



OCEAN CONSERVATION FUND

3RD EDITION

THEME: “MARINE INVERTEBRATES. PROTECT THE OCEAN, THE FUTURE OF THE PLANET.”

P R E S E N T A T I O N

Oceanário de Lisboa and the Oceano Azul Foundation present the third edition of the Ocean Conservation Fund, which aims at addressing critical challenges related to the conservation of marine ecosystems.

The aim of the Ocean Conservation Fund is to support new projects that can make a decisive contribution to the conservation of endangered species and marine biodiversity in general.

The planet's natural resources are essential for the survival and the economic and social development of mankind. It is recognised worldwide that the biological diversity of the oceans is a highly valuable asset for current and future generations. However, it is known that threats to marine species and ecosystems have never been greater. Given that the decline in species caused by human activity continues to increase at an alarming rate, this initiative can play an essential and collaborative role in our efforts to maintain existing biodiversity.

Each edition of the Ocean Conservation Fund has a different theme related to the conservation of marine species and ecosystems.

NATURE OF THE FUND

The Ocean Conservation Fund will support projects with a maximum duration of three years. The amount available for financing projects may vary and this year it is 150,000 euros. The minimum amount granted to a project will be 30.000€ with no maximum amount per project, with 1 to 5 winning projects in this year's edition.

Special regard will be given to projects that:

- | Have an *on-site* work component;
- | Assure that information gathered and shared meets scientific standards and is relevant to the target species conservation needs;
- | Represent sustainable initiatives, suitable to being continued after the implementation period;
- | Foster education, awareness and engagement of local population in action against biodiversity reduction;
- | Include a strong outreach element of conservation messages with evaluation metrics.
- | Project outputs include proposal of conservation actions implementation

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR THE 3rd EDITION (2 0 1 9)

The theme of the third edition of the Ocean Conservation Fund is “Marine Invertebrates. Protect the ocean, the future of the Planet”

Support will be given to new projects, developed within Portugal or abroad, that contribute to conservation of marine invertebrate species.

We know that about 97% of the total number of species of animals currently on Earth are invertebrates. However, it is estimated that only 10% of these species are known.

Invertebrates are key populations in all ecosystems on the planet, particularly in marine ecosystems.

This large group of animals, not very often taken into consideration in conservation efforts, includes a lot of species with severe conservation problems related to human activity, such as fishing and harvesting, habitat destruction, climate change and pollution among many others.

Species like the Mediterranean slipper lobster, the red coral and the yellow coral, are subject to harvesting in the Mediterranean area and populations have been decreasing over time.

Populations of several other species like sea urchins and sea cucumbers have been increasingly valued for human consumption, however, their population trends are unknown. Coral reefs are being destroyed at an extremely fast rate due to climate change and pollution.

These are some of the reasons why these group of animals deserve more attention.

The 3rd Edition of the Ocean Conservation Fund aims to address some of these problems and support projects contributing to the conservation of marine invertebrate species.

After 20 years of supporting ocean conservation, Oceanário de Lisboa seeks to not only ensure the future integrity of endangered species by funding and supporting scientific knowledge, but also to raise awareness of the importance of the balance between the health of the oceans and the use of marine resources, sharing the view that conservation of the oceans is everybody's responsibility. To be eligible, projects submitted must show significant potential to contribute to the conservation of target species, and must also include field work, guarantee the scientific quality of information and relevance to conservation, constitute sustainable initiatives and boost education. It is also crucial for them to present a strong component of dissemination of conservation messages, not only to specialists, but also to members of the general public.

THE FUND IN THE OVERALL ACTIVITY OF OCEANÁRIO DE LISBOA

Aquariums encourage visitors to appreciate the beauty, the potential and the fragility of aquatic ecosystems. Oceanário de Lisboa seeks to raise awareness of the importance of the balance between the health of the oceans and the use of marine resources, sharing the view that conservation of the oceans is a responsibility that everybody must share.

Each year, more than 700 million people visit zoos and aquariums worldwide. The zoo industry has a huge educational and economic impact and increasingly involves projects that promote sustainability and nature conservation. The agendas of zoos and aquariums cover a majority of the planet's ecosystems, from mountains, forests and coastal wetlands, to the depths of the ocean, including coral reefs, seagrass meadows and other ecosystems. Their conservation work covers a wide range of species, involving breeding programmes, scientific data collection, recovery and repopulation of habitats, ecosystem protection measures, among many other aspects. In this context, Oceanário de Lisboa has supported projects that promote the conservation of aquatic systems and the oceans since 1998. This work has generated results for science and for conservation at both national and international levels, with the involvement of a wide range of partners, including academic and research institutions, universities, NGOs, government organisations, renowned institutions such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the National Geographic Channel and international zoo industry associations.

Marine ecosystems are among the greatest assets of mankind, which is why it is fundamental to ensure their integrity through financing and supporting scientific knowledge.