

Call for applications for the assignment of n. 4 Fellowships on “Scientific developments in monitoring the distribution, spread, and impact of Non-indigenous Invasive species (NIS) in aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems: The case studies of the LifeWatch ERIC Internal Joint Initiative (IJI)”

Article 1: Subject

The present call for Fellowships aims at contributing to the scientific development and results dissemination of the case studies dealing with Non-indigenous and Invasive Species (NIS) that have been launched by LifeWatch ERIC in the context of its Internal Joint Initiative (IJI - <https://www.lifewatch.eu/internal-joint-initiative/>). The research activities will deal with different aspects of NIS ecology and impact on biodiversity and functioning of invaded ecosystems, such as: early-detection and monitoring of coastal marine NIS, trophic habits of invasive crustaceans, dispersion scenarios of terrestrial invasive plants, and EUNIS habitat and ecosystem vulnerability to NIS invasion. The present call is for 4 (four) Fellowship positions for 1 year launched by the LifeWatch ERIC Service Centre in Lecce, with the research activities located at the following hosting institutions: University of Gothenburg/Flanders Marine Institute/Hellenic Centre for Marine Sciences (Belgium/Sweden/Greece - *Early-detection and monitoring of coastal marine NIS...*), UniSalento (Lecce, Italy - *Trophic habits of invasive crustaceans...*), CNR-IIA “Institute for Atmospheric Pollution”- Earth Observation Unit/CNR-IAC “Institute for Applied Mathematics M.Picone” (Bari, Italy - *Spreading scenarios of terrestrial invasive plants...*), and University of Aveiro (Portugal - *EUNIS habitat and ecosystem vulnerability to NIS invasion*).

Funding resources are obtained from the LifeWatch ERIC Strategic Working Plan.

Article 2: Location

The main location of the Fellowships is the LifeWatch ERIC Service Centre in Lecce, with the research activities conducted at:

- University of Gothenburg (Sweden)/Flanders Marine Institute (Belgium)/Hellenic Centre for Marine Sciences (Greece),
- UniSalento (Lecce, Italy),
- CNR-IIA "Institute for Atmospheric Pollution"-Earth Observation Unit/CNR-IAC "Institute for Applied Mathematics "M.Picone" (Bari, Italy),
- University of Aveiro (Portugal).

Article 3: Scientific Supervisors

The research activity is coordinated by Prof. Alberto Basset as Scientific Supervisor, cooperating with the following Co-Supervisors:

- Matthias Obst, (Early-detection and monitoring of coastal marine NIS),
- Katrina Exter, (Early-detection and monitoring of coastal marine NIS),
- Christina Pavludi (Early-detection and monitoring of coastal marine NIS),
- Giorgio Mancinelli (Trophic habits of invasive crustaceans),
- Cristina Tarantino (Spreading scenarios of terrestrial invasive plants),
- Heliana Teixeira (EUNIS habitat and ecosystem vulnerability to NIS invasion)

Article 4: Research Topics

The 4 Fellowships will be awarded in the following research areas regarding product development of the case studies on NIS developed within the LifeWatch ERIC Internal Joint Initiative:

- Early-detection and monitoring of coastal marine NIS using conventional and metabarcoding data gathered from Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structures (ARMS).

- Trophic habits of invasive crustaceans and their impacts on invaded benthic food webs using stable isotope data.
- Spreading scenarios of terrestrial invasive plants using distribution maps from satellite data and predictive modelling.
- EUNIS habitat and ecosystem vulnerability to NIS invasion by using occurrence data of native and non-native species in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Article 5: Participation Requirements

To be considered eligible to apply, candidates must satisfy the following requirements:

- Minimum qualification: Master's Degree in the Scientific Faculties;
- Proven knowledge of and previous research experience on NIS ecology and impact;
- Proven knowledge of ecological theory at the community and ecosystem level and of statistical and modelling approaches for the analysis and the quantification of the impact of biological invasions and their temporal variation;
- Knowledge of the main methods and software of statistical analysis and mathematical modelling;
- Good presentation and reporting skills, fluency in written and spoken English.

