VELUX STIFTUNG

Call for proposals 2025

Challenges in forest management
Climate change, biodiversity, ecosystem services & forest products

The current call for proposals at a glance

Incorporating practice into research and using research to inform practice is essential to change and progress. Therefore,

Support available for

Research projects:
Innovative, novel, outside-of-the-box research that has a high potential to change forestry practice. Projects need to be participatory (including stakeholders) and can have an interdisciplinary approach. 10 % of the budget needs to be spent for knowledge transfer and the proposed approach should be of general interest.

Science-practice projects:
Science-practice projects aim to facilitate collaboration between researchers and practitioners to improve accessibility and comprehensibility of specified forest management findings relevant to stakeholders. Dialogue, knowledge exchange or co-production should lead to deliverables such as tools and resources or communication products. Applications must demonstrate the commitment of the collaborating parties and the continuity of the approach.

Thematic focus
– Innovative and integrative sustainable forest management to develop and provide solutions for adapting to or mitigating climate change, promoting biodiversity, providing resilient ecosystems services and supplying sustainable forest products.
– Incentives or tools for action and behavioural change towards sustainable forest management by transforming theoretical and abstract values of forest products and services.

Duration of the projects: 1 to max. 4 years	
Scale of funding: Up to max. CHF 100'000 per year	
Partnerships: At least 2 partners from different institutions necessary. See C. 2).	
Deadline: 22 September 2025, 23:59 CEST	
Final decision: March 2026	

Please also read the details of the call: pp. 3-12

The call for proposals in detail

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A. The foundation's funding policy

Velux Stiftung is a science-funding foundation based in Switzerland supporting forestry research in Switzerland and globally.

We put our support behind researchers who aim to transfer their discoveries to initiate change and create impact.

The foundation aims to contribute to sustainable change and impact for the benefit of humanity. While there are many important and unsolved topics in the supported funding areas, Velux Stiftung focuses on those ideas or challenges which are relevant and take an interdisciplinary, outside-of-the-box approach but have received too little attention from major funding sources and lack alternative funding opportunities.

We expect our grantees to be knowledge entrepreneurs, to have a clear vision of the impact their research could generate and how they can foster the necessary change. Velux Stiftung aims to support researchers who have the path to impact in mind and want to actively transfer their science-based knowledge beyond the academic community into action and impact. This ultimate objective determines which audiences need to be targeted, and in which form the results should be transferred.

To learn more about Velux Stiftung: https://veluxstiftung.ch

B. Vision, goals and approach of the program

1) Vision

The long-term vision of the program is:

- Innovative sustainable forest management practices are used widely and contribute to climate change mitigation, the adaptation of forests to climate change and the fostering of biodiversity without neglecting that there is a global demand for forest products.

- Stakeholders like scientists, forest managers, forest owners, indigenous people and smallholders, policy makers and conservationists communicate and work hand in hand towards resilient forest ecosystems.

2) Goals

The overall objective of the program is to improve sustainable forest management that addresses the pressing problems of climate change and biodiversity loss as well as society's need for forest products.

- The program shall contribute to a change of perspective in sustainable forest management and in the use and value of forests.

- The envisaged change of perspective shall be solution-oriented and based on an interaction between scientists and practitioners.

- The program shall contribute to the integration of evidence-based science into forestry practice.

- Financial innovation and improved framework conditions should provide leverage for the implementation of sustainable forest management, resulting in forests that can conserve biodiversity, act as a carbon sink and supply forest products.

- The program contributes towards "maintaining and fostering the stability of ecosystems" worldwide, as the statutes of Velux Stiftung claim.

3) Thematic focus of the call

The current call contributes to these goals by focusing on:

- Innovative and integrative sustainable forest management to develop and provide solutions for adapting to or mitigating climate change, promoting biodiversity, providing resilient eco-systems services and supplying sustainable forest products.

- Incentives or tools for action and behavioural change towards sustainable forest management by transforming theoretical and abstract values of forest products and services.

The priority is set on research addressing neglected issues whose results have a high potential to contribute to change.

If you are unsure about the fit of your application to the scope of the call, please send an abstract to info@veluxstiftung.ch and state the reasons why you think your project fits the call.

You can find a list of approved projects on our website.

Projects excluded from the call

Research projects with a main focus on implementation or community development without a clear science component are excluded from the call. Further, small case studies with limited generality and projects addressing urban forestry will not be considered.

