



Bat Conservation International (BCI) Granting Programs Request for Proposals (RFP)

Due: October 31, 2020

Title of the Opportunity: *Student Research Scholarships for Global Bat Conservation Priorities*

Bat Conservation International requests proposals from talented student researchers seeking financial support for their bat conservation research projects.

We will begin accepting new submissions on October 1, 2020 and close October 31, 2020 through our [online application portal](#).

We are seeking research proposals relevant to conservation on:

Category #1: The project contributes to the understanding of the effects of human-caused environmental changes, such as land use and climate change, as threats to global bat biodiversity, including projects focusing on habitat destruction or degradation, wind energy development, pollution, impacts from drought or extreme weather, invasive species, etc.

Category #2: The project contributes to the understanding and resolving of bat/human conflicts, such as persecution, hunting, roost disturbance, etc.

Category #3: The project will answer ecological or behavioral questions essential to the conservation of one or more bat species currently listed as Vulnerable, Endangered, Critically Endangered, or Data Deficient by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>) or officially recognized on a national list of species of concern.

We anticipate awarding 13 research scholarships to graduate students (Ph.D. or Masters) up to \$3,000 USD and announcing the awardees by January 2021.

From the awardees, we will recognize outstanding students for the following honors:

- **Verne & Marion Read Bat Conservation Honor** –to a student who inspires education and community action to protect bats around the world and address critical conservation needs. This recognition comes with an additional \$500 in support of their project.
- **Thomas H. Kunz Innovative Bat Research Honor** –to a student whose proposed research project uses innovative approaches to bat conservation research. This recognition comes with an additional \$500 in support of their project.

Applicants are encouraged to apply for awards recognizing their efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in conservation. These awards are eligible for additional funding, up to \$500 with the following awards:

- **Women in Science Award** –to a student identifying as a woman who demonstrates a commitment to advancing women in science, which can be demonstrated through an initiative to support other women in science or their own personal development. Eligibility is restricted to women from developing countries (low-income and lower to middle-income countries as defined by the World Bank; <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-and-lending-groups#>). This recognition comes with additional support for the woman’s professional development or proposed initiative up to \$500 USD.
- **Promoting Diversity in Conservation Award** –to a student who includes a component in their proposal to promote and support diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of conservation science. This award comes with additional support for the proposed program, up to \$500 USD.

Lastly, we are pleased to announce our new **Conservation Evidence Special Recognition** that will be a badge and recognition added to any Student Scholar who plans to test or implement a conservation intervention or action.

See more details about the awards and special recognition below on pages ##.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

BCI is bound by the laws of the United States of America, and therefore may not be able to make financial awards to nationals of certain countries or to persons or institutions specifically barred from receiving such financial support by the US government.

- Students must be a registered graduate student (Ph.D. or Masters) and in good standing with a recognized academic institution.
- Previous BCI Student Scholarship recipients enrolled in the same degree program are **not** eligible to apply. Note: a student regains eligibility if they successfully completed the project and degree for which they received a scholarship and are now in a new degree program (e.g., a student received a scholarship during their Master’s program, and now are pursuing a Ph.D.).
- Graduate research must fit the priority categories as defined in this RFP

APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

- Proposal must be prepared by the applicant. While BCI will fund work that is part of a larger project, the student applicant must write the proposal and conduct the research.
- One letter of recommendation is required, preferably from student’s supervisor. Any applications without a letter of recommendation will not be considered for funding.
- Projects must begin no later than six (6) months following the date of award, and final reports are generally expected within two (2) years following the date of award.
 - Exceptions can be made for delays due to COVID-19.
- Applicants may submit only one proposal per RFP. Unsuccessful applicants from previous RFPs may re-apply, but BCI encourages these applicants to revise their applications based on feedback from previous submissions.
- Eligible use of funds is limited to direct project costs.

- BCI requires that all sponsoring universities and institutions do NOT take overhead, administrative, or indirect costs from the awarded grant monies.

APPLICATION RESOURCES

Please see the RFP Guidance Document at www.batcon.org/rfpfaq, which provides detailed help for your proposal and application. For further assistance, please email scholarships@batcon.org.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- Apply online at <http://www.batcon.org/rfp>
- The application system will begin accepting new registrations and proposal submissions on October 1, 2020 and the system will close to applicants on Thursday, October 31, 2020 at 11:59 pm (Central Standard Time GMT-6).
- All submitted materials must be in English and only applications submitted through BCI's online system will be accepted; email or paper submissions will not be considered.
- All sections of the application form are required and must be completed to the best of the applicant's ability and knowledge and be completed within the online application system.
- Proposals should clearly state project objectives and the significance of the work to bat conservation and give detailed descriptions of the methodology, data collection analysis techniques, and conservation implications of the project.
- Proposals must show how projects support conservation needs and must demonstrate that the project in question is feasible within the planned time and financial limitations.
- **Applicants must also be able to affirm these seven statements:**
 - *I affirm that I am an enrolled graduate student in good academic standing at a recognized academic institution.*
 - *I affirm all collaborators are aware of this proposal and their roles and responsibilities.*
 - *I affirm that the applicant and all collaborators will meet all animal welfare needs, including IACUC approvals at their universities or institutions if animals are being used or handled.*
 - *I affirm that the applicant and all collaborators will follow accepted health and safety protocols for the type of work being conducted, including the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).*
 - *I affirm that I have reviewed the IUCN SSC Bat Specialist Group Recommended Strategy for Researchers to Reduce the Risk of Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from Humans to Bats MAP: Minimize, Assess, Protect Guidelines.*
 - *I affirm that required government permits will be in possession and current to carry out the field work.*
 - *I agree to abide by BCI's Code of Conduct*

BCI is an equal opportunity organization and strongly encourages applications from people of color, persons with disabilities, women, and LGBT applicants.

