



Terms of References

Internship (paid) – Supporting scientific advice for Mangrove Restoration in Latin America and the Caribbean

Key words: ecosystem restoration, nature-based solutions, scientific advice, Indigenous and local knowledge

Presentation

As the United Nations specialized agency with a specific mandate for science, UNESCO works to advance and promote science in the interests of peace, sustainable development and human livelihoods, in close collaboration with its Member States and a wide variety of partners, through its Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) and World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). The MAB Programme is an interdisciplinary scientific programme that aims to improve the relationship between human communities and ecosystems through a network of 738 biosphere reserves in 131 countries.

In line with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), the MAB Programme is implementing a three-year project (2022-2025) on “Mangrove restoration as a nature-based solution in biosphere reserves in Latin America and the Caribbean (MangRes)”, with the support of the UNESCO-Flanders Fund-in-Trust. The project’s main objective is to support biosphere reserve communities in their mangrove restoration and conservation efforts.

The main task of the intern will be to gain experience in scientific advice and learn about project management alongside the project team and the project’s Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), notably in conducting the initial assessment of the state of mangrove ecosystems and their restoration potential, which will serve as the basis for restoration campaigns, promoting scientific research, Indigenous and local knowledge, and education for sustainable development.

The SAG will be composed of specialists from the participating countries (Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru and El Salvador) and Flanders (Belgium), ensuring the exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as North-South and South-South collaboration.

Location and duration of the internship

The internship will take place at the Section on Research and Policy: Ecology and Biodiversity, Division of Ecological Earth Sciences, Natural Sciences Sector, UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France.

The internship will start from September 2023 and will last 6 months.

Description of activities

Under the direct supervision of the MAB Programme Specialist, the intern will gain experience by supporting the implementation of the MangRes project, in particular its scientific component, and will take part in the following activities:

a. Analysis

- Assist with the preparation of science literature reviews
- Identify and compile good practices in mangrove restoration and nature-based solutions that could be replicated in the project
- Compile statistical and spatial data from international and national public databases
- Support the SAG in interpreting data
- Support the SAG in designing bespoke indicators for mangrove restoration

b. Drafting and contents

- Draft meeting minutes, concept notes, briefings and executive summaries
- Prepare graphs, charts, figures and tables
- Identify and draft key messages emerging from the data analysis

c. Project management and event logistics

- Support the exchanges between SAG members, local stakeholders and biosphere reserves managers
- Support the exchanges of knowledge and experiences between young researchers and youth networks in participating countries and Flanders, fostering North-South and South-South collaboration
- Support the project team in disseminating key findings, for example through presentations
- Assist with the organisation of international meetings and workshops

Learning objectives

The UNESCO MAB Programme offers the possibility to work in an international and multicultural professional environment, engaging with global partners and leading experts in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem restoration.

The intern will gain a better understanding of international cooperation at the UN level, gain knowledge about the MAB Programme, work on concrete outputs and results, and will gain skills in research, data analysis, science communication and policy recommendations.

Eligibility and desired skills

Candidates must be currently enrolled in a graduate programme (Master's degree, PhD, or equivalent), or have graduated with a Master's degree or PhD.

- Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in ecological sciences, marine sciences, biology, hydrology, ecohydrology, geography, sustainable development or related fields.
- Demonstrated experience in quantitative and qualitative research and report writing in ecosystem restoration. Experience with mangrove ecosystems will be an asset.
- Knowledge of open science and open data is an asset, in line with the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science.
- Written and oral proficiency in English and Spanish is highly recommended. Proficiency in French will be an asset.
- Proficiency in the use of the MS Office package (Word, Excel, PowerPoint).
- Proficiency in the use of geographic information system (GIS Software) and/or statistical software tools (SAS/ATAT) is desirable.
- Be a team player and inclined to group discussions and brainstorming in an international working environment.
- Possess strong interpersonal and written and oral communication skills.

The intern will conduct these activities in line with UNESCO values and respectful of the MAB Programme's multicultural professional environment.