4) Approach:

Incorporating practice into research and using research to inform practice is essential to change and progress. Therefore, the foundation wishes to achieve these goals by supporting:

- Research projects: Innovative, novel, outside-of-the-box research which can show a high potential for change in forestry practice. Projects need to be participatory (= including stakeholders) and can have an interdisciplinary approach to define the research questions or to conduct the research. 10 % of the budget needs to spend for knowledge transfer and the proposed approach should be of general interest. Local scale projects have a lower priority.

- Science-practice projects: Science-practice projects aim to facilitate collaboration between researchers and practitioners to improve accessibility and comprehensibility of specified forest management findings relevant to stakeholders. Dialogue, knowledge exchange and co-production should lead to deliverables such as tools and resources or communication products. Applications must demonstrate the commitment of the collaborating parties and the continuity of the approach.

An annual budget of CHF 2 million will be dedicated to the program. One call for proposal is published every year from 2022 to 2026.

C. General requirements for applications

1) General eligibility

- The general eligibility and exclusion criteria for funding by Velux Stiftung apply. Please refer to the corresponding sections on our website (eligibility, exclusion criteria).

- Research projects with a main focus on implementation or community development without a clear science component are excluded from the call. Further, small case studies with limited generality and projects addressing urban forestry will not be considered.

- An organisation or institution (e.g., a university) can only submit a maximum of two applications per call (in the role as institution of the PI or co-PI), otherwise all applications will be excluded. PIs should contact their institution's Grants Office well in advance of submission so that the Grants Office can coordinate submissions from the same institution.

- The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for ensuring compliance with any internal approval processes required by their institution for submitting research funding proposals. This includes confirming that the institution agrees to the general funding terms of the foundation.

- Note that applications which do not meet all the requirements can be rejected without further explanation.

2) Partnerships

- An application requires at least two project partners (PI and co-PI) who need to be from different institutions. One partner needs to be from an academic research institution. Other partners or collaborators can be non-academic stakeholders, e.g., forest owners or practitioner associations, (non-)governmental organizations, or consulting agencies.

- While we support research worldwide, we welcome transboundary partnership applications with one partner from an OECD country. We ask that a collaboration is clearly delineated and follows the principles for fair and equal partnership. Please check the guide for fair research partnerships of the Swiss Academies of Sciences.

3) Roles in project management:

- The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for directing the project. The PI needs to be a permanent employee and act in a legally binding way on behalf of his/her/their organisational unit, which has to be a legal accountable entity.

- The PI's institution must agree to manage the grant and needs to be tax-exempted as well as eligible to receive funding from a Swiss foundation. Please provide the respective documents if the PI's institution is not a university. The approved amount will only be paid out to the PI's institution which is responsible to distribute the funds and compile the necessary reporting.

- At least the PI or one co-PI has to be an established (R3) or leading (R4) researcher in a field relevant to the project goals (according to the European research profiles descriptors).

- The co-PI(s) is/are key personnel who is/are essential to the project and will be involved in project management. The number of co-PIs is limited to three persons. Co-PIs and their organisations can request part of the budget. However, the approved amount will only be paid out to the PI's organisation.

- Collaborators are persons you are consulting with, who deliver input or who are significantly involved in the planned knowledge transfer or exchange activities. The number of collabo- rators is not limited. Please list your collaborators in the web portal and in the research proposal.

4) Additional requirements for the two types of projects

Incorporating practice into research and using research to inform practice is essential to change and progress. In addition to the foundation's general conditions, the funding criteria, and the objectives of this call, the following additional requirements apply for the two types of projects:

Research projects
Research results must be relevant and show a high potential for change in forestry practice. This requires close co-operation between researchers and stakeholders in the formulation of research questions, the alignment of expectations and/or the design or conducting of studies.

A – Stakeholder engagement
The perspective of stakeholders (forest owners, forest stewards, forest managers, policy makers, society, etc.) regarding the question at hand needs to be included. Stakeholder engagement goes beyond merely informing stakeholders; it should involve actively consulting with, involving, or collaborating with them from the beginning. See also C. 7) for a primer on stakeholder engagement. Select and justify key stakeholders appropriate to the project objectives and region.

B – Interdisciplinarity (optional)
Many present-day challenges require the expertise and skills of several disciplines. We welcome interdisciplinary collaborations or approaches (with a special focus on including social sciences).

