

## **Funding Guidelines for the CEE Fellowship Programme of the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt**

The DBU awards up to 50 fellowships annually for further qualification in the field of environmental protection and nature conservation in the sense of promoting young talent. The fellowships are open to qualified university graduates from all disciplines from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). They enable a six- to twelve-month stay at German host institutions: Universities, research institutes, companies, environmental and nature conservation authorities, NGOs, associations, societies, etc. During the fellowship, solutions to current environmental issues are developed so that the alumni can subsequently transfer knowledge to their countries of origin. In addition to the above-mentioned fellowships, the DBU also awards a limited number of alumni and travel fellowships as well as small grants.

### **1. Requirements**

Applicants must meet the following requirements to be eligible to apply for the CEE Fellowship Programme:

- Nationality of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Kaliningrad Oblast, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Slovenia;
- permanent residence in one of the above-mentioned CEE countries at the time of application,
- above-average (good to very good) university degree (Master's, Magister, Diplom) from one of the above-mentioned CEE countries;
- applications are welcome from all fields of study;
- At the time of application, the degree must not have been awarded more than five years previously;
- Doctoral candidates are admitted, provided the doctoral project is not completed during the funding period;
- Proposal for an environmentally relevant and practice-oriented topic;
- Sufficient knowledge of German; this knowledge must be proven to the host institution at the beginning of the stay or acquired immediately after the start of the stay.

### **2. Application**

Applications can be made online in German or English and are accepted twice a year in all countries. The annual application deadlines are 5 March and 5 September ([https://www.dbu.de/stipendien\\_international](https://www.dbu.de/stipendien_international)). Incomplete applications and applications received after the respective application deadline cannot be considered.

The following documents in German or English are required for the application:

- Curriculum vitae;
- Description of a current topic related to environmental protection and nature conservation, which is to be worked on in Germany and which is of interest in the home country, in the EU or globally;
- Copies of university certificates (Master's, Magister, Diplom, Bachelor's);
- Written statement by a university teacher from the home country; or alternatively by a supervisor;
- Confirmation of German and/or English language skills.

### **3. Selection procedure**

After the DBU has reviewed the application documents, the most promising applicants will be invited to a selection interview in German or English in their home country or a neighbouring country.

Decisions on the awarding of the fellowships are made by a selection committee. There is no legal entitlement to funding.

#### **4. Terms**

The funding period is between a minimum of six months and a maximum of twelve months. In principle, no doctoral projects or Master's/Bachelor's studies in Germany will be funded.

Each fellowship is initially approved for six months. After reviewing the progress of the work, the fellowship is usually extended by a maximum of another six months (i.e. up to a total duration of one year). In order to review the progress of the work, the fellows submit a meaningful interim report together with the informal application for extension and an expert opinion on the status of the work by the German supervisor no later than six weeks before the end of the first grant period of six months. In the event of premature completion of the fellowship, payments will be discontinued.

#### **5. Benefits**

The amount of the fellowship is 1,350 € per month. In addition to the fellowship, a monthly lump sum of €100 is paid for material and travel expenses (reimbursement of expenses lump sum). Material funds in excess of this can only be granted on the basis of a justified application in exceptional cases and to a limited extent. The DBU organises and finances health, accident and liability insurance abroad for its Fellows, an intensive German language course in Osnabrück lasting several weeks, invites the Fellows to seminars for mutual exchange, to important DBU events, e.g. the presentation of the German Environmental Award, and to annual meetings of DBU alumni in their home countries.

#### **6. Social security**

Participation in the Fellowship Programme does not give rise to an employment or service relationship between the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt or the supervising university and the Fellows; contributions to social security and pension insurance cannot therefore be covered. However, DBU Fellowships are exempt from social security contributions. The Fellowships are tax-free within the framework of the provisions of § 3 No. 44 EStG. Child benefit is not included in the Fellowships.

#### **7. Residence in Germany**

The DBU can assist in finding a host institution. However, there is no entitlement to this. Applicants must also show initiative. The commitment of a host institution does not have to be available at the time of application. It can also be appointed after the selection procedure has been completed positively. As a rule, the German host institutions provide the workplace and guarantee professional supervision. The fellowship begins with an introductory seminar for all new fellows in Osnabrück, where important organisational details for the stay in Germany are clarified. This is followed by the intensive German language course in Osnabrück, which lasts several weeks.

The DBU accompanies and supports the fellows throughout the fellowship. At the seminars, the fellows present their topics and results and can network with each other. The DBU very much welcomes and supports personal initiative, e.g. in organising further events/seminars.

