstrable experience in supervising doctoral studies;
- The proposal for a doctoral research project must provide evidence of a possible partnership with an ex-situ conservation centre of expertise in the region that has the minimum required research equipment and guarantees that it will be made available for doctoral research purposes;
- The proposal should specify the objectives and hypotheses or research questions at each level, the methods of data collection and analysis, and then a detailed timetable for planning the research activities; the proposal will also indicate the number and provisional titles of the scientific article projects envisaged, as well as the year and the quarter during which the candidate expects to be able to submit each of the manuscripts to a scientific journal;

Scholarships will be awarded to applicants whose proposals:

- Show the most perspective of being replicated and made available to other projects in the region in the future ;
- Have access to co-financing from the host research laboratory/centre of expertise, thus demonstrating that the laboratory is firmly rooted in its institution.

Applications from nationals of the ECOWAS region, as well as female candidates, are strongly encouraged.

3. Application files

Applicants are invited to submit an application containing:

- A cover letter ;
- A detailed CV of the candidate proposed for the PhD thesis ;
- A copy of the attestation of previous and required diplomas (Master, Bachelor and Scientific Bacallaureate) ;
- A Copy of the Master's thesis ;
- A copy of transcripts of the Master degree ;
- A doctoral research proposal as specified in the criteria listed above as well as a commitment to host the student by the head of the laboratory ;
- The formal commitment of a lecturer/researcher at least of the rank of Master of Conferences of CAMES Universities or equivalent to assume the role of Thesis Director and to supervise and coach the realization of the PhD work ;
- A recommendation is required from the Head of the Centre of Expertise for Wildlife Conservation identified by the student and his/her Thesis Director for collaboration on the doctoral research ;
- A presentation of the centre of expertise demonstrating the institution's capacity to host the doctoral research planned there ;
- A letter of acceptance/attestation of pre-registration or enrolment in a doctoral training program that meets the eligibility criteria ;
- A formal commitment of co-financing up to the minimum amount indicated above, specifying the sources and amounts of the contributions. Proof of the actual existence of co-financing may be required from selected projects before the contractualisation phase.

Scholarships will be awarded to beneficiaries on the basis of an evaluation of :

- The relevance of the research project against the objectives of the Regional Governance of protected areas project;
- The Relevance of the candidate's professional experience;
- The ability of the proposal to meet the eligibility requirements.

Applications should be submitted by doctoral schools and/or research laboratories/centres of expertise qualified in the field relevant to the proposal.

Applications must be submitted no later than 30 April 2021 :

- Either by deposit in separate sealed envelopes marked "DOCTORATE-SCHOLARSHI_8IUCN-RegionalGovernance " " To be opened only during evaluation sessions " at the IUCN Office located in Ouaga 2000, behind the Total Fuel Station Ouaga 2000, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.
- Either by email in a single file in PDF format (named as follows: DOCTORATE_IUCN-RegionalGovernance_NAME_hostCentre/Laboratory.pdf) to the following address paco@iucn.org.

Subject "Regional Governance of Protected Areas: DOCTORATE-SCOLARSHIP_IUCN-Regional Governance".

In case of selection, funding agreements for doctoral research projects will be co-signed by (i) IUCN-PACO; (ii) the Head/Director of the research laboratory or Doctoral School and (iii) the Head of the Centre of Conservation Expertise where the field research activities will be conducted.