C – Knowledge transfer
Knowledge transfer activities that address the specific information needs of one or more stakeholder groups increase the likelihood that study results will be implemented, applied or disseminated. The knowledge transfer activities have to account for ca. 10% of the project budget.

D – Generality
The application needs to explain how the proposed approach is of general interest. It should clarify how the envisioned approach can be used in different contexts/regions and show the adaptability of the approach. Meta-analysis of the scientific literature could be among the tools to establish generality prior to project submission or when appropriate as part of the project. If the approach is not of general interest this must be justified. Local scale projects have a lower priority.

Science-practice projects

Science-practice projects aim to facilitate collaboration between researchers and practitioners to improve accessibility and comprehensibility of specified forest management findings relevant to stakeholders. Essential requirements are:

A – Goal & Reach
A proposed project should pursue clear objectives within the scope of this call, aim to improve accessibility and comprehensibility of specified forest management findings, ensure relevance to the respective actors and substantial reach.

B – Deliverables
Building stakeholder engagement to move results into practice, to communicate findings comprehensively, or to jointly shape research questions is possible within this project type. The project work based on dialogue, knowledge exchange and co-production should lead to specific outputs within the timeframe of the project (mandatory).
Such deliverables can be in the form of:

• Tools and resources:
  e.g. Practical guidelines, frameworks, toolkits, training materials, data bases, etc.

• Communication products:
  e.g. Joint policy recommendations, advocacy material, awareness campaigns, etc.

C – Commitment
Demonstrate strong collaboration between researchers and practitioners, with well- defined roles and responsibilities for all parties involved. Please provide the respective letters of commitment for the collaboration.

D – Continuity
Explain how the proposed activities will continue beyond the funding period, and how future plans will be supported.

5) Geographical focus

Projects dealing with all types of forests, including: boreal, temperate, tropical and subtropical forests are welcome. The focus is on forests producing different goods and services, acknowledging particularly the global demand for wood products. See also point C 2) for partnerships.

6) Use of the funding

Budget of up to max. CHF 100'000 per year for one to four years
Budget categories that can be requested for research projects and science-practice projects:

- Salaries
- Consumables
- Equipment
- Travel
- Knowledge transfer (workshop organisation, communication to stakeholders, conference participation, etc.)
- Stakeholder engagement (coordination of stakeholder engagement, stakeholder engagement activities, remuneration of stakeholders where applicable and justified)

Note that the foundation generally does not support overhead costs
and that an explanation for each budget category needs to be provided.

7) Useful links for the preparation of an application

Guide for transboundary research partnerships: https://11principles.org/ or as PDF
Stakeholder engagement: https://i2insights.org/primers/stakeholder-engagement-primer/

D. Application guideline & selection procedure

1) Important dates

The application deadline of the current call is 22 September 2025, 23:59 CEST. Final funding decisions are expected by the end of March 2026.

2) Application guideline

For details what information is needed to apply, please refer to the application factsheet.
For details about the application procedure please refer to our website. Applications need to be submitted on our web portal. Please don't forget the general requirements for applications specified in section C. 1-7).

3) Selection procedure

A – Selection

Formal screening by the foundation management
Project applications are screened for compliance with the exclusion criteria, and requirements of the call. Applications that do not fulfil these criteria will not be considered and are rejected.

Preselection by an international and interdisciplinary scientific committee covering science and practice
The scientific committee (SC) preselects the applications that are promising based on the impact potential and innovation of the approach.

Review / prioritisation by the SC
All preselected applications are peer-reviewed by one or two members of the SC, or external experts based on the funding criteria. In a meeting, the committee discusses their evaluations and establish a shortlist of applications that is presented to the board of the foundation for final selection.

The foundation board of Velux Stiftung takes the final funding decision among the shortlisted applications.

B – Funding criteria
In addition to the funding criteria below, the foundation's general eligibility criteria, the objectives of this call, and its respective requirements apply.

The text below gives a short overview of the funding criteria:

Impact potential (assuming the goals of the project are achieved)
– Relevance
– Potential for change
– Transfer potential & Knowledge transfer

Project quality
– Novelty and originality
– Approach / Interdisciplinarity (if applicable)
– Probability of success / Risk

Resources
– (Scientific) competence of the project lead
– Leadership competence of the project lead
– Working environment
– Collaboration & Stakeholder engagement
– Budget

See the full [funding criteria on our website](#) for more information.

E.   Grant and agreement terms and conditions

The [general funding terms](#) of the foundation apply.
Please refer to our [website](#) for more information.