#### **8. Duties of the Fellows**

Upon acceptance of a fellowship, the fellows undertake to

- a) to participate in the intensive German language course in Osnabrück;
- b) to adapt their German language skills in accordance with the requirements of the DBU, if necessary even after the intensive German course in Osnabrück;

- c) to concentrate his/her work on the project described in the research or work plan;
- d) only take up gainful employment in addition to the fellowship with the prior approval of the CEE Fellowship Programme Department of the DBU and only if the gainful employment is thematically related to the professional development within the framework of the fellowship and does not exceed a maximum of ten hours per week;
- e) to report on the progress of the studies when specifically requested to do so and to submit an evaluative final report to the Foundation via the scientific supervisor of the project at the end of the fellowship without being asked to do so;
- f) enter the data on their own fellowship in the communication platform of the DBU fellowship programmes (<https://stipnet.dbu.de>), maintain it and update it regularly;
- g) to participate actively in the status seminars of the CEE Fellowship Programme at all times and to appear punctually at all points of the programme; in the event of any indisposition and the resulting absence from the seminar programme, the seminar management must be informed immediately in person. In addition, the behavioural instructions of the seminar house and the seminar management must be observed in order not to disturb other house guests during events and rest periods;
- h) the DBU is to be informed immediately about ongoing grants from other funding bodies (university, state, organisations, foundations);
- i) further training must be completed at the supervising institution in Germany and project work must not be done from abroad or from home (home office).

Furthermore, the fellows undertake to inform the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt and the scientific institution through which this fellowship is being carried out immediately if

- a) the project is interrupted, modified, prematurely completed or terminated;
- b) changes occur in his/her personal circumstances that are relevant to participation in the fellowship programme.

No work permit is required to carry out the project in Germany. However, for some countries a visa is required for entry into Germany. Fellows apply for this themselves in good time in their home countries at the relevant embassies and/or consulates.

Fellows must expressly declare their agreement with all provisions of these funding guidelines to the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt by signing and returning the Declaration of Commitment.

## **9. Rights of the DBU**

The Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt reserves the right to,

- a) to credit contributions from third parties towards maintenance or material equipment, insofar as they relate to the funded project,
- b) amend the award or withdraw the award and forfeit the fellowship if the fellow fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the fellowship,
- c) to make additions and amendments to the Funding Guidelines and to adjust current Fellowships to the changed circumstances without retroactive effect.

## **10. Termination and Revocation of the Fellowship and Repayment of the Fellowship**

1. The fellowship may be terminated or revoked if

- a) the conditions for granting the fellowship have subsequently ceased to apply,
- b) the Fellow has made incorrect statements about material facts or has concealed such facts,
- c) the Fellow discontinues his/her project,
- d) it becomes apparent that the Fellow is not making the necessary and reasonable efforts to achieve the funding purpose.

2. Upon notification of termination or revocation, payment of all benefits shall cease.
- a) In case 1 b), all benefits shall be repaid in full from the beginning of their granting, including an appropriate interest rate. This applies accordingly if the Fellow terminates his/her Fellowship before the start of the project or ends it in any other way, in particular if he/she does not continue the Fellowship after completing the intensive German language course of several weeks. In other cases, the benefits, including an appropriate interest rate, shall be repaid as of the occurrence of the reason.
  - b) If the Fellow is not responsible for the reason, the repayment may be waived.

### **11 Alumni Fellowships, Travel Fellowships and Small Grants**

Within the framework of the CEE Fellowship Programme, the DBU awards Alumni and Travel Fellowships as well as Small Grants in addition to the Fellowships. These are aimed exclusively at CEE Fellows and are only awarded to a limited extent. There is no entitlement to a grant.

An alumni fellowship can be used for further academic training in the course of a PhD/postdoc position or for practical further qualification between cooperating institutions/organisations/companies. The Travel Fellowships are intended for participation in a conference/meeting/workshop/seminar/training on current environmental topics in Germany.

The so-called Small Grants are intended to provide an additional incentive for the Fellows to use the skills they have acquired in Germany in their home countries in the field of environmental protection and nature conservation. Small Grants can be funded for a maximum of six months. They can be awarded primarily to those fellows who have achieved an exceptional performance in the course of the fellowship. The small projects, which must always be carried out in the Fellows' countries of origin and should be analogous to the funding topics of the DBU, can comprise three types of projects:

- a) Field of action analyses on selected environmental challenges.
- b) Development of feasibility concepts for potential projects.
- c) Implementation of model practical projects.

The prerequisites for the projects are focussed topics with major sustainability challenges. Through international cooperation, barriers are broken down and contacts are established so that a strong network of committed environmental experts is created in the long term. Supplementary funding guidelines apply to the Small Grants.

### **12. Contact**

All current information is published on the Internet at <https://www.dbu.de/en/promotion/moe-fellowship/>. This is also the place to apply for a fellowship. Questions about the CEE Fellowship Programme can also be sent to the DBU by e-mail or telephone.

Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt  
CEE Fellowship Programme  
An der Bornau 2  
D-49090 Osnabrück  
Tel. no.: +49 541/9633-460  
E-mail: [n.freyer@dbu.de](mailto:n.freyer@dbu.de)

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**The English version of the Funding Guidelines for the CEE Fellowship Programme is merely a working aid that has been produced via online translation. The written word of the German version is legally valid.**