Article 6: Application for Participation

The application is subject to the following procedure:

- 1) fill out all the required fields of the attached application form (Annex 1), date and sign it;
- 2) attach to the application form:

- a short covering letter and Curriculum Vitae¹ (EUROPASS format and annexes, 6 pages at the most) in English, dated and signed;
- a photocopy of a valid identity document: passport or identity card;
- documentation to certify academic qualifications and other research/work experiences assessable by the Evaluation Committee;
- the applicant must specify in Annex 1 which of the 4 research topics s/he is applying for. The applicants may not submit more than one application to multiple research topics.

Article 7: Application Submission - Terms and Deadlines

The request for admission to the selection shall be submitted to the Service Centre Director via e-mail to alberto.basset@lifewatch.eu and in cc to eleonora.romano@lifewatch.eu by **31 July 2022**. The subject line of the e-mail must contain this information "Call for Applications for the assignment of n. 4 Fellowships on case studies of the LifeWatch ERIC Internal Joint Initiative (IJI)".

The application and accompanying documentation must be submitted in a non-editable, portable, static format (preferably .pdf).

Candidates whose applications are submitted after the deadline will be automatically excluded from the selection procedure.

LifeWatch ERIC declines any responsibility for any possible misplacement of documentation, inaccuracy of personal information supplied by the applicants, missing or delayed communication of changes of the personal information stated by the applicants, and delays not attributable to the Institution. Compliance with the required qualifications can be made with a substitutive declaration of an affidavit in relation to Art. 47 of the D.P.R. 28.12.2000 no. 445;

Article 8: Selection Committee

After the application deadline, the Service Centre Director will appoint an Evaluation Committee which will include:

- the Scientific Supervisor as the President of the Committee;
- one member of the Executive Board of LifeWatch ERIC;
- the Co-Supervisors as scientific leaders of the research topics on NIS of the open research positions.

Article 9: Selection Procedure

Eligible candidates will be shortlisted on the basis of their academic qualifications and publications within the scientific research areas of the Fellowships.

Shortlisted applicants will be further evaluated in an interview to verify their research experience.

Having verified the eligibility of the applicants, the Service Centre Administrative Officer will send the applications, including all their annexes, to the Evaluation Committee.

The Evaluation Committee can assign a maximum score of one hundred (100) points to each candidate during the whole evaluation process. Up to sixty (60) points can be assigned on the basis of the candidate's academic qualifications and publications, and up to forty (40) points on the basis of the oral interview. Candidates should achieve a score of at least forty points out of the sixty available (40/60) in the initial qualifications/publications evaluation to be shortlisted for the interview. Moreover, of the forty (40) points that the Evaluation Committee can assign in the interview, candidates will be considered qualified for the open positions only if they achieve a grade equal to at least thirty points (30/40).

As for the initial evaluation of academic qualifications and publications (60 points max), the Evaluation Committee will assess:

- the Master's thesis (20 points max), specifically, the Evaluation Committee will evaluate the congruence of the scientific topic against the themes of the present Fellowships;
- the Master's Degree grade (15 points max);
- the scientific publications (10 points max);
- any academic qualification beyond the Master's Degree including a PhD, academic courses, and specialisations, etc. (10 points max);
- previous work or research experiences with public or private institutions in line with the research activities of the present Fellowships (5 points max).

During the interview, the Evaluation Committee will establish the suitability of the candidates for the open research positions including the evaluation of:

- previous research experience in NIS ecology and impact;
- knowledge of ecological theory at the community and ecosystem level;
- knowledge of statistical and mathematical modelling approaches for the analysis and the quantification of the impact of biological invasions and their spatio-temporal diffusion;
- experience on managing scientific data as part of larger projects and knowledge of FAIR data;
- fluency in spoken English;
- organisational, management, communication and teamwork skills, within international and multi-language contexts.

The interview will take place via **videoconference** tentatively between **03 August** and **12 August 2022**. Candidates admitted to the interview will be notified by email and will receive the link to the videoconference with a minimum 7-day pre-announcement.

The Fellowship is awarded by LifeWatch ERIC according to merit ranking.

Article 10: Sum Awarded to the Fellow

The sum of the Fellowship is Euro 20,000.00 -28,000.00 per year, gross of fees charged to the contractor, and will be paid in arrears in monthly instalments. At the end of the research activity period, Fellows are required to submit to the Service Centre Administrative Officer (eleonora.romano@lifewatch.eu) a detailed report on the scientific activity carried out and the results thereof.