Proposal Elements

Project Country: Where the project will take place.

Start Date: The date when you expect to begin the project. Project must begin no later than 6 months following date of award. Anticipated award notification is January 6, 2020. Therefore, projects with start dates much later than June 6, 2020 are not eligible.

End Date: The date when you expect to complete your project. Project duration is expected to be 1 – 2 years and final reports are generally expected within 2 years following date of the award.

Project Title: Provide a clear and concise title (15 words max).

Project Category: Select the category within which your project fits from the list of choices. If your project meets the criteria of multiple categories, you can also select a secondary category.

Project Abstract: Provide a brief abstract of your project that states the conservation priority addressed, states your research question, and describes the significance of the work to global bat conservation priorities (250 words max).

Project Description: In your project description, describe your project's significance to bat conservation and justification of how it relates to global bat conservation priorities (Categories 1 – 3 above) and specifically state your research goals, objectives, and hypotheses (500 words max).

Activities & Methods: Provide a comprehensive but concise explanation of the methods that you will employ toward achieving your project's goals and objectives (1,000 words max).

SARS-CoV-2 precautions: Describe the procedures you will take to avoid spreading COVID-19 to people and reduce your risk of human-to-bat exposure of SARS-CoV-2 during your research (250 words max).

Hiring field technicians: If you will be hiring volunteers or paid field technicians, explain how they will be recruited and if they will be locals to your project location or not. BCI does not support projects that rely on soliciting unpaid volunteer positions that require volunteers to incur substantial travel or other expenses to gain field experience. What is your plan to recruit field technicians? (200 words max).

Literature Cited: Provide relevant and cited literature (500 words max).

Awards and Special Recognition

Women in Science Award: Select if you qualify to apply for this award as a student identifying as a woman from a low-income and lower to middle-income countries as defined by the [World Bank](#). If yes, you will be prompted to provide more details.

Promoting Diversity in Conservation Award: Select if you plan to include any outreach, training, community science opportunities, etc. to promote DEI in conservation. If yes, you will be prompted to provide more details.

Conservation Evidence Special Recognition: Select if you include a conservation action or intervention in your project proposal. If you are unsure, look at examples of these actions/interventions on www.conservationevidence.org. If yes, you will be prompted to provide more details.

Qualifications and Collaborators

Applicant Background: Give a brief description of your experience to date, your career aspirations, and how this award will advance your future in bat conservation. (500 words max).

Other Partners, Collaborators, & Stakeholders: List key partners, co-investigators, close collaborators, and important stakeholders for your project, and provide a brief explanation of their role in the project (350 words max).

Budget

Amount Requested from BCI: Please enter the amount requested.

Total Project Cost: Total anticipated cost of project (including costs covered by other sources).

Funds received from other sources: Enter the total amount of other funding you have received to date for this project. Pending funds can be described in box below.

Budget Description: Please list the sources of other funding for your project. Please include both current and pending (350 words max).

Breakdown of Requested Costs:

- **Total Personnel Costs** (Salary & Benefits) (\$0 to \$3,000 USD)
- **Enter the total requested amount for travel costs:** Travel includes all transport (airfare, car rental, gas), lodging, and meals (\$0 to \$3,000 USD)
- **Total Supplies & Equipment** (\$0 to \$3,000 USD)
- **Total Other Costs:** Enter total requested amount for other direct project costs (publication fees, vaccinations, contractual services, etc.) (\$0 to \$3,000 USD)

Reference

For your application to be accepted, a letter of recommendation must be received in support of your application. Your recommender should ideally be your thesis advisor but can be a professional who is familiar with you and your project and is sufficiently established in the profession to lend credibility to their recommendation.

Please provide the contact information below and the online system will send a request to your reference to complete online. Please make sure they submit their letter before the application due date on November 4, 2019 or your application will not be accepted for consideration.

- **Contact's First Name ***
- **Contact's Last Name ***
- **Contact's Email Address ***
- **Contact's Phone Number**
- **Contact's Title**
- **Contact's Organization**

The following instruction will be sent to the letter writer:

Upload a letter of recommendation for the application: The letter should address the following, (1) how long and in what capacity the letter writer has known the applicant; (2) a candid assessment of the quality of the proposal and the applicant's ability to carry out the proposed project; (3) an evaluation of the candidate to make a meaningful contribution to bat conservation research

REVIEW PROTOCOL

All conservation-relevant proposals that meet the minimum submission criteria will be forwarded to a review team comprised of external experts and BCI staff selected for their recognized expertise.

The highest-rated applications will be considered for funding at either the full requested amount or at a lower amount. Final decisions on funding awards will be made by BCI staff.

No preference will be shown for age, sex, race, ethnicity, religious, or institutional considerations. BCI is bound by the laws of the United States of America, and therefore may not be able to make financial awards to nationals of certain countries or to persons or institutions specifically barred from receiving such financial support by the US government.

RECEIPT OF FINANCIAL AWARDS

In all cases, BCI prefers to award funds to applicants associated with legally recognized institutions, so that the transfer of funds from BCI can go directly to an institutional bank account. BCI does not allow indirect expenses and requests sponsoring universities and institutions to not take any overhead, administrative, or indirect costs from the awarded monies. Only for rare exceptions will BCI consider transferring funds to the privately held bank account of an individual.

Please address all questions to: scholarships@batcon.org