

Grants & opportunities

The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund expands support for overlooked species

The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund was established in late 2008 with an endowment to provide financial support to targeted species conservation activities worldwide, and since 2009 to the end of 2022 has awarded 2,566 grants for a total of USD 24,171,648. Generally, each project addresses the conservation of a focal species of animal, plant or fungus, and the grants awarded so far have examined 1,625 taxa in 1,114 genera and 608 families.

During this time the Fund has always been in a position to provide grants to support the conservation of threatened species that are usually overlooked—the less charismatic species. This has included grants for fungal conservation and for invertebrates of many types, as well as the small mammals, frogs and reptiles that do not often benefit from conservation funding.

To expand this support for a broader group of species, in 2023 the Fund is considering applications for work on soil biota and threatened soil species, in addition to the usual species groups. This call for applications is within the existing funding, review model and timetable, and would provide c. USD 12,000 for each of three grant rounds in a year. This funding will be available until the end of 2023. The criteria are the same as for other taxonomic groups, with some flexibility in recognition of the spatial scale of soil species and the diversity of species to be addressed.

This new focus aims to stimulate conservation attention for threatened soil species and soil conservation hotspots. The Fund's Advisory Board and Secretariat will review the success of this undertaking during 2023, and may continue the initiative in subsequent years.

For information on how to apply, please see speciesconservation.org/grants, and for questions regarding applications please contact Nicolas Heard (nheard@mbzfund.org).

The Rufford Small Grants Programme

The Rufford Foundation runs the Rufford Small Grants Programme supporting early-career conservationists in the developing world. The programme focuses on funding field work undertaken by current MSc or PhD students (or equivalent), or those who have graduated from such studies in the past 3 years and are seeking to undertake a conservation project. First grants support small-scale or pilot projects rather than providing a small amount of funding for a large-scale project. In some cases, The Rufford Foundation will fund 100% of the project costs. Projects can focus on particular species or have a more general focus such as on a threatened habitat or a major issue such as human-wildlife conflict or environmental education. The Rufford Foundation considers work on any species listed in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, provided it is not categorized as Least Concern. Projects on species that do not appear on the IUCN Red List because they have yet to be assessed but are thought to be threatened will also be considered. There are no restrictions on projects focusing on threatened habitats. This is a five-stage funding programme and successful grantees are encouraged to apply for further support provided they fit the criteria. To see examples of funded projects, visit rufford.org. Further information on eligibility criteria, as well as instructions on how to submit your application, can be found at apply.ruffordsmallgrants.org. There is no deadline for applications. Each application will be reviewed once the required three references have been received.