Article 11: Conditions for Entering into the Contract and Beginning Activities

Within fifteen (15) days from the date of receiving communication of the award of the Fellowship, the beneficiary must submit, on pain of forfeiture, the declaration of acceptance of the Fellow and afterwards s/he will be invited to stipulate the contract.

The activities of the Fellows are supposed to start on September.

Article 12: Contract

The Fellowship is governed by a specific individual contract.

The contract governs the collaboration according to these criteria: flexibility in relation to the needs of the activity, continuity, time allocation (not sporadic), coordination with the overall activities of LifeWatch ERIC, close connection with the realisation of a research programme, autonomous collaborative activities within the scope of the programme, absence of pre-determined working hours.

Each Fellow will conduct said activity under the supervision of a Scientific Supervisor, using the equipment and services available therein.

The research activity does not in any way constitute a relationship of employment with LifeWatch ERIC. The Fellowships will be subject to any tax and social security deductions prescribed by Italian law.

The insurance coverage of the researcher is assured in the same way as for all LifeWatch ERIC employees. The hosting Institutions and Universities where the research is conducted will take the necessary steps in regard to assuring appropriate health surveillance, as required by law.

The Fellow will be suspended in the case that s/he suffers serious and certified illness for a period equal to or greater than one month. This suspension can have a maximum duration of six (6) months, after which the grant will be revoked. The Fellow can also be suspended for a period of six (6) months for reasons of maternity. Any suspension for a period longer than six (6) months will result in cancellation of the grant.

The Scientific Supervisor and the Co-Supervisors are the guarantors of the research being conducted correctly and completely. Absences must not be of such a duration as to compromise the scientific training and development of the Fellowship nor the completion of the research activities. Any Fellow who fails to fulfil contractual obligations will have the Fellowship revoked by the Scientific Supervisor after consultation with the LifeWatch ERIC Executive Board. In this case, the Fellow will lose the right to receive any future remuneration and will be required to return all funds already received.

In any case, the Fellow is required to immediately inform the Scientific Supervisor of any interruption of research activities. In the event of renouncement, discontinuation, forfeiture or interruption of the research activities for any reason, the beneficiary cannot withhold any payments of the Fellowship that have already been made and is required to repay the Fellowship except for periods in which the Scientific Supervisor and Co-Supervisors certify that the research has been successfully carried out.

Article 13: Incompatibility and Prevention of Overlapping

The research Fellowship is incompatible with any subordinate employment relationship including those with short-term or part-time contracts and cannot be combined with other study grants awarded for any reason, except for those awarded by national or foreign institutions for the purpose of integrating the research activities with stays abroad.

Article 14: Dissemination of Research Findings

All the completed or partial results deriving from the execution of the project and all the information relating to the activity will remain the property of LifeWatch ERIC, except in the case of separate agreements with the financing body, and without prejudice to any provisions of industrial property law that regard the inalienable right of the originators to be recognised as authors of the findings. If the Fellow intends to publish and/or communicate the results of the research itself, the Scientific Supervisor must be informed in advance and LifeWatch ERIC must be acknowledged in any publication or communication.

Article 15: Processing of Personal Data

Pursuant to the General Data Protection Regulation No. 2016/679 and subsequent modifications, the personal data supplied by the applicants are processed only for purposes related to this call for applications. The data are collected by the Administrative Officer - C/O Lab BIOforIU Via Per Monteroni sn 73100 Lecce (Italy).

The communication of such data by the candidates is compulsory in order to evaluate participation requirements; failure to do so will result in them being excluded from the selection procedure.

Applicants can exercise their rights under artt. 15-16-17 of the above-mentioned law, including the right to access data that regards them, and additional rights such as the right to obtain the update, correction, completion or deletion of data that are incorrect, incomplete or collected in violation of the law.

Article 17: Contact Person of the Procedure

The person in charge of the administrative procedure is the Service Centre Administrative Officer Eleonora Romano (eleonora.romano@lifewatch.eu).

LifeWatch ERIC is an equal opportunity employer, and encourages all qualified candidates to apply, regardless of race, gender, age, national origin, or sexual orientation.