



UNESCO Earth Network

Call for applications for a roster of volunteer experts

The UNESCO Earth Network

The “UNESCO Earth Network” has been launched in 2021 to create a unique network of Volunteer experts and knowledge holders, including indigenous and local people and youth, to support the contribution of UNESCO designated sites and Conventions to the interlinked challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change and demonstrate that living in harmony with nature is possible.

Through the actions of volunteer experts, the Network will provide training for the restoration and conservation of key ecosystems in UNESCO designated sites: biosphere reserves, UNESCO global geoparks and natural and mixed World Heritage sites and cultural landscapes. It aims to restore the relationship between humans and nature through the promotion of good practices, knowledge and know-how that respect biodiversity. It will also support the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, such as the knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Mandate

The Volunteer experts will provide technical advice and provide training, responding to the specific needs and priorities of requesting UNESCO designated Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage sites, UNESCO Global Geoparks and Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) elements.

The direct counterparts of the volunteer experts will be the staff of the competent bodies entrusted with the care and management of the UNESCO designated sites or relevant ICH stakeholders, and, as such, the Network will contribute to the protection, management, safeguarding and restoration of the UNESCO designated sites and ICH elements.

Composition and functioning of the Network

The roster of volunteer experts may include scientists, practitioners and indigenous and local knowledge holders, with recognized expertise in issues related to the protection, management and restoration of biodiversity. The volunteer experts will support targeted activities identified by the authorities of the UNESCO designated sites and intangible cultural heritage elements, either in the form of missions or remotely¹ (including capacity-building and online training), to the beneficiary sites and relevant locations.

The Steering Committee of the Network will ensure the matching of the needs and priorities of UNESCO designated sites and elements with the expertise provided by the volunteer experts, based on the recommendations of the Scientific Committee.

¹ Taking into consideration the Covid-19 pandemic

The volunteer experts will work on a voluntary basis and only costs related to field missions and costs directly associated with organizing virtual sessions will be covered by the fund of the UNESCO Earth Network project. All administrative and logistic details will be communicated once the volunteer experts are selected.

The activities supported by the UNESCO Earth Network aim at ensuring that local actors, particularly indigenous peoples, youth and women can share their learning and knowledge in line with the activities of the 2021-2030 UN Decades on Ecosystem Restoration and Ocean Science and Sustainable Development.

Intergenerational mentorship programme

Young volunteer experts, particularly among UNESCO-designated sites and networks and including from indigenous peoples and local communities, are encouraged to apply to the UNESCO Earth Network roster through the present call. For each requesting site or element, the Network will focus on a systematic pairing between an expert and a young expert.

At this stage, young volunteer experts may include:

- PhD or Master's students already engaged with UNESCO Chairs and other relevant UNESCO scientific networks;
- Internships for young experts engaged within UNESCO networks, to support the development of specific activities within UNESCO-designated sites or in relation to elements, taking advantage of initiatives such as the World Heritage Volunteers;

Similar to other volunteer experts, young volunteer experts will work on a voluntary basis and no stipend will be offered; only costs related to field missions and costs directly associated with organizing virtual sessions will be covered by the fund of the UNESCO Earth Network project.

Criteria for participation in the roster

- Volunteer experts should be either:
 - o International experts in the relevant fields, such as biology, geology, geography, land restoration, environmental management, environmental policy and law, nature conservation, heritage management, culture, social sciences, anthropology, landscape architecture, sustainable tourism;
 - o Practitioners in the field of land restoration;
 - o Knowledge holders, including from indigenous peoples and local communities, youth and researchers from UNESCO's relevant Intergovernmental and International Programmes and Conventions, their advisory bodies and relevant networks
- Volunteer experts should confirm their time availability for the activities supported by the UNESCO Earth Network from October 2021 onwards (preferred duration of assignments, periods when the volunteer expert would be available/unavailable if known) and the duration for which they wish to be included in the roster.

UNESCO establishes the roster of volunteer experts taking into consideration geographical and gender diversity. Selected candidates will be informed of the decision.

Procedure for application to the roster

Interested candidates are invited to fill out the online application form either in [English](#) or [French](#). Applicants can also find more information about the Earth Network project on this [webpage](#). As an applicant, you will be asked to upload a CV and a letter of motivation along with two letters of reference.

Once completed, applications will be reviewed by UNESCO's Secretariat and, if selected, candidates will be notified in a timely manner.

For any questions related to applications to the UNESCO Earth Network, please refer to the FAQ available [here](#). Should you have any remaining questions, please contact Martin Delaroche (m.delaroche@unesco.org).