



Animal Behavior and Cognition Funding

What we're doing

The National Geographic Society is launching a rigorous global effort to find three of the best scientists doing field research on animal behavior and cognition. If selected, each individual will receive direct funding of \$800,000, as well as substantial additional resources and services over four (4) years (with the possibility to extend an additional six (6) years, totaling a project length of 10 years). The selection process will focus on identifying individuals doing fieldwork with the potential to develop into a high-value, long-term research program.

Beyond funding, the three individuals will be named a National Geographic Explorer and welcomed into the Society's global National Geographic Explorer community. As Explorers, they will receive significant additional investment in their work, such as leadership and community-building training; regular exposure, speaking, and media opportunities; innovative equipment, technology, and data services to support and propel their projects; and collaboration opportunities with other members of the National Geographic Explorer community.

This program is funded in part by the [Templeton World Charity Foundation, Inc.](#)

(\$200,000 USD per year), as well as substantial additional resources and services, over four years.

ce communication training needed to engage and inspire those within and outside of the science community.

posure, speaking, and media opportunities based on project discoveries and accomplishments.



Eligibility

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Project Criteria

- Projects must focus on understanding the role of climate, proximate, or developmental causes on animal behavior and cognition.
- Projects must answer compelling, well-defined research questions regarding any or a combination of the priority topics, demonstrate the need for long-term research, and show potential for scientific growth.
- Projects must be research. Projects focused on conservation, education, or storytelling DO NOT qualify for this funding opportunity.
- Projects must be fieldwork-oriented and focus on wild populations (projects working with captive populations will not be accepted for this opportunity).
- Projects must be planned to run for four (4) years, and applicants must describe the specific research questions, activities, and budget for that timeline. HOWEVER, the proposed project must be framed within the applicants' long-term research plan (over a potential 10-year span) and the larger question driving their scientific curiosity.
- This funding opportunity does not have any taxonomic or geographic restrictions.
- For well-studied species, projects must focus on novel approaches to studying their behavior and cognition.

Applicant Criteria

- Candidates must have at least three (3) years of relevant work experience after the award of their Ph.D. We welcome applications from all career stages beyond that, but preference will be given to early-career scientists.
- Candidates must possess a minimum of three (3) years of fieldwork experience working with their proposed species or a similar species (these three (3) years do not need to be continuous).
- Candidates must demonstrate their experience leading field projects relevant to the research topics.
- A strong publication record relative to the applicant's career experience is expected.
- Candidates must show exceptional originality, insight, drive, and potential to achieve significant future advances in knowledge.
- Candidates should demonstrate strong relationships and collaborations with key local stakeholders and present a local engagement plan.
- Ideal candidates will articulate specific plans to empower and strengthen the scientific capacities of local researchers in the country or region where the project will be conducted.
- For projects focused on species without site fidelity, applicants must present plans for collaborations with local researchers from the species' natural-ranging area. For marine and/or migratory species, please get in touch with the Program Director for options (larnedo@ngs.org).
- Candidates must show interest in communicating their research findings effectively to the public, inspire appreciation for the pursuit of knowledge, and serve as future role models in their field.
- In alignment with the mission of the [Templeton Prize](#), applicants must include a vision of how their project will contribute to our understanding of the natural world and the place and purpose



- Successful applicants will be required to follow good practices in open science, consistent with the [Open Access Policy](#) of the Templeton World Charity Foundation (TWCF).

Budget Guidelines

- The maximum annual budget request is \$200,000 USD, for a maximum budget request of \$800,000 for four (4) years.
- Applicants may request up to 15% of the total annual budget as overhead or indirect costs. Typically, these costs are related to the administration of your project and grant funds and may be used by an institution to cover day-to-day operational fees. Overhead or indirect costs may not exceed \$30,000 USD per year and must be requested in addition to the total annual budget for the grant.
- Funds requested for travel and lodging must be justified in detail. This might include travel to, from, and within field sites and to regional/international conferences.
- Funds requested for equipment and supplies must be justified in detail.
- Requesting funds to support stipends and salaries for local staff is strongly encouraged. Principal investigators must provide a strong justification if requesting funds to offset their salaries.
- If an applicant is the primary caregiver for a child, parent, or another dependent and has extenuating circumstances that would make it impossible to complete their fieldwork without additional funds for caregiving, we will allow a line item in the budget under the Miscellaneous category for caregiving assistance. These costs must not exceed \$5,000 USD per year. Grant applicants must detail how dependent care assistance will be spent.
- The National Geographic Society will not fund the acquisition of lethal weapons, including but not limited to handguns, semi-automatic rifles, cannons, and ammunition.

Timeline and Process

- **Applicants must submit their projects through the National Geographic Society grants portal by 11:59 p.m. EDT on April 12, 2023.**
- The projects will be subject to an internal and external review process. The top 6 finalists will be invited to discuss their projects with a panel of experts in September 2023. Awards will be announced in October 2023.
- For questions, please contact larnedo@ngs.org

Apply Now!

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[DOWNLOAD SAMPLE APPLICATION \(PDF\)](#)

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